

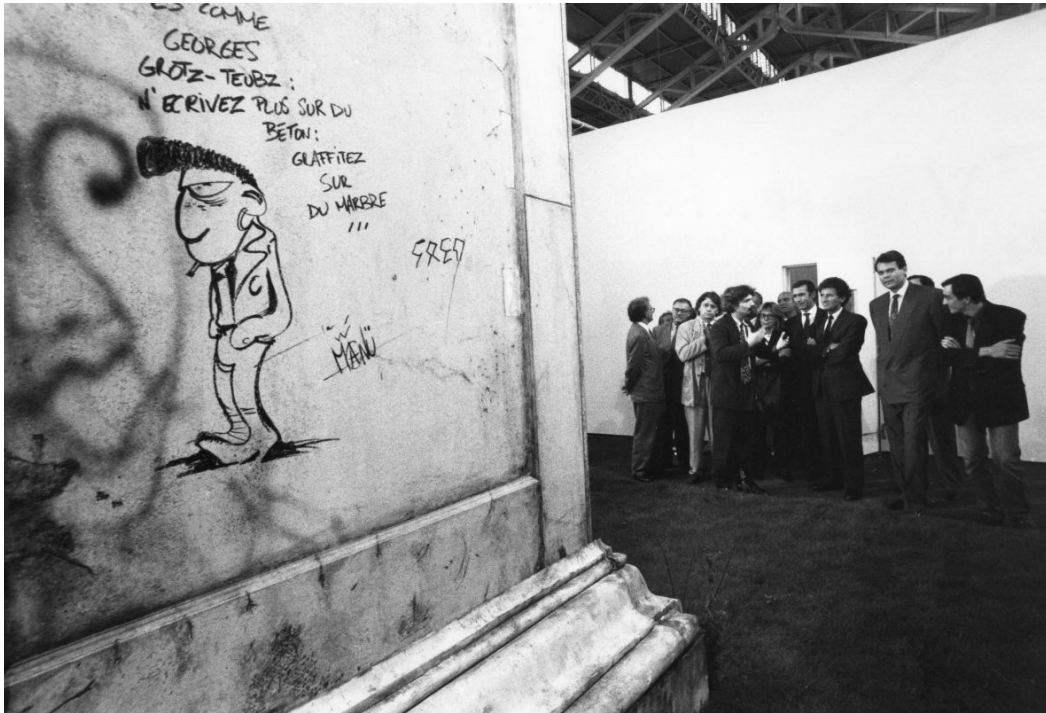


Poster for the 1st Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art (1991): The Love of Art

Jack Lang in Lyon for “L’Amour de l’art”

This section revisits events that took place in Lyon and the surrounding region over the past two centuries—spanning a wide range of fields—through period local press articles, photographs, or illustrations.

By Laurent D



1st Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art. Opening with Jack Lang and Michel Noir. Photographer: Marcos Quinones. Lyon Figaro Collection. © Lyon Municipal Library.

On September 2, 1991, Lyon prepared to inaugurate its first contemporary art biennial. It was also the first to be held outside Paris, in accordance with the joint wishes of the Ministry of Culture and the municipal government. Titled “L’amour de l’art” (The Love of Art), the event aimed—twenty years after the 1972 “Pompidou” exhibition—to take a broad look at artistic creation and “the power of art” in France. Thierry Raspail and Thierry Prat, the event’s artistic directors (who also headed the Museum of Contemporary Art in Lyon), intended to create a major, manifesto-style exhibition. Gathered within the Halle Tony Garnier, 69 artists—each allotted a 120-square-meter space enclosed by an openwork door—exhibited 69 new works. The event reflected shifting attitudes toward contemporary art in France; understanding and recognition were growing, driven by events of international stature like the Lyon Biennial. It was a prestigious undertaking fully backed by the Ministry of Culture, evidenced by the presence of Jack Lang at the official opening. For Mayor Michel Noir, this first Lyon Biennial “should enable both amateur and professional circles to situate current French output within an international context. Will it hold the same appeal for the people of Lyon? Will they be receptive to the artist’s gift for capturing the spirit of the times?” For Thierry Raspail, the title “L’amour de l’art” embodied “a candid assertion: a reference to affinity.”

The close financial ties between Jeffrey Epstein and the family of former French minister Jack Lang

The Epstein files contain details of the disgraced US financier's links with the family of former French culture minister Jack Lang. They show that in 2016 Lang's daughter Caroline Lang, an influential figure in the film world, set up an offshore company with Jeffrey Epstein in the British Virgin Islands, while her name also appears in the will the convicted paedophile made two days before his death. Other documents suggest direct links with Jack Lang himself, who is now head of the Arab World Institute in Paris.

By Fabrice Arfi and François Bougon

The release by the United States Department of Justice of three million new documents from the Epstein files has unearthed previously unknown links, in particular financial ties, between the disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein and the family of former French culture minister Jack Lang.

According to the information seen by Mediapart, in 2016 Epstein set up a company registered in the United States Virgin Islands tax haven, half of whose shares were held by Caroline Lang. She is the eldest daughter of the former leading socialist politician, who is now president of the Institut du Monde Arabe or Arab World Institute in Paris. Named Prytanee LLC, this offshore company was registered on July 22nd 2016 in Saint Thomas, one of the three US Virgin Islands.

Caroline Lang, now 64, is an influential figure in the world of culture. She spent nearly three decades at the head of Warner Bros Television for France and the French-speaking world and in early January was appointed as executive director of the Syndicat des producteurs indépendants (SPI), which represents independent production companies. She is also a board member of the Séries Mania television series festival and until recently a member of the commission overseeing advances on box-office receipts - money provided by the French state to back new film ventures - at the Centre national du cinéma (CNC) in France. Personally committed to fighting gender inequality in her professional field, she also co-chairs the association Pour les femmes dans les médias (PFDM), which campaigns to help women in the media.

In her youth, Caroline Lang enjoyed a brief acting career, notably appearing in the film *L'Argent* ('Money') by Robert Bresson in 1983. And money would indeed later feature in her dealings with Jeffrey Epstein. According to information provided to United States legal authorities by Deutsche Bank - one of Epstein's banks - the aim of Prytanee LLC was to purchase works of art; paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, furniture, and so on. In total, the accounts of the company owned by Jeffrey Epstein and Caroline Lang had funds totalling 1.4 million dollars, according to the same source.

When interviewed by Mediapart on February 1st in Paris, Caroline Lang said that she first got to know Jeffrey Epstein in around 2012, through a couple of mutual friends, namely the celebrated New York film-maker Woody Allen and his partner Soon-Yi Previn, the adopted

daughter of Allen's former partner Mia Farrow. All of them shared a passion for art, fashionable Paris exhibitions and trendy galleries.

"One day, Jeffrey told my father and me that he wanted to invest in young French and international artists, to help them," Caroline Lang recalled. "He suggested setting up a fund and I said yes. I didn't deal with anything. Jeffrey Epstein's lawyers did it all in terms of the structure." The aim of the operation was to back young artists and resell their works years later.



Jack Lang, Caroline Lang and Jeffrey Epstein. © Photos Stéphane de Sakutin / AFP, Catherine Delahaye / Sipa et Epstein Estate / House Oversight / ZUMA Press Wire via Sipa

Undeclared company

Caroline Lang invested in Prytanee LLC through a third-party structure, The Pierre Trust, which was also registered in the United States Virgin Islands. In an email sent in late December 2016 to a Deutsche Bank manager responsible for opening a bank account for Prytanee LLC, Epstein's lawyer and legal adviser, Darren Indyke, stressed that the funds came from Southern Trust Company (STC), Epstein's firm, and that Caroline Lang was contributing her knowledge of the art market.

"The Pierre Trust's interest in the art fund represents the value Ms. Lang adds to the art fund in selecting the new artists and the particular pieces in which the art fund will invest," the lawyer wrote. "STC provides the funds and Ms. Lang provides the knowledge and eye for artistic promise and value."

"I was staggeringly naïve," Caroline Lang now says, admitting that she did not declare her company in the US Virgin Islands to the French tax authorities. "As I hadn't put any money into it - all the funds came from Jeffrey - I didn't grasp the implications and consequences," she added.

The very many email exchanges made public by the US Department of Justice (DOJ) now

shed light on the closeness that existed between Caroline Lang and Jeffrey Epstein, who was found dead on August 10th 2019 in his New York prison cell. He had been incarcerated as part of an explosive criminal investigation accusing him of sexual crimes, a probe that was likely to implicate powerful members of the United States political and economic elite. None of the messages consulted by Mediapart, however, suggests any involvement by Caroline Lang or her father in the predator's sexual crimes.

II. Certification of beneficial owner(s)

Persons opening an account on behalf of a legal entity must provide the following information:

a. Name and Title of Natural Person Opening Account:

JEFFREY E. EPSTEIN, PRESIDENT OF SOUTHERN TRUST COMPANY, INC., 90% MEMBER

b. Name of Legal Entity, Type of Legal Entity, and Address of Legal Entity for Which the Account is Being Opened:

PRYTANEE, LLC, A USVI LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY
6100 RED HOOK QUARTER, B3
ST. THOMAS, USVI 00802

c. The following information for each individual, if any, who, directly or indirectly, through any contract, arrangement, understanding, relationship or otherwise, owns 25 percent or more of the equity interests of the legal entity listed above:

Name	Date of Birth	Legal Address	For U.S. Persons: Social Security Number	For Non-U.S. Persons: (See footnote 1, for alternatives to Social Security Number)
JEFFREY E. EPSTEIN	1/20/52	6100 RED HOOK QUARTER, B3 ST. THOMAS, USVI 00802		
CAROLINE LANG				

1. For Non-U.S. Persons, in addition to a Social Security Number or a Passport Number with Country of Issuance, an alien identification card number, or number and country of issuance of any other government-issued document evidencing nationality or residence and bearing a photograph or similar safeguard should be provided.

