

## BOOK PROPOSAL

# Bearing the Cross:

*A Gringo Political Prisoner Exposes the Injustices, Indignities, and Vexations of the Chilean Criminal Justice and Prison System*

*A Five-Volume Literary True-Crime Memoir*

**by Dr. John M. Cobin, Italian-Chilean (former American) academic, writer, consultant, and vibe programmer**

*Literary True Crime / Memoir / Investigative Non-Fiction*

*Approximately 1,300,000 words of narrative across 5 Books (11 Volumes, 195 chapters)—appendices and indices separately paginated*

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### 1. ONE-SENTENCE SUMMARY

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When a fifty-six-year-old Italian-Chilean (former American) academic, writer, consultant, vibe programmer and Baptist pastor—surrounded in his pickup truck by a drugged mob shouting “Kill him!” during Chile’s October 2019 insurrection—drew the legally licensed pistol that would cost him 5.42 years inside South America’s most overcrowded prison system, he did not yet know that he would emerge with a 1.3-million-word manuscript, ballistic and forensic evidence proving his innocence, and a story that fuses Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* with Wambaugh’s *The Onion Field* and exposes how a modern democracy weaponized its courts against a foreign-born thinker it could not silence.

### 2. BOOK DESCRIPTION

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On November 10, 2019, in the upscale beach town of Reñaca, Chile, Dr. John M. Cobin drove into a mob of looters and criminal agitators that had announced its intention to burn the town that night. The country had been on fire for three weeks; in Reñaca, police were outnumbered fifteen to several thousand. When the rioters surrounded his vehicle, beat it with feet, fists, rocks, bottles, sticks, and bats, and the assailant Sebastián Valdés Muñoz wrenched his driver-side door open, others in the mob shouted threats including “son of a bitch, kill him!”—corroborated on video and by court witnesses. Defense eyewitness Catalina Valeria Silva, whose nearby shop the drunken, drugged men had visited shortly before (some without paying for the food they were served), testified that those same men were already calling John a “fucking

fascist” as he drove toward the fateful stoplight and were openly declaring their intention to “lynch” him. Cobin fired warning shots at the pavement and executed what his ballistics evidence would later prove was a calculated retreat. Initial charges: two counts of attempted murder, plus inciting riot and unjustified discharge in public. Initial sentence: eleven years, three days. The prosecution was led by hard-leftist Assistant District Attorney Paola Rojas Caro, joined by Communist Party lawyers acting as private accusers—Rita Díaz Torres, Carlos Oliva Ballón, and Gustavo Burgos. Cobin spent the next 5.42 years in three Chilean prisons—Valparaíso (two years and eight months), Rancagua (approximately three months in blocks 45 and 84 as a punishment-sanction for writing *Bearing the Cross*), and Casablanca (from October 8, 2022 onward for two and a half years). In March 2021 the Chilean Supreme Court partially reversed his conviction, conceding that no murderous intent existed and leaving his full sentence at six years and twenty-six days. He received early-release benefits beginning with Sundays-home on January 5, 2025, and was paroled on April 9, 2025. *Bearing the Cross* is the work he wrote inside, drawing on his daily logs and on the evidence the trial court suppressed: the impossible ricocheted bullet trajectories that contradicted physics, the missing exit wounds in the hospital report and pants analysis, the radiator and gearbox farce, and the five witness statements that contradicted the video evidence and police narratives. No bullets were recovered in Molina’s gearbox, Ahumada’s thigh, or anywhere else. Five books, eleven volumes, 212 chapters (an average of 19 per volume)—each chapter titled with a biblical phrase, the structure mirroring his theological reading of the experience without ever interrupting the propulsive narrative.

The arc is intimate and forensic at once. Book One opens with Cobin’s induction into *Módulo* 118 (cell block 118) in Valparaíso—the protected block for ex-police, ex-*gendarmes*, invalids, notorious sex abusers, politicians, food service workers, and a few wealthy and educated. Book One introduces the dozen men around him: Manuel 1, the off-duty *gendarme* jailed for defending himself and his father against six knife-wielding assailants; Raúl 1, the seventy-year-old who murdered the mother of his daughter at her schoolyard with his pistol; José 1, the ex-cop; Roberto 1, the alcoholic, called Viejo Chico. Miami 1, the do-gooder who would become one of John’s close friends—as *Alfi* would later, in Casablanca from late 2023—a friendship that endures: John still visits nominally Jewish and minarchist libertarian *Alfi* and the Baptist disciples converted to Christ under his and Valentín’s Baptist ministry there twice a month. These and dozens of others (Alejandro 4, Leonardo 1, Kens 1, Rubén 1, Álvaro 2, Marcelo 1, Alexis 2, Edgar 1, Abraham 1, and his Baptist disciples) are not background characters. They are the chorus of an exposé. Book One concludes with the three-week trial ending on October 16, 2020, the initial conviction, and the launch of the Supreme Court appeal. Books Two, Three, and Four follow the appeal’s slow course, the sentence reduction, transfers among cell blocks (including the punitive Rancagua interlude), the founding of the *Bautistas Históricos* (Historic Baptists) prison ministry, and the slow accumulation of forensic evidence that would have acquitted Cobin had the trial court admitted it. Book Five closes with the parole, the return to Reñaca, the criminal complaint Cobin filed against the prosecutor, the medical-forensics doctors, and the ballistics experts who drew bogus diagrams, and the unfinished business—a man free but not exonerated, writing as he lives.

