

## The New and Improved Cold-Case Christianity | with J. Warner Wallace

(September 1, 2023)

### FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, if I was going to give one book to someone who wanted to know whether or not the New Testament documents were telling the truth, it would be "Cold-Case Christianity", written by my friend, Detective J. Warner Wallace. Well, that book has actually been improved, believe it or not. It's hard to improve a modern-day classic, but Jim has. Because the first one came out 10 years ago in 2013. Here we are 10 years later, and he's updated it. The question is, how do you make a great book better? And the great J. Warner Wallace is going to tell us. Jim, how did you make "Cold-Case Christianity" better? What did you do?

### JIM:

I hope I made it better. I mean, who knows, right? I mean, that's the hope anyway. But a lot of it was because I was recording the audio version of the old book. And I hadn't done that the first eight years. We had an artist do this back in the day. And they didn't know who I was, because they wouldn't try to even do the audio version. So, they asked me when it kind of renewed, would you be willing to go and record that book again? Which I did. And as I was recording it, I thought, oh my goodness. There's so much more I can say in this one area. You learn things, Frank, as you know, by presenting this material over, and over, and over again on stages. Like, where's the pushback? Where are the questions? Where are the things you could have been clearer about?

So, in my mind, I thought, if I ever get a chance to rewrite this book, I would do it, I think. Also, when I first wrote the book, you know, I like to illustrate everything all the way out. And this was my first book. I think the publisher was kind of like, what do you mean illustrate every page? I really wanted to illustrate every page. And so, we were able to go back. There isn't a single page of the original book we haven't edited, haven't changed in some way. There are some seriously significant changes, especially if I learned how to maybe throw the concept better in front of an audience. And then I thought, well, you know, that would be good to have in the book.

For example, this was one thing we do in front of audiences all the time, with a series of cell phones to show how textual transmission occurs over time in the manuscripts. Well, that was not in the original book. That was something that I thought of while working with high schoolers. And so, I thought, I'm going to go back and rewrite that into the book. So, we did a lot of that. Tweaking, and changing, and then adding entirely new sections, an entirely new section on archaeology because that does change. We wrote also a new afterword where you talk about



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the 12 most common objections I've gotten over the last 10 years. We answer those. And we've added 300 illustrations to the book.

It's the book I was always hoping we would have written in the very beginning. So now, that's this book. I can't imagine a time now to rewrite this. This is kind of the book I always wanted. And you only learn that after you have to read your own book. Which by the way, is a painful experience I think because I'm so critical of my own work. I'm thinking, why did I say it that way? This is so much clearer to say it this way. So anyway, that's I think what started it for me.

**FRANK:**

There are so many things you learn, as you say, when you're presenting the material. Ways of turning a phrase, a way to make it clear to an audience, things you learn. Oh, I wish I had known that when I wrote it. I could have put that in the book. So, this is a perfect opportunity for you to update all this. You said archaeology has been updated. Maybe we'll get to that later in the show. But what's changed in the past 10 years that you said, I need to put this in, other than the archaeology?

**JIM:**

Well, I think what's changed also is just an attitude about whether or not...skepticism has grown in certain key areas. Is this even eyewitness testimony? That's a reason why Richard Bauckham's book, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, was written years ago. I'm really focused on this version of this book, and really helping people to see that this is not just a collection of what we think are truths about Jesus. But these are really the accounts written by eyewitnesses. And what are the attributes of eyewitness testimony we would see in those accounts? So, there's part of that in there. But also, I think that when people read a book like this, and the input I've had over the last 10 years, has been you know, I use this material now when I'm talking to people.

So, people will read our books. I'm sure the same thing happens with "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist." And they will end up kind of communicating the idea, the way they received it in the book. So, that's why the opportunity to make the communication more engaging, by changing the way we communicate these ideas to match what we do on the stage, because in the end, I think somebody who reads the book then can take that approach now with their friends and family members to actually make the case more persuasively. So, I wanted to take advantage of just the kind of the way we influence people by cutting out the stuff that's not necessary and really going after what is the key issue.

For example, when I talk to you about how we now re-illustrate the idea of how do we know that this has not changed over time? And that we can really trust even though we have no original manuscripts? How can we trust that that is that? We can return reliably to the original manuscript. How do we know we can do that? I just felt there were better ways to communicate that in the book. And so, I just made sure I covered all those. And so, that's the largest part of it,

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is just trying to find ways to re-articulate this so that when you read the book, you'll be able to talk to your friends about it in a way that's persuasive.

**FRANK:**

You know, the chain of custody idea that you introduced in the original was kind of a profound insight for me, can you just kind of give us an overview of that? I think that's such a great point that you make in there. Because a lot of people go, come on. We don't have the originals. And you know, a lot happened between when Jesus was on the earth and say, the councils which occurred 300 years later. Couldn't all that have changed over that period? Give us an overview of why it probably couldn't have been changed.

