

SECRET MESSIAHS!

SPACE

A vast star field. The tiny image of a CROSS appears at the very top of the screen.

Then five characters appear facing the camera: VERONICA, STEVEN, DR. PUS, ROCK SOLID and THE LEPER

Title and Credits

An oil painting appears on screen: Pieter Casenbroot's *St. Veronica with the Sudarium*

VERONICA (V.O.)

Saint Veronica, you gave Christ a towel on His way to Cavalry Which He used to wipe the Precious Blood from His Holy Face. In return for this great act of kindness He left you His most Holy image on the towel.

EXT. STREETS OF LAWRENCE - DAY

TITLE CARD: **THE SOVEREIGN**

A burned-out shell of a city. As the camera lingers on the empty streets, abandoned buildings and shattered brickwork, Veronica's prayer continues...

VERONICA (V.O.)

Oh Jesus, who in your cruel Passion became the reproach of men and the Man of Sorrows. Once your face shone with the beauty and sweetness of the Divinity; but now, for my sake, it has become as the face of a leper.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

STEVEN lurches into the frame.

Ragged and dirt-caked, he turns towards the camera to reveal a face covered in running sores.

He pulls a scarf up and over his horrible visage, turns and makes his way down the middle of the street when something slips out of his shirtsleeve and hits the ground with a faint SPLAT.

It's his hand.

He brings the stump up to his face and examines it in terror and disgust. Then an agonized howl and he stumbles off into a near-by alleyway.

Hold on the empty street for a moment until a WOMAN ON A BICYCLE swoops in from behind the frame. She stops beside the loose appendage, picks it up and follows Steven into

#### ALLEYWAY

Gasping and sputtering, Steven drags himself along the wall before collapsing onto a heap of trash. Our perspective shifts to his point of view and we see the shaky image of the woman on the bicycle stop and dismount.

This is VERONICA.

She too is greasy and dirt-caked, her clothes as ragged as his but for a small poncho that is absolutely pristine. The only thing on it is a faint image of THE FACE OF CHRIST.

She slips the poncho off and, still carrying Steven's hand, walks towards us and drapes the garment over the lens.

Over darkness...

VERONICA (V.O.)

Yet, in that disfigured  
countenance, I recognize your  
infinite love and I am consumed  
with the desire to make you loved  
by all mankind.

Flashes of light now... flickering stars and the distant chanting of angels.

DISSOLVE TO:

#### STREET

Veronica walks the bike back out into the street, hops on and starts pedalling away. Steven comes running out after her, cleaned of his sores and with his hand now miraculously reattached.

He touches his face, yanks the scarf off of his head and waves it around in the air. He turns towards the camera, starts to shout.

STEVEN

The Sovereign is here to work  
miracles and save the world!

(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Next comes the Judgement and then  
the New Paradise!

(leaping around like a  
madman)

What have all you doubters got to  
say, now?

(holding up his hand)

Look at me!

(unzipping his hoodie and  
bearing his chest)

The sickness has no power against  
the hand of God!

Veronica has since turned the bike around and pedalled up  
behind him. She dismounts and puts her hand over his mouth.

VERONICA

Shut up, you. Don't say a word  
about what I did here today.

He gently wriggles free, drops down and starts grovelling at  
her feet.

STEVEN

Why not? You're the Sovereign,  
aren't you? Tell me that you are!

VERONICA

Shut up about it.

She turns to go, but he grabs her leg.

STEVEN

You have to go see Dr. Pus! He's  
telling everyone that there's no  
such thing as The Sovereign. He  
thinks that he can heal the world  
all by himself.

VERONICA

So let him try.

STEVEN

He's hurting people! Doing all  
kinds of experiments on them. You  
have to go there and heal them,  
tell them that there is a  
Sovereign. That the World is saved  
at last!

FLAMES overtake the screen...

We pull back to reveal DR. PUS - a man in a battered contamination suit and grimy surgical mask. He's tearing pages out of a Bible and throwing them onto a fire-spitting barbecue grill.

DR. PUS

(mocking voice)

A woman, having an issue of blood twelve years which had spent all her living on physicians, neither could be healed by any. But came behind Him and touched the border of his garment and immediately her issue of blood was stanchd. And the woman fell down before him, and she declared before all the people why she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

He scatters a few more pages onto the flames and then tosses the whole book into the fire.

EXT. STREET

Low Angle: The camera travels along the road, passing rotted hands, legs, fingers and toes.

Through hard cuts, we gradually move further out of the town and into a more rural area.

A few more body parts pass by and then the camera tilts up to reveal...

EXT. PAPER MILL - DAY

A massive burned-out structure set back from a cracked concrete field with grass overgrowing it. Veronica pedals past the scattered body parts and not a few dead bodies.

She continues on, dismounts and then enters...

INT. PAPER MILL

She walks through this huge, burned-out area. She scans the walls and sees a few passageways/antechambers. She peeks her head into each of them and then walks further on until she sees the portable grill.

She picks up one of the charred pages, looks it over solemnly.

VERONICA

(a whisper)

Now you've done it.

(a shout)

Now you've done it!

DR. PUS

Done what?

She turns and sees Dr. Pus standing at the threshold of one of the antechambers.

DR. PUS (CONT'D)

Did I flood the world? Did I destroy cities with fire? Did I kill all the first born of a nation? How about order my armies to massacre millions? Or demand people to mutilate themselves as an act of fidelity?

(a pause)

No. I just pulled a few pages out of a book.

VERONICA

And burned them!

DR. PUS

Are you here looking for medical treatment?

VERONICA

No. I'm here to tell you that we've been sent a reprieve.

(a pause)

From God.

DR. PUS

(smirking)

No need.

He beckons her to follow him. She picks up as many of the pages as she can and follows him through the passageway and into...

INT. LABORATORY

It's a ghoulish display of battered equipment, body parts and power tools. In the center of the space is a small tree about the size of a potted plant. It's constructed from PVC pipes, electrical wiring and some batteries.

DR. PUS  
 (dramatic sweep of his  
 hand)  
 This is the New Tree of Life.  
 Crafted by the hands of man. This  
 is the salvation of the world!

VERONICA  
 That's blasphemy.

DR. PUS  
 It's math. It's chemistry.  
 Engineering! Human ingenuity! When  
 I'm finished, this tree will have  
 saved every living person in the  
 world!

VERONICA  
 You're too late. I told you we've  
 been given a reprieve.

DR. PUS  
 What do you mean 'a reprieve'?

VERONICA  
 The Sovereign has come. Next is The  
 Final Judgement and after that, The  
 New Paradise.

DR. PUS  
 You think that you're The  
 Sovereign?

No answer.

He steps over and yanks the remaining Bible pages out of her  
 hand, shakes them in her face.

DR. PUS (CONT'D)  
 There is no Sovereign or Last  
 Judgement or New Paradise...  
 There is no God.

Long pause.

LEPER  
 Dr. Pus?

THE LEPER has since entered the chamber. She stands evenly  
 between the two of them.

DR. PUS  
 Yes! You've heard about me?

LEPER  
You have a cure?

DR. PUS  
(running his fingers over  
the tree)  
The fruit from these branches will  
give you eternal life.

LEPER  
(hobbling over to him)  
Give me!

DR. PUS  
You'll just have to wait a little  
bit longer. The tree isn't...  
mature yet.

VERONICA  
That tree will never bear fruit.

The Leper turns to Veronica.

LEPER  
Who are you?

Veronica spreads her arms, revealing the full face of Christ  
on her poncho. The leper is transfixed by it.

VERONICA  
I'm the salvation of the world.

DR. PUS  
That woman is insane.

LEPER  
(to Veronica)  
Tell me who you are.

But Veronica gives no answer, she just kneels down and  
beckons. The Leper starts walking towards her.

DR. PUS  
She can't help you. Listen to your  
doctor.

Veronica throws the poncho over the woman.

VERONICA (V.O.)  
Show me how to wipe their faces,  
serve their needs, and heal their  
wounds, reminding me that as I do  
this for them, I also do this for  
You.



The room starts to shake, rattling the New Tree of Life on its foundation.

DR. PUS

No!

He runs over and tries to keep it from falling. Veronica pulls the poncho away to reveal the woman completely healed. And just as she does, the tree topples forward and impales Dr. Pus with its branches.

The Leper takes no notice. She kisses Veronica's hand and runs off in glee.

Veronica then walks over to Dr. Pus, puts her hand on his head as he breathes his last.

