

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS CHRIST, ANARCHIST

EXT. SHALLOW RIVER - DAY

ULTIMATE ADAM stands waist-deep in the water tracking the surface with a speargun. He's a bearded, fair-haired man in his 30s. He wears a t-shirt with a graphic of a lion on it.

We hear a woman's voice...

DINAH (V.O.)

Ultimate Adam? Is it ever just to kill?

ULTIMATE ADAM (V.O.)

Man or beast?

DINAH (V.O.)

Man.

ULTIMATE ADAM (V.O.)

Never.

He fires a spear and hits a good-sized trout right through the body.

DINAH (V.O.)

What if it was to save a life?

ULTIMATE ADAM (V.O.)

No.

DINAH (V.O.)

What if it was to save my own life?

ULTIMATE ADAM (V.O.)

To return evil for evil? Then both souls
perish regardless.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

We see Dinah now. She's about Adam's age, good-looking but clearly in despair. There's blood on her clothes.

She's standing atop a small hill and Adam is kneeling in prayer a few yards away. The speargun is on a strap across his back and the trout is lying on the ground before him.

Dinah is not happy with his position on self-defense.

DINAH

You're a coward! You don't know anything about surviving in the world!

ULTIMATE ADAM

What did you expect to see? A reed shaken in the wind? A man in soft clothes?

Long pause...

DINAH

I know who you are, Ultimate Adam.

He picks up the fish, walks back up the hill to Dinah and presents it to her. They eat it together.

ULTIMATE ADAM

Who did you kill?

DINAH

A war hero. You won't believe me when I tell you his name. Fredrick Augustus Fidfaddy..

We tilt up to the sky..

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The sequence is shot in silhouette, the white walls of the kitchen blasting so much light that all we can see of FREDRICK is the dark form of his sturdy frame and shaved head.

DINAH (V.O.)

We were together before he went overseas..

Dinah enters the kitchen and puts her arms around his waist. He turns and they embrace.

DINAH (CONT.)

And after...

Fredrick suddenly takes her by the throat, they struggle for a moment until Dinah breaks free and runs back past the camera.

In a flash, Fredrick has a machine gun in his hand. He chambers the first round and follows her.

DINAH (CONT.)

Luckily, there was a .22 on the bookshelf and another on the coffee table. A Heckler and Kotch on the TV, a Colt Commander on the bathroom sink and a Desert Eagle on the floor next to the tub..

(As she names each firearm, a stock image of it appears on screen)

A side-by-side, an over and under and a sawed-off Mossberg pump action under the couch. If I'd made it to the garage, I might have been able to get a hold of the bolt-action rifles and the other HK 4-16s.

In the end it was the that little snub nose that we'd play William Tell with when we'd been drinking. I'd had it on me the whole time.

They're standing above Fredrick's body now. He's got a tiny hole in his sternum and a trickle of blood coming from the side of his mouth.

Ultimate Adam kneels down.

ULTIMATE ADAM

This is a terrible sin.

DINAH

It was him or me.

ULTIMATE ADAM

It was murder nonetheless.

Dinah kneels too.

DINAH

...maybe it was

SWAT JESUS appears. He's wearing tactical gear and is levelling a 9mm pistol. He barks orders as he moves towards them.

SWAT JESUS

You! Girl! Stand up! Up! Do it
now!

She does.

Did you shoot that man in
self-defense?

DINAH

Yes.

SWAT JESUS

Well, shit. You did the right thing.

He smiles, holsters the gun.

DINAH

I did?

SWAT JESUS

Absolutely. No court in the land would
convict you. Go on, get outta here you
crazy kid. Move on with your life!

ULTIMATE ADAM

Don't listen to him.

SWAT JESUS

Shut up, you! We'll talk in a minute.

Dinah walks tentatively towards the door, looks to Adam.

DINAH

I'm sorry, Adam.

She's about to leave when Swat Jesus whistles, points to the snub nose
on the ground.

SWAT JESUS

Don't leave without that. Never know,
right?

Dinah looks down at the gun. After a moment of indecision, she leaves
without it.

Adam smiles.

ULTIMATE ADAM

She's doubting you.

SWAT JESUS

Doesn't matter. She'd do the same thing again million times over. It's only natural to strike back when you're threatened.

ULTIMATE ADAM

For animals.

SWAT JESUS

You really think it'd go any different if she had the chance again? You think she'd lay down her life and let him kill her?

ULTIMATE ADAM

Maybe. Now that she knows the truth.

SWAT JESUS

What is the truth?

ULTIMATE ADAM

That evil must be resisted, but never by force.