**JIM:**

Yeah, and this is a concept. I remember when I did this class for the first time, Frank, at Biola. I had a student who was sitting in the front row, who said to me. He took the class. It was for, you know, whatever many units it was for, for him. And he needed to take a class, I guess. So, he resigned himself to taking my class. And he said, you know, I kind of think this is a gimmick. Like, you know, like, you're just using this stick.

And of course, you know, people who are critiquing us online, atheists who have YouTube pages, they of course, obviously think it's a stick. But for me, a lot of these concepts, especially if you're working cases in which you've got an eyewitness, who you're not going to interview for some period of time, or that you discover 30 years later, these are the techniques you actually use to see, has this guy been saying the same thing for 30 years? Is this piece of evidence...?

You know, there's a series called "The Making of a Murderer" on Netflix. And the accusation is that the evidence was collected, but then tampered with later or that evidence was tampered with as it was being collected. So how do you know that what you've collected, even if it's a manuscript of the New Testament, hasn't been changed over time? Well, it's the same process we use if a piece of evidence could have been tampered with over time. And we basically do (and defense attorneys are good at this). They want to know, who touched that? How many times was it touched? And what's the sequence of people who touched it?

So, who picked it up? Where did he put it? How do we know it was safe while it was there? And then who picked it up from there? And then where did he bring it? And then who picked it up from there? And so, you trace every officer who's touched that piece of evidence over time, to make sure that when they described it in their reports, and in their photographs, it looked the same at every point in history, in the 30 years or so it was being held in property or being examined by a number of generations of detectives.

Well, it's very similar. So, I asked myself the question when I was first investigating Christianity. How do I know who's touched this story of Jesus? Maybe the first story of Jesus was very, you know, simple. No miracles, no virgin birth, no rising from the dead, no miracles worked by Jesus. Just a simple teaching rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, who over 300 years is then

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exaggerated, and exaggerated, and modified, and modified until finally, he is the Christ of Christianity. Well, if I had a chain of custody that could tell me, what was the claims about Jesus? Who made the earliest claims? Who did they communicate those claims to? Who did they communicate those claims to?

And if I had documents from every person who heard the story, I can at least see what they're saying about Jesus, to see if the story is starting to evolve. And so, that's called the chain of custody, because each person in that sequence is like a link in the chain that connects the past to the present. And you don't need by the way, all the links. Because if the first four links are exactly the same as link number 20, which you would hear in court. Well, then you can be sure nothing's changed because it was that way in the beginning. It's still that way now.

So, like the defense attorneys are always going after the first two or three links. They are hoping that there's like some blood spatter and they've got a picture of the scene. A later picture has something in it, but this first picture has nothing in it. Oh, that's what they're looking for. So, that chain of custody helps us determine if anything has changed over time.

**FRANK:**

We'll look a little bit more into the chain of custody right after the break. And you want to get the brand new edition of "Cold-Case Christianity." It comes out September 5. You want to preorder it and we're going to tell you how you can get a free digital copy if you preorder it, right after the break. Don't go anywhere. We're back in two minutes.

If you're low on the FM dial looking for National Public Radio, go no further. We're actually going to tell you the truth here. You will never hear the truth of Christianity on National Public Radio. I doubt it, anyway. We're here with detective J. Warner Wallace. His new edition of ColdCaseChristianity.com. Well, that's the website. But the book is "Cold-Case Christianity." The 10 Year Anniversary edition is out. Three hundred new illustrations, a lot of new material. You're going to want to get the book whether you have the old one or not. And if you don't have the old one, you're probably not even a Christian. [Laughter]

No, no. Even if you have the old one, you're still going to want the new one. And, Jim, if they preorder it, and by the way, friends, preordering is important for authors and publishers. Here's why. If you preorder it, it sends it up the charts, which means more people will see the book, which means more people will buy the book. And that's important. It's a great book. It's going to help you defend the Christian faith. But Jim, if they preorder it, how can someone who preorders it by September 4, get the free digital edition emailed to them? How does it happen?

**JIM:**

So, what we'll do is we've got a form you fill out at ColdCaseChristianityBook.com. And you'll see the form there. And you just fill it out with your purchase order number, and we'll send you the digital copy immediately. But it usually takes me about...I do it myself. So honestly, I do. So,

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it takes me about two days. I've been in Alaska the entire summer. So, that makes it a little bit of a delay.

**FRANK:**

We'll talk about that next week. You've been doing important stuff in Alaska. So, next week's program you're going to be here for friends. But anyway, so if they go to [ColdCaseChristianityBook.com](http://ColdCaseChristianityBook.com), if they preordered the book, no matter where they pre ordered it, if they can prove they preordered it, you're going to send them the digital version?

**JIM:**

That's right. It's only good until September 4, then everything switches. But also, Frank, look. What we tried to do. Do you know that our ministry is basically a dude in southern California. Okay, that's it. My immense staff is actually talking to you right now. And so, what we try to do is to offer stuff that will help you take a step out. People take a step. Yeah, this book is part of that. But for anyone who purchases the book, and then reviews it, what we're going to do, is we're going to send them a 10.5 hour, 30 session, Case Maker's course. They get you everything from truth, all the way to the impact of Jesus on culture, evidence for God, evidence for Christianity, how to make the case forensically, all of that stuff. It's 10.5 hours that's entirely I just want you to have it.