(If no individual meets this definition, please write "Not Applicable.")

The articles of incorporation of the offshore company Prytanee LLC.

According to a document available on the DOJ website, Jeffrey Epstein signed a will two days before his death, in which he asked that, in the event of his death, very substantial sums of money be bequeathed to his close circle - his total fortune was estimated at more than 500 million dollars. Among the proposed beneficiaries was Caroline Lang, who was promised 5 million dollars. Caroline Lang says she was unaware of the existence of this will until Mediapart showed it to her.

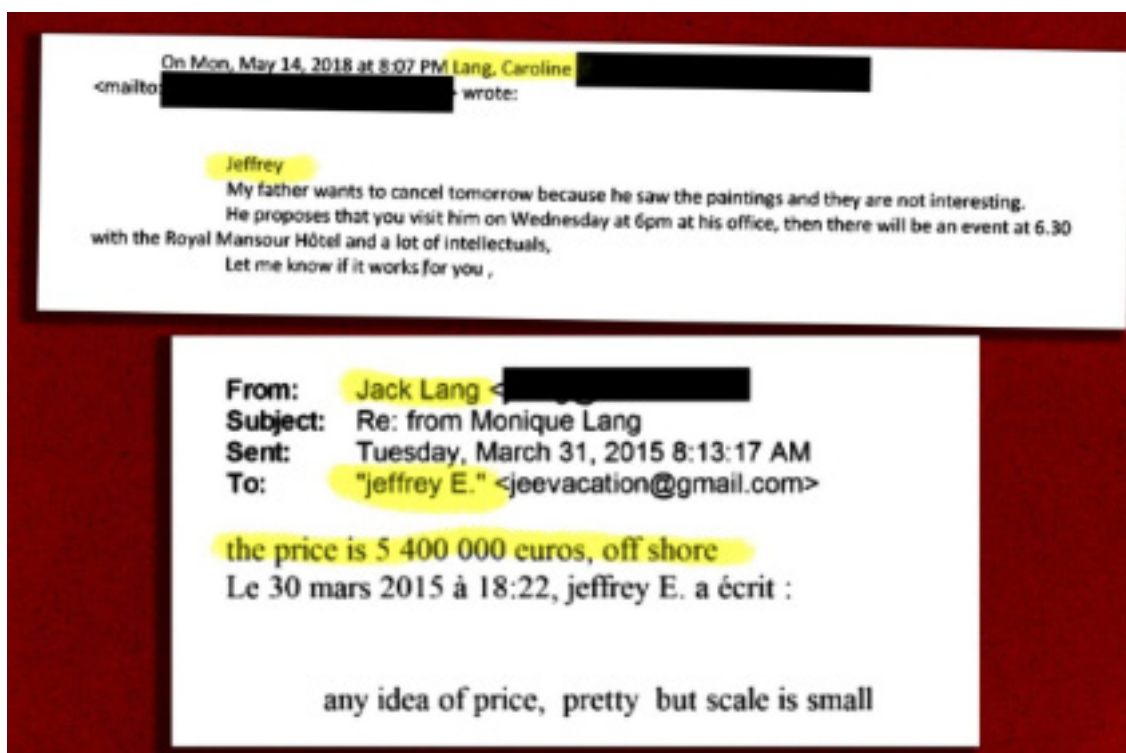
Jack Lang's name in company statutes

For their business, Caroline Lang and Jeffrey Epstein entrusted the operational management of Prytanee LLC to someone called Étienne B., who also happened to be an acquaintance of Jack Lang. An email sent by him on October 21st 2016 to Jeffrey Epstein's lawyer raised questions about the true scope of those interested in Prytanee LLC's activities. It reads: "I finally secured the Lang family support on the case and the documents." The reference here is to "the Lang family", not simply to Caroline.

When confronted with this message, Caroline Lang went further: she says she only discovered on January 31st, while consulting her archives after an initial text message from Mediapart, that her father was also mentioned in the company's statutes. According to a document from September 2016 that she showed Mediapart, the offshore company was indeed to be dissolved

in the event of the death of Jeffrey Epstein, Caroline Lang and... Jack Lang, spelled “Jacques”. This was a spelling mistake Epstein often made.

Contacted by Mediapart, the former minister of culture and education, now aged 86, insists he was never informed of this fact.



Extracts from emails exchanged between Caroline Lang, her father and Jeffrey Epstein.

Several emails available on the DOJ website nevertheless suggest that Jack Lang was associated, at least intellectually, with the artistic ambitions of his daughter and Jeffrey Epstein. On May 14th 2018 Caroline Lang wrote to Epstein: “My father wants to cancel for tomorrow, he has seen the paintings and they are not interesting.” And in a diary entry listing Jeffrey Epstein’s activities one day in the summer of 2018, there is a dinner organised in New York at which he had invited Étienne B., the manager of Prytanee LLC, “Jaques [sic]” and “Monique”, the former minister’s wife.

Caroline Lang also appears in the emails as one of Jeffrey Epstein’s main intermediaries with her father. She organised many meetings between the financier and him - lunches, dinners, coffees, sometimes trips - and regularly exchanged messages about him.

For example, in June 2012, she messaged the US financier after her father was defeated in the parliamentary elections that year. “The fact that Marine Le Pen [*editor’s note, the far-right politician*] put my father on a ‘black list’ and asked voters to defeat him worked,” she wrote. Epstein replied: “I am with you in spirit if not in body.”

During her interview with Mediapart Caroline Lang was keen to clear up any ambiguity. “I never had a romantic relationship with Jeffrey,” she said. “He was considerate, but he never hit on me. Never. On the other hand, he was very supportive to my parents and me when my sister Valérie died [*editor’s note, she died from a brain tumour in 2013*].”

In 2014, Epstein lent her his Palm Beach house in Florida for a week with her two daughters. The links between the financier and the Langs are clear, to the point that Jeffrey Epstein told Caroline Lang, in an email dated September 2017, that he felt he was “part of the family”.

A year later, Caroline Lang mentioned a meeting that, according to her, could only take place “one to one” between Jeffrey Epstein and her father. But the subject matter is not mentioned in the email. The following year, in May 2016, Epstein in turn sent an email to Caroline Lang asking “will your father’s friend join to speak about deal?” But again, the subject of this deal is not mentioned in the exchanges.

Epstein, who refers in his emails to Jack Lang as a “great friend” and a French “icon”, was also happy to portray the former culture minister to an unidentified correspondent as someone who “works for my foundation in Paris”.

An ‘offshore’ *riad*

Jack Lang and Jeffrey Epstein, who used to see each other in Paris, Avignon or Morocco, sometimes needed no intermediary and contacted each other directly, including to talk money. In March 2015, a series of emails show that Jack Lang and his wife Monique approached Jeffrey Epstein to put to him the idea of buying a magnificent riad or traditional Moroccan house in Marrakech, called Ksar Massa, which was owned by a friend of theirs.

“Any idea of price?” Epstein asked on March 30th. The following day, Jack Lang replied: “The price is 5,400,000 euros, off shore.” When asked about this by Mediapart, the president of the Institut du monde arabe replied: “I don’t remember this very well, but I must simply have passed on the seller’s expectations, without comment.”

This is not the first time Jack Lang’s name has been linked with that of Jeffrey Epstein. In 2020, The Daily Beast website revealed that a foundation belonging to the toxic financier paid 57,897 dollars in 2018 to an association that had just been set up by close associates of Jack Lang. This donation was meant to “fund a movie”, the former minister told the website Politico. Soberly titled ‘Jack Lang, la traversée du siècle’, (‘Jack Lang: A Journey Through the Century’) this film was never broadcast because of the furore caused by the Epstein scandal, the investigative weekly Le Canard Enchaîné reported.

Like her father, Caroline Lang says she never had suspicions about Jeffrey Epstein’s criminal behaviour as a paedophile or the sex trafficking he is accused of having arranged, and nor was she informed of it. “One day, a long time ago, [Epstein] told me: ‘If you do research on me on Google, you may never want to speak to me again,’” Caroline Lang recalled. She continued:

“So I looked it up and found in the Florida press that he had been convicted of procuring minors and that he’d been convicted for that in 2008. He told me he had paid his debt and compensated the victims, and I believed him.”

Caroline Lang says she was “flabbergasted” when the latest cases exploded publicly in 2019. In the weeks following Jeffrey Epstein’s suicide in prison, she demanded that Prytanee LLC be liquidated, and asked that she receive no assets linked to that company.

On the BFMTV news channel Jack Lang said Epstein had not been a “friend” of his, and that he knew him through Woody Allen, who was a friend. He said that he did not regret knowing the disgraced financier, adding: “I’m not in the habit of turning on people I once knew who later find themselves accused of crimes.”

Jack Lang meanwhile told Mediapart he always saw Jeffrey Epstein as a “true fan of art and culture”. He concluded: “It came as a complete shock when I learned everything that we know today. But you can’t write history through the lens of the present, otherwise you go mad.”