VERONICA

You poor, misguided man.

Dr. Pus musters his last bit of strength to spit a gob of blood onto her poncho. It vanishes as he dies.

EXT. PAPER MILL - DAY

Veronica puts the last bit of earth on Dr. Pus' grave with her bare hands. She then drives The New Tree of Life into the rocks as a marker.

She gets back onto the bicycle and pedals off. We hold on the grave for a few moments and then the earth begins to shake again.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN POOL - DAY

Close up: sequence of body parts floating in the water. As we linger on these, we hear the earnest whisper of a man.

ROCK SOLID (V.O.)

His eyes are like a flame of fire,  
and on his head are many royal  
crowns! He is dressed in a robe  
dipped in blood, and his name is  
called the Word of God! A sharp  
sword comes out of His mouth to  
strike down all Nations...

We pull back to reveal the ragged, crazed prophet ROCK SOLID.

He stands waist deep in the water and he has a thick rope tied around his waist. The other end of it leads out of the water and rests upon the ragged rocks along the shore.

Steven approaches from the surrounding woods. He kneels down at the edge of the water, scoops some up and splashes it on his head.

STEVEN

The Sovereign has come.

ROCK SOLID

Your faith has always been stronger than your judgement, Steven. You told me that Dr. Pus was The Sovereign.

STEVEN

I know I'm right this time. Look at me. She cured my sickness!

ROCK SOLID

A woman?

STEVEN

Why not a woman?

Rock Solid turns his back, looks up to the sky.

ROCK SOLID

God's first creation was sexless. Did you know that? What we call Adam was something that has never again walked the earth after it was split to make man and woman. So I suppose that The Sovereign could be either. Or a combination of the two. Did this one who healed you have both sex organs?

STEVEN

I... didn't check.

A few moments pass.

ROCK SOLID

Well she could be a sorcerer or a witch. She could be an agent of the adversary.

STEVEN

She has the face of Christ on her clothes.

ROCK SOLID

Indeed.

STEVEN

I know I'm right this time.

ROCK SOLID

The Sovereign will arrive. Then comes the Final Judgement and after that, the New Paradise.

(a pause)

There's only one way to know for sure.

STEVEN

Yes! Only one way!

He gets up and scurries back off into the woods. Rock Solid turns, gazes into the water.

ROCK SOLID (V.O.)

A great man once said that all you needed to discover God's plan was a Bible and a pencil...

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Rock Solid is wearing a business suit, carrying a briefcase and talking on the phone. Something falls out of the sky and lands at his feet.

It's a human hand. He crouches down, picks it up between his thumb and forefinger, examines it closely. Then the sounds of screaming and explosions comes up on the audio.

ROCK SOLID (V.O.)

So when this plague swept the earth, I knew exactly what I needed to do.

INT. ROCK SOLID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rock Solid is sitting at desk with the Bible opened beside him. He's underlining passages with a golf pencil and then scribbling notes on a legal pad beside him.

ROCK SOLID (V.O.)

I was never gifted with divine sight. I never heard voices or saw signs. All I had was a Bible and a pencil.

(MORE)

ROCK SOLID (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 (a pause)  
 A Bible and a pencil.

He finishes his scribbling and then gets up from the desk.

We pull back to reveal that his entire bedroom wall is covered in these pages. There are also maps and diagrams. He places this last piece of the puzzle up and then steps back, puts his hands on his hips.

ROCK SOLID (V.O.)  
 And then I knew what my place was  
 in all of this.

EXT. MOUNTAIN POOL - DAY

Rock Solid has his back turned.

ROCK SOLID  
 I tied a rope around myself and  
 waded into this water. And here  
 I've been all these years. I  
 haven't eaten or drank. I haven't  
 slept. And I cannot be moved from  
 this spot until the true Sovereign  
 and Savior of the world takes up  
 the end of that rope and removes me  
 by force.

He turns now and we see that Steven has returned with  
 Veronica. He is kneeling, but she remains standing.

ROCK SOLID (CONT'D)  
 (to Veronica)  
 So you're The Sovereign?

VERONICA  
 That's what you say.

ROCK SOLID  
 I don't. Not yet.

STEVEN  
 She is!  
 (turning to her)  
 You are.

ROCK SOLID  
 This one tells me that you're a  
 miracle worker.

VERONICA  
 (touching the poncho)  
 With this.

ROCK SOLID  
 Have you killed anybody?

VERONICA  
 No.

ROCK SOLID  
 The Sovereign will save the  
 innocent and destroy the guilty.  
 That's what The Final Judgement is.

VERONICA  
 I'm not here to destroy anybody.

ROCK SOLID  
 (turning his back)  
 Then The Sovereign you are not.

STEVEN  
 She hasn't killed anybody yet! But  
 she will.  
 (to Veronica)  
 Won't you?

He picks up the rope and puts it into her hand.

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
 Go on. Pull him out of the water.  
 You are The Sovereign. I know it!

Rock Solid turns back around locks eyes with her and extends  
 his arms.

ROCK SOLID  
 Prove me wrong, girl.

A few moments of hesitation. Veronica then steels herself,  
 digs her feet into the mud and starts to pull.

Struggles.

STEVEN  
 (a whisper)  
 You are The Sovereign. You are The  
 Sovereign.  
 (shutting his eyes)  
 You're here at last.

But when he opens his eyes again, Veronica is still struggling and Rock Solid hasn't budged. She finally drops the rope in exhaustion, falls into the mud.

Steven grabs the end of the rope and tries to put it back into her hand. But she turns from him and walks slowly back into the surrounding woods.

ROCK SOLID

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Veronica walks a little way and then drops down onto her knees. She lowers her head and sobs gently.

Steven comes up behind her.

STEVEN

You heard what he said. The Sovereign has to be a savior and a destroyer. Punish the guilty. Then we'll come back and try again.

VERONICA

One act of kindness.

STEVEN

(stepping closer)  
What?

VERONICA

(running her hands over the poncho)  
When I was a little girl, I did one act of kindness. That's why I have this...  
(a pause)  
Thing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FAMILY VAN - DAY

Veronica (12) and her MOM and DAD are driving through a European city. All three are wearing contamination suits and surgical masks.

The radio is playing a news report.

BROADCASTER

(in Spanish)

Disease Control has compiled a list of preventative measures to avoid being infected: Do not touch the body parts that are falling from the sky, do not touch the body parts that are falling off of people, do not make physical contact with an infected person or any of the fluids that drip from their sores...

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The family van continues on along an empty dirt road. White noise as the news broadcast breaks up and another program takes its place.

PREACHER

(in Spanish)

Rejoice! These are the labor pains that have been foretold! The old world has to fall away before the new one is established! Paradise is at hand!

EXT. COUNTRY VILLA - DAY

The family van pulls up to a rustic villa.

PREACHER

It's God's purpose to restore all things to the way they were at the very beginning!

The radio cuts out with the engine and the family gets out of the vehicle. All three remove their face masks and contamination suits.

Dad starts unloading luggage from the trunk and Mom unlocks the door and goes inside.

Veronica takes a kite out of the backseat and runs into a field behind the villa.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Veronica runs around trying to get the kite into the air. Hope it's windy when I shoot this.

Then she spies something along the road that they came in on. A BOY is walking along with an uneven gait. As he nears, she can see bandages wrapped around his face and arms.

He catches sight of her and slowly walks over. A few moments pass and then she hands him the kite handle. He takes it tentatively, then an expression of joy crosses his face.

Both smile.

Then a strong wind takes the kite, jerking the string and pulling the boy's hand right off of the wrist.

DAD (O.S.)  
Veronica!

Dad takes her by the elbow and jerks her out of the frame. She keeps her eyes on the boy as she's dragged back to the house. The Boy clutches his stump, and falls down onto the ground.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Veronica is sitting the bathtub. She's wearing the contamination suit and surgical mask again. The door opens a crack and her lunch is slid to her on a plate.

She ignores this, slumps back further into the tub. A few moments pass and then she stands, steps up onto the rim of the tub and looks out of a small, high window.

She has a clear view into the backyard and the boy still lying there. The sound of the radio broadcast comes up on the audio.

PREACHER  
(in Spanish)  
'When did we see you a stranger and  
invite you in, or needing clothes  
and clothe you?  
"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell  
you, whatever you did for one of  
the least of these brothers and  
sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Veronica steps down from the tub, picks up the food and a blanket, slips out the door.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Boy is lying on his side. The bandages have fallen away and we see the running sores on his body.