We've got the videos, and I had a research assistant helped me create all of the written content for that. So, pardon me. My hope is that it will actually help people take a step. Because you and I both know that what we're really concerned about is, is the church thinking? Is the church really applying critical thinking to any number of topics, but especially...? You know, I used to think when I became a Christian for the first time that doesn't everybody, kind of like, you know, study the evidence before they say yes to this, you know? It turns out, Frank, I think that everyone has a high value for evidence, everyone. But a lot of people think the only evidence they need is their own personal experience.

But of course, we know this from our Mormon friends, that doesn't necessarily lead you to truth. It leads you to the realization you've had some kind of an experience. But how do you ground that? Well, you ground that in the evidence for the worldview. And that's what we hope, that Christians will adopt that view, that approach, because it's going to help our young people, help our kids survive in the next generation. So, that's why I've always written my books with high schoolers in mind. And that's why I try to make them visual. When people will say, do you have anything for high schoolers? Well, yeah, all these books. I expect my high schoolers to raise the bar. And I think they can, as long as I make it visual, that's why we added the 300 illustrations to this book.

**FRANK:**

Well, let's go back to the chain of custody for a minute, because you were giving sort of an overview as to in a crime investigation, there's got to be a chain of custody with a certain piece of evidence. And you're saying the same thing is going on with the original documents of the

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New Testament, right through the first several centuries of the church. Give us an example of what a chain of custody might look like.

**JIM:**

Okay, so for example. I've written three in the book, one from John, one from Paul, and one from Peter. All three of these people said they had some kind of a visual experience with Jesus of Nazareth. They knew him personally, they touched him, or they encountered him on the road to Damascus. The question is, how do we trust that their claims, especially the claims about the supernatural nature of Jesus, are early claims? By the way, anyone who says, well, you know, I think the claims of Jesus were very, very simple to begin with and then later were exaggerated into the Christ of Christianity.

Well, people who say that, at least have to admit then that there are some early claims about Jesus. You can't have it both ways. You can't say, well, nothing exists about Jesus until the third century. These are all late documents, and then still claim they were changed over time. If you're going to make the claim that there's been changes made to the documents, is if you first believe that there must be some very early version of Jesus that could be changed over time.

So, I think that two things are important, and both are described in the book. Are these early? And are these legendary? Have they changed over time? So, for example, John. He's going to tell this story to his students, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papius. Now, what I hear skeptics saying sometimes is, how can even trust those people are actually students? Well, that's the earliest information we have. What evidence do I have that this isn't true? I mean, what would I expect to have that would demonstrate that these are the students as were described historically of John?

And they had students. Ignatius and Polycarp had a student named Irenaeus. Irenaeus had a student named Hippolytus. You can track over the generations, who taught who the story of Jesus. I'm not, at this point, even trying to demonstrate that the story is true. I just want to know, what are the salient facts about Jesus that were being communicated early. And we can therefore trace those. If you didn't have any New Testament Gospels, any letters of Paul, and all you had were the students of the first eyewitnesses, the students of John, the students of Peter, the students of Paul, like Linus, and Clement.

If all you had were their works, you could recover the content, not the line by line descriptions. But I mean, the overarching story, including all of the supernatural elements from the virgin birth to the resurrection. You could recover those from the first students of the eyewitnesses. In other words, from link number two. If link number one is the author, link number two would be the students of the author. And you're stuck with that story from link number two on. So, you could argue that this isn't true. But you can't argue it's been changed over time.

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**FRANK:**

So, if you get the new edition of "Cold-Case Christianity", which is the 10th Anniversary edition. Again, comes out September 5. You're going to see this visually represented. And I think it's a brilliant way of pointing out that the New Testament story has not changed throughout the early centuries of the church. It couldn't have been altered after that, because we have so many manuscripts. We know what the original said. And Jim will show you how that is reconstructed in the book as well. So, this is a very salient point, a very important point when it comes to Christian apologetics.

Jim, I mean, you and I have been doing this quite a while now. And we see what goes on on the internet. We see what goes on at the seminars that we run. Some people will come up and they will just make a bold claim, like a slogan. You know, the Bible has been changed throughout the centuries. I can't believe it. This is the perfect response, what you're seeing right here, is to point out that even if you didn't have the Bible document, you could know it hasn't been changed throughout the centuries. Correct?

**JIM:**

And nobody does a better job of that in short order than you do, Frank. I remember when you used to send videographers to my Q&A's at universities. And I think I provided you with about zero good content, because you know, I'm always going to have a much broader response. It's a much more nuanced response. But sometimes they're not looking for that nuanced response. And sometimes people who are listening to the objection, they fall for the rhetoric of the quick objection. And they want something that's equally rhetorical to be said in response.

