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Former Chile ambassador rediscovers the world after Times 'correction'

By PETER LORD

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STONINGTON, Conn. — Edward M. Korry, who retired from the world in this small seacoast town several years ago, watched his resurrection gain momentum every time the telephone buzzed in his sparsely furnished office in the back of the library at nearby Connecticut College.

He was on the phone with a reporter from *Editor and Publisher* magazine, emphasizing his points by pounding his fist and jabbing at documents on his desk, as if the caller could see as well as hear. Minutes later, an editor from the *Wall Street Journal*, which has the largest circulation of any daily newspaper in the country, called him. The editor told Korry the *Journal* would be running a story about him Tuesday.

A smile spread across Korry's face as he hung. "They're running it tomorrow," he said. "I can't wait to see it."

Korry could be excused the smile. A bit of smugness. Because he had tried for seven years to tell the story of how his nine-year career as one of this country's top diplomats was destroyed. He couldn't get a job other than part-time teaching at the college. He had sold his house in New York and his wife's jewelry.

He was left with little more than his story: one of lies and spies, corrupt South American politicians and North American counterparts who weren't so different, careers and lives made and shattered. Big names. Big money.

No one who counted would listen.

NOT UNTIL last week, when the New York *Times* published what *Time* magazine, in its own story on Korry this week, described as "an extraordinary front page mea culpa... surely the longest correction ever published in the prestigious paper."

What the *Times* attempted to do, simply, was to say Korry has been telling the truth all these years. That as the U.S. ambassador to Chile from 1967 to 1971, he had nothing to do with secret CIA plans to overthrow Chilean President Salvador Allende Gossens, a Marxist, when he came to power in 1970. In fact, the *Times* story supported Korry's contentions that he repeatedly tried to stop White House efforts to overthrow Allende.

Korry's telephone hasn't stopped ringing since the article appeared.

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER
28 February 1981

New York Times clears ex-envoy's name

By Andrew Radolf

It was an "unusual story" by all accounts: A front page exoneration of a former United States Ambassador to Chile in the *New York Times* headlined, "New Evidence Backs Ex-Envoy on His Role in Chile."

The February 9 story was written by Seymour M. Hersh who left the Times in March 1979 to write a book on former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Hersh won his Pulitzer for international reporting in 1970 for his stories on the My Lai Massacre. He also won several awards for his 1974 investigative series in the Times on domestic spying by the CIA and the Drew Pearson Prize in 1975 for his stories on CIA involvement in Chile.

Hersh, at the request of Edward M. Korry, U.S. Ambassador to Chile from 1967 to 1971, told Times executive editor A.M. Rosenthal in November 1980 that he had uncovered new evidence while researching his book supporting the ex-envoy's claim that he never knew anything about covert CIA attempts to prevent Salvador Allende Gossens from being sworn in as that country's president.

Rosenthal responded to the news by assigning Hersh to write the story for the Times.

"This is a very unusual story," Rosenthal said. "In itself it's a story. It's not a correction. We ran stories some years ago. The writer came across some new information, so we ran that story."

The executive editor added he had asked Hersh when the latter informed him of the new evidence "not to put it in the book before you write it for us."

In the spring of 1973 Korry had testified to the Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations headed by Frank Church, former Senator from Idaho, that the covert plot against Allende in 1970, known as Track II, did not exist.

At the time, few believed Korry was telling the truth.

On September 17, 1974, Hersh wrote in the Times that the subcommittee staff said it was recommending that Korry, along with former CIA director Richard Helms and other Nixon officials, be charged with contempt of Congress for allegedly giving misleading testimony at the 1973 hearings.

Korry's name was never submitted to the Justice Department, and the former

According to Korry, after the story appeared in the Times, as well as other news media including the *Washington Post*, he became "a pariah" who was unable to work in either government or journalism, his first career.

Korry had been U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia from 1963 to 1967 before assuming his post in Chile. He also had been United Press's chief European correspondent based in Paris in the early 1950's and had covered the beginnings of the United Nations at Lake Success, New York for UP. One of his fellow reporters at the U.N was A.M. Rosenthal, then a Times reporter.

Korry said he and Rosenthal had been friends from 1946 until the news stories appeared in 1974 on his role in Chile.

The ex-envoy said Hersh's story on September 17, 1974 and two other stories by the Times reporter on September 8 and September 10, 1974 were some of the most harmful to his reputation.

Korry said Hersh's February 9 story ends nearly seven years of frustration in trying to get himself heard by the major news media including the Times.

"The story reestablishes an integrity I was robbed of unjustly and unfairly seven years ago," Korry told *E&P*. "It's the Times that has ended the nightmare that began seven years ago."

Korry stated "an accurate reading of the record (of his 1973 testimony)" would show he had "inadvertently stopped it (Track II)" by continually acting against it "without knowing it existed."

"If he (Hersh) had called me and asked me," Korry said, "he never could have written what he did."

Korry contended Hersh for his September 17, 1974 story relied on information supplied by a source on the subcommittee instead of reading the record. The ex-envoy stated that Hersh in a recent conversation admitted to "only skimming" the record of Korry's testimony.

E&P asked Hersh if he had made such an admission to Korry. Hersh replied the allegation was "ludicrous. I let my record as a journalist speak for itself."

Korry also contended that Hersh was aware by the end of 1976 that his stories in 1974 about the former Ambassador's role in Chile were inaccurate.

Hersh wrote in his February 9 Times story, and told *E&P*, that he had contacted Korry in 1976 about doing another story to present Korry's side of what happened in Chile but had concluded the former ambassador's account was "too self-serving to be credible."

But Korry said Hersh never wrote a story in 1976 about his version of events in Chile because it would have been "ideologically displeasing" and dealt with CIA involvement in the country dating back to the Kennedy administration.

Korry claimed that in 1976, Hersh had said to him, "I may resurrect you" if he agreed to provide the Times reporter with information on Henry Kissinger's involvement in covert CIA operations in Chile.

Korry said he told Hersh he would only talk about "what I did and could swear to."

Hersh dismissed Korry's claim of an offer "to resurrect him" and said he "did not want to dignify it with a denial."

Hersh did write a story for the Times on December 23, 1976 which mentioned Korry near the end. Hersh wrote testimony Korry had "volunteered in June (1976)" to Federal investigators looking into allegations of CIA/ITT wrongdoing in Chile was found by them to be "helpful."

In that same story, Hersh credited Joe Trento of the *Wilmington News-Journal* with writing the "first published reports of the active grand jury investigation in the CIA-Chile connection."

Trento's story appeared December 19, 1976 in the *News-Journal*. It was the second of many stories by Trento which began appearing November 28, 1976 and continued into 1978.

In his stories, Trento wrote at length about Korry's account of events in Chile and said the former ambassador had been victimized by others in the government who were his political opponents.

"Sy Hersh had all the information of any consequence that appeared in his story on February 9, 1981 by December 19, 1976 when he had his hands on our second story dealing with what really happened in Chile," Trento said. "I didn't have any preconceived notion of Ed Korry. I checked out what he had to say and it stood up. The readers of the *Wilmington News-Journal* knew the truth four years earlier than the people who read the Times."

Hersh told *E&P*, "I didn't trust Joe's articles as much as I should have. At one point, I felt one of his stories was very bad. The later stories were very good. I didn't think much of those stories because I was wrong (about Korry in 1974)."