The voice is the engine. Cobin writes in the third person about himself (“John”) when reconstructing scenes he witnessed but does not centrally inhabit, and in the first person when the narrative requires it; the effect is the hybrid of memoir and investigative dossier that distinguishes the best literary true crime—Wambaugh’s *The Onion Field* meets Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* meets Silvio Pellico’s *Le mie prigioni*. His prose is dense, lettered, polemical, and astonishingly specific—the brand of bullet (Pow’r Ball, 135-grain, .40 caliber [10.6 mm] nylon-tipped hollow-point), the inmate count per cell, the exact prices of food smuggled in *encomiendas* (the prison-package deliveries cell-block families send weekly), the names of the seventeen lawyers, judges, and prosecutors he indicts. He names them. He documents them. He invites the libel suit he is certain will never come.

**Why it matters now:** Chile is the OECD’s testing ground for institutional collapse. Between Cobin’s arrest in 2019 and his release in 2025, the country rejected two constitutional rewrites, swung from a far-left president to the rise of a hard-right opposition, and saw homicide rates double. Cobin’s case is the lens. He was prosecuted not for the bullets he fired—none of which struck the alleged victims with the force the prosecution claimed—but for what he had been writing and saying for two decades as a public-policy economist, libertarian commentator, a Baptist pastor (co-pastor of *Bautistas Históricos* since 2018): 1,507 published letters to the editor, four books on Christian public policy theology (counting the substantial theological sections in *Behind the Walls* and *Suffering Unjustly*), a libertarian YouTube presence, a fledgling political party (*Partido Independencia*), and a refusal to be bought. He was, the trial record reveals, the rare intellectual the regime could not silence by any means short of incarceration. *Bearing the Cross* is the document of how a democracy decides to do that.

### 3. TARGET AUDIENCE

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**Primary.** Readers of literary true crime in the tradition of Truman Capote, Joseph Wambaugh, Erik Larson, and Patrick Radden Keefe—works that fuse forensic specificity with extended character study and political argument. Readers of prison literature and political-prisoner memoirs (Solzhenitsyn, Bonhoeffer, Václav Havel, Wei Jingsheng, Anthony Ray Hinton, Richard Wurmbrand). Readers concerned with government failure, prosecutorial misconduct, and abuse of state power—an audience served by the Innocence Project, the ACLU, and equivalent organizations across the Americas and Europe. Human-rights readers (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House constituencies) who follow wrongful-conviction and political-prisoner cases. Italian readers and the Italian academic and Catholic-intellectual press, given the author’s Italian citizenship and Salerno ancestry; the Reñaca case received no Italian press coverage despite the failure of the Italian bureaucracy in Rome and its consulate in Santiago to repatriate one of its citizens—a diplomatic story embedded in the book. Spanish-language readers across Chile and the broader Hispanic world (500+ million speakers), where the case remains live news.

**Secondary.** Religious-liberty and persecution-focused readerships (Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors, Prison Fellowship, InterVarsity, The Navigators, *First Things*, *Touchstone*). Libertarian and classical-liberal readerships in the U.S. and Europe—the Cato Institute, the Mises Institute, the Liberty Fund, the Istituto Bruno Leoni in Milan, the Hayek-Gesellschaft, the Foundation for

Economic Education, the Institute for Humane Studies. Conservative readerships across the spectrum—the Heritage Foundation, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI), the American Enterprise Institute, *The American Conservative*, *National Review*. Academic readers in criminology, law and economics, and Latin American studies; the book documents a single criminal proceeding from arrest to release with the granularity normally found only in commission reports.

**Tertiary.** Italian-American diaspora readers (40+ million potential, particularly the Campania and Lucania regional federations). Reformed and Baptist Christian readerships internationally; the Waldensian (Valdese) Italian Protestant tradition; Evangelicals broadly; and any Christian group interested in prison ministry. Catholic and Orthodox readers who—despite confessional differences—share much in common with the author on religious liberty, the dignity of the family, the rule of law, and the duty of the state to its own citizens, and who will recognise in Cobin’s case the same diagnostic pattern Solzhenitsyn and Wurmbrand applied to twentieth-century totalitarianism, now reproduced inside a twenty-first-century OECD democracy.

**In short.** The book speaks to anyone interested in true crime, in the failure and abuse of government, in human rights, in liberty, and in conservative principles—and to Christians of every tradition (Baptist, Waldensian, Evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox) who recognise that the persecution of a foreign-born pastor by a democratic state is a story their own communities cannot afford to ignore.

## 4. COMPARABLE TITLES

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Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973)—the structural model for using one prisoner’s experience to indict an entire judicial-penal system. *Bearing the Cross* updates Solzhenitsyn’s method for a democratic, OECD-member, twenty-first-century setting where the apparatus of injustice wears the uniform of due process rather than the Cheka. Anthony Ray Hinton, *The Sun Does Shine* (2018)—the closest contemporary analogue in voice and structure: a wrongfully convicted innocent man writing about thirty years on death row, with a deep faith spine. Hinton’s book sold over 500,000 copies and remains in print. *Bearing the Cross* offers the international, forensic, academic, philosophical, economic, theological, and political dimensions Hinton’s case did not have. Erik Larson, *In the Garden of Beasts* (2011)—the comparable for narrative non-fiction that fuses a single protagonist’s diaries with the political collapse of a country. Larson’s reconstruction of 1930s Berlin maps onto Cobin’s reconstruction of 2019–2025 Chile. Patrick Radden Keefe, *Say Nothing* (2018)—the comparable for politically charged true crime with extensive named investigation of state actors. Like Keefe, Cobin documents living perpetrators by name and invites the legal pushback. Joseph Wambaugh, *The Onion Field* (1973)—the literary true-crime template most closely matched at the prose level: dense, character-saturated, structurally ambitious. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (1951)—the spiritual register Cobin reaches in the meditative chapter openings, without ever displacing the criminal narrative. Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844)—the literary archetype of the wrongfully imprisoned man whose return to society is shaped by what he learned inside; Cobin’s post-parole criminal complaint against the prosecutor mirrors the Dumasian impulse, though argued from public-policy evidence rather

