

L.A. Now

California: This just in

Arrest made in slaying of O.C. transgender activist



Zoraida "Ale" Reyes, 28, leads a rally at a May 27 protest in Santa Ana. (Courtesy of Hairo Cortes)

By **ADOLFO FLORES**

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Police in Anaheim have arrested a 38-year-old man on suspicion of killing a transgender activist, whose death triggered protests and raised concerns that she'd been targeted because of her gender identity.

Randy Lee Parkerson was booked Tuesday on suspicion of murder in the death of Zoraida Reyes, whose body was found June 12 in the parking lot of a Dairy Queen in the 200 block of North State College Boulevard.

Her death concerned LGBT advocates because the transgender community has a heightened risk of violence and harassment.

However, Anaheim police said that the investigation hadn't uncovered evidence that Reyes was specifically targeted, and that the homicide wasn't being investigated as a hate crime.

"There is nothing to suggest that Zoraida was specifically targeted," said Lt. Bob Dunn, a spokesman for the Anaheim Police Department. "The motive is still unclear."

But a friend, Jorge Gutierrez, an LGBT and immigrant rights organizer, said he's unconvinced.

"For many the lives of transgender people don't matter and they're viewed as disposable," Gutierrez said. "We know that her identity as a trans woman was a huge factor, whether the police want to acknowledge it or not."

Reyes was born in Michoacan, Mexico, and immigrated to the United States, Gutierrez said. She was a graduate of Century High School in Santa Ana and received an associate degree from Santa Ana College.

She attended UC Santa Barbara but moved back to Santa Ana about three years ago and was living with family when she died. Reyes was a member of several transgender and immigrant rights advocacy groups in Orange County.

Parkerson was being held on \$1-million bail at the Anaheim Police Department Temporary Detention Facility.

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UPDATE

4:01 p.m.: This post has been updated with details about the victim and the crime, as well as comments from police and a friend of the victim.