SWAT JESUS

That's downright un-American. But I'll take that bet.

ULTIMATE ADAM

What?

SWAT JESUS

I'll bet you that she'll do the exact same thing again.

(turning to Fredrick)

Atten hut!

Fredrick leaps back up onto his feet, his dead eyes staring straight ahead.

ULTIMATE ADAM

You never learn, do you?

SWAT JESUS

I never give up. There's a difference.

(turning to Fredrick)

Was the marine shot and killed
by his own woman?

FREDRICK

Sir, Yes sir!

SWAT JESUS

How does the marine feel about being
shot and killed by his own woman?

FREDRICK

Sir, not very Goddamned good, sir!

SWAT JESUS

Would the marine like another
opportunity to defend himself?

FREDRICK

Sir, yes sir!

The next thing out of Swat Jesus' mouth is not a question. It's an order.

SWAT JESUS

Defend himself with deadly force.

FREDRICK

Sir, yes sir. The marine would very
much like that opportunity, sir.

SWAT JESUS

Marine! How many push-ups can you do
between now and sundown?

FREDRICK

Sir! Between now and sundown, the
marine can do 12,314 push-ups, sir!

SWAT JESUS

Drop and give me 12,314!

FREDRICK

Sir, yes sir!

He drops down and starts doing push-ups at a furious pace. His body is like a blur.

ULTIMATE ADAM

And at sundown?

SWAT JESUS

She'll be given the choice again. Her life for his. I'll show you that she's an animal. All of them are. Now get going! Find that girl. This is only going to count if you twist her ear all afternoon with your peace and love routine.

(he turns back to Fredrick)

Marine, count off!

FREDRICK

12,224! 12,223! 12,222! 12,221! 12,220!
12,219! 12,218!

Adam slowly stands, turns and walks out without giving Swat Jesus another look.

SWAT JESUS

See you tonight.

Fredrick's voice continues to boom through the place, the floorboards creak rhythmically under his body weight. Then the sound becomes more like troops marching..

TOY SOLDIERS overtake the screen now, the little green ones in combat poses. They march in all directions as the backdrop of the kitchen turns to..

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

They fire at each other through the tall grass.

But for each man that falls, another two or three come over the hill. The dead pile up as tanks and other armored vehicles arrive on the scene.

ULTIMATE ADAM (V.O.)

Tell me, which of these men is just
in his actions?

DINAH (V.O.)

Where are the flags?

We see now that the two of them are sitting on the grass, looking down at the battle. Adam starts pointing at individual soldiers.

ULTIMATE ADAM

What about him? Or him? Show me one just man.

DINAH

This isn't like what happened to me. I killed in self-defense.

ULTIMATE ADAM

So did he. That one, too. Now this one is killing in self-defense, and he just got killed by another who was defending himself. So all of them are just? Or none of them?

The fighting gets more intense, louder. More troops enter the fray and Dinah and Adam are surrounded by them.

DINAH

That's enough. Make them stop.

ULTIMATE ADAM

How would you stop them?

She turns and steps away, puts her hands over her ears. The fighting just gets louder, though. It's like she's right in the middle of it.

Finally she turns, starts stomping all over the battlefield, grinding the soldiers with her feet and kicking their vehicles away.

From the ground, this looks to the soldiers like traditional wrath of God type events: floods, fires and earthquakes.

Then all is settled, silence at last.

DINAH

That should do it.

But that never works.

New troops arrive within the minute, they trample over the dead as they continue trying to kill each other. It's even worse now.

Dinah is about to start trampling again when Adam stops her. He takes a small figurine out of his pocket and places it among the soldiers. It's a little BENDY CHRIST.

It towers above the soldiers, arms outstretched.

BENDY CHRIST

You've heard it said, An eye for an eye
and a tooth for a tooth, but I tell you not
to resist evil, whoever hits your right cheek,
turn your left to them. You've heard it said
that you should love your neighbor and hate
your enemy. But I say to love your enemy, bless
those that curse you, do good to those that hate
you and pray for those who persecute you. How
hard is it to love those who love you? Don't evil
people do the same? So be perfect, as your Father
in Heaven is perfect.

There is a long silence among the troops. Then all of them band together as one.

They march as a group onto Bendy Christ and topple him. Then they drag him atop the hill and nail him to some popsicle sticks.

Dinah turns her face away in horror.

DINAH

Why are you showing me this?!

ULTIMATE ADAM

Because you are going to be called
upon to be perfect.

They both turn back to the scene of the crucifixion. Bendy Christ dies and the ground begins to shake.

Then a door of light appears and the soldiers begin marching through it. Their weapons have disappeared.

She turns back to Adam.