than vengeance. Stephen King, *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption* (1982; film 1994, dir. Frank Darabont)—the contemporary touchstone for wrongful conviction, prison ministry to fellow inmates, and the slow accumulation of evidence that overturns a sham conviction; the cultural reach of *The Shawshank Redemption* establishes the audience appetite for stories of this shape. Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ* (1967)—the canonical Christian prisoner-of-conscience memoir, sold in tens of millions of copies across more than ninety languages; Wurmbrand survived fourteen years in Romanian Communist prisons. Cobin writes from a parallel posture—Baptist pastor imprisoned by an OECD democracy for exercising civic speech—and shares Wurmbrand’s readership in *Voice of the Martyrs*, *Open Doors*, and prison-ministry networks worldwide. **Market Differentiation.** No contemporary memoir combines (a) forensic exoneration evidence assembled by the prisoner himself, (b) a 1.3-million-word documentary canvas, (c) the international dimension of a Western-citizen political prisoner held in a Western democracy, and (d) the religious and intellectual depth of a credentialed academic writing in the Solzhenitsyn lineage. *Bearing the Cross* is the only book on the market that does all four.

## 5. UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

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**Forensic Self-Defense.** The book includes—in Appendix 3—a complete ballistics reconstruction (AI-assisted, but cross-checked against physical evidence and the trial record) demonstrating that the bullet trajectories prosecution witnesses described are physically impossible. This is exoneration evidence presented inside a literary work. No comparable title offers this. **The Italian Dimension.** Cobin holds Italian citizenship through his maternal grandfather, Donato Taglieri of Oliveto Citra (Salerno), naturalized in Turin in April 2017. The government in Rome refused to repatriate John (the Italian Consulate in Santiago serving as its messenger), or intervene in his case during 5.42 years of incarceration. This is a story Italian readers have not been told and Italian editors will recognize as publishable. **Inside the Prison Society.** Cobin spent his sentence in Módulo 118, Valparaíso’s protected block for ex-police, ex-*gendarmes*, former officials, and the educated—a population virtually never documented in prison literature. The character gallery alone (Manuel 1, Raúl 1, Roberto 1, Miami 1, Aníbal 1, Karim 1, Mauricio 1, Édgar 1, Abraham 1, and dozens more) is unprecedented. **Named Indictments.** Prosecutor Paola Rojas Caro, public defender Guillermo Améstica, the trial judges of the Viña del Mar oral panel, the Communist Party lawyers retained as private accusers, the *gendarmería* officials and the LACRIM/Labocar/Carabineros peritos are all named, dated, and quoted. The book is litigation-ready. **Triple-Language Availability.** Complete English manuscript; Spanish translation of Volume I already produced under the title *Llevando la Cruz* by Editorial Don Pelayo in Santiago, which holds Chilean Spanish rights (only); Italian translation (*Portare la Croce*) commissioned. Simultaneous Anglo-Italian-Hispanic publication is feasible. **The Author’s Verified Platform.** Twenty YouTube interviews completed by November 2025, a million Chileans estimated to know the case, a 149-donor financial-support network sustained across five years of incarceration, and an active social-media presence on X with growing reach. The author is media-ready in three languages.

**Theological Spine without Sermon.** Every chapter title is drawn from Scripture (Appendix 1 lists the verses). The structure encodes a theological reading of unjust suffering. The text never preaches. Religious readers find a coherent biblical framework; secular readers find a meditative architecture that never slows the story.

