

Transsexual was motivated by anger at his therapist

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A transsexual fatally shot his therapist and then himself because the woman would not certify him as mentally ready for a sex change operation, police said Thursday.

The man, who dressed as a woman, made an appointment with therapist Rita Powers on Wednesday, apparently with the intent to kill her, Sgt. Bob Lopez said.

"He obviously knew what he was going to do because he came armed," he said. Police later found an assault rifle and a shotgun in his apartment.

The bodies of Powers and the 26-year-old man were found Wednesday night in a hallway at the Cognitive Therapy Institute two hours after gunfire was reported at the office building.

The shooter, whose identity has not been released, had been seeing Powers for nearly a year while seeking an operation to surgically alter his gender, Lo-

pez said.

"He needed a letter of approval from his therapist and apparently she was not willing to give that approval," Lopez said. "That appears to be the motive."

Police didn't discover the shooter was a man until the medical examiner came to the scene and examined the body.

"He had breasts and a penis," Lopez said. "He was wearing women's pants, a blouse and had long, blond hair, which was his."

The gunman shot himself once in the head with a 9 mm semiautomatic handgun. The medical examiner was withholding his name until relatives could be located.

Powers, 41, an intern and single mother of two teen-age boys, was shot multiple times all over her body, said Collins, adding autopsies were planned Thursday.

Transsexuals are people predisposed to identify with the opposite sex, sometimes so strongly as to undergo surgery to change

their gender.

A patient seeking a sex change is usually required to undergo counseling with a therapist, who then certifies with a doctor when that person is ready for the operation, Lopez said.

"(Powers) had told him all along that she did not believe he should have this operation," he said.

KNSD-TV in San Diego reported Thursday that the man went by the name Julia and was "very frustrated" that he had not received the therapist's recommendation. They interviewed a woman who identified herself only as Evelyn and said she was a friend of the gunman.

The office housed a group of nine psychiatrists and therapists who counseled people for problems in a variety of areas including marriage, family and work.

Michele Manker, a licensed clinical social worker at the institute, left a message Thursday on her office voice mail to patients and friends.