Veronica sets the plate down beside his face. She breaks off a piece of bread and puts it to his lips. The Boy takes it with his good hand and eats.

She then takes the blanket and throws it over him. The boy looks at her, smiles and then shuts his eyes.

The ground slowly starts trembling, then more so. Though she should be terrified, Veronica just sits in place. The boy's image starts quaking, too.

Then his body vanishes, leaving only the blanket. The quaking ceases, and the blanket bears the image of Christ's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Veronica stands back up, turns to Steven.

VERONICA  
 (putting her hands on the  
 poncho)  
 This... is not a weapon.

Steven steps closer, gently puts his hand on the garment. His fingers tighten around it and he starts to pull. A brief tug-of-war ensues until Steven gives her a good slap to the face.

Another solid blow and she falls to the ground. He wrests the poncho off of her shoulders and holds it triumphantly over his head.

This pose is held as the camera slowly tilts up to the sky...

SPACE

Veronica, Steven, Rock Solid, The Leper and Dr. Pus appear beneath the sign of the glowing cross.

In a series of dissolves and super-imposed credits the actors change roles:

VERONICA becomes a new character, BITTER WATER

THE LEPER takes on the poncho and the role of VERONICA

DR. PUS takes on the role of STEVEN

STEVEN takes on the role of a new character, ALDO

ROCK SOLID becomes a new character, ADGAR

TILT BACK DOWN

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

We return to the exact same posture, Steven holding the poncho above a battered Veronica. Though both characters have now been recast.

TITLE CARD: **THE SOVEREIGN, PART 2**

EXT. STREETS OF LAWRENCE - DAY

The very same limb-strewn stretch of road where we first met Steven and Veronica. It's Steven who is now pedalling down the street in the poncho.

He goes a ways before he hears an agonized cry and sees a woman up ahead flailing around in a panic. As he nears, he sees that both of her hands have fallen off and are lying on the ground.

This is BITTER WATER. She cries out to him as he pedals past.

BITTER WATER  
Help me! Please!

He pays her no mind.

BITTER WATER (CONT'D)  
Help me find Dr. Pus!

At this, Steven stops and turns around.

STEVEN  
Dr. Pus can't help you.

BITTER WATER  
(holding up her stumps)  
He can! He's making a cure! I heard him on the radio! Do you know where he is?!

STEVEN  
He's a Godless fool. And a charlatan. Only The Sovereign can save this world.

BITTER WATER  
Dr. Pus says that there's no such thing as The Sovereign!

Steven slowly pedals over to her, steps off of the bike and raises his arms out so that she can see the face of Christ.

STEVEN

I am The Sovereign.

He then kneels down, picks up her severed hands and uses the poncho to reattach them to her wrists. Bitter Water flexes her fingers, then touches the sores on her face.

BITTER WATER

(lunging at him)

Heal my face!

STEVEN

(stepping back)

I will. In time. But whenever I heal a part of your body, that part will then belong to me. Understand?

BITTER WATER

Yes.

STEVEN

Then follow me and use my hands to pick as many body parts as you can.

He hops back onto the bicycle and pedals off at a brisk pace.

Bitter water picks up a few more appendages and takes off after him at a jog.

The camera is mobile now, holding on Bitter Water as she runs towards it and picks up body parts as she goes. They fall out of her arms and she picks them up again.

Finally exhausted, she stops and the camera stops with her.

STEVEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Let's go! You want to live or not?!

Bitter Water starts running again and the camera resumes its retreat.

The girl is suffering.

INT. ROCK SOLID'S APARTMENT - DAY

We pull back from the vast notes and diagrams on Rock Solid's wall. Steven is looking them over carefully. Bitter Water enters with the body parts and slumps down on a couch.

STEVEN

Go look for a bag or something. A big one. And a briefcase if you can find it.

Bitter Water gets back up and leaves the room. Steven walks closer to the wall. There's a thick, curving line running through it, with 14 little drawings on post-it notes along the way.

Steven traces his finger on the line, stopping at the 6th post-it. There's a crude drawing here of a woman holding a veil with a face on it.

Veronica returns with a tattered burlap sack and Dr. Pus' briefcase.

Steven goes over to the desk, picks up Rock Solid's bible and the one of his golf pencils.

BITTER WATER

Will you cure me now?

STEVEN

Bag the body parts.

(pointing)

And then I want you to take all of this down and pack it up, too. And be careful, you hear me?

(turning to her)

Your life depends on it.

EXT. STREETS OF LAWRENCE - DAY

Same P.O.V. shot of Bitter Water running towards the camera. Though this time she has the heavy bag over her shoulder and the briefcase in her hand.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Hard cut and we are now in a nicer area, we pass grand houses on small hills. Though there are still body parts strewn in the street.

Poor Bitter Water struggles on...

EXT. GRAND HOUSE - DAY

We hold on this grand house for a moment.

ROCK SOLID (V.O.)

Don't assume that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn "'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

Steven rides the bike up the steep driveway and knocks on the door. Bitter Water slowly drags the bag up after him.

EXT. DOORSTEP - CONTINUOUS

Steven's knocking becomes more insistent. At last, the door opens a crack and man almost completely shrouded in darkness peers out.

This is his older brother, SYLVESTER.

SYLVESTER

Steven?

STEVEN

Yes, brother. When you turned me away, I was a very sick man. But look at me now.

(raising his arms)

I'm cured.

Sylvester opens the door wider, stumbles out on a crutch. We see now that he is sick.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

And it looks like you've been infected anyway.

SYLVESTER

All of us. Not long after you left.

STEVEN

I didn't leave. You threw me out. But I forgive you.

He pushes past him and goes into the house. Sylvester follows him, but we hold on the open door until Bitter Water drags her burden over the step and into the house also.

She shuts the door behind her.

INT. GRAND HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Steven enters and stands in the middle of the room. Sylvester's wife, MIRA is sitting on the couch wrapped in a blanket. She also has a scarf concealing the bottom part of her mouth.

The home has fallen into a terrible state of disrepair.

STEVEN  
 (shaking his head)  
 Oh, brother. To see your home in  
 such a state.

Bitter Water comes through the door and drops the trash bag right in the middle of the room. She then slumps down in a chair.

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
 (to Sylvester)  
 Where's Adgar?

SYLVESTER  
 Why are you here, Steven?

STEVEN  
 I'm here to save you. Now where's  
 the old man?

INT. GRAND HOUSE - BEDROOM

ADGAR is lying in bed under an American flag. His wounds are the worst yet. His breathing is labored and his eyes are nearly swollen shut.

Steven enters the room, stands at the foot of the bed. He gazes at this man for a few moments more before pulling the sheet off of him.

Adgar is dressed in a tattered police uniform. He's wearing his duty belt but is not armed.

STEVEN  
 You silly son-of-a-bitch. Keeping  
 up the good fight right to the end,  
 eh?  
 (a pause)  
 Hey, Adgar. ADGAR!

ADGAR  
 (stirs, stammers)  
 Sylvester?

STEVEN  
 (crouching beside the bed)  
 It's Steven.

ADGAR  
 (a murmur)  
 Steven...

STEVEN  
 You know. The bum. The degenerate.  
 The piece of trash that you kicked  
 to the street.  
 (leaning in close)  
 You spent your whole life out there  
 trying to make the world a better  
 place with your guns and your rules  
 and your prisons and your oaths and  
 your orders. Look at it now. All  
 for nothing. A wasted life.

ADGAR  
 Get out of my house.

STEVEN  
 You're going to answer for all of  
 it. First to me, then to God!

He gets up and walks back out into the...

#### UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

There's another bedroom up here. The door is half-open and we  
 can see someone kneeling beside their bed as if in prayer.  
 This is Sylvester and Mira's developmentally stunted son,  
 ALDO.

Steven speaks to him from the door.

STEVEN  
 Aldo? It's Uncle Steve.

ALDO  
 (turning)  
 Uncle Steve?

STEVEN  
 (stepping into the room)  
 I'm all better now. I've come back  
 to make you better, too.

ALDO  
(shaking his head)  
I don't need to be better. There's  
nothing wrong with me.

He gets up and turns. The boy is able-bodied, and free of  
sickness.

STEVEN  
To save your mom and dad, then.

ALDO  
Only The Sovereign can save them.

STEVEN  
Come on downstairs, buddy. I've got  
some very exciting news.