## 6. AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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Dr. John M. Cobin (b. Santa Monica, California, March 10, 1963) is an Italian-Chilean (former American) public-policy economist, academic, writer, consultant, gold arbitrageur, entrepreneur (construction manager), and vibe programmer with products available at **AlertnessAI.com**. He has also programmed **PolicyOfLiberty.com**, **DefendersVillage.com**, and **BautistasHistoricos.com**. He is a Baptist pastor and co-pastor of *Bautistas Históricos* (Historic Baptists), the ministry he started with Co-Pastor Valentín Navarrete Urbina in 2018 after meeting him at a Viña del Mar Baptist conference in 2015. He holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy and an M.A. in Economics from George Mason University (1995, 1996), an M.A. in Business Economics from the University of California, Santa Barbara (1987), a B.A. in Business Economics from California State University, Long Beach (1985), and an undergraduate degree in Religious Studies from Reformed Bible College (now Kuyper College, 1984), plus six graduate-level seminary courses from Regent College (Vancouver). His Italian citizenship was granted in Turin in April 2017 through descent from his maternal grandfather, Donato Taglieri of Oliveto Citra, province of Salerno; he had previously lived in Turin during 2010–2012 and Colliano (SA) during the few years that followed. He has been a resident of Chile since 1996 and became a naturalized Chilean citizen in 2014. He renounced his American citizenship in 2015. He has held full-time and visiting professorships at Universidad Finis Terrae (Santiago), Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez (Valparaíso), Universidad Andrés Bello (Santiago and Viña del Mar), Universidad Austral (Valdivia), and Universidad Francisco Marroquín (Guatemala), Universidad Católica (Santiago), among other part-time gigs at universities in the United States and Chile, and has lectured under the auspices of free-market and classical-liberal institutes in Belgium, France, the Czech Republic, Serbia, Nigeria, India, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala, plus a talk at the Baptist Seminary in Prague (in 2002). His scholarly publications include *Building Regulation, Market Alternatives, and Allodial Policy* (Avebury, London, 1997—the published version of his dissertation), articles in *The Independent Review*, *The Cato Journal*, *Planning Theory* (Sage), *Economic Affairs* (London), *Economia dei Servizi* (Bologna), *Estudios Públicos* (Santiago), and *Planning and Markets*. His authored books include *Bible and Government: Public Policy from a Christian Perspective* (Alertness Books, 2003) and *Christian Theology of Public Policy: Highlighting the American Experience* (Alertness Books, 2006). He is married to Pamela Sepúlveda Mendoza, great-granddaughter of Wenceslao Valdivia (1860–1935), the first Chilean Baptist. He has seven children and seven grandchildren (the youngest, Archie, born May 2026). He was incarcerated in Chile from November 10, 2019, to April 9, 2025—five years and five months of imprisonment, capped by a parole period yielding six years of incarceration and parole combined. The five-book *Bearing the Cross* and *Suffering Unjustly* were the principal literary output of that period.

## 7. AUTHOR PLATFORM

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PolicyOfLiberty.com—author’s principal website. Hosts the complete criminal case dossier, all publications, multilingual literary-agent presentations (English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German, French), the *Bearing the Cross*, as well as *Suffering Unjustly* and *Behind the Walls*, book pages with downloadable manuscripts, and ongoing case updates. BautistasHistoricos.com—Spanish-language ministry website, a sustained audience and readership of Latin American and Spanish Reformed and Baptist Christians. X (Twitter)—growing public presence; weekly broadcasts and case updates. YouTube—twenty long-form interviews completed by November 2025, the largest of which (Nicole Rodríguez, October 15, 2025) drew 13,527+ views, 1,700 likes, and 414 comments (99% supportive).

Donor and supporter network—149 unique financial supporters sustained the author through 5.42 years of incarceration; the same network is active for book promotion. Speaker availability—fluent in English and Spanish, conversational Italian (B1–B2); media-ready in all three languages; passport-current for travel to Latin America, South Korea, Philippines, New Zealand, Italy and across Europe. Endorsement pipeline—relationships with Sebastián Izquierdo and Hermógenes Pérez de Arce (Chile), with the late Walter Williams’s network at George Mason, with the *Independent Review* and *Cato* editorial circles, and with Reformed Baptist and historic Baptist clergy across the Americas.

## 8. MARKETING PLAN

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Italian Channels Italian publishers have a natural opening into this book: an Italian citizen, naturalized in Turin, prosecuted by a foreign democracy, denied consular protection and transfer to a more humane Italian jail under the Strasbourg Convention treaty that Italy signed in the mid-1980s, and writing in the literary lineage of Silvio Pellico’s *Le mie prigioni*. Approach paths: Religious presses (San Paolo, Queriniana, EDB Bologna) for the theological-memoir register. Academic and intellectual presses (Il Mulino, Rubbettino, Marsilio, Liberilibri) for the political-prisoner and free-market angles. Trade non-fiction (Mondadori Strade Blu, Bompiani saggi, Garzanti, Neri Pozza) for the literary-true-crime treatment. The Campania and Lucania regional press, given Cobin’s family roots in Oliveto Citra and Colliano. Conference circuit: Festaletteratura Mantova, Pordenonelegge, the *Salone del Libro Torino*—particularly relevant given Cobin’s residency in Turin during 2010–2012. Catholic intellectual journals (*Il Regno*, *Vita e Pensiero*, *Studium*) and the *Avvenire* and *La Stampa* book sections. Spanish-Language Channels Sebastián Izquierdo’s network (Chile, right-of-center commentariat). *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera*, *El Líbero* opinion pages. The musical political collective *La Firme*, which has already produced and circulated the song “Al Ritmo del Cañón (Historia de John Cobin)”. Latin American religious-liberty and persecution-focused outlets. English-Language Channels Religious-liberty organizations (Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors, Alliance Defending Freedom, the Becket Fund). Classical-liberal, conservative, and Christian-ministry partners (Cato, Reason, the Independent Institute, the Mises Institute, *The American Conservative*, Adam Smith Institute, Heritage Foundation, Fraser Institute, Mackinac Institute, Acton Institute, Christian Libertarian Institute, Foundation for Economic Education, Mercatus Institute, Institute for Humane Studies, Institute for Justice, American Enterprise Institute, Intercollegiate Studies

Institute (ISI), InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, The Navigators, Prison Fellowship (Chuck Colson’s ministry)). True-crime and literary non-fiction outlets (*The Atlantic*, *Harper’s*, *The New Yorker*, *Quillette*). Italian-American press (*La Voce di New York*, *America Oggi*, the *Order Sons and Daughters of Italy* in America newsletters).