Fabrice Arfi and François Bougon

English version by Michael Streeter

The Langs' troubling friendship with Jeffrey Epstein

Former French culture minister Jack Lang and his daughter Caroline Lang appear thousands of times in the most recently released documents. All evidence suggests that she had a much closer relationship with the sex offender than she now admits.

By Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ivanne Trippenbach

On June 20, 1990, before dawn, Jack Lang arranged to meet his guests at Le Bourget airport, just north of Paris. President François Mitterrand's minister of culture had big plans to export the annual national music celebration he had created to the Soviet Union. His round trip to Moscow involved celebrities (Eddy Mitchell, Charlélie Couture, Alain Delon), a filmmaker tasked with capturing the event, and around 15 journalists. Out on the tarmac, the delegation discovered their aircraft: a private Boeing 727, fully fitted out with a lounge, bedroom and bathroom. The plane had been lent by a "friend," answered Monique Lang, the minister's wife, when asked about the mysterious owner's identity. That "friend," French diplomats whispered to the stunned guests, was Robert Maxwell.

The British media mogul and Lang had already known each other for several years. In 1987, the Socialist culture minister and the businessman, a former Labour MP in the House of Commons in London, even formed an alliance. At the height of the battle over the privatization of TF1 television station, undeterred by any mixing of business and politics, it was with Lang's support that Maxwell and Francis Bouygues, head of the world's largest construction group, managed to convince Mitterrand to choose them to buy France's first television channel.

Maxwell also became a valuable patron for Lang. On July 18, 1989, they were side by side at the inauguration of the Grande Arche de la Défense, the giant monument aligned with the Arc de Triomphe. It was one of those celebrations that characterized the Lang years, complete with champagne and saxophonists dressed as astronauts. The British businessman had saved his friend's colossal project by contributing 150 million francs (€42 million today).

The businessman also demonstrated his generosity by contributing 500,000 francs to fund events and commemorations related to the bicentennial of the French Revolution, notably for the digitization of period documents, affording himself the pleasure of attending all the Parisian ceremonies. Maxwell was, in fact, so close to Lang, who was also the mayor of Blois, in central France, that he owned a printworks in that city. In October 1989, he attended the Estates General of European Culture there at Lang's invitation. Without even visiting his own printworks.

At the time, one of the minister's two daughters, Caroline Lang, was 28 years old. After appearing in the films *L'Argent* (Money, 1983) by Robert Bresson and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*

(1986) by Francesco Rosi, she studied to obtain a doctorate in public law. And, for her first foray into professional life, she was hired by none other than Maxwell Communications in London. As always with the Lang family, blurring the lines was the rule, with private interests and public service, family and ministry all intertwined. At Jack Lang's own office, Monique, in everyone's eyes, acted as the head of communications, welcoming all the important artists on behalf of her husband.

Since childhood, the daughters, Caroline and Valérie, had never escaped this family influence and the fierce determination that was first and foremost that of their parents: to build a flamboyant existence for themselves, outside the rules that apply to ordinary mortals. "A kind of royal family, where the person and the role are one and the same," said the architect Patrick Bouchain, adviser to Jack Lang from 1988 to 1995.

In their fathers' worlds

It was also for the Maxwell group that Caroline, the older sister, flew to New York in 1990, where she took up the position of senior international editor at the Maxwell-Macmillan Publishing Company, the family publishing house. It was her first major job. From the outset, she was tasked with creating a collection of European authors for the American market. She also had to oversee the launch of a collection of historical texts on the French Revolution during the bicentennial celebrations supervised by her father. It was as if the start of her career was inextricably linked to her father's position as minister of culture.

No one seemed particularly bothered. At the Maxwell household, for that matter, the children also worked within their father's orbit. This was notably the case for the British magnate's favorite daughter, Ghislaine, a young woman the same age as Caroline Lang. "My sister Ghislaine and Caroline Lang likely crossed paths in that context," Ian Maxwell, one of the businessman's sons, told *Le Monde*, recalling "the friendship between our two families."

In any case, Caroline Lang's time at Maxwell-Macmillan Publishing Company did not last long. On November 5, 1991, Robert Maxwell's body was found floating in the Atlantic Ocean, near the Canary Islands, just a few meters from his yacht, named *Lady Ghislaine* – a sign of his love for his daughter. As there were no injuries, investigators ruled the death an accident, but it also revealed a scandal. Maxwell had funded a significant portion of his investments by siphoning off the pension funds of 4,000 of his employees. His business empire collapsed overnight, leaving behind colossal debts and a ruined family.

Caroline Lang lost her job but soon joined the media and entertainment group Time Warner, also in New York, at the beginning of 1991 as head of international projects. She stayed there until the end of 1994.

Ghislaine Maxwell followed a nearly identical path at almost exactly the same time, settling in the heart of Manhattan, both to distance herself from England and the scandal and to heal the wounds of a romantic breakup. Her connections, charm and poise quickly made her a fixture

of New York high society. It was at one of those exclusive parties for which the city is famous that she met a master of financial fraud, Jeffrey Epstein. She would become his partner and principal accomplice in recruiting underage victims for his international sex trafficking operation.

Since the documents were made public and her family was implicated, Caroline Lang has sworn that she only first crossed paths with “Jeffrey,” the charming man in his 50s who described himself as a “wealth manager,” at the beginning of the 2010s in Paris. According to her, they became closer in 2012, when she was living in the 6th arrondissement of Paris, divorced and the mother of two daughters. On closer examination, however, there remains a mystery surrounding the timeline of her first encounter with Epstein.

In Epstein’s “little black book” – his address book, which the FBI seized as early as 2009 while investigating his embezzlement and sexual abuse of minors in Florida – Caroline Lang’s name is already there: three phone numbers and a New York address, apartment 9C at 400 East 52nd Street, in the heart of Manhattan. Had the daughter of the former Socialist minister already been noticed, as early as the 2000s or even before, by this businessman determined to spin his web around the world? Very few French nationals appeared in this directory that contained some 1,700 names. When contacted by *Le Monde*, Caroline Lang declined to comment.

Wildly close-knit clan

Since January 30 and the publication of the Epstein files, the documents have cast a raw light on the connection binding the Lang family, particularly Caroline, to Epstein. Their extensive correspondence, which lasted seven years, from 2012 until the sex offender’s arrest in 2019, reveals an intimate and troubling relationship.

Records show that on March 24, 2012, the American hosted a dinner in Paris attended by Caroline Lang, along with filmmaker Woody Allen and his spouse, Soon-Yi Previn, and US Ambassador Charles Rivkin and his wife. Epstein, who had been convicted four years earlier of soliciting prostitution of a minor, took care to keep paparazzi at bay, even as he returned to Parisian high society and rebuilt his extraordinary network. The following day, Jack Lang’s daughter thanked him by email for inviting her to his table. On March 26, she visited his luxurious Paris apartment at 22 Avenue Foch in the 16th arrondissement. Welcomed by the butler, she spent some time with the American, discussing Japanese literature and Vladimir Nabokov, the writer whose most famous novel, *Lolita* (1955), is also the confession of a sexual predator about the relationship he had with a 12-year-old girl.

On March 27, 2012, Caroline Lang was ready to welcome into the family circle this businessman who was released from prison in 2009 and listed in the sex offenders registry. That was how things worked in the Lang family: Everything always happened within the clan. No friend or lover had ever entered the inner circle of the two daughters without being approved

by Jack and Monique. "On Sunday, I am having lunch at my parents house with my daughters. We have a family lunch. My parents would like to invite you. Will you be able to come?" Caroline Lang suggested. The millionaire was returning to his private Caribbean island, one of the locations of his sexual trafficking, but promised to call during his next stay in Paris.

From: "jeffrey E." <jeevacation@gmail.com>
To: Jack Lang <[REDACTED]>, "Lang, Caroline" <[REDACTED]>
Subject:
Date: Tue, 05 Jan 2016 11:44:19 +0000

now that the family is back from the holiday. The idea is quite simple but needs input from the french attorneys, I put up 20 million dollars. Jacques buys the art. no involvement from me. we split the profits 50/50/ proceeds going to him or any family members he designates. children grandchildren. If he prefers my name not to appear. that is ok with me as well. He can call it the Lang Art fund. if he prefers he can take a yearly salary for administration as well.

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please note

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Excerpts from Jeffrey Epstein's emails, released by the US Department of Justice on January 30, 2026. US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

These Sunday lunches were a ritual for the Lang family. They took place in the apartment of the former minister and his wife, a 130-square-meter home nestled in one of the sumptuous 17th-century buildings on the Place des Vosges, in the heart of Paris. On the advice of their neighbor, architect Fernand Pouillon, the couple had the place renovated, removing false ceilings to restore its height, furnishing the living room with a table gifted by designer Philippe Starck, a banquette designed by interior architect Andrée Putman and hanging on the walls drawings by Pierre Alechinsky and another by Jean Tinguely.

When they invited friends to these "family" meals to get to know them better, the ritual was almost always the same: Jack Lang bustled about in the chaos of the kitchen while his wife, their daughters and granddaughters presided at the table, presenting the picture of a close-knit clan.

With his charm, his ability to drop the names of artists and politicians into conversation, and even though Jack Lang spoke English poorly, Epstein passed the test with ease. Every time he came to Paris, every two or three months, he made a point of seeing Caroline Lang and, more often than not, her parents. “Will be with you in spirit on Sunday, though not in body,” he apologized when he let her down in April 2012. The following month, he was the one who took her to the residence of the United States ambassador in Paris. “I enjoy fairy tales,” Epstein wrote to her again, in the middle of an otherwise ordinary conversation.