And what I always say is, look. A murder occurs in a second. And everyone's life is shattered. The victim's life has ended, and that family's life is shattered. And then it takes me years to reconstruct and investigate what happened in a second. And then it takes me weeks to communicate it to a jury in a way that they are convinced I now know what happened in that second. So, I've gotten used to taking my time to thoroughly reconstruct or explain what happened really, very quickly. But we're not in a social media world, I think right now, where we're afforded that luxury. We have to be much more rhetorically powerful and say it quickly.

The chain of custody will help get you there. But here's what's more important. It's going to give you the confidence to not be shrill. Because the reality of it is, is that I always say we are like Christian Chihuahuas. You know, the smallest dog on the yard that's worried that the other dog is stronger, that the other dog might abuse this Chihuahua in some way. So, the Chihuahua is always barking vehemently, while the Great Dane is just prancing around like it's no big deal.

Well, the reason why the Great Dane is prancing around is because he has confidence. And when we have confidence as Christians, because we know what the evidence demonstrates, I get to the point where I'm like, okay. If you don't want to believe it, that's not on me. I have confidence this is true. I'm happy to sit with you for half an hour and show you why I think it's true. But I'm not shrill about it anymore. It is what it is. I also don't get shrill about that one juror

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who might hang my jury. Okay, we'll have to retry the case. But the point is, confidence comes from...

And that's one thing I've learned in the last year or so, is that the word for hope in the New Testament is not a word the way we use it in English, where you'll say it's wishful thinking. It's like, you know, I hope the Raiders will win this weekend, or you hope whatever your team is, is going to win. Well, it's not that. I mean, the way that hope is used in the New Testament is confidence based on either an experience, or the evidence you've had for this. It's the confidence in knowing something is true.

Not hoping, like having wishful thinking that it's true. But knowing with certainty. There's a level of certainty in the word hope in the New Testament, that doesn't translate well into our English. But I want the readers of these kinds of books, to have that kind of hope. Hope that's based on confidence, based on the evidence.

**FRANK:**

Yeah, John Lennox always says when he's answering a question, he says, I don't have a complete answer for you. But I have a doorway to an answer. And that's all you can do in a couple of minutes. You can just start the answer, pretty much. And I typically refer to books in some of the answers I try and give on a college campus. You know, I'd refer to your book about the chain of custody. I refer quite frequently to Paul Copan's books when it comes to the Old Testament questions about God's morality and all this. So, you can't give a complete answer. You can only sort of give a doorway to an answer. And then you can go much further in written form. And look, the Bible's in written form for a reason.

Because there's a lot God wants to communicate. And it takes quite a while to understand what he wants to communicate. There's so much to communicate that it takes a lifetime of learning about it in order to become at least hopefully more like Jesus. That's what we're all trying to do here friends. That's what we're here to do. God didn't say make believers. He said make disciples. And a book like "Cold-Case Christianity" will help you do that. So, I sure hope that you guys get the new edition whether or not you have the old edition doesn't matter. You need to get the new edition and you want to preorder it.

So, wherever you preorder it, once you preorder it, go to [ColdCaseChristianityBook.com](http://ColdCaseChristianityBook.com). And you'll see a form there where you can submit where you bought the book. And then Jim is going to personally send you the digital account. And we've got a lot more to cover right after the break. In fact, some have said Jim is not a real cold-case homicide detective. There's a lot of nonsense going on on the internet about that. We'll address that as well. So, don't go anywhere. We're back in just two minutes.

Ladies and gentlemen, Frank Turek with you on I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. My guest is the great J. Warner Wallace. Detective Wallace, in fact, will be with me and Alisa Childers in Nashville, Tennessee. Actually, it's near Nashville, Lebanon, Tennessee. Our friends

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at the National Religious Broadcasters TV network, where both Jim, myself, and Alisa have TV programs, are holding an apologetics conference called "Defending the Truth" conference. That's September 8-9th. Go to the website for more.

Then we're continuing our men's study here in Charlotte, North Carolina on September 11. We're going through all the archaeological evidence for the Bible. Next night, September 12th, Lord willing, I'll be at Florida Atlantic University. Then on September 14-15th, I'll be in San Diego, California at the TPUSA Pastor's Summit. Of course, Charlie Kirk heads that up. I'm speaking a couple of times there. I'm looking forward to being there. Then Clovis Hills Church on Sunday the 17th. That's in Fresno, California. Also be up there for the evening event where we'll go through I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Next night, Fresno State, out there in Fresno, California. And then the following weekend, I'll be with Natasha Crain and Alisa Childers at the Unshaken Conference at Calvary Chapel, Tucson. That's all day the 23rd. And then the next day I'll be speaking at all the services, Calvary Chapel, Tucson on the 24th.

Then the following weekend, up at Camp of the Woods. I haven't been up there in quite a while. Great men's retreat we're doing up there, myself and Jim Zorn. You know Jim, the former NFL quarterback and coach will be up there in Speculator, New York for the weekend of the 29-30th and October 1st, for a men's conference. Go to our website for more. And then look for UNC Wilmington on October 5th. I know Jim is out on the road quite a bit too. Jim, I know we're going to be together in Lebanon on the 8th and the 9th. You got anything else coming up?