Podcast circuit (Jordan Peterson, Triggernometry, Lex Fridman, Rod Dreher, Andrew Klavan, Holy Post, White Horse Inn). **Author Commitments.** The author commits to translation review and footnote integration in all three editions, to a minimum eighteen-month media tour, to in-person events in Italy (Turin, Oliveto Citra, Salerno, Rome, Milan) and in other parts of Europe and Latin America, Asia, Australia, as the publisher deems necessary, and to producing two long-form companion essays per quarter for serialization in periodicals during the launch year.

## 9. SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

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The work comprises five Books containing eleven Volumes, plus separately-paginated appendices and indices. Each prison location is narrated as one continuous incarceration with movements between cell blocks, dormitories, and yards inside each facility—not separate stints.

**Introduction:** The important backstory recommended by Reedsy consultant Don: A substantial autobiography of the protagonist, John Cobin—family origins, education, conversion, academic and pastoral career, and the chain of events leading to the November 10, 2019 incident—opens the work before Book One.

### ***BOOK ONE—Valparaíso and Legal Conviction (Volumes I & II)***

John’s arrest on November 10, 2019, following his self-defense incident in Reñaca, leads to two years and eight months of incarceration in Valparaíso’s cell blocks 118 and 109. Volumes I & II document the pre-trial period, the three-week trial starting on September 28, 2020, his October 16, 2020 conviction for attempted murder (which he contests as self-defense), his sentencing to eleven years and three days, his first year of imprisonment, the launch of the Supreme Court appeal and reduction of sentence to six years, twenty-six days without attempted murder charges, and the mobilization of his international support network. Throughout, John witnesses extreme prison violence, documents the Chilean justice system’s failures, begins teaching inmates the Bible and economics, and completes his first manuscripts for *Suffering Unjustly* and Volume 1 of *Bearing the Cross*. This book establishes both the injustice of his prosecution and the foundation of his ministry work amidst the chaos of a Chilean maximum-security prison.

### ***BOOK TWO—Valparaíso Deepening and Supreme Court Appeal (Volumes III & IV)***

By March 2021, sixteen months into imprisonment, John has become the most influential inmate in Valparaíso penitentiary, recognized as Bible teacher, chess champion, and intellectual mentor. Volumes III & IV chronicle his expanding ministry role, training of inmates in discipleship, navigation of complex prison hierarchies, and theological influence on the inmate population. Volume III (“Solutions”) presents John’s own theoretical replacement for prisons—a libertarian-Christian model of restitution, community oversight, and voluntary contractual

governance, drawing on his published doctoral work on allodial policy. These volumes document the slow legal developments and the bittersweet cycle of hope and disappointment as proceedings advance, while John maintains his discipleship teaching and intellectual leadership through late 2021.

### ***BOOK THREE—Valparaíso Final Period and Transfer to Rancagua (Volumes V, VI & VII)***

From November 2021 onward, John’s ministry reaches new depths with systematic discipleship classes and intensive Bible studies in cell blocks 118 and adjacent 118 A/B. Volume V chronicles the two-year mark of incarceration with his pursuit of language learning, chess excellence, and writing. Volume VI documents his transfers within the Valparaíso facility (blocks 118B, 118A, and back to 109 from March 2022), his adaptability amidst relocations, and the continuation of his ministry despite legal uncertainties and wrong doctrine and practice of prison Pentecostals. Volume VII covers his traumatic transfer to Rancagua prison after two years and eight months in Valparaíso—a transfer imposed as a sanction for writing *Bearing the Cross* and mentioning drug distribution and other corruption among the guards. Confined to cells in blocks 45 (a harsh, inhuman quarantine block) and 84 for approximately three months. In 45, John faces severe deprivation, lack of water and edible food, cold, and confinement to dungeon-like spaces that test his faith. This rupture separates him from his established network and the familiar Valparaíso structure.

### ***BOOK FOUR—Casablanca Arrival and Continued Ministry (Volumes VIII & IX)***

John arrives at Casablanca prison in October 2022, the third facility, housed in dormitories rather than cell blocks. Volume VIII documents his arrival and adaptation to material conditions that are improved compared to Valparaíso and Rancagua (better food, easier visitation, lower costs for family supporters), yet present new challenges of medical bureaucracy, heterodox theological battles among inmates, and cultural adjustment. Volume IX (“Incompetence, Runaround, Heterodoxy, and Evil”) chronicles his ongoing struggles with systemic failures: medical testing procedures that fail, court orders that *gendarmes* refuse to execute, delays in *CET (Centro de Educación y Trabajo)* transfers despite psychological and Warden approval to get him to such improved conditions, and encounters with false gospel teaching and practicing fornicating, homosexual, unrepentant pedophiles and murderers among the Pentecostal “church” members, with Pastor Juan Vásquez approving the situation while banning John from his services. John sustains his discipleship and teaching ministry while fighting against institutional incompetence and deliberate evil within the prison system’s medical, psychological, ministerial, and administrative apparatus.

