

Mario Modiano With Princess Sophia And Princess Eirini



This is a picture of the then Princess Sophia and Princess Eirini. I don't remember what function it was, I think they had come to visit the Reuters office, or something along those lines, and here I am, Mario Modiano, on the left, you can see me in profile, looking as handsome as ever. The photo was taken in Athens in the 1950s. In 1950 I was appointed assistant correspondent for The Times. In 1952 Frank McCaskey, their former correspondent, was transferred to Suez to cover the Anglo-French landing there. Frank was a very heavy drinker and eventually he died of it. The Times asked me to carry on in Greece. I accepted and I continued to work for them for the next 38 years. I always felt passionate about my new profession. It really takes you over and controls your life. You are no longer a free man. At every moment you must be on the alert just in case something important is happening in your area. It is a very exciting job but a very demanding one. You are on call 24/7. The period between 1967 and 1974 was particularly interesting because a bunch of army colonels imposed a dictatorship in Greece. Actually mine was a risky profession to be in. From one moment to the next you couldn't tell whether they would slap you in jail because of something disagreeable you wrote in The Times. So much so that the British Ambassador gave my wife his bedside telephone number just in case something happened in the middle of the night. But they didn't touch me, although I was sharply critical of the regime in my reports. There were many other important issues that I covered during the 38 years I was in the profession. One of the big issues was Cyprus. Towards the end of my career I was awarded the OBE by the Queen of England for a job well done. It was the same award that had been presented to my father a few years earlier. During all those years as a foreign correspondent only once or twice there were references in Greek newspapers pointing out that I was Jewish, simply because they hadn't liked something I had written.