**JIM:**

Yep, I'll be in Calvary Chapel, Flower Mound at a men's conference and the Sunday service on September 30th and October 1st. That's the Sunday. And I'll be at an event with Biola on the road at Yorba Linda Friends Church here in Southern California on Friday, the 6th-7th. I'll be speaking at that Yorba Linda Friends Church on the 8th, and at a place called The Lux Forum on the 18th of October. That is in Napa Valley, California. It's an opening presentation to skeptics. It's basically inviting people who are not believers from the community to come in. And then we're doing a bunch of things, private stuff that they've asked us to do for the rest of that month. So, a lot of it's with, as you know, Frank, the Law Enforcement Appreciation Program with BGA. So, that is my calendar for the next two months.

**FRANK:**

Yeah, there's a lot going on. Jim has got a lot going on with BGEA. And in fact, we're going to talk about that on the Tuesday midweek podcast. You're not going to want to miss that podcast, ladies and gentlemen. For those of you listening on the American Family Radio Network, it will not be broadcast on radio. You have to look for the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast. And Jim has been doing some work that you're going to want to know about. It could be very helpful to people, especially people that have gone through trauma. We'll talk about it.

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**JIM:**

And even more than that too, Frank, is just I think it's great for us to talk about what the state of law enforcement is in America right now. We talked about it before, but it's an ever changing target. Right? It's always moving. And I think it has dire consequences for those of us maybe, who don't care about law enforcement particularly. But we take that substructure of our culture for granted. And as it's starting to shift, it will have an impact on everyone. So, that's the kind of stuff we'll talk about at the end.

**FRANK:**

We'll also talk a little bit about marriage because Jim is doing some marriage presentations to help people who have gone through traumatic events, and how to put their marriages back together. So, look for the Tuesday midweek podcast. Jim let's go back to something I mentioned just before the break. You know, there's so much nonsense out on the internet. You can't keep up with it. But there have been some people that are trying to say, well, Jim Wallace was not a real cold-case homicide detective. Where does that come from? And what's the truth there? What is that all about?

**JIM:**

Well, I think part of it is just that, like you said. This feels like this is kind of a like if I was an electrician, would I be taking an electrician's approach to apologetics? This is just unfortunately, the skill set I had.

**FRANK:**

That's what the buzz is, Jim. That's what you'd be doing. [Laughter]

**JIM:**

Exactly. I should not have set that up and tossed that ball to you so slowly over the center of the plate for your dad joke. But yeah. So, I get this a lot, you know, where people will say, well, I don't know. My story is pretty much online. If you were to look at these things that are behind me on the wall here, those are online. The formation of our team, the accommodations, stuff that we got over the years. And a lot of it is hard to track. Here's what I would say.

The claim really is, well, you never worked cold-cases for this period of time in which you said you worked cold-cases, because your team was only established in 2007. And remember, I became a Christian I think in 96 or 97. I forget what year it was. So, how could you have been a cold-case detective when 10 years had expired before you ever formed the team? Well, here's the problem. Across America, probably 90% of police agencies that are working cold cases, that are investigating cold cases, have no cold-case detectives. We are just detectives working cold cases, because the department doesn't have the resources to dedicate people to this full-time.

So, we're typically...I started off, I was working in the back room. I was working undercover. But we had freedom to work whatever case we could develop. And I saw about a year before I became a Christian, I solved one of my dad's cases. The notebook was sitting on the shelf. And

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it was an interview with a guy who had killed a woman, a girl, 10 year old girl named Terri Lynn Hollis. And when I saw it, I recognized the name right away because my dad was a detective. And this was his case. And it remained unsolved. And it happened when I was about 11. This 10 year old was killed and it changed the way that our city thought about the safety of its children.

Because she was brutally murdered, and her body was dumped a couple of counties north of us. And so, I took that off the shelf and I had been trained in forensic statement analysis. And I started to investigate that case because somebody had copped out to it. Somebody had admitted to doing this murder and it wasn't the right person. They had taken this person off the list after some primitive blood evidence. They believed they probably had the wrong guy, even though he had confessed to the murder. So, I opened that case up to say, hey, I wonder if they were wrong. If this guy is the killer, wouldn't that be a quick, easy solve?

So, I started to do a forensic statement analysis of that interview, and no. He's not the killer. And that helped me to at least move off of him. Now, the problem, of course, with this is, if you're working in these cases collaterally...and you know I've had cases that took 14 years to solve. At that point, I think I opened that book for the first time, maybe a year before I got saved, maybe 95ish. And we didn't submit the blood evidence. We didn't start to thoroughly research, probably 2000/2002, no hit in our CODIS database in 2002. And then we eventually got a hit using Ancestry DNA in 2017, solved the case in 2019. So, how many years is that?