### ***BOOK FIVE—Casablanca Final Years, Parole, and Conclusion (Volumes X & XI)***

Volumes X & XI cover John’s final period of incarceration through continued legal obstacles and mounting health challenges. Volume X (“A Fistful of Impediments and Ballistics”) documents John’s discovery of the ballistics *fraude* in his case—the fraudulent trajectories claimed by prosecution experts, the fraudulent bullet holes in the radiator and gearbox, the lack of exit

holes in the pants and the hospital report, and the fact that no bullets were recovered—the case resting on the speculation that the wounds and damage were caused by John’s ricochet, when analysis by ballistics expert Cristián Flores and basic physics and logic make clear that something other than a bullet caused the damage, the systematic falsification of forensic evidence—and his work reconstructing the true ballistics record from inside prison. Despite mounting legal obstacles and serious health crises (including Stage-2 renal carcinoma discovered in early 2025 during Sunday-home leave but not operated on until after he was on parole, on June 23, 2025), John maintains his intellectual engagement and ministry, writing and teaching while awaiting resolution of his case. Volume XI chronicles John’s final reassignments among dormitories 2, 4, 5, and yard 3, his approach to release, his advanced Italian language study, his deepening discipleship teaching, and his spiritual centeredness through Psalm 37:23 (“the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord”), Luke 21:19 (“by your patience possess your souls”), Philippians 1:29 (“unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake”), Acts 14:22 (“we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God”), and 1 Peter 2:19–20 (“if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God”—on which *Suffering Unjustly* was based). Early-release benefits began January 5, 2025; John was paroled on April 9, 2025—capping approximately 5.42 years of unjust imprisonment, which together with his parole period totals to close to six years of incarceration and parole.

The complete five-book structure presents John’s journey from arrest through conviction (Book One), through appellate proceedings and sentence reduction (Books Two through Four), to release and post-prison life (Book Five). The work documents a single criminal proceeding from arrest to parole with the granularity normally found only in commission reports, while also serving as extended theological meditation on unjust suffering, biblical self-defense, and Christian witness in oppressive circumstances.

Where else can one find this mixture of so much distinct expertise in a single protagonist: Baptist pastor preaching and teaching 865 times inside prison, actively supported by over 149 generous donors who also indirectly helped many other inmates; public-choice and Austrian economist commenting on the failure of the prison system to serve the elusive “public interest”; political philosopher; scholarly book reviewer; creative writer whose analogies drive home prison life to the lay reader; chess champion who dominated his cellblocks; libertarian activist; charitable worker; trilingual author (English, Spanish, Italian) who taught Bible, history, geography, English, and basic economics to inmates in two of those languages; forensic ballistics reconstructor who exposed the fraudulent evidence of his own prosecution; husband, father of seven and grandfather of seven; and a memoirist with a deep personal touch and unflinching insight into the emotions, feelings, and lasting effect of prison on family and friends?

## **10. ABOUT THE MANUSCRIPT**

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The complete manuscript (≈1,300,000 words of narrative, with separately-paginated appendices, indices, footnotes, and bibliography) is available for editorial review at [policyofliberty.com/literary-agents.php](http://policyofliberty.com/literary-agents.php) (download link; password furnished on request). Single

files: bearing\_the\_cross\_EN.docx and .pdf.

**Translations.** Spanish: Volume I complete (*Llevando la Cruz*), produced by Editorial Don Pelayo in Santiago, which holds Chilean Spanish rights only. Italian: *Portare la Croce*—interim translation available; sample chapters on request. For readers interested in the theology of prison ministry, the corollary volumes *Suffering Unjustly* and *Behind the Walls* are also available in all three languages.

**Editorial development.** The author welcomes editorial development. The work is structured for division into five separately marketable books, for a single omnibus volume, or for further consolidation into a shorter trade edition of 250,000–350,000 words at editorial discretion.

### *Health, threats, and abandonment*

For more than five years, behind the bars of three Chilean prisons, John Cobin contracted a series of grave illnesses that the Italian State knew about—and chose not to remedy. Every episode was communicated, in writing and in person, to the Italian Consulate in Santiago—first to the very young Consul Nicole Spada, then to her successor Francesca Siega—to the Vice Consul in Valparaíso Franco Dezerega, and to the Director General Stefano Opilio of the Ministry of Justice in Rome, at Via Arenula 70. The responses were evasive, formulaic, or simply absent. While the file slept on a ministerial desk, the illnesses advanced.

### **Documented pathologies.**

- Severe Covid-19 (June 2020, Valparaíso, *módulo* 109). Three nights—in his own words—in which “death was knocking at the door,” the brain unable to drive oxygen to the lungs. Loss of several kilograms in three weeks.
- Pneumonia no. 1 (June–July 2020, simultaneous with Covid-19). Thirteen days of heavy antibiotics following Dr. Venegas’ diagnosis (the Valparaíso prison doctor, a kind soul).
- Pneumonia no. 2 (July 2022, Rancagua *módulo* 45). Dr. Consuegra—the Rancagua prison doctor who tried to cover up the real cause and shield his colleague Major Riveros—ordered an X-ray: “half of the left lung in a fog, no oxygen exchange” (*Bearing the Cross*, P03964–P03966). The principal diagnoses were rendered at the Rancagua public hospital (where staff were miffed by John’s refusal of the Covid-19 vaccination) and, outside the prison, by friendly cardiologist Dr. Fernando Soto. The request for transfer to Clínica Santa María in Santiago was refused.
- At least seven documented respiratory/flu episodes (2020–March 2025), plus a tuberculosis exposure (24 October 2024, inmate Brian 2 in the adjacent *colectivo*).
- Stage-2 renal carcinoma. Blood in the urine on 17 June 2023; MRI confirmed the tumor on 23 January 2025; surgery—performed by Dr. Iván Pinto, robot-assisted, at Clínica Santa María in Santiago—postponed until 23 June 2025, two months after parole. The tumor had grown for more than eighteen months while the transfer file lay in Rome.
- Progressive macular degeneration, uncontrolled hypertension, hypothyroidism, diverticulitis, severe vertigo with vomiting (25 February 2023).
- Pneumonia twice in winter—Valparaíso (June 2020) and Rancagua (July 2022); pneumonia is the world’s fourth leading cause of death. A near-fatal Covid-19 episode during the Valparaíso pneumonia compounded the crisis.