INT. GRAND HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Aldo sits with his parents on the couch. Steven directs  
Bitter Water to go and sit with them, too.

He remains standing with the trash bag at his feet.

STEVEN  
(raising his arms)  
How could you have known on that  
day that you kicked me out into the  
street, that one day I would come  
back a cured man! And that through  
my healing, I would heal you as  
well?

SYLVESTER  
Get on with it, then.

STEVEN  
Come here, brother.

Sylvester struggles to his feet, hobbles over to Steven on  
the crutch. Steven crouches down, pulls up the other man's  
pant leg to reveal a leg that ends at a mushy ankle.

Steven fishes into the trash bag and pulls out a foot that's  
still in decent condition. He slips it under his brother's  
stump and clinches them together with the poncho.

His brother's leg is healed. Though there is still sickness  
on the rest of his body.

Aldo's eyes widen. He then beats his palms against his  
forehead and runs off into the...



## KITCHEN

Aldo grips the sides of the sink, shaking his head and his eyes shut tight.

Steven enters, puts his hands on his Nephew's shoulders and rubs them until Aldo calms some.

STEVEN

(gently)

Did you see something that you don't understand, buddy?

Aldo nods.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Don't feel bad. Nobody understands miracles. That's what makes them miracles. I have special powers now.

ALDO

(turning)

Are you... The Sovereign?

STEVEN

With these hands, I took hold of the rope and pulled Rock Sold from the water. And when I did, a great light shown upon me and I heard a voice say that God was pleased with me.

(dramatic pause)

And when I looked up, I saw something carried on the wind, floating down to me softly. A gift from the Hand of God Himself.

(running his hand across the garment)

It landed on my shoulders. And I've been working miracles with it ever since.

ALDO

Are you The Sovereign?

STEVEN

I am.

Aldo falls down, grovels at his feet.

ALDO

Thank God!

STEVEN  
 (helping him up)  
 You know what comes next, don't  
 you?

ALDO  
 Judgement!

STEVEN  
 That's right. Now go get your  
 grandpa and bring him out into the  
 yard.

EXT. GRAND HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Steven sits in a large deck chair. Bitter Water stands to his right with the trash bag of body parts at her feet. Aldo stands to his left with his arms crossed, a small pile of stones at his feet.

Adgar, Sylvester and Mara are on the grass a little ways away.

STEVEN  
 And so begins The Final Judgement.  
 If you are found to be worthy, you  
 will have your body healed...  
 (motioning to Bitter Water)  
 And if not, you will be destroyed  
 forever.  
 (pointing to Adgar)  
 You first. Approach!

Adgar scowls at him defiantly. Aldo goes over and drags him to the spot right in front of the chair.

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
 Lieutenant. I charge you with  
 pledging allegiance to the World of  
 Men, for passing judgement on your  
 fellow man. For carrying a gun with  
 the intent of shooting and killing  
 people just because your government  
 told you. I charge you with 'just  
 following orders'

ADGAR  
 (struggling to speak)  
 I have... no regrets about how I  
 lived my life.

STEVEN  
 And unrepentant.

He motions to Aldo who hooks his grandfather under the arms and drags him over to the left side of the chair. Steven motions to his brother next.

Sylvester walks over on his good legs, kneels down.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Do I even need to list the charges?  
You probably don't even remember  
most of them. But I do. Every...  
Single... One.

SYLVESTER

You've wanted this your whole life,  
haven't you, baby brother?

STEVEN

Since the day I was born.  
(a pause)  
Big Brother.

He motions to Aldo who takes his father to the left side of the chair. Steven locks eyes with Mira. Aldo goes over to help her, but she pushes him away.

She crawls over to the chair, sits up on her knees and stares at Steven.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

And you, Mira. You refused the love  
of a good man. Me. But there's  
still time to repent.

She slowly removes the shawl from around her face to show a mouth rotted shut with sickness. Steven comes over to her, wipes her mouth with the hem of the poncho.

Mira gapes and takes a deep breath through her restored mouth. Steven takes her face in his hands.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Do you repent for this terrible  
crime? Will you change your ways?

She lowers her eyes in shame and defeat. Her voice can just barely be heard.

MIRA

Yes.

Bitter Water steps in and takes her to the right side of the chair.

STEVEN

(standing)

And now to carry out the sentence.  
Eternal destruction. There will be  
no afterlife for you. No  
resurrection. No New Paradise. You  
will be wiped away from every  
possible level of existence!

ADGAR

You think you're doing anything?  
You... execute a dying man?

Steven stands up, takes the poncho off and heals both Adgar and Sylvester completely. The two men stand up, completely overwhelmed with the sense of new life that's flowing through them.

They stumble around like babies just learning to walk. They smile, laugh. Mira watches these two men whom she loves enjoy life anew.

She smiles.

Steven allows them to enjoy this for a few moments more before reaching down and picking up one of the stones at Aldo's feet. He wings it at Adgar and hits him right in the forehead.

More stones follow. Aldo throws them, too. It's a terrible scene of blood and horror.

Bitter Water lets out a terrified cry. She drops the bag of body parts and runs away into the darkness. Mira pulls the veil up over her face and weeps...

The camera tilts up to the sky and then tilts back down to...

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

Veronica is just where we'd left her, lying in the dirt and stripped of her poncho. The horrible sounds of the stoning deaths surround her and she writhes and screams as if the stones are hitting her.

This goes on until the sounds stop and the last gasps and death rattles of the two men sputter out. They are dead.

Veronica gets up, charges through the darkness until she can hear rushing water and a familiar voice.

## ROCK SOLID (O.S.)

For without are dogs and sorcerers  
and whore mongers and murders and  
idolators! In the New Paradise,  
there will be nothing but  
righteousness!

She can just make out the frayed end of the thick rope in the moonlight. She grabs a hold of it with her bloodied hands and starts to pull.

BACK TO:

## EXT. GRAND HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Mira weeps over the bodies of her dead husband and father. Steven drags the trash bag of body parts over to her, crouches down and pulls her coat off.

Her shoulders and arms are covered with the disease. She only has a few fingers left on each of her hands. She continues crying as Steven slowly heals/rebuilds her with the poncho and spare body parts.

When she is whole, she crawls over to the bodies and kisses each of them on the forehead. Steven then roughly takes her by the shoulder and drags her into the house.

BACK TO:

## MOUNTAINSIDE

Veronica is still struggling with the rope when another sound comes up on the audio... a violent sex act. We can hear Steven panting and Mira whining... the bedsprings and headboard.

These sounds send Veronica back into the dirt again, screaming and writhing. She suffers on until this last violation is complete.

Then she goes limp.

FADE OUT.

## INT. GRAND HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Rock Solid's maps and charts have been pinned up on the wall. A small desk has been brought in where Steven sits working with a Bible and a pencil.

Mira is sitting in the bed with the sheets pulled up to her chest. Aldo is sitting in the corner staring blankly out the window.

MIRA  
You're not The Sovereign.

ALDO  
(leaping up)  
He is! Uncle Steve IS The  
Sovereign!

Steven drops his pencil, turns to his nephew.

STEVEN  
Go to your room.

Aldo does. Mira waits until the door shuts before repeating her accusation.

MIRA  
You're not The Sovereign.

STEVEN  
I know. But the world needs false  
prophets, too.

MIRA  
Is that what you think your place  
is in all of this?

STEVEN  
I've made it my place.

He stands up, traces his finger across the line that goes across Rock Solid's work.

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
A brilliant man once said that all  
you needed if you wanted to chart  
the history and future of man was a  
Bible and a pencil.  
(a pause)  
And it's all here...

The camera zooms in on the wall chart, drifts across the notes, drawings and obscure symbols. As it does, paintings fade in and out of the screen...

*Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise* by Louis Gonzalez  
Velasquez

Orazio Riminaldi's *Sacrifice of Isaac*

Domenico di Pace Beccafumi's *Moses and the Golden Calf*

Nicolas Poussin's *Victory of Joshua over the Amalekites*

Henry Ossawa Tanner's *The Annunciation*

*Salome with the Head of John the Baptist* by Guido Reni

*Saint Veronica wiping the face of Christ*, Mattia Preti

Rembrandt's *The Ascension Of Christ*

The camera pulls back from the wall and back to Steven.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

But I still feel like something is missing.

Long pause.

MIRA

We took Aldo to see Rock Solid, you know. He was the only one who never got sick. And he was always so innocent. We thought that he might be The Sovereign.

