

Author A.C. Frieden Visits Chile for Research

SANTIAGO, Chile (Oct. 6, 2008) – Author A.C. Frieden traveled to Santiago, Chile, in early October to continue to research for his upcoming political thriller set in Latin America. Prior to his arrival, Frieden had set up meetings and interviews with prominent politicians, diplomats, authors, publishers and members of academia in Santiago. “I was excited to meet in-person so many people I’d only read and heard about during my research,” Frieden said. “And the meetings indeed turned out to be enlightening.” Frieden’s research in Chile adds to his extensive travels for the same novel over the past year to Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Venezuela, and Uruguay.



Above: Frieden meeting with the controversial Chilean author Alejandra Matus.

During his visit, Frieden met with Alejandra Matus, the Chilean author of *El Libro Negro de la Justicia Chilena* (“The Black Book of Chilean Justice”, published in 1999 by Planeta Publishing Company; cover pictured below), a controversial chronicle of corruption in Chile’s judiciary. In response to the book, Chile’s Supreme Court Judge Servando Jordán commenced legal action based on the State Security Law, which makes it a crime to insult high level officials. The book’s entire print run was immediately seized from the publisher, and Alejandra was charged along with Planeta’s president and chief editor. Facing five years in jail if convicted, Alejandra fled to Miami and soon received political asylum. Only after legislation was introduced to repeal the law in 2001 was she permitted to return to Chile. However, her fight for press freedom is not over.

In 2003, Alejandra resigned from the newspaper *La Nación* when it refused to run her story about alleged corruption involving the government’s Institute of Agricultural and Livestock Development. Today, she is a freelance journalist working for various publications, including the satirical paper *The Clinic*, Chile’s equivalent of the *The Onion*. Frieden’s discussions with Alejandra focused on the control of print and television media by wealthy families and powerful political figures in Chile, and the continuing challenges facing journalists.



Above: Frieden had dinner with the Swiss Ambassador, André Regli (second from left), and his friends at the renowned sushi restaurant Ichaban.

Frieden had the honor to meet with Switzerland's ambassador to Chile, Mr. André Regli. Originally from the Alpine town of Andermatt, Mr. Regli received his law degree in Fribourg, Switzerland. He has served as diplomat in various functions in Berne, New York, Bangkok, Geneva, and Abidjan before becoming chief of mission at the Swiss embassy in Brazil. Immediately prior to taking the post of Ambassador to Chile, he served as director of personnel for the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs. During their meetings at the ambassador's residence and over dinner at Santiago's renowned Ichiban sushi restaurant, Frieden, Ambassador Regli and Honorary Consul Marianna Fiala discussed a wide range of political, security and cultural issues affecting Chile and its foreign relations, many of these topics being key to Frieden's research for his upcoming political thriller.



Above: View from Frieden's hotel room of the Las Condes district of Santiago and the Andes.

Frieden also met with Ricardo Hormazábal Sánchez, a former Senator of the Republic of Chile and past president of Chile's most powerful political party. Mr. Hormazábal is currently a leading professor and activist focused on pension reform at the University of Chile (*Instituto de Asuntos Públicos de la Universidad de Chile*) and has authored numerous books and articles on government reform. He received his law degree from the University of Chile and post-graduate degree from the University of Bonn. In 1973, he was elected Deputy for the first district of Santiago and later participated in the organization of the first demonstrations against the military government of General Pinochet. Until 1989, he was President of the Confederation of Banking Unions of Chile, the country's second largest union. He was then elected Senator for Region IV and later was elected president of the Christian Democratic Party. He also served as Chile's ambassador to Germany for several years. Much of Frieden's meeting with Mr. Hormazábal focused on legal and ethical challenges facing Chile since its transition to democracy.



Above: A.C. Frieden with former Chilean senator Ricardo Hormazábal, holding his latest book analyzing the political reform during the current Bachelet presidential administration.

Frieden also had an extensive discussion with Professor Hernán Rodríguez Fisse, a colleague of Professor Hormazábal, focusing on the bilateral relationship with the United States. Professor Fisse has authored numerous books and articles on government relations. The meetings were arranged by Professor Aida Bexama Farias of the University of Chile who Frieden first met in 2007 during his research in Caracas, Venezuela.

Frieden also met with Steve Anderson, director of The Santiago Times, the Chilean capital's online English language daily, and Ben Witte, editor of The Patagonia Times and The Valparaiso Times, as well as Linda Strauss, the director of libraries at the prestigious International School Nido de Aguila.



Above: Frieden in front of the Palacio de la Moneda. During the 1973 military coup, the palace was where President Salvador Allende allegedly killed himself as soldiers closed in on the building.

To enhance his research, Frieden rented a Cessna 182 (pictured below) and piloted around the capital, as well as into the Maipo River Valley and over two well known ski resorts in the Andes.





Above: Aerial view the Las Condes area of Santiago.



Above: Aerial view the Valle Nevado ski resort in the Andes east of Santiago.

About the author: A.C. Frieden is a Swiss-Brazilian mystery novelist and lawyer living in Chicago. He is currently working on two political novels, including one set in Latin America. For more information, visit his website at www.acfrieden.com and his literary travel blog.

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