- Torn shoulder connective tissue, contracted in prison and never properly diagnosed at the time—almost crippling to this day; more than twenty post-release physiotherapy sessions have failed to restore full mobility.
- Torn hip connective tissue, a parallel injury equally refractory to physiotherapy; continuous pain and persistent gait limitation.
- Left knee—marked stiffness, residual from having been operated on in 1991 and 2012, aggravated in prison and never treated there. To this day, after walking any distance, Cobin visibly limps.
- Endemic bedbugs. April 2021 episode: “seven baby bedbugs and five or six full-grown ones” in Cobin’s clothing.
- Weeks without soap in the communal showers (May–August 2023, dozens of manuscript citations); daily water cuts of 19–22 hours; broken plumbing throughout.

### **Torture, with names attached.**

*Valparaíso—gendarme Rigoberto Castro.* During the austral winter, Castro forced Cobin to sit for hours in the rain inside a cage exposed to the elements, without adequate clothing. This is torture as defined by Article 1 of the UN Convention Against Torture: severe pain, intentionally inflicted by a public official, for a discriminatory purpose.

*Rancagua—concrete quarantine cell.* Cobin was held for 321 consecutive hours ( $\approx 13.4$  days) in a cell with broken windows, sub-zero winter air filtering in continuously, water gushing from broken fixtures that mixed the damp cold with airborne mold spores, following the direct orders of the nefarious, unprincipled Major Riveros, who detested John’s polite and respectful unwillingness to be Covid-19 tested. Direct consequence: one of the two bouts of pneumonia.

The pneumonias were caused, not merely left untreated. On both occasions Cobin was running a fever of  $39.8\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  /  $103.6\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$  and was refused permission to return to his bed to sleep: he had to pull on his hooded jacket and lie down on the concrete floor of the yard or inmate work booth, with morning temperatures of  $-4\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  /  $25\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ , while the cough would not stop.

**Pamela Sepúlveda Mendoza, heroine of the medical saga.** Without Pamela Sepúlveda Mendoza—the prisoner’s wife, and with her the household helper María, and Pamela’s childhood friend Jana (Nadia), who also helped out a great deal—the author would never have reached any of the consultations at private clinics outside the prison. Cobin carried private health insurance (*Isapre*) that covered every cost in full: the financial barrier did not exist. And yet the *gendarmes* refused care systematically until Pamela and John’s lawyers (chief among them Héctor Concha in Casablanca and Freddy Acosta in Rancagua) pushed individually for each authorization, sometimes resorting to court orders. “If the *gendarmes* had taken John for the MRI Dr. Pinto ordered in 2023,” Cobin wrote in June 2025 after the surgery, “the tumor would have been caught early, rather than taking everyone by surprise in 2025.”

**Death threats arising from naming names in the book.** In Volume 1 of *Bearing the Cross*, Cobin named—by full name or by transparent pseudonym—a number of fellow inmates: child molesters, drug dealers, violent political militants. Once they learned that their names appeared in the manuscript, retaliation began: Casablanca Warden Lt. Rodrigo Jesús Parra Pardo physically confiscated four pages of the manuscript on 18 January 2023; the inmate

*Garra* (a drug runner) spat in Cobin's face and threw wood at him on 23 February 2023; the inmate Omar 1—a Communist—issued a death threat on 26 July 2023: “any time, any place [...] if you narked, I will call on my communist pals to stab you.” Cobin himself recorded: “Should the writing of *Bearing the Cross* suddenly come to a stop, the reader would know that the communists succeeded in killing John.”

The threats were transmitted to the Italian Consulate through Pamela, inside a continuous correspondence between February 2023 and December 2024 that explicitly invoked “the human rights violations he was experiencing as a reason for urgency.”

No protection of any kind was offered by the Italian State. Pamela herself came to fear, in January 2025, that she might be kidnapped for ransom by the “*patio scumbags*” who—having learned of the book—would assume John had money.

**Three verbatim passages from the manuscript.** “Three nights during the end of June (between doctor visits), John thought he was close to death. He could not breathe well and sometimes not at all, waking him up as his brain struggled to get oxygen to his lungs. It was horrifying lying all alone in the cold, dark cell with death knocking at the door.”—*Bearing the Cross*, June 2020, *módulo* 109

“Prison conditions in Chile are intolerable and dangerous, especially for a foreigner born in the First World who considers himself to be a political prisoner. The courts and prison authorities seem to rather enjoy the spectacle of my presence, but it is nothing but a terrestrial hell for me.”—Letter to Dr. Stefano Opilio, Director General, Italian Ministry of Justice, Rome, 4 March 2024

“And whatever happened to Italy, and its official spokespeople, Francesca and Franco, who let him rot in jail for years, while bureaucrats sat on his transfer request? The animals in prison were to blame for small evils, but there were many other greater evils imposed by truly evil judges, police experts, police officers, *gendarmes*, and bureaucrats.”—*Bearing the Cross*, 30 March 2025, ten days before parole.