‘Big kiss’ at the end of his message

In July 2012, the financier offered to pay for her membership at the very prestigious Parisian club Cercle de l’Union Interalliée, with its magnificent swimming pool, lounges and restaurant just steps from the Elysée Palace. Caroline Lang ultimately decided not to accept. Time and again, up until spring 2019, they met in Parisian restaurants or on Place des Vosges; at the home of “mom and dad,” as he called them; at family friends’ for her sister Valérie Lang’s birthday; or at the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA, Arab World Institute) presided over by Jack Lang, for meals on the ninth-floor terrace overlooking all of Paris. Epstein sometimes came accompanied by a young “assistant.”

Caroline Lang, for her part, went out of her way for her American friend. She opened the doors to the most dazzling cultural institutions: the Château de Versailles, on a Monday in March 2013 when it was closed to the public; the Palais de Tokyo, on a Tuesday in November when the museum was likewise closed, to see the major exhibition by visual artist Philippe Parreno (“It will be opened only for us (...) My parents told to the president of the Palais de Tokyo that you were coming”); the Musée d’Orsay for a private visit to the “Picasso” exhibition; or the Centre Pompidou for the highly sought-after opening of the retrospective on sculptor César. She also gave him access to IMA events, such as a guided tour of the “Osiris” exhibition in September 2015, before they all shared a lunch together.

In her official résumé, which she sent to Le Monde, Caroline Lang claimed to have “a personal and intimate knowledge of all the key players and leaders in the world of cinema and audiovisual media, in France and across the French-speaking world, as well as the main players and leaders in Europe and the United States, and their unanimous recognition of [her] experience, [her] skills, and [her] personality.” For Epstein, who had always sought to enter the inner circles of celebrities and the powerful, this was a resounding success: His French friends were not put off by the accusations made against him by women, which were widely reported in France from 2011 onward, nor by his Wikipedia page, which mentioned his behavior and his predilection for underage girls. “Thank you for today, it was unique,” wrote the businessman after wandering with the Langs through the gilded halls of the Château de Versailles.

While he was looking for another property in Paris, Caroline Lang arranged private house viewings for him. In October 2013, they went to 95 Rue du Cherche-Midi, in the 6th arrondissement, to the Hôtel de Chambon. There, behind a surrounding wall and a carriage en-

trance, was the hôtel particulier of Gérard Depardieu. Some 1,800 square meters of marble, granite and precious woods, where the actor's collection of the greatest artists of the 20th century was displayed, including three Rodin bronzes. A longtime friend of the Langs, Depardieu was in Kazakhstan at the time, but wanted to part with this architectural gem and its private garden. Epstein did not follow up.

To: jeevacation@gmail.com[jeevacation@gmail.com]
From: Lang, Caroline
Sent: Tue 3/19/2013 7:15:15 PM
Subject: Re: Paris

The visit is confirmed on the 25th in the afternoon

De : Jeffrey Epstein [mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com]
Envoyé : Tuesday, March 19, 2013 04:28 PM
À : Lang, Caroline
Objet : Re: Paris

Apt and yes for 25

On Tuesday, March 19, 2013, Lang, Caroline wrote:

Would you be available Monday the 25th in the afternoon. It will be easier for the Chateau de Versailles as they are closed to the public?

Regarding our dinner with Etienne and Sebastien this Friday, would like to organize at your apartment or would you like me to book a restaurant?

Thanks

Caroline

Caroline Lang

Tel - [REDACTED]

From: Jeffrey Epstein [mailto:jeevacation@gmail.com]
Sent: mardi 19 mars 2013 01:03
To: Lang, Caroline
Subject: Re: Paris

can we change versaille to the 24? i need to go to strausburg on th 27

On Mon, Mar 4, 2013 at 11:46 AM, Lang, Caroline [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Jeffrey

We will go to Versailles on the 23 or 24 of March.

I wanted to organize a dinner with Sebastien and Etienne. They leave to Thailand on the 22 or

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US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The following month, Caroline Lang took him to visit another exceptional residence: the so-called Hôtel des Ambassadeurs de Hollande, at 47 Rue Vieille-du-Temple, in the Marais neighborhood. She wrote that it was “one of the most beautiful hotel particulier in Paris with original paintings o[n] the ceilings,” which a friend had purchased but no longer wanted. Epstein also did not buy this building, valued at €70 million.

Caroline Lang, who paid close attention to the wishes of her American friend, also arranged a meeting with Dominique Strauss-Kahn at the Hôtel Royal Monceau in 2014, at a time when the former director of the International Monetary Fund, who had been arrested in 2011 at the Sofitel in New York for attempted rape, had been charged with aggravated soliciting as part of an organized group in the so-called Lille Carlton case. Epstein canceled at the last minute on this meeting with “DSK.”

Drawn to power in all its forms, he found in his Parisian friend a valuable partner in his quest to connect with a segment of the French elite. While Epstein was attempting to approach the Socialist government – as he had previously tried to gain entry into Sarkozy-era circles – Caroline Lang dangled the prospect of introductions to the minister of finance, Michel Sapin; the minister of the economy, Pierre Moscovici; and even the president himself, François Hollande. In the end, however, these meetings never took place.

In the Epstein-Lang relationship, business, private life and family intimacy were constantly intertwined. Caroline Lang often ended her messages with “big kiss,” and for special occasions, she added little hearts. One year, while her daughters were at summer camp in Pennsylvania, she asked Epstein to send them packages of sweets. When he took her shopping in Paris for her birthday, she picked out a coat and said she was extremely happy.

Vacations in Marrakech, stays in New York, a week in Florida... “A friend, not someone close,” Caroline Lang insisted recently to describe their relationship. In February 2014, she wrote: “Jeffrey, are you going to your island? Could you take me there for a few days?” In March, of that year, Epstein made the following offer to Jack Lang: “I am happy to pick up all expenses for a new york or caribbean trip.” In April 2014, Caroline Lang and her daughters instead stayed at his villa in Palm Beach, Florida, at 358 El Brillo Way – the address where the convicted sex offender had girls “delivered” under the guise of massages. These acts led to his 2008 conviction for soliciting prostitution of a minor.

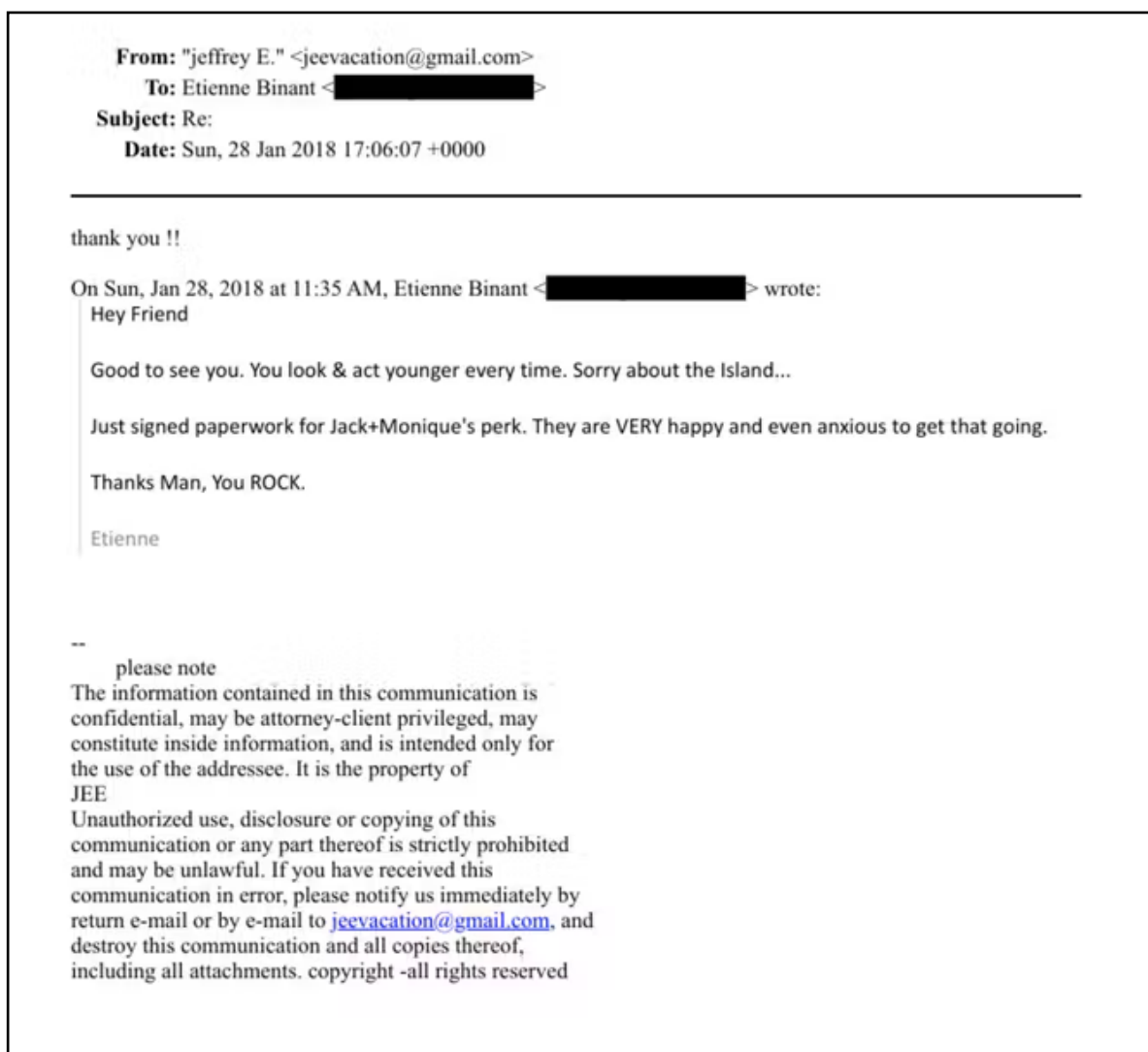
‘Jack+Monique’s perk’

With the Langs, Epstein said he felt like part of “the family.” So, when he learned that Valérie Lang had died of a brain tumor in 2013, he said he cried. The Langs dreamed of making a documentary about their younger daughter. They asked him for €30,000 to complete the film’s budget at the end of 2015.

