

# ***Bearing the Cross***

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

A Five-Book, Eleven-Volume True Crime Journal/Memoir

By John M. Cobin, Ph.D.

## **BOOK PROPOSAL**

### **Contact Information:**

Dr. John M. Cobin

Email: [jcobin@policyofliberty.com](mailto:jcobin@policyofliberty.com)

Phone: +56 9 4990 0391 (Voice/WhatsApp/Telegram)

Website: [policyofliberty.com](http://policyofliberty.com)

**Project Status:** Complete manuscript (5 books, 11 volumes, ~1.25 million words)

**Rights Available:** All territories (some exceptions apply), all languages

**Film/TV Rights:** Available

### **OVERVIEW**

On November 10, 2019, during Chile's social unrest, a mob attacked my vehicle while I sat trapped at a roadblock. Video evidence shows protesters shouting death threats before someone opened my door to assault me. I fired two warning shots in self-defense. One protester was wounded. I was arrested, prosecuted, and convicted—despite forensic evidence that should have exonerated me in any fair court.

*Bearing the Cross* chronicles my wrongful arrest, conviction, and 5.4 years inside Chile's prison system. This is a meticulously documented memoir combining human drama with forensic evidence, prison ministry, and personal survival.

### **SURVIVING DEATH: Health Crises Behind Bars**

The narrative includes multiple near-death experiences: contracting COVID-19 in squalid prison conditions (my study documents zero deaths among prisoners despite overcrowding, challenging the 'pandemic' designation); surviving pneumonia twice in facilities with minimal medical care; and developing renal cancer in 2023, finally treated successfully in 2025 after prolonged bureaucratic delays. These health battles add visceral human interest to the larger story of injustice.

### **CHARACTER JOURNEYS: Growth Through Adversity**

Central characters undergo profound transformations: Pamela (my wife) evolves from uncertain supporter to fierce advocate; María emerges as an unexpected ally; Jana's journey from skeptic to believer; Valentín (1,761 mentions) becomes a key figure in the prison ministry narrative; Joe and Bob represent the North American connections that sustained hope. These character arcs provide emotional depth beyond the legal drama.

### **FAMILY STRUGGLES: Marriage and Children Under Pressure**

The memoir candidly documents the strain on family relationships—4,096 references to wife/marriage and 6,002 to children reveal the human cost of wrongful imprisonment. Readers witness marital tensions, children's struggles with their father's absence, financial hardships, and the slow work of rebuilding trust and connection across prison walls. This family dimension gives the story universal resonance.

## **PRISON REFORM THESIS: A Libertarian Alternative**

Drawing on my Ph.D. in Public Policy and firsthand experience, the book develops a compelling thesis for replacing the current prison system with market-based alternatives emphasizing restitution, rehabilitation, and reduced state power. This intellectual framework transforms personal narrative into policy advocacy, appealing to readers interested in criminal justice reform.

## **CORRUPT JUDGES: The Irony of Injustice**

Three judges who condemned or kept me imprisoned have since been exposed as criminals: María Teresa Letelier (Supreme Court)—under criminal investigation for corrupt judicial appointments, home raided by police January 2026; Alonso Arancibia Rodríguez (presided over my trial)—caught secretly filming women at a gym, suspended; Juan Carlos Maggiolo Caro (denied my parole citing my ‘dangerous American values’)—convicted of fatal hit-and-run, sentenced to prison. The low quality of these judges underscores the systemic corruption documented throughout.

## **COMPLETE BOOK STRUCTURE**

The work comprises 5 Books containing 11 Volumes, plus extensive appendices and indices:

### **BOOK ONE: Valparaíso (Part 1)**

Introduction: Autobiography of the protagonist, John Cobin

#### **Volume I: Cell Blocks 118 and 109 (21 chapters)**

The narrative opens with the author’s introduction to the brutal reality of Chilean prison life. Beginning with the terrifying sounds of violence echoing through cell blocks, Volume I documents the initial shock of incarceration, first encounters with the prison hierarchy, navigating survival among dangerous inmates, and confronting the dehumanizing conditions of pre-trial detention. Chapter titles drawn from Scripture (e.g., ‘The Beginning of Sorrows,’ ‘What Is Crooked Cannot Be Made Straight’) reflect the author’s faith perspective throughout his ordeal.

#### **Volume II: Redux (22 chapters)**

Continues the Valparaíso prison experience with deepening understanding of the corrupt system. Covers the author’s adaptation to prison routine, relationships with fellow inmates, witnessing injustices against others, early ministry efforts, and the psychological toll of wrongful imprisonment. Themes include oppressive power structures, patient endurance, and maintaining hope amid adversity.