DINAH

Talk plain.

ULTIMATE ADAM

Fredrick is going to try to kill
you again.

Long, incredulous pause.

DINAH

What?!

EXT. WOODED CLEARING - DAY

Dinah is walking through the clearing shaking her head. Adam is a few steps behind her.

DINAH

That's crazy. It's impossible!

ULTIMATE ADAM

It became possible when you involved me.

DINAH Well

I don't want to involve you anymore!
Go away.

ULTIMATE ADAM

There's no running from this. You're going to face him tonight.

Dinah stops and turns to him.

DINAH

You don't understand. There's something else.

Sounds now of a bicycle bell and children's laughter. It's coming from just beyond the clearing.

Dinah turns and follows it.

EXT. VACANT LOT - CONT.

There are kids on bikes riding around in circles. Dinah walks out towards them and they circle her also...

Then we hear Fredrick again...

FREDRICK (V.O.)

9,750! 9,749! 9,748! 9,747! 9,746!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Fredrick is still counting off.

Swat Jesus is staring out the window as if he can see all that Adam and Dinah are doing. Because, in fact, he can.

He watches her among the children.

SWAT JESUS
Is that girl pregnant?
(turning to Fredrick)
Atten hut!

Fredrick leaps to his feet.

FREDRICK
Sir, yes sir!

SWAT JESUS
Is that girl pregnant, marine?

FREDRICK
Sir, yes sir!

SWAT JESUS
Is it your child?

FREDRICK
It had better be my goddamned child,
sir!

SWAT JESUS
You were going to kill the woman
carrying your own child?!

FREDRICK
Sir, would you like the marine to walk
through his reasoning, sir?

SWAT JESUS
I would.

FREDRICK
I served my country with valor. In return,
I require certain things. I require monetary
compensation, government entitlement programs,
healthcare, continuing education, preferential
hiring and the gratitude of every fucking
American citizen both here and abroad.

SWAT JESUS

With you so far.

FREDRICK

The marine also requires a woman. A woman who is a good cook, a great lay, respectful, obedient and supports the marine 100% no matter what he says, does, eats, kills or chooses to fuck, sir!

SWAT JESUS

And the woman you had here with you?

FREDRICK

Consistently underperformed across every metric, sir!

SWAT JESUS

And the child?

FREDRICK

A bad tree bears bad fruit, sir!

SWAT JESUS

Know your scriptures, then?

FREDRICK

King James only, sir! King James only!

SWAT JESUS

As you were.

Fredrick drops and resumes with his push-ups.

FREDRICK

9,746! 9,745! 9,744! 9,743!
9,742!

EXT. VACANT LOT - LATE DAY

We can still hear Fredrick as the children cycle around.

FREDRICK (V.O.)

9,7441! 9,740! 9,739...

As Fredrick's voice tapers off, the children disappear. They leave Dinah standing by herself in the middle of the huge, barren lot.

Ultimate Adam comes over to her, gently takes her face in his hands.

ULTIMATE ADAM

A greater parent than you has sacrificed His child. And he didn't do it for war the way the people here do. He did it for love and peace. Because peace begets peace. Just as war begets war.

DINAH

I'm one person, Adam. Two, actually.

We cut to the image of a fast flowing stream, there's a single stone in the center that the water is breaking on.

ULTIMATE ADAM (V.O.)

The horror and violence of this world is caused by individuals, not governments or armies. Peace will come in the same way. Only when the soldiers themselves put down their weapons will it end. They hide behind flags and orders, but they'll be naked before the Lord on Judgement Day. There will be no excuses for their horrible sins! Who will you be counted with on that day?

We return to the lot and see that there are wounds on Adam's hands. He leaves smears of blood on Dinah's cheeks.

They're staring at one another when there's suddenly a flash of light and Swat Jesus appears.

He wrests Adam's hands away and throws him to the ground.

SWAT JESUS

Time out! Time out! What kind of pinko, commie, beatnik, insurrectionist bullshit are you saying to this girl? If it weren't for the good men and women in our armed forces we'd all be speaking Vietnamese right now!

Fredrick is here now too, still counting off.

FREDRICK

7,894! 7,893! 7,892! 7,891!

SWAT JESUS

We can't let these people think they're personally responsible for anything the government tells them to do!

(to Fredrick)

What do you say, marine?

FREDRICK

I was just following orders, Sir!

SWAT JESUS

Law Enforcement says?

FREDRICK

We're just doing our jobs!

SWAT JESUS

Politicians?

FREDRICK

It's the will of the people!

SWAT JESUS

The government and the President of the United States of America?

FREDRICK

Defense of the country!

