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Accused killer called schizophrenic

NEW YORK (AP) — The woman accused of murdering financier Nicholas Deak and his receptionist was diagnosed by psychiatrists three months ago as being paranoid and schizophrenic, court papers say.

The psychiatric report, issued in August, also found that Lois Lang, 44, was incompetent to stand trial on criminal charges in Washington state and was unlikely to be competent to stand trial in the future, The New York Times reported in Thursday's editions.

Lang, 44, was ordered held without bail Tuesday after being arraigned in the shooting of Deak, 80, chairman of Deak-Perera U.S., the nation's largest non-bank dealer in currency and precious metals, and Frances Lauder, 58.

It also was revealed Wednesday that Lang received a master's degree in physical education from the University of Illinois in 1968 and visited the campus this fall to request a scholarship to resume her studies.

Thomas Cureton, a retired professor who was her thesis adviser and saw her again this year, said Lang "looked like she'd been pulled through a keyhole."

"I just don't believe it," said Marianna Trekell, another professor in the physical education department

who knew Lang in the late 1960s and saw her several weeks ago on the school's Champaign-Urbana campus. "She was always well-prepared and conscientious, well-dressed and well-groomed."

But, like Cureton, she noticed that Lang had changed.

"Everyone who had contact with her was stunned," Trekell said. "She looked like a bag lady," wearing an old coat and with a hat pulled down over her head and carrying her possessions in a backpack.

Trekell and Cureton said that when Lang visited the campus this fall, she asked about obtaining a scholarship.

"She seemed lost," Cureton said. "She didn't know where she was going or what she was going to do."

According to court records in King County, which includes Seattle, Lang was examined at Western Washington State Hospital, where she was found paranoid and schizophrenic. She was released after 14 days and a burglary charge was dropped.

Police in the Seattle area said they had had several encounters with Lang since 1982, including one in which she tried to grab an officer's gun and one in which she threatened



LOIS LANG
1961 college photo

a cafeteria worker at the University of Washington.

Lang, who usually wore a green "Robin Hood" hat with a red feather, was a fixture on the Washington campus until three months ago, when she left for New York. She told an officer she was going to "to rule the world."

Mike Evans, a university police

officer, said he knew Lang for several years. "I'd always see her between 3 and 4 in the morning, moving out from Parrington (hall) to the heat vent by the flagpole. You could set your watch by her," he said. "I never saw anything that looked like violence. She seemed to be a very quiet, gentle person. I always approached her like she was an old friend."

But police said she frequently claimed to own property clearly not hers, such as the university student union and a cottage she was accused of burglarizing in July.

Law enforcement sources in New York said Lang apparently believed the government had given her Deak-Perera in the 1940s. The sources, who spoke on the condition they not be identified, said Lang believed she had then entrusted Deak with the company.

When Deak & Co. filed for protection under federal bankruptcy laws last year, Lang became convinced that he had mismanaged the firm, and she decided to kill him, the sources said.

Lang told police that she arrived in the city Monday after an 1,100-mile bus trip from Orlando, Fla., and entered the Deak offices in lower Manhattan several hours later.