### **BOOK TWO: Valparaíso (Part 2)**

#### **Volume III: Solutions (19 chapters)**

Explores attempts to address problems both legal and practical within prison. The author develops coping strategies, engages in theological study, witnesses both corruption and unexpected kindness, and begins more structured ministry work. Covers cell searches, contraband issues, prisoner conflicts, and navigating the Byzantine bureaucracy of the Chilean penal system.

#### **Volume IV: Sweet and Sour (20 chapters)**

Documents the mixed experiences of prison life—moments of connection and grace alongside continued hardship. Covers spiritual growth, relationships with family outside, health challenges, the trial process, and maintaining intellectual engagement through reading (204 books total) and chess (3,780 games, 91.5% won).

### **BOOK THREE: Valparaíso (Part 3) and Rancagua**

#### **Volume V: Beating the Air (20 chapters)**

Covers the frustrating appeals process and bureaucratic obstacles. The author contends with illness, corrupt officials, ineffective legal representation, and the maddening slowness of judicial proceedings. Documents the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on prison life, including lockdowns and health crises.

**Volume VI: Cell Blocks 118B, 118A, and back to 109 (17 chapters)**

Chronicles transfers between cell blocks within the prison system, each move bringing new challenges and dangers. Covers ongoing ministry work, discipleship of fellow inmates, confrontations with prison authorities, and the emotional toll of prolonged incarceration on family relationships.

**Volume VII: Cell Blocks 45 and 84 (8 chapters)**

Transitions to the Rancagua prison facility. Describes conditions in different cell blocks, new cast of characters among inmates and guards, continued faith-based ministry, and preparations for potential transfer. Chapter titles reference the dungeon without water and walking in white—themes of suffering and purity.

**BOOK FOUR: Casablanca (Part 1)**

**Volume VIII: Dormitory 3 and Yard 5 (20 chapters)**

Describes life at the Casablanca prison facility with its different structure (dormitories and yards rather than cells). Covers new ministry opportunities, interactions with a different prisoner population, continued legal battles, and maintaining hope despite repeated disappointments in the appeals process.

**Volume IX: Incompetence, Runaround, Heterodoxy, and Evil (22 chapters)**

A scathing account of systemic failures: incompetent bureaucrats, endless runaround in legal proceedings, theological disputes with other religious groups in prison, and encounters with genuine evil among both prisoners and officials. Documents specific instances of judicial corruption and evidence manipulation.

**BOOK FIVE: Casablanca (Part 2), Tables, Graphs, and Indices**

**Volume X: A Fistful of Impediments and Ballistics (21 chapters)**

Details the forensic evidence proving the author's innocence, including ballistics analysis showing the prosecution's case violated laws of physics. Documents the obstacles preventing justice, expert testimony ignored by courts, and the frustrating disconnect between evidence and verdict.

**Volume XI: Enduring to the End in Dormitories 2, 4, 5, and Yard 3 (22 chapters)**

The final volume covering the author's last period of incarceration through release. Chronicles final transfers, continued ministry (bringing 10-15 inmates to Christian faith), release preparations, and reflections on the entire experience. Chapter titles drawn from Pauline epistles and the Psalms emphasize endurance through suffering at the hands of evildoers.

**Epilogue:** Post-Prison Life of John Cobin—covers life after release and ongoing advocacy for criminal justice reform.

**Appendices:** (1) Bible verses from which chapter titles were derived; (2) Tables and Graphs (Gendarme evaluations, donations, character appearances, sermons, books read, lawyers, ministry results); (3) AI Ballistics Analysis with charts

**Indices:** Names, Family, Gendarmes, Prisoners, Judges/Bureaucrats/Politicians, Lawyers, Places, Books Read, Medical Doctors, Bible Verses, Key Sermons, General Subject Index

**KEY THEMES AND CONTENT**

**Prison Experience:** 7,346 references to prison life, cells, inmates, and incarceration conditions

**Baptist Ministry:** 1,925 references; 865 Bible studies/sermons preached; 10-15 inmates brought to faith

**Chile/Chilean Context:** 2,087 references to Chilean culture, society, and institutions

**Chess:** 1,152 references; 3,780 games played (91.5% won, 1.9% drawn) as intellectual survival strategy

**COVID-19 Pandemic:** 832 references documenting pandemic's impact on prison conditions

**Libertarian Economics:** 542 references to free-market principles and political philosophy

**Ministry/Sermons/Study:** 1,935 references; 204 books read during incarceration

**Corruption:** 193 documented instances of judicial and institutional corruption

**Abuse:** 231 references to mistreatment within the prison system

**Persecution:** 130 references; 81 specific references to political prisoner status

## TARGET AUDIENCE

### Primary Audience

True crime enthusiasts who follow wrongful conviction cases and prison memoirs. This includes readers of bestsellers like John Grisham's *Framed*, Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy*, and Piper Kerman's *Orange Is the New Black*. The true crime genre commands over \$600 million annually in the U.S. book market.