**What ordinary people did, and what the State did not.** There is a counterpoint to all of this that the documentary record makes inescapable. The Italian State of which Cobin is also a citizen contributed nothing—no transfer to an Italian penitentiary, no dollar of consular assistance, no institutional response of any meaningful kind. Across the five years and five months of his confinement, 149 individuals did. His son David carried sixteen percent of that burden; his cousin Dan added a quieter, steady help. None of his other six children (Paul was only a teenager, and was thus excused) or sister Gina (and her daughters Giulia and Danica) sent any help, nor did any other cousins, three aunts, or uncle Mike. Instead, more than 147 close friends, libertarians, conservatives, acquaintances, and Baptist and other brothers in the Christian faith contributed because they recognised, without needing to be told and without diplomatic instruction, that a raw injustice had been done. Together they donated USD 197,500 for the family's support. What the institutions refused to do, ordinary people did—out of their own pockets, on their own initiative, with no register to sign and no diplomatic note to file. The contrast is, in itself, the moral verdict on the case.

**The unavoidable truth.** The Italian State knew—by written declaration on file, by twice-signed letters, by twenty-two documented contacts between Pamela Sepúlveda Mendoza and the Consulate in Santiago, by four in-person prison visits from Vice Consul Franco Dezerega—that one of its own citizens, suffering from renal cancer, was approaching death in a Chilean cell, exposed to torture and to death threats from pedophiles named in his book, like Carlos Donoso Muñoz, a sailor who published sex acts with his eight-year-old daughter on WhatsApp, like Carlos Donoso Muñoz, a sailor who published sex acts with his eight-year-old daughter on WhatsApp. It chose silence. The documentary record is unambiguous: a sovereign state with formal notice, repeated written warnings, four in-person consular visits, and twenty-two documented contacts with the prisoner’s wife elected silence while its citizen was tortured and threatened with death. *Bearing the Cross*—together with its companion volumes *Suffering Unjustly* and *Behind the Walls*—is the dated, signed, counter-signed evidence of that silence. This memoir is the record.

**2026 Update—the active Chilean criminal investigation.** As this proposal goes to editors, a criminal investigation is under way in Chile—opened by court order on October 4, 2025, not at police discretion. The lead investigator is Detective Cristian Severino of Chile’s *Policía de Investigaciones (PDI)*; he took John’s detailed sworn statement on January 17 and 22, 2026. The charges so far are obstruction of justice (*obstrucción a la justicia*) and further offences. Severino’s most recent personal update to Cobin is dated April 30, 2026: having concluded several pending matters, he indicated that the witness-interview phase would begin in the first weeks of May 2026—the phase now under way.

**State actors under investigation.** Under investigation are Assistant District Attorney Paola Rojas Caro, who tried Cobin in 2020, and the forensic-police experts (*peritos*) who testified against him at the original trial or knowingly made impossible ricochet and scene diagrams or drawings to fit the prosecution’s fictional case. The named *peritos*: Carabineros planimetrists Lt. Juan Delgado Espinoza and 1st Sgt. César A. Necul González; PDI planimetrist Larinka Lobos Rodríguez; Labocar ballistics expert Marco Labrán Tapia; and LACRIM/PDI Subprefecto Héctor Díaz Orellana. Their supervisors—co-responsible for what their subordinates produced—were LACRIM’s José I. Araneda Isamit, Labocar’s Rodrigo Fedo Alvarado, Carabineros Major Ricardo A. Arriagada Sepúlveda, and Carabineros Captain Jorge Hugo Guzmán Rojas (SEBV Valparaíso, investigation leader). Cobin’s sworn statement accuses these state actors of having purposefully and knowingly failed to be objective and competent experts.

**The independent review that broke the case open.** A separate, independent ballistics review by Cristián Flores—also of the PDI—found that the original forensics team had failed to apply the proper tests despite having the capability, and had absurdly concluded that Cobin’s lead-free solid-copper bullets had nonetheless left microscopic lead residues inside the gearbox—even though no bullet was ever recovered from that gearbox. The reasoning collapses on its own terms.

**The cover-up.** Col. Osses of the Carabineros compounded the fraud in 2024 by refusing, in an official letter, to release the underlying evidence protocols on grounds of “national security”—lest Chileans, she warned, begin to doubt the forensic process. The conspiracy extended well

beyond prosecutor Rojas and her Communist Party collaborators (Oliva, Díaz, and Burgos) to include lawyer Andrés Lagos representing then-President Piñera, together with the police and medical-legal forensic experts named above.

**Coached false witnesses.** Cobin’s sworn statement also accuses five or more false witnesses whose obviously prepared testimonies—coached by prosecutor Rojas and her Communist Party collaborating lawyers Oliva, Díaz, and Burgos—contradicted both the video evidence and the eyewitness police testimony. These five witnesses are now under formal investigation; their depositions, checked against the ballistic forensics, the video, and the cross-witness record in the appellate file, are reportedly irreconcilable with the documented physical sequence of events of November 10, 2019 in Reñaca.

This matters for an Anglophone reader and for an Anglophone publisher. It means that the case is no longer a private claim of innocence by a wrongly-convicted citizen: it is an active investigation by Chilean state institutions into the conduct of their own prosecution and their own forensic experts. Chile is putting its own actors on trial for the way they convicted Cobin. The manuscript thus becomes the contemporaneous record of a criminal-justice failure that the implicated jurisdiction itself has now begun to acknowledge. Few wrongful-conviction memoirs reach the editor’s desk while the state in question is still opening files; this one does. *Bearing the Cross* is the dated, signed, counter-signed record of exactly the facts that Detective Severino is now reconstructing from inside the same jurisdiction.

*Note:* The final pages of this proposal (contact details, dated submission line) may be updated prior to publication.