

Nutritionist Verónica from Valparaíso penitentiary came and interviewed John and others, promising to start dieta for them on Friday or Monday. She remembered John from módulo 118 and doubted Felipe's story that the whole module had changed to 109 since she had made no modifications to the dieta schedule for 118. John's weight (clothed with a winter sweater and long underwear) was 127 kilograms, basically the same as his weigh-in at Rancagua but clearly a belt notch heavier than his lowest point during the quasi-starvation suffered in Rancagua. He grew back a centimeter to 187, too. John had his outgoing encomienda bag ready early and, besides taking a walk and writing a little, did nothing more than beat Mario 3 twice in chess—concluding their three hundred sixty-sixth game. Noontime rancho was one of the best John had seen all year: boiled potato wedges, carrots, and onions with chunks of pork, plus shredded carrot and lettuce salad. "The nutritionist ought to visit more often," mused John, "so that the pacos and kitchen staff make better food in order to impress her." Verónica had inquired about what foods were brought to him during visitation and through encomienda, which was far more frequent than in Valparaíso (when both things were combined in two days—versus over four days per week in Casablanca). She looked a little befuddled when John described for her the variety of foods he was able to eat and thus mostly avoided rancho. She acted surprised that he and other chronically ill reos would have to eat rancho instead of dieta, but there had been no dieta offered during John's nine months in the jailhouse, and he had never seen a nutritionist or a doctor (or even a nurse) either. Did Verónica really believe the pacos were concerned about sick men's food or diet? As far as John could ascertain from others, there had been no nutritionist on site for years, much less trained medical personnel. Did she know that lack of medical care had contributed to Marcelo 2's death? In the end, John figured that she probably just shrugged off the minor nuisance impacting her conscience as an inextricable inefficiency, and thought, probably, "What did it matter since they were all just criminals anyway?" Pamela was slightly amused by the story and revealed that the only "help" Solange had really given her was to give her Roa's phone number (the Casablanca jailhouse's general line), which was no help at all since Roa was unwilling or unable to schedule her husband's medical exams. Pamela was going to try calling the two people who spoke to John recently from the Public Defenders Regional Office. There was always a gendarme van (paddy wagon) parked in front of the jailhouse, and so she wondered why they always said there was no vehicle to take John to the doctor or hospital.