(a pause)

But he couldn't move the man.

STEVEN

(dismissive)

Of course he couldn't.

MIRA

There is something missing from Rock Solid's work. But you won't find it in that Bible.

STEVEN

You're saying God forgot something?

MIRA

Rock Solid is a 'King James Only'. All the maniacs are. But you need the missing books that are in a Catholic Bible.

STEVEN

(a gasp)

The missing books!

He looks back to the wall chart again, reexamines the trajectory of the line.

He places his finger at the demarcation between the end of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.

MIRA

The book of Machabees and the Hebrew messiah of vengeance and destruction. The warrior king that took back the temple from the Greeks...

STEVEN

Judas Machabeus.

MIRA

No history of man is complete without him.

STEVEN

You have a Catholic Bible?

MIRA

Give my son back first. Tell him that you aren't The Sovereign. You've killed your enemies. What use is he to you now?

STEVEN

You have a Catholic Bible in this house?

MIRA

I can tell you where to find one.

STEVEN

Aldo!

Aldo enters.

MIRA

Steven has to tell you something.

STEVEN

I'm not The Sovereign.

ALDO

(hurt, confused)  
You're not?

MIRA

He lied to us.



ALDO  
(laying his hand on the  
poncho)  
But this.

STEVEN  
Stole it. From a witch. Rock Solid  
is still in the water.

Aldo's face drops. He turns and slumps off into the corner,  
slides to the floor.

MIRA  
(a whisper)  
The Sovereign will be here soon,  
though. You'll see him, Aldo.

But the boy is inconsolable. She puts her arms out and he  
runs over to her. She rocks him back and forth, stroking his  
hair.

Mira looks to Steven, points out the window. Steven looks out  
and the camera follows his gaze just across the street to...

EXT. CATHOLIC HOUSE - DAY

Close up on one of those half-bathtubs with a statue of the  
Virgin in it. We pull back and see a large crucifix on the  
front door.

Steven knocks. He peers into the windows and sees only  
darkness. He knocks a few more times and then throws himself  
up against the door, breaking the hinges.

INT. CATHOLIC HOUSE - MAIN ROOM

The place is trashed and dimly lit. There are more religious  
statues and paintings, but no Bibles as yet. He scans the  
rest of the floor and then takes a set of steps up to...

INT. CATHOLIC HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Steven peeks his head into every room. But the door at the  
end of the hall is locked. He knocks a few times, then bashes  
the knob like he did the other one.

INT. CATHOLIC HOUSE - BEDROOM

A small Catholic altar in the middle of the room. The only  
other thing here is a small bed pushed into the corner.

Steven finds a Bible here among the small statues and artifacts.

He grabs it and turns to leave, but then he catches the eyes of a statue of Christ on a pedestal.

It's one of those creepy statues that's painted completely so that Christ has a weird, peachy skin tone. The eyes are fully painted also and penetrating.

Steven has to fight to break away from His stare.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM

An array of view screens built into a wall. Steven's face is on all of them, the reverse angle staring at the statue.

SWAT JESUS is sitting at the controls. But we only see him from behind. He's a broad-shouldered man with long stringy hair and a broken crown on his head.

He watches impassively as Steven finally breaks his gaze and slips out of the room.

Swat Jesus then hits another switch and the feed changes to images of the diseased, bandaged citizenry doing all manner of terrible things to each other... thefts, fist-fights, stabbings and murders.

These images are intercut with those of battered surveillance cameras affixed to the sides of buildings, mounted on telephone poles and hidden in shrubberies.

Then the image of Steven returning to the Grand House with the stolen Bible.

INT. GRAND HOUSE - BEDROOM

Steven gets back to work with his Catholic Bible and a pencil. As he scurries back and forth between his desk and the wall chart, Mira starts to sing.

MIRA

See, the conqu'ring hero comes.  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.  
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,  
Songs of triumph to him sing.

Peter Paul Rubens's painting, *The Triumph of Judas Maccabeus* appears on screen

MIRA (CONT'D)

See the godlike youth advance.  
Breathe the flutes, and lead the  
dance;  
Myrtle wreaths, and roses twine,  
To deck the hero's brow divine.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Swat Jesus creeps through the darkness with a shiny,  
otherworldly looking pistol in his hand. We can see him  
clearly now.

He wears a tactical gear and a trench coat. He's even more  
wild-eyed and crazed looking than Rock Solid.

MIRA (V.O.)

See, the conqu'ring hero comes.  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.  
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,  
Songs of triumph to him sing. See,  
the conqu'ring hero comes.  
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.

EXT. GRAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Swat Jesus approaches the house. He finds the front door open  
and slips in quietly.

MIRA (O.S.)

Sing unto God, and high affections  
raise,  
To crown this conquest with  
unmeasur'd praise.

INT. GRAND HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Steven is at the wall with the Bible open in one hand and  
making notations with the other.

MIRA

Sweet flow the strains, that strike  
my feasted ear;  
Angels might stoop from Heav'n to  
hear  
The comely song we sing,  
To Israel's Lord and King...

STEVEN

(a whisper)  
The Sovereign is already here.

A crashing sound as the door comes off of the hinges. Steven and Mira turn as Swat Jesus comes through the door, pistol leveled.

Aldo turns from his mother's arms. But now there's a clear patch of sickness on his cheek. He puts his hand to it, looks down at the pus on his fingers in horror.

ALDO  
(to Swat Jesus)  
Are you The Sovereign?

SWAT JESUS  
I am.

Aldo scurries over, grovels at his feet.

ALDO  
Heal me, please!

Long pause.

STEVEN  
Go on, if you're The Sovereign.  
Heal him.

Steven takes off the poncho, tosses it over to Swat Jesus. The other man opens it, stares at the image of Christ. He then turns to Aldo groveling at his feet.

Swat Jesus tries, but some invisible force prevents him from touching Aldo with the poncho. He gives up and tosses it back to Steven.

Aldo whimpers and scurries back to his mother's bedside.

SWAT JESUS  
I am the flood. I am the fire from  
the skies. I'm God's wrath, His  
judgement and His Vengeance.

STEVEN  
But you're not His Sovereign.  
(a pause)  
Not yet.

Swat Jesus takes hold of Steven, throws him to the ground and levels the pistol. Steven holds the Bible up defensively.

SWAT JESUS  
You think you're safe because  
you're holding a Bible? You're  
defenseless against this book...

He drops a heavy tome on the desk.

SWAT JESUS (CONT'D)

I see everything. And I've got it  
all written down here in the New  
Book of Life and Death.

STEVEN

You're nothing but a destroyer.  
(to Aldo)  
You hear that, buddy? Nothing but a  
destroyer.

Swat Jesus looks back over the pages on the wall. He touches  
the time line with the tip of the pistol and traces it to a  
particular spot.

SWAT JESUS

Right here. This spot. This was the  
moment when my destiny was revealed  
to me.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Swat Jesus is a bandaged, plague-stricken mess. He crawls  
along the sidewalk as cars pass without even slowing.

He makes it a little further until he collapses from the  
strain. Pedestrians step over him now.

EXT. VACANT LOT - DAY

Swat Jesus stumbles into the lot and falls to his side. He  
stares out into the street and watches as the people pass by.  
Then he sees a LITTLE GIRL staring at him.

It's the same actor who'd played Young Veronica. This girl  
looks at him for only a moment and then walks along, too.

Swat Jesus curls into a ball and huddles against the wall.  
Then a severed hand falls out of the sky and lands right in  
front of him. It's clasping a shiny, alien-looking pistol.

He carefully picks it up and pries the fingers off of the  
handle, caresses the weapon lovingly.

SWAT JESUS (V.O.)

Depart from me, you who are cursed,  
into the eternal fire prepared for  
the devil and his angels.

(MORE)

SWAT JESUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

For I was hungry and you gave me  
nothing to eat, I was thirsty and  
you gave me nothing to drink, I was  
a stranger and you did not invite  
me in, I needed clothes and you did  
not clothe me...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN POOL - DAY

Swat Jesus is standing at the bank. Steven is at his side and  
Veronica is still cowering in the mud where we left her. Rock  
Solid is in the middle of the pool as always.

Swat Jesus raises the pistol and fires three shots into the  
air. Then three more. Then ten more...

SWAT JESUS

I've fired this gun thousands of  
times. I've never had to load it.  
And my bullets cause total  
destruction... body and soul! And  
on the day that I pull the trigger  
and nothing happens, on that day  
I'll know that my work here in this  
world is done.