That is so common for cold cases when you're working them collaterally, which we did. As a matter of fact, I worked cold cases collaterally for about 10 years before we ever formed the cold-case team. And the only reason why we formed the cold-case team is because we had successfully already prosecuted two of them. One was on Fox News. One was on Dateline. So, our department says, you know what? This might actually be worth funding. So, we funded it until I retired. And by the way, after I retired, it stopped being funded.

**FRANK:**

So, when you say collaterally, while you didn't have the official title in the department at the time, you were doing the cold cases, and doing your own job, too?

**JIM:**

Yes. And 80% of the cold-case detectives on Dateline are just detectives who are investigating a cold case. That is just the nature of how cold cases are worked, by and large, everywhere. And so, if you said, well, are you a cold-case detective? Yes. I've got two cold cases I'm working actively right now. Well, what is your title? Homicide detective. Okay, so you're not really a cold-case detective? Well, those don't exist in our agency.

**FRANK:**

Jim, is there a different school for a cold-case detective than a detective?

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**JIM:**

Oh, no. I'm trying to remember if I ever took a class in cold cases. I probably did. I don't remember it, though, because it wasn't really helpful. It turns out that you learn how to work cold cases by messing a bunch of them up. So, I've done my share of that, too. So, I mean, part of it is, is that at some point, they would ask me to teach it. And I have done that for D.A.'s in the San Francisco area. But to be honest, you don't learn it by going to a class. You learn it by doing it.

And so, some people who are working cold cases have gone to like a weeklong, cold-case class. And most haven't. Most haven't at all, they're just working this and they're applying those four aspects of eyewitness reliability I talk about in "Cold-Case Christianity." They simply apply those to every case. By the way, those aren't necessarily just cold-case principles. Those are the principles you would use to work any homicide. So, that's why a lot of times when I'm out talking about these, I've got homicide investigators in the audience.

I had one, for example, in Michigan, who had been assigned a cold case. He's a homicide detective, just like I was. Working on a cold case, just like I was. And he was taking notes. He came back for all three services, and just took notes. Then he contacted me, and we talked on the phone several times while he was solving that case. Just like, how do I apply this to the solving of this case? So yeah. The claim has been made, well, Jim, you never were. Your timeline is all messed up. Well, not really, because it turns out that I just didn't have the formal title.

And right now, at my agency, I can think of two active cold cases that are being investigated actively right now by people who are detectives working cold cases, but they're not official cold-case detectives. There is no difference in those two guys. There's just a title difference, you know? So, it is what it is.

**FRANK:**

Yeah. It's not like you need some sort of degree to do this. It's not like you claimed you were a medical doctor when you really weren't.

**JIM:**

No, no. Unfortunately, most of us who do this, learn by our mistakes. You know?

**FRANK:**

Okay. Yeah, this is a big nothing burger if you see this on the internet, ladies and gentlemen. Jim, as you know, has been on Dateline several times, solving these murders. In fact, one of the times we did CIA, Jim, I remember you working on the Lynne Knight case for so many years. And the verdict actually came down when we were at CIA. That guy who had killed her what back in 79? Something like that?

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**JIM:**

Yep, 79. We got the verdict, I think, in 2016, maybe 2014. And we had opened that case in 2000. And by the way, when I say opened it, I mean we were officially assigned it. I might work a case for three years before it's officially assigned to me, because I'm not going to take a case that I know I can't win. So, I usually chip at it. You might spend what, an hour a week with all your other caseload working your cold. By the way, I always tell agencies, you're never going to solve cold cases if you're working them collaterally. You will, but it'll be tough. You're far better off if you can just get one person who's dedicated to it full-time. Then you're far better off in trying to solve those cases.

But yeah, the part of the problem is that I'm not kidding when I say that...The other thing they will challenge too. We see this sometimes; somebody will say I was a Christian for 25 years and then my eyes were opened and I'm no longer a Christian. I'm an atheist. And all the Christians will say, well, I'm not even sure he was a Christian to begin with. It always happens the same way in reverse. You know, I was an atheist until I was 35. And if you'd asked me at 34, what was my worldview? You would have seen. Yeah, that dude's an atheist. I had people say that Jim's never going to get saved. But then I became a Christian.

Now, you could challenge whether or not I was a true atheist. Fine, whatever. People who knew me would say otherwise. But that's always the challenge when this kind of stuff happens publicly. You never really were an atheist, and you didn't really apply this process because, you know, they can't believe that the truth might be knowable.

**FRANK:**

When we come back, we're going to see if the truth is knowable about the New Testament writers, the eyewitnesses. Were they biased? Can you really believe? I mean, after all, they were Christians. Why should we trust Christians to tell us what happened to Jesus? You hear that objection quite a bit. We're on with detective J. Warner Wallace. I'm Frank Turek. Back in two.

Ladies and gentlemen, we just announced it's on the website right now. If you go to [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org), click on Online Courses. You will see the brand-new course in Galatians. We're going through it verse by verse. I'll be your instructor. Brand-new course. It starts in a couple of months. But you can get it early bird special if you go to [CrossExamined.org](http://CrossExamined.org). Click on Online Courses. You will see it there. You'll also see a course by the great J. Warner Wallace in Cold-Case Christianity, as well. Avail yourself of that.