Caroline and her father planned to enroll the eldest granddaughter at Bard College in New

York. Epstein dictated the application letter, which Jack Lang signed, and supported her application with the university's president, Leon Botstein. But the young woman ultimately preferred to study business and management. When Epstein wanted his closest friends to write a short note for his 63rd birthday, Caroline Lang was among the dozen chosen.

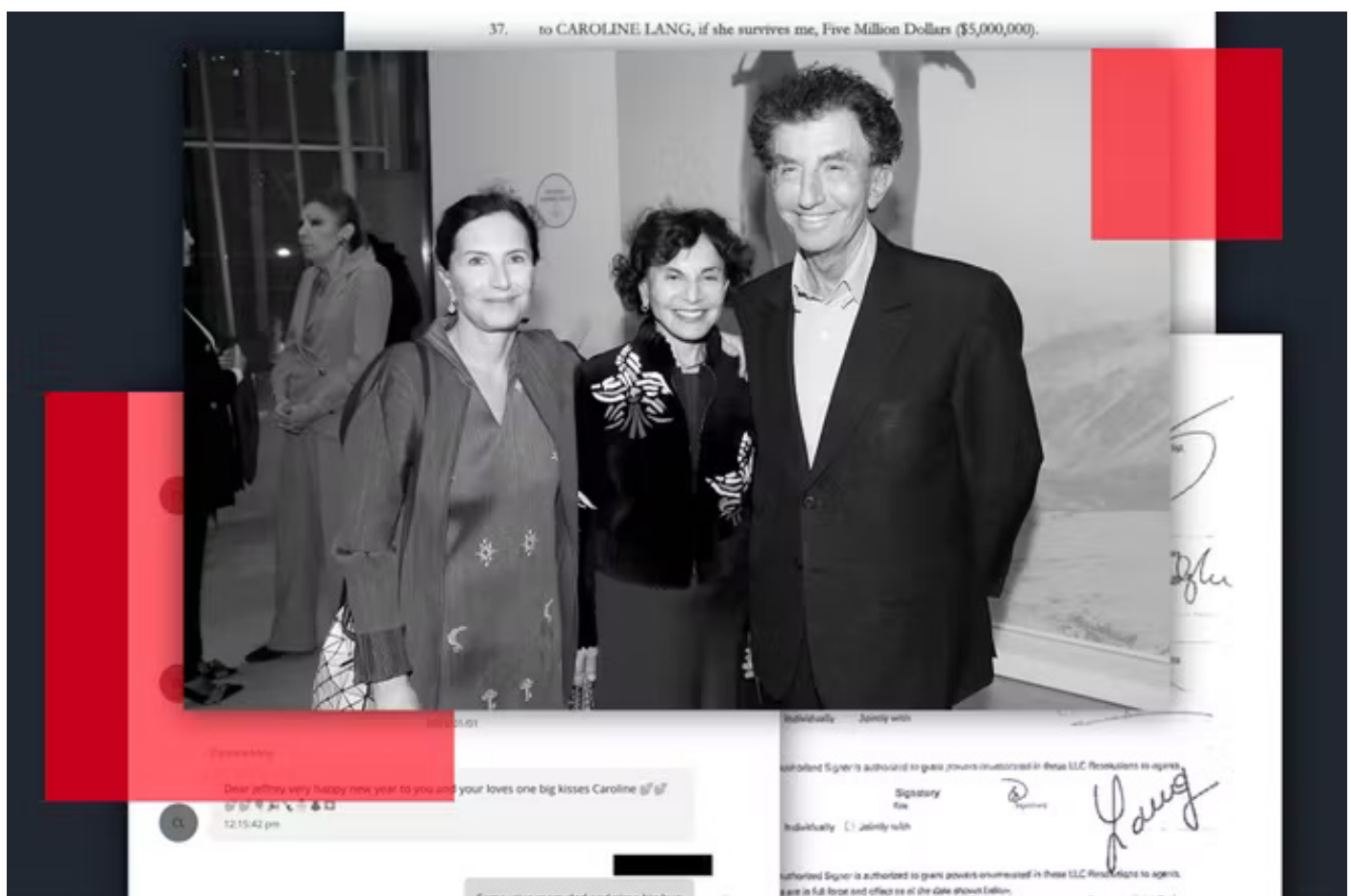
Caroline Lang wrote her emails from her office as head of Warner Bros TV for France. Her job at the company was to manage rights portfolios worth several million dollars, negotiating the sale of Warner's vast film catalog to television broadcasters, from TF1 to Canal+ and overseeing legal compliance in Europe. Beyond their personal relationship, she and Epstein also spoke as business partners. She quickly put him in contact with a trusted friend, a financier named Etienne Binant, who was unknown to the general public.



Excerpts from Jeffrey Epstein's emails, released by the US Department of Justice on January 30, 2026. US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

This mysterious businessman, who appeared to act as an adviser for the Lang family as well as a patron for the IMA, wrote to Epstein “for Jack” and arranged numerous meetings with the American, in New York and in Paris, on Avenue Foch or Avenue Montaigne. These meetings were held, in particular, to set up the offshore fund that Epstein called the “Jack project” or “Lang Art Fund,” and to prepare “the documents,” which Caroline Lang, herself a law expert, read carefully. Binant, who did not respond to Le Monde’s requests for comment, reported both to Jack Lang and his daughter. He became the manager of the company, Prytanee LCC, founded in 2016 by Epstein and Caroline Lang. Based in the US Virgin Islands, it was not subject to American or French tax laws.

In September 2017, at the request of Jack and Caroline Lang, it was Binant who invited Epstein to the father’s birthday – a celebration he described as “very private, it’s the inner circle only.” In early 2018, once again, it was Binant who negotiated a permanent chauffeur service for Jack Lang, paid for by Epstein, and consulted Caroline Lang to find out “what she thinks about it.” In January 2018, Binant wrote to the American financier that he had just “signed the paperwork for Jack+Monique’s perk,” though it remains unclear what “perk” he was referring to. “Thanks man, you ROCK,” he messaged Epstein.



Caroline, Monique and Jack Lang at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris, on September 29, 2019. BERTRAND RINDOFF PETROFF/GETTY IMAGES/US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE/ LE MONDE

In the summer of that same year, 2018, Jack and Monique Lang flew to New York and asked to stay at Epstein's Manhattan residence. In the end, they simply went to dine at his house, on July 17, in that mansion where one might come across a stuffed tiger and a sculpture of a naked woman dressed in a bridal veil hanging from the ceiling. The house, above all, contained several rooms decorated with photographs of young, undressed girls and a sinister massage room with shelves filled with sex toys. "Thanks for having us at dinner and showing us around the fabulous mansion," wrote Binant to their host.

Over these years, Caroline Lang very often acted on behalf of her father. She defended his interests in December 2012 regarding two transfers of €50,000 from Epstein, sent to the World Cultures Association, which was founded by Jack Lang, as *Le Monde* revealed, in place of a formal contract in her father's name. Both of them claimed they never received this money. Or again, when she sent Epstein her father's résumé in January 2019. For his part, Jack Lang became fully involved in this collaboration with Epstein. He used his position at the head of the IMA to identify artists from the Middle East and Africa whose works could be purchased by their offshore fund, then later resold to share the profits with the financier.

Apparent nonchalance

Epstein, for his part, never lost his talent for networking. Starting in 2017, he tried to use his closeness to Jack Lang to get closer to France's new president, Emmanuel Macron. At the ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of the Louvre Pyramid in late March 2019, he boasted to Donald Trump's former adviser Steve Bannon that he was "with the entire [Macron] govt. The ministers of the elite." In reality, he was embellishing the story, since he was once again content to simply pose for a photo with Jack Lang in front of the glass monument designed by architect Ieoh Ming Pei.

At the same time, Caroline Lang's eldest daughter asked Epstein if she could stay in one of his New York apartments for a month – she had already visited in 2016, accompanied by three friends and nine suitcases. During that spring of 2019, the 20-year-old asked Epstein's assistants to find her tickets to an NBA basketball game and seats for the Harry Potter show on Broadway, all of which Epstein was "delighted" to provide her. She even asked one of the sexual predator's assistants to go buy her a Juul, the trendy American e-cigarette, along with its cartridges that look like Nespresso capsules. When Caroline Lang joined her daughter in New York, she in turn asked Epstein to send her a car; his driver, Jojo; or a taxi.