Swat Jesus holsters the pistol and picks up the rope. He  
gives it everything, but Rock Solid holds his spot. Swat  
Jesus collapses at last.

ROCK SOLID

(to Steven)

Stop bringing people here, Steven.  
The Sovereign can find his way to  
me without you.

STEVEN

But I have brought you The  
Sovereign.

ROCK SOLID

Who?

(pointing at Swat Jesus)

Not this one.

(to Veronica)

Not this one, either.

(a smirk)

You're going to tell me that it's  
you, now?

STEVEN

No.

Steven helps Veronica up off of the ground and places her hand on the rope.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

The right hand of God - mercy,  
forgiveness, life.

(places Swat Jesus's hands  
on the rope)

And the left hand - judgement,  
vengeance and death.

(a pause)

The Sovereign isn't one person.  
It's two.

ROCK SOLID

Madness.

STEVEN

I studied your work with the King  
James Bible. You were missing  
something. And I found it in a  
Douay-Rheims.

ROCK SOLID

A what?

STEVEN

A Catholic Bible.

ROCK SOLID

You demon! You devil!

STEVEN

The Sovereign is here. Split  
between this man and this woman...  
between the Old Testament and the  
New!

Swat Jesus and Veronica start to pull. Rock Solid buckles forward and splashes into the water.

ROCK SOLID

God be praised!

He slips beneath the surface a few times before they pull him ashore and he flops onto his back.

ROCK SOLID (CONT'D)

Now, the final judgement of the  
world can begin!

His image flutters and then vanishes. Swat Jesus and Veronica clasp hands, turn and walk off back the way that they came.

TILT UP TO:

SPACE

The actors switch roles again. Swat Jesus is played by the actor who was playing Veronica and the actor playing Veronica becomes Swat Jesus.

Bitter Water and Mira switch roles, as do Dr. Pus and Aldo.

TILT BACK DOWN

EXT. TOWER OF JUDGEMENT - SUMMIT - DAY

A small hill in the wilderness not far from where Rock Solid was pulled from the water.

A large stone has been positioned just near the edge of the summit. Steven and Veronica enter the frame still holding hands.

They sit together and stare directly into the camera.

TITLE APPEARS: **JUDGEMENT!**

The camera then pulls out and tilts down to the base of the hill where Steven is now standing. Then he begins the arduous climb to the top.

As he struggles up the nearly vertical ascent, images flash across the screen of his deeds - when he attacked Veronica, mistreated Bitter Water, stoned Adgar and Sylvester.

Though in all of these moments, Steven is played by the actor who is playing him now, not the one who performed the original scenes.

STEVEN (V.O.)

I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life.

Steven pulls himself up and onto the summit, crawls on all fours to the rock where Swat Jesus and Veronica are sitting.



STEVEN (V.O.)  
And the dead were judged according  
to what they had done, as recorded  
in the books.

Swat Jesus opens his New Book of Life and Death.

SWAT JESUS  
Steven of Lawrence.

STEVEN  
Yes.

SWAT JESUS  
(turning the pages)  
You are a thief and a murderer.

STEVEN  
Yes.

VERONICA  
Do you have anything to say before  
we pass judgement?

STEVEN  
You wouldn't be here right now if  
it weren't for me and all of the  
things that I've done. It was my  
works and my faith that put you up  
here on this throne.

SWAT JESUS  
So you want a pass?

STEVEN  
I do.

VERONICA  
We can't, Steven.

SWAT JESUS  
(drawing the pistol)  
There's no place for someone like  
you in the New Paradise.

STEVEN  
You ungrateful pricks!

Veronica stands, crouches beside him.

VERONICA

We're grateful to you, Steven.  
Every savior needs a betrayer, a  
Judas whose terrible actions make  
it possible for goodness to come  
into the world.

(a pause)

And your destruction is just as  
much a part of the plan as  
everything else that you've done.

Long pause.

STEVEN

Then I regret nothing.

Swat Jesus takes aim and fires, sending Steven tumbling off  
of the summit to land in a heap at the bottom.

We hold here for a moment until other diseased people appear  
and start their climb to judgement.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PAPER MILL - DAY

Bitter Water comes shambling across the blighted concrete.  
She steps into the massive structure and calls out...

BITTER WATER

Hello?! Dr. Pus?

INT. PAPER MILL - DAY

Bitter Water creeps around the place. She comes across dead  
bodies, severed limbs and other detritus. She ignores it all  
in pursuit of her goal.

BITTER WATER

Dr. Pus?!

EXT. DR. PUS' GRAVE - DAY

Bitter Water comes upon it at last. The grave is still fresh  
and the battered New Tree of Life is still sticking up where  
Veronica left it.

Bitter water runs her fingers over the branches. They've  
borne no fruit.

BITTER WATER (V.O.)  
 Oh, Dr. Pus. All hope is gone from  
 the world now.

INT. PAPER MILL - DAY

Bitter Water walks into one of the larger of the open spaces. There's a broken TV set here that's attached to a long, gnarled extension cord.

She picks up the cord, gives it a few tugs to test the strength. She then loops it and tosses it over some piping in the ceiling, ties the other end around her neck and steps up onto the TV.

A few moments pass as she steels herself for the very last act of her life...

A hissing sound.

She looks down and sees that the long slack end of the cord has suddenly come to life. It's the pronged end, so when it bends up to face her, the plugs stick out like fangs.

EXTENSION CORD  
 The Sovereign has finally come. Why  
 aren't you rejoicing with the rest  
 of the world?

She's completely unfazed by this talking cord.

BITTER WATER  
 Dr. Pus was the savior that this  
 world needed.

A hiss.

EXTENSION CORD  
 What about the New Paradise?

BITTER WATER  
 Lies!

Hissssssss...

EXTENSION CORD  
 Yes. The Sovereign, The Final  
 Judgement, the New Paradise. It's  
 all lies. Dr. Pus knew that. It's  
 why they killed him.

BITTER WATER  
 Who killed him?

## EXTENSION CORD

The same liars and false prophets  
that are sitting atop a mountain  
right now... deciding who'll live  
and who'll die.

## BITTER WATER

Bastards!

Hissssss

## EXTENSION CORD

I'll help you. But first I need you  
to say that The Sovereign, the  
Final Judgement and The New  
Paradise are all lies.

## BITTER WATER

The Sovereign, the Final Judgement  
and The New Paradise are all lies.

## EXTENSION CORD

Follow me.

The cord unwraps itself from her neck and leads her back  
to...

## EXT. DR. PUS' GRAVE

The cord slithers up to the New Tree of Life and strikes  
right at the base, burrowing down into the ground. The other  
end of the cord wraps itself around the trunk of the tree.

The stones atop the grave start to quake. Bitter Water knocks  
them away and starts pawing at the ground with her bare  
hands. She's able to uncover Dr. Pus' body quickly.

## BITTER WATER

(brushing the dirt from his  
face)

Doctor?

The body starts to smoke. The crusted sores on his head give  
way to a hard, metallic coating. His withered hands are also  
given a robotic make-over.

His eyes flutter. He sits up slowly, looking about himself in  
a daze. He stands but is only able to walk a few steps before  
the tension on the cord stops him.

He's attached to the New Tree of Life like a baby with an  
umbilicus.

Bitter Water picks up the tree and follows him as he shambles away from the grave and to an adjacent field.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Dr. Pus shambles around regaining his balance. Bitter Water follows him with the tree. This goes on for a spell until Dr. Pus is steady.

Bitter Water then leads him back into the mill at to his...

INT. LABRATORY - DAY

They enter the lab and Dr. Pus goes over to an array of beakers and other equipment. He tries out his new mechanical hands.

He then plops down onto a crate. Bitter Water crouches beside him, looks around.

BITTER WATER

All of this seemed very natural to me when it first happened. I wasn't afraid.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BITTER WATER'S HOUSE - DAY

Young Bitter Water is sitting at her bedroom window. She's played by the same actress who played Young Veronica.

She's watching as body parts are falling out of the sky and landing in the backyard.

BITTER WATER (V.O.)

My father had been waiting for it all of his life. I'd never seen him so happy as when it finally happened.

HER FATHER takes her by the arm and yanks her away.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Supplies are stacked to the ceiling, tanks of gasoline too. There are also lots of guns.