### Secondary Audience

Christians interested in persecution narratives, prison ministry, and faith under fire. This includes readers of Richard Wurmbrand's *Tortured for Christ* (3+ million copies sold) and Corrie ten Boom's *The Hiding Place*. The religious/inspirational market represents 6% of all book sales.

### Tertiary Audience

Libertarians, criminal justice reform advocates, and those interested in Latin American politics. The book's critique of judicial corruption and state overreach appeals to readers concerned about government abuse of power across the political spectrum.

### International Audience

Spanish-speaking readers throughout Latin America and the U.S. Hispanic market. With over 500 million Spanish speakers worldwide and growing interest in true crime content, the bilingual availability significantly expands market reach.

## COMPARABLE TITLES

*Bearing the Cross* enters a proven market with established bestsellers while offering unique perspective:

### ***The Gulag Archipelago* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (Éditions du Seuil, 1973)**

Nobel Prize-winning exposé of Soviet prison camps, written secretly during Solzhenitsyn's own imprisonment and exile. Sold tens of millions of copies worldwide and helped bring down the Soviet system. *Bearing the Cross* shares remarkable parallels: both authors documented state persecution from inside prison cells; both expose corrupt judicial systems through meticulous firsthand detail; both combine personal memoir with systemic critique of governmental abuse. While Solzhenitsyn wrote secretly, Cobin documented openly—producing 1.25 million words of day-by-day testimony that stands as the most comprehensive wrongful conviction account ever written.

### ***Framed* by John Grisham and Jim McCloskey (Doubleday, 2024)**

Shortlisted for the ALCS Gold Dagger for Non-Fiction 2025. Grisham’s first nonfiction since *The Innocent Man* presents ten wrongful conviction cases. *Bearing the Cross* offers what Grisham provides from the outside—but written from inside, by the wrongfully convicted person himself, with 1.25 million words of day-by-day documentation.

***Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson (Spiegel & Grau, 2014)**

#1 *New York Times* bestseller, adapted into major motion picture starring Michael B. Jordan and Jamie Foxx. Stevenson writes as a lawyer fighting for the wrongfully convicted. *Bearing the Cross* provides the prisoner’s perspective—what it actually feels like to be abandoned by the justice system while maintaining faith and purpose.

***Orange Is the New Black* by Piper Kerman (Spiegel & Grau, 2010)**

*New York Times* bestseller adapted into Emmy-winning Netflix series. Kerman served 15 months in a U.S. federal prison. *Bearing the Cross* documents 5.4 years in Chilean prisons—a far more brutal system—with deeper theological and political analysis.

***Midnight Express* by Billy Hayes (E.P. Dutton, 1977)**

Classic prison memoir adapted into Academy Award-winning film. Hayes spent five years in Turkish prisons for drug smuggling. *Bearing the Cross* offers a similar foreign prison narrative but with crucial differences: the author was innocent, acting in documented self-defense, and the story involves contemporary political persecution rather than criminal activity.

***Papillon* by Henri Charrière (Robert Laffont, 1969)**

Sold over 10 million copies worldwide. Charrière’s account of French Guiana penal colony captivated readers with its survival narrative. *Bearing the Cross* provides a modern equivalent with forensic documentation proving innocence—something Charrière never had.

***Home of the Happy* by Jordan LaHaye Fontenot (William Morrow, 2024)**

National bestseller exploring wrongful conviction in Louisiana. Demonstrates continued strong market for wrongful conviction true crime narratives, especially those with personal family connections and regional/cultural specificity.

**“*The Economic Organisation of a P.O.W. Camp*” by R.A. Radford (*Economica*, 1945)**

Classic economics article documenting how WWII prisoners in German POW camps created a functioning market economy, with cigarettes as currency. Written from firsthand experience by a prisoner, Radford’s insider account became required reading in economics courses worldwide. *Bearing the Cross* similarly provides an economist’s insider perspective on prison life, documenting the informal economies, power structures, and survival strategies that emerge in incarceration—observations only possible from someone living inside the system.

## **UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION**

*Bearing the Cross* offers distinctive features unavailable in any comparable title:

### **1. Unprecedented Documentation**

At 1.25 million words across 11 volumes, this is the most comprehensively documented wrongful conviction account ever written. Every incident, every conversation, every injustice is recorded in real-time journal entries—not reconstructed memories years later.