This apparent nonchalance of the Lang family, pampered by their American friend, never seemed to be shaken. But it did not reflect Epstein's true situation. For several months, the FBI had been on his trail. On November 28, 2018, the *Miami Herald* published an in-depth investigation titled "How a future Trump Cabinet member gave a serial sex abuser the deal of a lifetime." The "serial sex abuser" in question was Epstein. The Trump administration official mentioned by the Florida daily was Alexander Acosta, the very man who, 10 years earlier, had accepted a secret deal with the millionaire to reduce his sentence to 18 months in prison

in exchange for his guilty plea to soliciting prostitution from a minor, at a time when the FBI had identified 33 victims. This time, the journalist behind the investigation found around 80 women claiming to have been sexually assaulted and raped by the businessman between 2001 and 2006, when they were between 13 and 16 years old.

Did Caroline Lang hear about this article published on the other side of the Atlantic? In any case, she knew that her friend was accused of “international sex trafficking” and of “sex orgies” with a very large number of young women, some of whom were minors at the time. On March 4, 2019, Epstein himself sent her the letter to the editor his own lawyers had just published in The New York Times, in response to the Miami Herald investigation and the inquiries now being conducted by the largest American daily newspaper. Caroline Lang replied to thank him.

Fifteen days later, however, she invited him, as usual, to a family lunch on Place des Vosges. “Perfect, as usual, I will be on time,” Epstein replied with delight. She also invited him to a contemporary interpretation of Swan Lake at the Théâtre National de Chaillot with her parents on March 30, 2019.

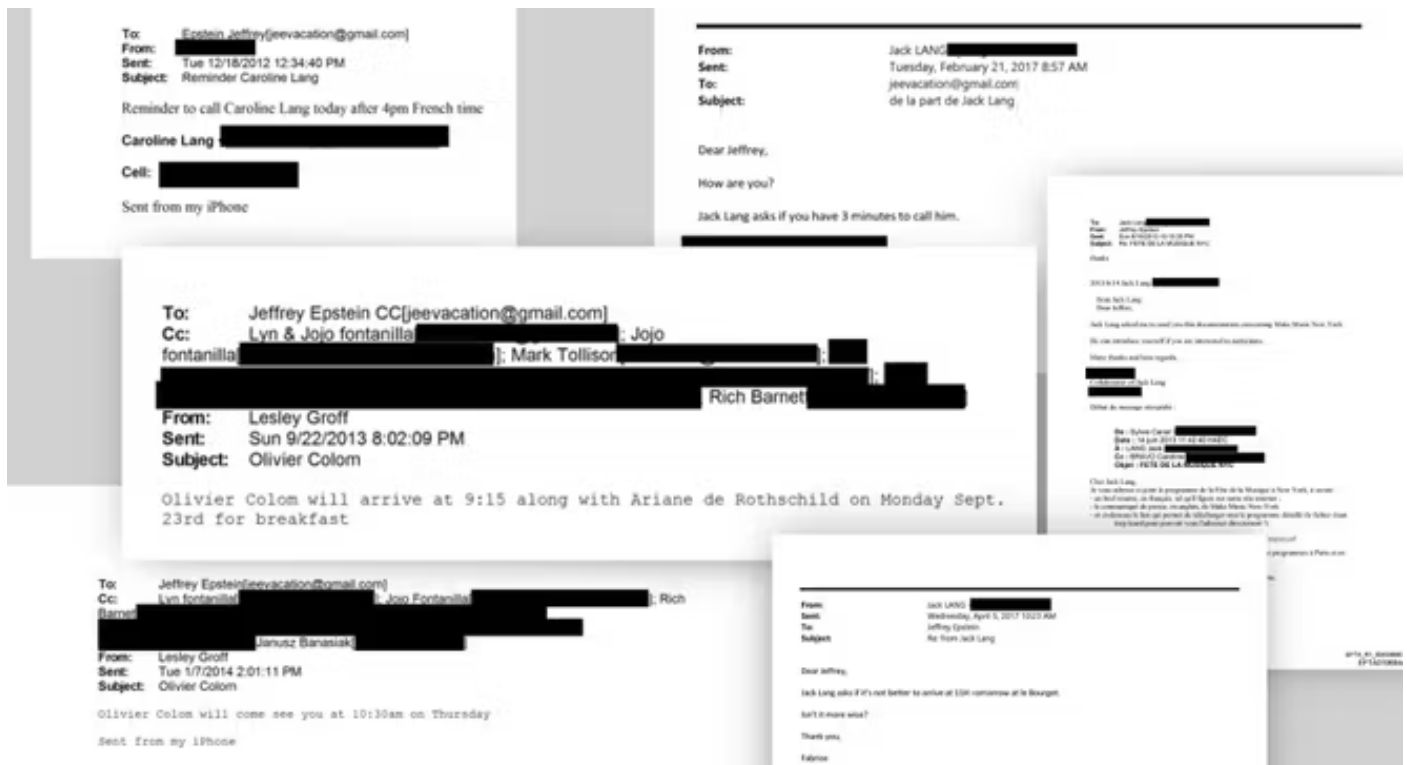
The next day, Epstein told her in an email that Jack Lang had a “proposal” for him. Through Caroline, a meeting was arranged between the two men at the café Ma Bourgogne, Place des Vosges, to discuss it. It is not known what idea Jack Lang had for his American friend. However, his daughter Caroline would be among the last French people to see Epstein, who was arrested by the FBI on July 6, 2019, as he returned from Paris aboard his private jet. On August 8, 48 hours before he was found dead in his prison cell, the convicted sex offender included her in his will, leaving her \$5 million (€4.2 million).

By Raphaëlle Bacqué and Ivanne Trippenbach

Epstein's correspondence reveals links to French public figures

Millions of emails released by the US Department of Justice reveal the financier's relationships, some more intense than others, with several figures from France's politics and culture.

By Ivanne Trippenbach



Excerpts from Jeffrey Epstein's emails, released by the US Department of Justice on January 30, 2026. Montage by Le Monde. MINISTERE AMERICAIN DE LA JUSTICE/LE MONDE

In the sprawling case around the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the release of an additional three million pages by the US Department of Justice on Friday, January 30, sent shockwaves through France, implicating several high-profile figures from politics, cinema and other cultural industries. None of the emails reviewed by Le Monde show any involvement in the trafficking committed by the child sex offender, but many raise questions about what the individuals in question knew or did not know.

During the 2010s, Epstein was known as a wealthy businessman who made his fortune on Wall Street and was close to Bill Gates and entrepreneurs from Silicon Valley. He had already been accused in 2008 of setting up a system of underage prostitution at his villa in Palm Beach, Florida – the Federal Bureau of Investigation identified 33 victims, some as young as 14. The financier reached a deal with federal prosecutors in Florida, pleaded guilty to soliciting prostitution from just one 14-year-old girl, and negotiated an 18-month prison sentence. After that first case, Epstein continued to welcome a stream of visitors, drawn either by his

address book or his fortune. Skilled at staging his relationships – real or fabricated – with powerful people, the predator, whom everyone described as “charming,” worked tirelessly to insinuate himself into their social circles. “The whole world came to his table,” recalled internationally renowned conductor Frédéric Chaslin. Between 2013 and 2019, he saw Epstein at least five times, in New York, in Paris and at Epstein’s ranch in Santa Fe, New Mexico, accompanied first by his then partner and later by his current wife, in the hope, he said, of securing funding for an opera. “Obviously, if I had known, I would never have gone to his home,” insisted Chaslin. “It’s as if I had met a monster.”

The conductor sent an ambiguous email to Epstein in September 2013: “I found a great girl for your next stay in Paris, student in philosophy, 21, looks a little like Roman Polanski’s current wife.” According to Chaslin, this referred to a translator for a museum visit, who ultimately did not work for Epstein. As speculation grew on social media, Chaslin condemned the “insinuations” in a post on X on Tuesday, adding that it is “completely unacceptable and false” to claim that he had “found a girl” for Epstein.

Brief encounter with Bruno Le Maire

The politician Bruno Le Maire, for his part, chose to remain silent rather than issue a statement. The former French finance minister appears, though unwillingly, in the published emails, without ever having corresponded directly with Epstein. The person behind his introduction to the financier was Olivier Colom, a former adviser in the diplomatic unit of President Nicolas Sarkozy at the Elysée between 2007 and 2012. Colom was also a classmate of Le Maire’s at Sciences Po and the Ecole Nationale d’Administration (ENA).

After leaving the Elysée to become an international adviser for the Edmond de Rothschild banking group, Colom corresponded actively with Epstein, to the point of emerging as one of his main contacts in France. In September 2013, Colom wrote him an email in which he introduced Le Maire as a “friend,” a “former minister of Sarkozy and a future candidate to the Presidential election” for 2017, who was about to come to New York for the United Nations General Assembly. He added that he “would like to help him raise funds. Any idea?”

Le Maire, for his part, wanted to meet investment bankers to expand his network. Colom invited him, during the day, to Epstein’s house in Manhattan. Once seated across from the host, the MP realized he was in the financier’s home and, according to his account, left quickly and immediately cut ties with Colom, whom he held responsible for this unwanted meeting. When contacted by *Le Monde*, Colom recalled things differently: According to him, Le Maire knew he was going to meet Epstein, describing him as a “superconnector” among bankers, but the 10-minute meeting was abruptly cut short after the MP’s presentation. Colom said he maintained cordial relations with Le Maire, who invited him to an awards ceremony at the French Finance Ministry in 2023.

In any case, in the months and years that followed, Epstein did not appear to clearly remem-

ber his interlocutor (“Bruno, I forgot his last name,” he wrote). According to documents in the so-called Epstein files, he tried to see Le Maire again, who in 2017 became finance minister, but was unsuccessful.