Bitter Water and Her Father enter. He takes down his guns, starts checking and cleaning them. He takes a small, hand cranked radio and switches it on...

BROADCASTER (O.S.)

Disease Control has compiled a list of preventative measures to avoid being infected: Do not touch the body parts that are falling from the sky, do not touch the body parts that are falling off of people, do not make physical contact with an infected person or any of the fluids that drip from their sores...

BITTER WATER (V.O.)

Three generations of his family had been waiting for this. He was honored to be the one who finally saw it. He felt chosen.

Her Father loads up - a rifle over each shoulder, grenades strapped to his chest. He sits down and starts reading the Bible.

BITTER WATER (V.O.)

He believed in The Sovereign, and the The Final Judgement and The New Paradise. And as we'd lived to see the beginning, he was going to be sure that we lived to see the end.

(a pause)

And so we waited.

Years pass by in a single hard cut and we see Bitter Water as she is now. The garage is almost completely empty. Her aged father is sleeping on the floor next to the radio that only spits out white noise.

The motor snaps off and Bitter Water picks it up, gives it a few cranks and it comes alive again. She toggles the dial, more white noise.

Then she picks something up, very weak...

DR. PUS (O.S.)

...revolutionary procedure... There's nothing magical about what's happening... I'm on the verge of a cure... Come here to the Paper Mill...

BITTER WATER (V.O.)

I hadn't heard a voice other than my father's in all that time. And he'd barely spoken at all those last few years...

DR. PUS (O.S.)

Nobody is coming to save us. We have to do it ourselves... There is no Sovereign, there is no Final Judgement... there will never be what the lunatics call a New Paradise...

She slinks off into a corner, turns the volume down and presses the radio to her ear.

BITTER WATER

And listening to you in secret made me realize that my father was insane.

(long pause)

And fate of the world rested with you. And the New Tree of Life.

DR. PUS (O.S.)

There is no God.

She props up some boxes and gazes out of a high window. She looks over at her slumbering father, then slowly curls her fingers under the sill and pulls it open.

She takes the fresh air into her lungs, gasps with ecstasy. But when she turns, her face is covered with sores.

Her hands, too.

She cries out in horror, waking her father. He leaps up, pushes past her and slams the window shut. But it's too late, he's been infected too.

HER FATHER

Demon child!

He slaps her across the face a few times, runs over to the far wall and grabs a rifle. The infection spreads faster.

Bitter Water flings the window all the way up, scrambles outside just as he starts shooting.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Bitter Water gets a good head start down the long road to the house before her father comes up behind her. A few shots whip past her head.

She breaks right and weaves through some trees before emerging at

RAILROAD TRACKS

She goes a little further before ducking behind a tall pile of timber. She crouches here panting as Her Father comes out onto the tracks.

He looks both ways, starts to reload but the sores on his hands startle him and he drops the weapon. A few more steps and he falls to the ground.

Dead.

Bitter Water comes out of hiding. She walks over to her father and lies down beside him. She stays here a long time. Then she gets up, grabs him by the heels and pulls him off of the tracks.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

Bitter Water drags her father's body through a rocky, blighted area. She comes upon a small gully and rolls him into it.

She then starts throwing dirt on him with her bare hands.

Hard cut and Her Father is as deep in the ground as she can put him. She then stumbles off into a maze of gnarled trees.

BITTER WATER (V.O.)

In those moments, all I had was the  
memory of your voice. You were my  
hope and salvation.

She stumbles, gets back up.

BITTER WATER (V.O.)

And yet, I betrayed you.

EXT. STREETS OF LAWRENCE - DAY

Bitter Water stumbles down the street. The infection has spread to her face.



Steven comes up behind her on his bike, but he's played by the actor who was killed on the tower of judgement. So the same scene from earlier plays out with two new performers.

BITTER WATER  
(waving frantically)  
Stop! Stop, please!

Steven pedals right past.

BITTER WATER (CONT'D)  
(calling after him)  
Tell me where I can find Dr. Pus!

Steven stops, pedals back over.

STEVEN  
Dr. Pus is an abomination and a  
madman. But I'm here now.

BITTER WATER  
Who are you?

He gets off of the bike, spreads his arms so that the face of Christ on the poncho is staring right at her.

STEVEN  
I'm the one who's been sent to save  
the world. I am The Sovereign!

BITTER WATER (V.O.)  
But he was a liar.

BACK TO:

INT. LABRATORY - DAY

We return to Bitter Water and Dr. Pus in the present.

BITTER WATER  
It was all lies. Just like you  
said.

Dr. Pus slowly reaches out and touches The New Tree of Life, struggles to speak. When he finally does, his voice is robotic.

But not without emotion.

DR. PUS

I could never get anything to grow  
on this tree. But now I know what  
was missing.

BITTER WATER

Tell me.

Long pause.

DR. PUS

Love.

Another long pause. She then stands, extends her arms.

BITTER WATER

I can give you that.

Dr. Pus rises, walks over to her on his unsteady legs. She leads him over to a ratty mattress in the corner of the space and pulls him down on top of her.

The two then engage in a bout of sweet love-making. The cord attached to Dr. Pus' back stiffens and quakes and the camera follows it along to the New Tree of Life.

The Tree sways to the rhythm of the act and soon little pills start forming on the branches. The camera then tracks back along the cord and to the bodies undulating in the darkness.

Dr. Pus finishes and then rolls over onto his back, stares up at the light coming through the broken roof. Bitter Water stares up at the light, too.

She then rolls over and drapes her arm across Dr. Pus. She shuts her eyes for a moment and then opens them again. The New Tree of life is glowing.

She gets up and walks over, sees that the branches have sprouted pills. She picks one, looks it over.

BITTER WATER (CONT'D)

Doctor?

No answer.

She sits down on a crate and examines the pill for another moment. Then she pops it into her mouth and swallows.

Waits.

Sitting perfectly still, her body starts to smoke. The sores on her face and legs transform into the same metallic patches that cover Dr. Pus.

When the smoke finally clears, all of her sickness has been cured.

BITTER WATER (CONT'D)  
 (leaping up)  
 You did it! You did it!

Her voice now has the same robotic din that his does.

DR. PUS  
 (sitting up)  
 What happened?

She rushes over, jumps on top of him.

BITTER WATER  
 The world! You've saved the world!

DR. PUS  
 I have?

BITTER WATER  
 Yes!  
 (laughing joyously)  
 Yes! Yes! Yes!

She scurries back over to his work station and switches on his radio equipment, takes the microphone in her hand.

BITTER WATER (CONT'D)  
 Now hear this! Dr. Pus has made a cure! The cure is here! Come to the paper mill! Come all of you! Come to get the cure! Come to save yourselves! Come and eat from The New Tree of Life!

EXT. DYING WORLD - DAY

A series of shots of empty streets, dead forests and abandoned homes. We hold on these as Bitter Water continues.

BITTER WATER (O.S.)  
 There is no Sovereign! There is no Final Judgement and no New Paradise. Salvation is here with us now! And it didn't come from false prophets or magic or sorcery! It came from us! From mankind! Human ingenuity! Science! Engineering! Chemistry! Come and get your cure from the New Tree of Life!  
 (MORE)

BITTER WATER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Come to the paper mill! The old  
Paper Mill in Lawrence! Salvation  
lies within!

EXT. PAPER MILL - DAY

Bitter Water stands at the entrance of the mill, staring out into a vast field of dead grass. A figure approaches from the distance. It's Mira.

Bitter Water runs out to meet her. The other woman is so infected now that she collapses into her arms.

BITTER WATER  
(shouting over her  
shoulder)  
Doctor!

MIRA  
Aldo's has finally been infected!  
As soon as Steven left, he got  
sick!

BITTER WATER  
Where is everyone? I've been  
broadcasting the good news for  
days.

MIRA  
They're going to the Tower of  
Judgement. To see The Sovereign!

BITTER WATER  
The is no Sovereign!

MIRA  
Save my son, please. He'll never  
survive the Judgement. He's done  
something so terrible!

BITTER WATER  
(over her shoulder)  
Doctor!

MIRA  
Go there. Save Steven and all of  
those other poor souls...

EXT. TOWER OF JUDGEMENT - DAY

We hold on a wide shot of the tower. Sick people are climbing as Swat Jesus and Veronica judge them one at a time. Most are found guilty, shot and tumble back down the hill.

Veronica heals a few of them and lets them walk past.

This continues along with musical accompaniment. We don't actually hear what they're saying to each other.