He turns to Adam.

SWAT JESUS

See? The whole system is based on self-defense. Without it, it's just a person and their soul like you said.

ULTIMATE ADAM

And you? Are you responsible for anything that you do?

SWAT JESUS

'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and though shalt bruise his heel.'

I've been claiming self-defense since the beginning. See you in a few hours.

He turns and vanishes just as he'd appeared.

Adam looks around and sees that Dinah has walked to the edge of the lot and disappears into the trees.

He doesn't follow her.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Dinah is sitting on a large rock beneath a tree. She's staring off into the darkness when she hears a slight rustling in the grass beneath her.

The toy soldiers are approaching. The tanks and jeeps, too. They've surrounded the rock and a few scouts are scaling up the back.

A squad of soldiers comes over the front of the rock approaches her. There's only ten of them so they spread out in a semi-circle.

Dinah gently reaches down, picks one up. She brings it close to her face, examines it carefully.

BANG!

It fires a shot right into her nose, stings her like a wasp. She cries out, throws the soldier out into the darkness.

At that, they all open fire.

Dinah flees, scurrying across the grass and screaming as she's hit just as many times as she's missed.

She spies a rock structure up ahead and dives behind it for cover. She stays crouched down here until the shots taper off.

She then looks about herself and sees that she's behind a chair, and that chair is next to a blazing fire pit. She slowly stands and sees that there's also a man sitting here.

He's older, bearded and dressed in a simple robe. He's got a Bible in his lap that he's tearing pages out of.

DINAH

Is that a Bible?

MAN

It is, yes. There's a lot of padding in here. Lots of mumbo-jumbo.

He's tearing huge sections out, now. Twenty to thirty pages at a time and tossing them up into the air.

DINAH

You can't just rip up a Bible. Who do you think you are?

MAN

I'm Leo Tolstoy.

You know, it might just be easier to rip out the parts that I want to keep.

He thumbs to the back of the Bible and pulls out a handful of pages. He hands these to Dinah and tosses the rest away.

DINAH

This is it?

MAN

That's it. The sermon on the mount. All you need.

DINAH

I don't think I have enough time even for this.

MAN

I'll make it even simpler, then. Love God above all, and do unto others.

He turns and walks off into the darkness, but we hear a last echo of his voice.

And evil must be resisted, but never by force.

Dinah turns back towards the rock, sees that the soldiers are fortifying their positions.

She steels herself, extends her arms at her sides and starts walking towards them.

The soldiers start firing again. But she takes the shots this time. She winces and cries out, but does not stop until she reaches the rock and stands atop it.

Here she stands with her arms still stretched out until the sounds of the shots start to fade and we hear Fredrick's voice again...

FREDRICK (V.O.)

12! 11! 10! 9! 8! 7! 6! 5! 4!

Dinah opens her eyes...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

She's in the kitchen again, standing in the spot where Fredrick was shot dead.

FREDRICK

3! 2! 1!

He leaps to his feet, locks eyes with Dinah. She looks down and sees the machine gun at her feet. She'd only have to reach down to pick it up, whereas Fredrick will have to dart across the room.

He takes a first furtive step towards the weapon. Dinah crouches down so that her hand is just beside the stock. This gives Fredrick pause.

Then she looks up and sees Swat Jesus standing on the stairway landing looking down at her.

She locks eyes with him a moment, then stands back up again. We hold on Swat Jesus as we hear the scuffle and the shot go off.

Swat Jesus comes down the steps, surveys the scene. Fredrick is standing at attention over Dinah's dead body.

SWAT JESUS

As you were, marine.

Fredrick's eyes roll back into his head and he falls back onto the ground like we first saw him.

Ultimate Adam comes down the steps, speaks to Swat Jesus from the landing.

ULTIMATE ADAM

Why do you keep playing these games?
You'll never be satisfied.

SWAT JESUS

I'm plenty satisfied.

All over the world right now, kids, little kids who are 6 years old are already pledging allegiance to a flag. Not you, not God. A flag. I've already beaten you at this a million times a million times over. And you claim this one person as some kind of victory?

But Adam is already gone.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Swat Jesus appears.

He goes over to the rock where Dinah had been standing and starts collecting up his soldiers in plastic bags. Each bag is labelled with a different country's flag.

Then he tosses them all into one giant sack, walks off into the darkness.

EXT. SHALLOW RIVER - DAY

We leave Ultimate Adam as we met him, fishing in the river with his speargun. Then we hear a voice. This time it belongs to a man.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Ultimate Adam? Is it ever just to kill?

Adam turns and looks directly into the screen.

CUT TO BLACK