In October of that same year, mathematician and MP Cédric Villani received an email from “Jeffrey,” who introduced himself using the names of tech and science celebrities Misha Gromov and Joi Ito, and wrote: “My area of expertise is money and digital currencies.” He invited Villani to have “a coffee,” which in reality took place at his apartment on Avenue Foch. Villani went there without knowing it was Epstein. The businessman then tried to entice Villani by mentioning that Le Maire had previously visited him, but to no avail.

Hazanavicius: ‘We were in the spotlight and Epstein was networking’

Similarly, filmmaker Michel Hazanavicius, best known for directing *The Artist* in 2011, met Epstein at the financier’s request. Through their respective agents, the businessman offered to introduce him to Woody Allen at a dinner in Paris in May 2012. Around the same time, Hazanavicius visited Epstein’s Paris apartment. “He told me he’d been set up with underage masseuses,” the filmmaker told *Le Monde*. “It was a bit strange. Bérénice [Bejo, Hazanavicius’s actress wife] told me: ‘We are never seeing this guy again.’ It was just after the Oscars; we were Hollywood’s darlings. You get invited to Madonna’s place, Clint Eastwood pats you on the back, Scorsese tells you you’re a genius... We were in the spotlight, and Epstein was networking. He was spotting people to blackmail them, like a spider trapping you in its web.”

In June 2012, Epstein wrote to the director: “Any ideas for a very beautiful but smart girl to accompany me to woodys paris premier?” The phrase “smart girl” was the same one he used in his emails with intermediaries to procure the services of very young women. Hazanavicius sidestepped the request, and Epstein found the “girl” through another channel. The director gradually distanced himself from the sexual predator, avoiding his numerous invitations until 2014. “I’m a pretty boring, good family man, so I find it mind-blowing to have crossed paths with that guy,” he added. “In hindsight, I realized he had sent me signals that could have led me into some sleazy situations.”

It was also through Allen that Jack Lang and his daughter Caroline met Epstein, in 2012. Among the many published emails, they appeared to be the French nationals with the closest ties to him. “Cordial ties,” clarified Jack Lang, in his office at the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA, Arab World Institute) on Tuesday. Their meeting purportedly took place at a dinner attended by Allen, a friend of the Langs who sometimes accompanied Epstein during his trips to France. “I can’t count the number of times we saw each other,” the former culture minister told *Le Monde*. “I meet a lot of people; I’m drawn to the unexpected. Jeffrey was personally generous, a pleasant businessman. He loved art and cinema. You can’t project the monstrous crimes he later committed onto the past. It’s disgusting to erase what happened just because someone turns out to be a criminal!”

The main question centers on an offshore company registered in the US Virgin Islands, which Epstein set up in 2016 in partnership with Caroline Lang, who at the time was managing director of Warner Bros TV for France. This company, Prytanee LLC, aimed to acquire works of art and had \$1.4 million (about €1.2 million) in its accounts, according to Mediapart. Caroline Lang owned half the shares, but Epstein contributed 100% of the capital. The plan was for them to split any profits should the art collection be resold.

Jack Lang, who was copied on emails about the management of the fund, maintained, however, that he had been unaware that his name was listed in the company's statutes, "most likely to attract clients." The company was dissolved in April 2020, at the request of Caroline Lang, after Epstein's death in prison in August 2019. "I never received a cent," she told *Le Monde*. "I didn't put a penny into this company, nor into my trust. I let Jeffrey create this fund. I was careless, I wanted to support young artists and I should have been more vigilant."

Friendly relations with the Lang family

According to the published emails, the financier also acted as a benefactor, even a patron, to the Lang family. In October 2012, well before the creation of the fund, he wrote to Jack and Caroline Lang to inform them that "the balance of the 100k" would be paid – in connection with a book project – but Jack Lang and his daughter said they never received that money. They told *Le Monde* that Epstein had helped them twice to fund two films. One of these donations – \$57,897, according to the website *The Daily Beast* – was used to produce Jack Lang, *la traversée du siècle* ("Jack Lang, Crossing the Century"), which was never released because of the sexual trafficking scandal. In another email from January 2013, Caroline Lang suggested that Epstein could provide funding to revive the IMA. "And why not? I should have asked him to fund the IMA," Jack Lang responded, insisting that no financial support ever took place.

"It was a period of great vulnerability, we were in mourning, and Jeffrey wanted to comfort my parents," Caroline Lang continued. Indeed, their emails reveal a close friendship, as shown by the fact that, in 2014, Epstein made his villa in Palm Beach available to Caroline Lang and her two daughters. She said she had read in *The Miami Herald* that Epstein had been convicted in Florida for the sexual exploitation of a minor from whom he had solicited massages. "He told me it was a mistake, that he had gotten treatment, that he had compensated the victim and served his sentence in prison. I thought he had the right to be rehabilitated," she explained to *Le Monde*. Her father, for his part, said he had never known anything about the 2008 case, which resurfaced in 2015 following a new complaint: "When you make a new friend, you don't check their résumé."

The correspondence also revealed that Epstein lent his plane for trips to Marrakech, Morocco, in April 2015 and April 2017, and his chauffeured car in September 2017 for travel between Paris and Chantilly, an hour north of Paris. In return, the Langs invited their American friend to cultural events or attempted to facilitate introductions with President Emmanuel Macron's

staff at the Elysée. When Epstein wanted to buy a riad in Marrakech, where they would meet, Jack Lang passed along a seller's offer to him in 2015: "The price is 5,400,000 euros, offshore." Jack and Caroline Lang continued to see Epstein until three months before his arrest in July 2019 on charges of sex trafficking. They spent time together in Paris during a symposium marking the 30th anniversary of the Louvre Pyramid at the end of March 2019 and at a lunch at the Langs' home. Caroline Lang insisted, however, that she was completely blindsided in the summer of 2019. "He had a double personality. You never suspect his double life for a second," she said. "He hid it well. He was Jekyll and Hyde. I am not comparing myself to the horror endured by those women, but I also feel like a victim." She said she learned from Mediapart, an investigative news site, that she was named in Epstein's late-stage will for €5 million, along with dozens of others, without ever having been informed.

After this past closeness was revealed, Caroline Lang was forced on Monday to resign from the Independent Producers Union (SPI), the organization she had headed for the past three weeks. "She lost her job, she is the collateral victim of me," said her father, while insisting that there's no panic sweeping through the IMA, which he has chaired since 2013 and from which he has no intention of resigning.

By Ivanne Trippenbach

How the Epstein scandal brought down Jack Lang: ‘Everyone knew he never paid for anything’

The emblematic minister from President François Mitterrand’s era was forced to step down as president of the Arab World Institute in Paris. Former allies and rivals have begun to speak out about a man who used his influence and network to maintain a lavish lifestyle.

By Ivanne Trippenbach



Jack Lang, then president of the Institut du Monde Arabe, at the Egyptian Parliament in Cairo, on April 18, 2016. LAURENCE GEAI FOR LE MONDE

On Tuesday, February 3, Jack Lang was still very much the master of his domain. He welcomed Le Monde, seated on the couch in his glass-walled office on the eighth floor of the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA, Arab World Institute), the Paris institution he had been leading for more than 13 years.

The former culture minister under President François Mitterrand jumped in surprise when asked whether he planned to resign. “What have I done that is reprehensible? What legal action has been taken against me? This is absurd,” he said. The day before, Mediapart had revealed the “financial ties” between the Langs – he and his daughter Caroline – and the American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, a businessman known for his sprawling network, who died in detention in August 2019.

In the mountain of emails released on January 30 by the US Justice Department, the relationship between the Lang family and Epstein appeared to be woven with gifts and favors exchanged over seven years, up until the sexual predator's arrest in 2019. Ironically, Lang himself did not use email: His entourage would print them out for him so he could annotate them. "He does not have a computer; he has never written a single email himself," his team at the IMA confirmed. Lang traveled all over the world, but also did not speak English very well.

It was therefore his daughter Caroline, who worked for 30 years at the American company Warner Bros Television, who handled most of the communication between the two men. She shared ownership of the offshore company Prytanee LCC, founded with Epstein in 2016, and which was at the heart of the scandal that would bring Lang down.

Improbable trio

The emails reveal that Epstein came up with the idea, which he presented to Jack Lang in November 2015, before summarizing it to Caroline Lang: Why not create a fund, to which he would contribute \$20 million, so that Jack Lang could buy artworks, resell them later and then split the profits 50-50 between Epstein and the Lang family? "No risk for your side. It will be fun!" "Wahou!!!" replied Caroline Lang. Yet, she had previously expressed concern to Epstein about his conviction for child sex offenses, which Paris Match and other media outlets had reported on 11 months earlier, following a new complaint and accusations of rape against Prince Andrew. Epstein played it down as "Bad press only."

The unlikely trio formed about a year before President François Hollande appointed Jack Lang to head the IMA in January 2013. The Langs met filmmaker Woody Allen and his wife, Soon-Yi Previn, who is also his adopted stepdaughter, at a dinner hosted by the Bourbon-Two Sicilies royal family in Paris. Caroline Lang and Previn became friends.

When Allen and Previn came to Paris, the Langs took them to the best exhibitions. One day, the couple asked to bring along a friend: Epstein. The financier often spent time in Paris, where he owned an 800-square-meter apartment on Avenue Foch, in the 16th arrondissement; during a dinner in 2012, he grew closer to the Langs. The connection was made.

The beginning of this friendship coincided with the end of the long political career of Lang, an icon of the cultural world since the 1980s. It was also a time of mourning for the family, which lost a daughter, the actress Valérie Lang, who died suddenly of cancer in 2013. Epstein, this new friend, appeared to be a generous benefactor from the United States.