Hey, Jim, one other thing. I just wanted to mention one other thing that you know, these people who try and tear down your reputation for whatever reason on the internet. You know, even if they were right about something, wouldn't that be a bit of a genetic fallacy to say, oh, well, this guy, he said X. But he's not really X, he's Y. That doesn't mean what you're saying is false, even if what they're saying is true.

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**JIM:**

No, that's true. I mean, but look. At the same time, I'm sensitive to that. Not for myself. But I think that it is important if you've got trusted authority in something, that you have trusted authority in it. And the first word is probably key. You could be authoritative in something but not trusted. Now, you're not going to get very far. Now, you can be unauthoritative but trusted and get a lot further. So, I think it is important when someone...

And I think I've told you this too, Frank. I don't typically go tit for tat and respond to these kinds of claims. Number one, because you're looking at the entire staff. And I think that there's a season. You know this. I've talked about with these in the past is that there's a season. When I was in my 40's and 50's, I would get out there and do it. Now that I'm in my 60's, I feel like okay. This is a season where it's time to be oh Pa, to my grandchildren. It's time to lean into my marriage and help others who are hurting in theirs. And so, there are seasons where you kind of spend time on those types of issues. That's not the season I'm in.

Now, I'm really glad though, that we get a chance to talk about it. So, then when somebody like asks those kinds of questions, I can point people. But let's face it. We would say the same thing about Ravi, wouldn't we? We would say, look. Just the fact that Ravi might have had these issues.... And I know that's still up for debate. But I kind of think that the way it settles, I'm convinced he had those issues. Okay. The question then becomes, well, that doesn't make anything he said untrue. Yet, you'll notice his influence has completely vanished, as I can understand. Because it's about trusted authority. And now we don't think we can trust him from a character perspective.

So, look, in the end, I get it. And we are in a personality driven world. For example, we're recording this right now. We're also doing video. And what is showing in my video is this boring rectangle with my big head in it. So, it is all about identity. And we are in an identity generation. You talk about this publicly. And I also talk about it publicly because it turns out that trauma is often related to abrupt changes in the way you see yourself. Abrupt changes in your identity are often traumatic. You might have thought oh, I was a competent person in this, and they have a failure. Now I don't see myself that way. We're an identity generation. And so, that's why when someone attacks your identity, you probably want to at least address it.

**FRANK:**

Well, I can assure you ladies and gentlemen. If you look at Jim's record, you can see that he's actually solved several cold cases. They've actually been on TV, ladies and gentlemen. And not only that, when that whole Ravi thing. And this is the last thing we'll say about it because we've got to move on. The whole Ravi thing came up. Jim, you were the first one that said, man. I don't want all this attention. I don't want this to be personality driven.

You started taking your images off of thumbnails and everything. I want the information to be front and center. I want Jesus to be front and center. I don't want me to be front and center. So, you took it very seriously. And it is always a struggle. We could rely on our personalities to get

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stuff we want to get done. And that can be damaging to our witness and damaging to our character. Enough said about that.

**JIM:**

Well, let me just say one thing about that too. I think it actually does apply to what we're trying to do in cold case, too, right? We're trying to do some things here that I want to be...The problem, of course, is that people want to hear like, how did you learn that technique? What was your story? What was the case where you learned that? So, you end up reciting a lot of your cases. And I do that a lot in the next book, which is coming out next year, which is called "The Truth in True Crime." Well, I'll tell you that when I see this, when I work these kinds of cases, I will say there's one thing, always, that's behind every misbehavior.

Now, we talked about this in cold case, right? Those three things that would cause someone to lie are the same three things that cause you to commit any sin, including murders. And that is the pursuit of money, sex, and power. Power is probably the 70% umbrella that catches a lot of stupid. Because if you are, for example, let's say you walk into a Walmart, and you kill 30 people who are different color. What is that about? It's about thinking that my color is more important than yours. It's about authority, respect, and power. When you're stealing from your parents to support your drug habit, that's because you think that your pleasure is more important than their inconvenience. That's about power. One gangster shoots another gangster because they've been disrespected. Authority, power, respect. That catches so much.

Now, it turns out that those three biases are missing in the New Testament authors. And that's one of the things I talk about in detail, looking at old ancient church documents that describe the lives and those are out there. Maybe you don't know they are, but they are. So, you can read those to see how do these people live? So, I just don't see the bias motivating anyone to tell the lie. But here's what's important about that and how it connects back to Ravi, is that those things stand like the metal trophies at the Olympics. The gold, the silver and the bronze are standing on a platform, right?

Well, the platform for those three misbehavior motives is a bigger platform called pride. Pride is the reason why we have all kinds of world wars, why we have injustice in places in the world, why we have any kinds of pain and suffering caused by humans. Pride is the motivator, and it reveals itself through sex, money, and power, the pursuit of sex, money, or power. So, if pride is the problem, well, the solution then would be the antonym, the antithesis of pride. By the way, I studied this now. There's studies going back about 35 years. The one characteristic that actually leads to human flourishing better than any other human attribute, is the attribute called humility.