### **2. Video Evidence of Innocence**

Unlike most wrongful conviction cases relying on witness testimony or DNA, video footage exists showing the mob attack, death threats, and the door being opened to assault the author. This forensic evidence portfolio transforms the narrative from "he said/she said" into documented fact.

### **3. Ballistics Proving Prosecution Fraud**

AI-assisted ballistics analysis demonstrates the prosecution's case violated laws of physics. The trajectory and evidence presented at trial was physically impossible—documented proof of judicial corruption, not mere allegation.

### **4. Three Corrupt Judges Now Exposed**

The judges who condemned or kept the author imprisoned have themselves been exposed as criminals: one under investigation for corrupt appointments (home raided January 2026), one caught secretly filming women, one convicted of fatal hit-and-run. This ironic vindication adds compelling narrative dimension.

### **5. Written From Prison**

Unlike academic treatments or journalistic accounts, this was written day-by-day from inside Chilean prison cells with pen and paper. The immediacy and authenticity cannot be replicated by outside observers.

### **6. Bilingual Availability**

Complete manuscript available in English and Spanish, enabling simultaneous publication in both markets—rare for this genre.

### **7. Film/TV Ready**

The dramatic narrative arc—American defending himself against mob, prosecuted by Communist Party lawyers, surviving brutal prison system, proving innocence through forensic evidence, seeing his corrupt judges exposed—offers compelling adaptation potential.

## **AUTHOR PLATFORM**

### **Established Online Presence**

PolicyOfLiberty.com: Author's main website featuring comprehensive case documentation, multilingual content (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, French), literary agent dossier, forensic evidence portfolio, and ministry resources. The site includes downloadable manuscripts, video evidence, and six-language audio summaries.

BautistasHistoricos.com: Spanish-language Reformed Baptist ministry website reaching believers throughout Latin America.

### **Proven Media Success**

The author has demonstrated strong audience engagement through media appearances:

Nicole Rodríguez YouTube Interview (October 15, 2025): This single interview achieved over 13,527 views, nearly 1,700 "likes," and 414 written comments (99% positive and sympathetic). A follow-up interview is scheduled for March 2026. This viral response demonstrates significant public interest in the story.

Fountainhead Forum Podcast (FF-364): Extended interview discussing political situation in Chile and prison experience, reaching libertarian and freedom-focused audiences.

Red Hot Chile Podcast: Multiple episodes on "Liberty and Life in Chile," building audience among expatriates and those interested in Latin American affairs.

Six-Language Audio Summaries: Professional audio presentations of the book proposal available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German, and French, demonstrating international marketing capability.

### **Financial Supporter Network**

During imprisonment, the author developed a network of 149 unique financial supporters who provided ongoing assistance. This dedicated base demonstrates committed readership likely to purchase and promote the book upon publication.

### **Ministry Network**

- Co-pastor of Historic Baptists (Bautistas Históricos) online ministry
- Connections with Reformed Baptist churches throughout Latin America
- Prison ministry contacts and ongoing outreach programs
- 865 Bible studies/sermons delivered during incarceration with documented 10–15 conversions

### **Academic and Professional Credentials**

- Ph.D. in Public Policy, George Mason University
- M.A. in Economics, George Mason University
- M.A. in Business Economics, UC Santa Barbara
- Undergraduate degrees in religious studies and biblical studies
- University professor at multiple Chilean and American institutions
- Published author of multiple books on economics, public policy, and Christian ethics
- Fluent in English and Spanish; conversant in Italian

## **MARKETING PLAN**

### **True Crime Market Strategy**

Podcast Circuit: True crime podcasts collectively reach millions of listeners monthly. The author's compelling story—American imprisoned in Chile, video evidence of innocence, corrupt judges exposed—offers ideal content for long-form interview formats. Target shows include *Crime Junkie*, *My Favorite Murder*, *Wrongful Conviction with Jason Flom*, and *Actual Innocence*.

Wrongful Conviction Organizations: Partnerships with Innocence Project, National Registry of Exonerations, and wrongful conviction advocacy groups provide access to engaged audiences passionate about justice reform.

Book Club Targeting: True crime book clubs and reading groups actively seek new titles with discussion potential. The book's multiple dimensions (legal, religious, political, personal) provide rich discussion material.

### **Religious Market Strategy**

Persecution Ministry Organizations: Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors, International Christian Concern, and similar organizations serve millions of supporters interested in persecuted believers. The author's story of maintaining faith through 5.4 years of unjust imprisonment aligns perfectly with their missions.