Dynamic director of the IMA

What happened when Lang no longer had access to a chauffeur-driven car, an old privilege that was eliminated at the IMA? Epstein lent him his. What about when he wanted to travel

to Marrakech, Morocco? Epstein lent him his private jet. And when the former elected official feared his name would gradually fade from public view? Epstein spent \$30,000 on a film paying tribute to his daughter, \$50,000 on a film about the glory days of the Lang years, and considered paying \$100,000 for a book on education.

The energetic head of the IMA was also constantly striving to raise funds, to dynamize an institute he wanted to be buzzing and turn it into a golden showcase for cultural diplomacy between France and the Arab world. Yet he did not, for six years, think to ask his philanthropist friend for money to support the IMA, where he often arranged to meet him.

“I should have... Why didn’t I do it? Because I’m an asshole,” replied Lang, brashly, on February 3. Was it perhaps because he knew Epstein was not someone to be seen with? He insisted that he knew nothing about Epstein’s 2008 conviction for procuring a minor for prostitution, or the prison sentence served in Florida, despite the widespread media coverage of the victims’ accusations, some of whom were only 14 years old at the time of the rapes.

At the time, Lang was making a final attempt to relaunch his political career, running for a seat representing the Vosges in the parliamentary elections of June 2012. Despite a Socialist wave sweeping the country, the former media heavyweight of the Mitterrand years failed to get elected. Who now remembers that from 2002 to 2012, he served as MP for Pas-de-Calais? The founder of France’s Fête de la Musique celebration had been parachuted into these former working-class strongholds, at the risk of creating a disconnect that worried local party members.

One day during the 2002 campaign, Lang left without paying his team’s bill. An employee of the local departmental council ended up stuck with the tab. Longtime elected officials had to put the star politician back in line: “These are your campaign expenses. You take money out of your own pocket to pay for drinks for the kids running around for you...” On another occasion, when Socialist activists urged him to hold regular office hours in his constituency, Lang shot back: “I’m not a social worker!”

‘Production machine’

“He was the lord,” recalled former minister and Socialist senator Brigitte Bourguignon, who was elected in Pas-de-Calais in 2012. “He never had his feet on the ground. He would leave without looking to see who was paying, as if he didn’t know that things in life have to be paid for. He always took advantage of his networks – many people were like rabbits caught in the headlights. He was an extraordinary character, and sometimes outside the usual rules. Gradually, the image faded. It was all make-believe.” Lang believed in his lucky star and his tremendous popularity. “Wherever I go, I’ll be elected,” he told Socialist activists in Pas-de-Calais when he was not nominated again. Not this time.

At the IMA, his personal playground, Lang was a hyperactive, creative and all-powerful pre-

sident. This intense energy went back years and wore out his collaborators. Bernard Latarjet, his former special adviser at the Ministry of Culture and National Education, recalled, “He worked tremendously hard, he would overwhelm us, suffocate us with demands, instructions and requests. No Sundays, no evenings, not even vacations. You can’t grasp the sheer amount of work. And he had a pathological, almost unhealthy, memory for the tiniest detail. Lang was a production machine.”

A former chief of staff at the Elysée Palace from that period said Lang wielded relentless pressure like no other to secure appointments, decisions or honors. “He never stopped being a minister. Every day, he would call me, send letters, emails, texts... I had a special Lang folder,” recalled former culture minister Rima Abdul Malak. When the 2022 Press Club, Humor and Politics Award, was given to Abdul Malak, Lang changed his plane ticket to return from Saudi Arabia.

“He never misses an opportunity to put himself in the spotlight – an honor, a medal, he is the guardian of his legacy and his recognition every second of his life... Everyone knew he never paid for anything in Cannes,” said Abdul Malak. “He believes he should be invited everywhere, and always in luxurious conditions. This aspect of his personality echoes the criticisms of the champagne-socialist left, the lure of money, the circles of luxury and power. But he is also capable of joining the floats at the Techno Parade and dropping by small underground workshops to support artists.”

Feeling of impunity

Ambivalent, a man of institutions and ideas, a former professor specializing in the law of piracy and not particularly attached to protocol, Lang still enjoys the aura of his record as an emblematic minister, benefiting from President Mitterrand’s 1981 promise to double the culture budget. He cultivated that aura and his connections all over the world, even at the risk – as his critics claim – of sliding toward a sense of omnipotence and impunity. “He has a naïveté and a mindset that are no longer relevant,” said a person within his entourage at the IMA.

Since his connections with Epstein came to light, the pedestal has begun to crack. Alongside the investigation launched by France’s National Financial Prosecutor’s Office (PNF) for aggravated tax fraud laundering, memories of past transgressions have resurfaced chaotically, fueled by social media set ablaze by the publication of thousands of emails. Lang and his wife, Monique, have been placed under police protection.

More discreetly, former allies and political opponents have begun to talk about unpaid bills and a lavish lifestyle. Some said Parisian restaurants dreaded seeing the Lang couple walk in. At Chez Edgard, a major haunt of the political and media elite in the 1990s, the owner confided to a former minister from Lionel Jospin’s government: “The Langs at my place, never again, they owe me 10 years’ worth of lunches.”

At the Cannes Film Festival, the luxury hotels on the Croisette decided to push back. Figures from the world of culture and cinema were invited by the festival for two nights, breakfast included. But, according to organizers at the time, the Lang couple's bills reached several thousand euros – three or four times the allotted amount – sometimes for an extended stay, sometimes for meals with guests. No hotel would accept hosting him anymore. In fact, Lang was no longer invited after 2020, as Pierre Lescure, the former president of the festival, revealed on the social media platform X, mentioning “significant unpaid bills in the hotels on the Croisette.”

The IMA: A full-time job

A “way of life,” a “well-known habit,” is how most political and cultural leaders who knew Lang and his wife described it. For a long time, she was the driving force behind the scenes and his secret public relations asset. “Lang’s attitude toward money was abnormal – not all politicians do that,” insisted another former Socialist culture minister, Aurélie Filippetti. In principle, the heads of boards of directors serve unpaid. Lang, however, turned the IMA presidency into a full-time job. He had the board of directors approve a monthly salary of €10,000 for himself at the time, more than a government minister earned. The detail shocked members of Hollande’s government, especially as the president had cut ministerial pay by 30% and ministers were required to return any gift valued at over €150.

“At the IMA, I had eliminated all the perks. I had neither a salary nor a driver, and my meal expenses were very limited,” recalled Renaud Muselier, who led the IMA from 2011 to 2013. “These practices did not fit with my ethics. The way Lang and his family operated was not appropriate for a position heading a public institution, where it is France that pays.”

Luxury suits

Lang imposed a “preferential rate” on the Lebanese caterer Noura, an IMA partner, for his guests and himself. However, the restaurant formally requested that the institute pay an outstanding bill of €41,000, as revealed in 2015 by the newspaper *Le Canard Enchaîné*. The courts recognized mutual debts between the restaurant, which was in receivership, and the Institute. Lang also received luxury suits, such as those from the Italian brand Smalto, the couturier who dressed King Hassan II of Morocco (1929-1999), according to *Le Canard Enchaîné* and *L’Obs*. An investigation into possible embezzlement was opened and then ultimately dropped in 2023. Other designers, such as Yves Saint Laurent and the Japanese designer Issey Miyake, also gifted him suits. “The numbers are all over the place,” argued Laurent Merlet, Lang’s lawyer. “Since 1990, when I began defending his reputation and image in matters of defamation and privacy, I have never dealt with a trial over unpaid restaurant bills trying to portray him as ill-mannered.” Contacted about these matters, Lang declined to comment.

Lang was no stranger to media storms and knows how to stand his ground. Past statements,

however, cast a shadow over his image as a trailblazer and progressive figure. When, on May 16, 2011, then IMF chief and French presidential candidate Dominique Strauss-Kahn was arrested at the Sofitel in New York for the rape of Nafissatou Diallo, a housemaid, Lang downplayed the event in an interview on the evening news, saying: “No one died.”

In January 2018, when Allen was again accused by his adopted daughter Dylan Farrow of sexually assaulting her when she was 7 years old, Lang criticized what he called “Woody bashing” and a “plot within a family” without “any evidence” on the popular program *Quotidien*. “Sometimes you have to be politically incorrect and go against the grain,” Lang asserted, adding that the New York prosecutor had found the case to be unfounded in 1993, which was not in fact true. His daughter informed Epstein by email of this public support for their mutual friend Allen.

After Gérard Depardieu was charged with rape and sexual assault, accused by around 20 women, Lang remained friends with the French actor. And although he was criticized for publicly supporting Roman Polanski, who was arrested in Switzerland in 2009 at the request of the US for the sexual assault of a minor in 1977, Lang now insists that he would do it again. After Mediapart’s revelations, the financial prosecutors’ opening of an investigation into Jack and Caroline Lang on Friday, February 6, hastened the octogenarian’s decision to resign, under pressure from the Elysée. Three days earlier, he had said of his daughter’s resignation from the National Union of Producers, “It’s very sad for her; she is responsible for this whole issue with the funds,” referring to the offshore company. “I never received a single cent,” Caroline repeated.

Lang’s term was renewed in 2023 when he was 83, breaking with the norms at the top of comparable institutions – leaders of public bodies are usually subject to age and term limits – and disregarding President Emmanuel Macron’s promise to reserve the position for former foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. Lang had warned: He would stay.

Ivanne Trippenbach