And if we can learn to adopt humility, your relationships will be better and deeper. You'll be a better boss, a better employee. You'll be a better student; you'll actually be able to discern truth from error better. You'll have better mental health. You'll have better physical health. You'll live longer. Humility is the key to human flourishing, humility. And I think we're in an age right now, where just the opposite is being promoted. Everyone has got...it's all about your bio. It's all

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about your social media platform, the size of your platform. Just all the stuff that we have to do to sell a book. I'll be honest, I hate it. Because just the opposite is what will cause us to flourish.

The struggle for you and me, and for anyone who wants to be a public, Christian, casemaker is how do we stick to the facts? I want to write a book that is all about the details, all about the facts, all about the case, and less about me. And I get it. People want to hear your story. But what matters more is, is the case for Christianity strong? Especially for young people. I think we want to make a visual case. That's why I hope this new edition of "Cold-Case" is a much more accessible version for young people. And it really will help them to make the case about not them, about the facts related to Christianity.

**FRANK:**

Humility is the key. That's why my new book is coming out, 10 Steps to Humility and How I Made it in 7, which is really humbling me, Jim. Because as you know, I made it in six.  
[Laughter]

**JIM:**

I know, I'll tell you something that's funny about that, because I talk about this publicly a lot now, and especially when I'm working in marriages. Because humility is important in marriage. Your marriage will be much deeper if each person is humble. And I'll tell you that I use the same...because you know, I think we first heard that, maybe I'm wrong.

**FRANK:**

I think Mike said that.

**JIM:**

Yeah, so I got a cover of the book with Mike's picture. I made him a cover. It has that in there. How to Get Humbled in 10 Steps and How I made it in 8. Every time I show it people laugh because it's so true. It turns out that you could never pursue humility because it's a pursuit. You'll never get there because of that title. You'll actually take a prideful approach to pursuing humility. It doesn't work. Humility is not a pursuit, it's a realization. And Spurgeon said it. It's when you properly assess who you are before a holy God, you get an Isaiah moment.

And in that realization, you realize that there is a God, and I am not him. And that's why I think it's so important for us who are making this case publicly, to stick to the facts, ma'am. That's why I think sometimes a cop approach, a Joe Friday approach, is just the facts, ma'am. And that's what we're trying to do with these books.

**FRANK:**

We're running out of time. But I do want to give our audience just a little bit. Chapter 14 of "Cold-Case Christianity", the updated edition talks about, were they biased? And a lot of people will say, well, they were Christian. So, their biased. Can't trust them. What do you say?

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**JIM:**

Well, okay, again, they lacked those three motives. Most atheists/skeptics will agree that they didn't have a financial motive. They didn't have a sexual motive. But like a Bart Ehrman, those kinds of disciples will say, hey, you know, they actually had a bias toward power, because they were nobodies who became somebodies by leading the church. And the reality of that, of course, is that you've got to apply it to those people then who you think wrote the Scriptures. And that's Paul, primarily. Paul wrote more New Testament books than anybody else. But to suggest that...

He was in a larger group that really had a unique position within the Roman Empire. You know, the Jews did were not forced to bend their knee to the Roman gods like every other conquered group. The Jews were kind of left alone. The Christians didn't have that luxury. He could have stayed in the one group that afforded him protection in that sense, at least. Because obviously, they sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD. But he could have stayed with that larger group where he had more stature, had the authority to draw papers against Christians, and had more authority, power, and respect as the disciple of one of the best finest rabbis of the first century.

But no, he's going to say, I'm just going to jump in with this smaller group, and get my butt beaten all over the world for the next 30 years, hoping to someday return to the position I already have? So, that's why I think some of the principles of evidence are helpful. Like understand the difference between possible and reasonable. That's a possible explanation. It's just not reasonable. And we don't allow jurors to fret about possibilities. We actually have a jury instruction for this. That's called speculation and jury deliberations. We want you to focus on what is the most reasonable inference from evidence, not any possible explanation you might think of.

**FRANK:**

They had no motive to make it up friends. The New Testament writers did not create the resurrection. The resurrection created the New Testament writers. These Jews never would have written any of this down if it hadn't happened. To get themselves beaten, tortured, and killed? No way. And Jim unpacks it beautifully in the brand new edition, "Cold-Case Christianity", 10 Year Anniversary edition. Go preorder it. And then, Jim, where do they go to get the free digital copy?

**JIM:**

[ColdCaseChristianityBook.com](http://ColdCaseChristianityBook.com) and we'll send you all those bonus resources.

**FRANK:**

[ColdCaseChristianityBook.com](http://ColdCaseChristianityBook.com). You'll get all the bonus resources. You're going to want those resources. Get it by September 4th, friends. And Lord willing, Jim and I'll see you here on Tuesday on the podcast, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. See you then.

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