Prison Ministry Networks: Prison Fellowship, Good News Jail & Prison Ministry, and local jail ministries provide distribution channels for both inspirational reading and practical ministry application.

Reformed/Calvinist Networks: The book's theological foundation creates opportunities with Ligonier Ministries, Banner of Truth, Reformed seminaries, and Calvinist church networks.

### **Political/Libertarian Market Strategy**

Liberty-Focused Media: *Reason Magazine*, Cato Institute, Mises Institute, and libertarian podcasts reach audiences concerned about government overreach and judicial corruption.

Second Amendment Community: The self-defense narrative resonates with gun rights advocates and publications covering defensive gun use cases.

### **International Strategy**

Spanish-Language Release: Simultaneous or near-simultaneous Spanish edition captures Latin American market and U.S. Hispanic readers. Spanish-language Christian radio (present in every Latin American country) provides promotional opportunities.

European Interest: Italian citizenship and language ability, plus translated materials in Portuguese, Italian, German, and French, enable European market outreach.

### **Adaptation Potential**

The dramatic narrative offers strong film/TV adaptation potential: clear three-act structure (incident, imprisonment, vindication); video footage of inciting incident; compelling antagonists (corrupt prosecutors, criminal judges); redemption arc through prison ministry; ironic justice through judges' exposure; international setting with cultural conflict themes.

### **Author Commitment**

The author commits to extensive marketing participation: unlimited podcast and media interviews (fluent English/Spanish); speaking engagements at churches, conferences, and universities; social media content creation and engagement; book signing events and tours as arranged; cooperation with publicity campaigns and promotional activities.

## **MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLIC INTEREST**

Initial Coverage (2019): *Washington Post*, BBC, major Chilean outlets (Emol, BioBioChile, Cooperativa) covered the incident extensively, establishing name recognition.

Ongoing Interest: Wikipedia article documents the case with ongoing updates. Online forums and expatriate communities continue discussing the case years later.

Corrupt Judges Coverage (2024–2026): Chilean media coverage of the judges' subsequent crimes (CIPER Chile, BioBioChile, Cooperativa, SoyChile) provides news hooks connecting current events to the book's themes.

Social Media Engagement: The Nicole Rodríguez interview's viral success (13,500+ views, 1,700 likes, 414 comments with 99% positive sentiment) demonstrates strong organic audience interest when given exposure to the story.

## **EVENTS AND SPEAKING**

The author is available for (preferably by Zoomcast to avoid undue travel expenses from Chile):

- Book Launch Events: Signings, readings, and Q&A sessions in both English and Spanish markets
- Conference Speaking: Criminal justice reform conferences, religious liberty events, libertarian/freedom conferences, prison ministry gatherings
- University Lectures: Academic presentations on Chilean judicial system, wrongful conviction, prison conditions, or Latin American politics
- Church Appearances: Sunday services, men's groups, Wednesday night programs, prison ministry training

- Podcast/Media: Unlimited availability for interviews in English and Spanish

The author's academic credentials (Ph.D., university teaching experience) and pastoral experience (865 sermons in prison) provide polished presentation skills suitable for diverse audiences.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. John M. Cobin is a dual Italian-Chilean citizen with a Ph.D. in Public Policy from George Mason University, M.A. in Economics (George Mason), M.A. in Business Economics (UC Santa Barbara), and undergraduate degrees in religious studies and biblical studies. He has been a university professor, entrepreneur, consultant, Baptist pastor, and international conference speaker. Fluent in English and Spanish and conversant in Italian, he has authored numerous books and articles on economics, public policy, and Christian ethics.

During his 5.4 years of incarceration, Dr. Cobin led Bible studies/preaching/lectures 865 times, read 204 books, played 3,780 chess games, and learned Italian. He survived COVID-19, pneumonia (twice), and renal cancer. He is married to Pamela Sepúlveda Mendoza, a Chilean Baptist whose great-grandfather was the first Chilean Baptist convert (1896). He has 7 children and 7 grandchildren.

## **CONTACT**

Dr. John M. Cobin

Email: [jcobin@policyofliberty.com](mailto:jcobin@policyofliberty.com)

Phone: +56 9 4990 0391 (Voice/WhatsApp/Telegram)

Website: [policyofliberty.com/literary-agents.php](http://policyofliberty.com/literary-agents.php)

**Materials Available:** Complete manuscript ([policyofliberty.com/download-btc.php](http://policyofliberty.com/download-btc.php) — password available upon request), forensic evidence portfolio, video evidence, six-language podcasts, sample chapters, author CV