Instead, we hear Aldo struggling to remember his Scriptures.

ALDO (V.O.)  
 Blessed is the man that walks...  
 Walks not with...  
 (a pause)  
 Blessed is the man that doesn't  
 walk with the ungodly.  
 He stands in the way of sinners...

The camera drifts away towards the surrounding wilderness, locks in on the river...

EXT. RIVER TRAIL - DAY

Follows it until it comes upon Aldo, who is so sick now that he walks with a large stick to support himself.

ALDO (V.O.)  
 His delight is in the law of the  
 Lord; and in his law he can see the  
 difference... between good and bad.

The sickness is on his face and both of his hands.

ALDO (V.O.)  
 He is like a tree  
 (a pause)  
 A tree planted by the rivers of  
 water, that brings... that  
 brings...

He stops now, shuts his eyes and concentrates.

ALDO (V.O.)  
 He is a tree that his fruit!

BITTER WATER  
 Aldo!

He turns and sees Bitter Water and Dr. Pus coming towards him. As they near, he sees the metallic/robotic patches on them and it scares him.

He holds out his walking stick defensively.

ALDO  
Stay away from me!

BITTER WATER  
Don't you remember me, Aldo? From your house?

ALDO  
No.

BITTER WATER  
Your mother sent us to heal you.

ALDO  
My mother won't come to see The Sovereign! She's going to The Devil!

BITTER WATER  
The Sovereign isn't real, Aldo. If you want to live, you have to get medicine from the New Tree of Life.

She picks one of the pills from the tree on Dr. Pus' back.

ALDO  
What happened to your face?

BITTER WATER  
I've been cured. With this.  
(holding out the pill)  
It'll make all of the sickness go away.

Aldo backs up closer to the riverbank as the other two near him.

ALDO  
The Sovereign will save me. The Sovereign comes, then The Judgement and then the New Paradise.

DR. PUS  
All lies, Aldo. It's up to us to rebuild the world. One person at a time. And when we're finished, the New Tree of Life will have saved every single person on this planet.

ALDO

Who are you?

BITTER WATER

This is Dr. Pus. He's the savior of the world.

ALDO

No! Get away from me.

He swings the stick but it snaps on contact with Dr. Pus' robotic hand. He and Bitter Water then tackle Aldo to the ground. Dr. Pus holds him as Bitter Water tries to force the pill into his mouth.

ALDO (CONT'D)

You're devils! This is the devil's business!

BITTER WATER

This is a gift, Aldo! Eternal life!

DR. PUS

Take the gift! It's free for everyone!

Aldo struggles so hard that his diseased arms come off at the elbows. Bitter Water and Dr. Pus recoil in horror.

Aldo scuttles away and throws himself into the water. The current is just strong enough to carry him along.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Aldo bobs up and down as the water carries him closer to the sounds of gunshots. He soon gives up his struggles and surrenders to the flow.

His recitation of Scripture flows more easily, too.

ALDO (V.O.)

The ungodly are like the chaff that the wind blows away. The ungodly will not stand in the judgment, or sinners in the congregation of the righteous. The Lord knows the way of the righteous. The way of the ungodly will perish.

He comes back up to the surface and floats a little bit further when all the sounds of the river and surrounding woods fade away.

Total silence.

He drifts further along and the sound of a film camera starts up. Aldo looks over to the shore and sees a FILM DIRECTOR and CAMERA MAN recording him as he goes along.

He makes a move towards them, but the Film Director motions him to keep going down river. So Aldo continues on to the sound of the film camera going.

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Aldo pulls himself ashore among some rocks. He stands and looks around himself. The sound of the film camera is still all we hear.

His image flickers and he starts to switch back and forth between to the actor who is playing Aldo in this section and the actor who was playing him in the previous one.

Then everything switches back, the sounds of the river and the woods returns, but Aldo is played by the first actor now. He crouches down and stares into the water.

He realizes that's he's been transformed. The whole image shakes now and the sound of the last few feet of film going through a projector can be heard.

Then the image flashes to WHITE.

Silence.

Then the faint sound of gunshots...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOWER OF JUDGEMENT - DAY

Swat Jesus fires another bullet into another PENITENT, who goes tumbling down the hill into bed of jagged rocks at the bottom.

When we return to Swat Jesus and Veronica, however, the actors have switched roles. The two of them stand at the edge, holding hands and looking down at the dead.

Then they see Dr. Pus and Bitter Water approaching from the distance. They too have exchanged roles. Dr. Pus takes the New Tree of Life from off of his back and plants it on the ground right at the bottom of the hill.



DR. PUS  
Come down here and eat from the New  
Tree of Life!

VERONICA  
Dr. Pus? You're dead.

DR. PUS  
I was! But I've been resurrected!  
And now nobody else ever has to die  
again!

A SICK WOMAN comes out of the surrounding woods. Bitter Water  
turns to her, picks a pill from the tree and extends it.

BITTER WATER  
Take the gift! Eternal life!

Swat Jesus takes aim, but Veronica steps in his path.

VERONICA  
We have to let her choose.

He reluctantly lowers the gun, steps back and allows Veronica  
to make a verbal appeal.

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
Don't take that fruit, woman! Come  
here and make your soul right with  
God.

BITTER WATER  
(to the Sick Woman)  
You'll die up there.  
(pointing to the rocky  
death pit)  
Look at what they've done.

The Sick Woman shambles over and looks into the rocky death  
pit. It's a grizzly sight indeed.

SWAT JESUS  
There's no place in the New  
Paradise for sinners and criminals  
and sex perverts.

BITTER WATER  
But there's a place in the world we  
have now for everybody.

The Sick Woman looks into the pit and at The Sovereign at the  
top of the hill. She then shambles over to Bitter Water and  
takes the pill.

No sooner does she swallow it, then her body starts to smoulder and all of the patches of sickness turn to the same metallic plating that Dr. Pus and Bitter Water have.

When the transformation is complete, she throws her hands up in the air and cries out in a robotic voice.

SICK WOMAN

Hallelujah!

Swat Jesus and Veronica stumble backwards onto their respective thrones. They watch from here as MORE SICK PEOPLE gather around the tree and eat of the fruit.

SWAT JESUS

We can't allow this.

VERONICA

It's their God given free will. We can't interfere.

SWAT JESUS

They're condemning themselves.

VERONICA

They are. But unless they climb the hill, we have to let them be.

They sit back in silence as more and more SICK PEOPLE arrive and eat from the tree. Veronica slips into a meditative state. Swat Jesus' anger and frustration mount until...

SWAT JESUS

(standing)

Enough!

He takes aim and fires a shot right at Dr. Pus' chest. The projectile bounces off of him. Swat Jesus crouches down, takes more careful aim and starts firing again.

He aims at Dr. Pus, the New Tree of Life and everyone around it. But the bullets just spark and bounce off of the hard metal.

This was something that even Dr. Pus and Bitter Water hadn't foreseen - total immunity to Swat Jesus' gun. A stand-off now between the parties at the top of the hill and those at the bottom.

Then Aldo arrives.

All look to him as he slowly walks past the New Tree of Life and starts climbing up the hill. As both of his arms are gone below the elbow, it's a difficult climb indeed.

The sounds of the natural environment fade away and the sound of the film camera starts up again.

FILM DIRECTOR (V.O.)

Hold on him. Let it run.

(a pause)

Now go to a close-up. I want this to feel like it's taking place outside of normal space and time. He's a pawn. They're fighting for him.

We go to a wide shot, Aldo laboriously making his way up the hill with the two factions on either side of him.

FILM DIRECTOR (V.O.)

Just hold here. Let him make it to the top in this shot.

Aldo finally pulls himself up and over...

EXT. PLATEAU - CONTINUOUS

Aldo is crouching between Swat Jesus and Veronica. The sound of the film camera tapers off and the sounds of the natural environment come back up.

ALDO

Judge me.

Swat Jesus opens up the New Book of Life and Death and flips to Aldo's page. He winces at what he sees and gravely shows it to Veronica. She too recoils in disgust.

SWAT JESUS

(slamming the book shut)

You've done one of the worst things that a person can do.

VERONICA

You killed your own father.

ALDO

Yes.

SWAT JESUS

That's unforgivable.

ALDO

Yes.

Bitter water shouts up to them.

BITTER WATER

They're going to kill you, Aldo.  
Come down here and save yourself!

VERONICA

He climbed the hill! Leave him be!

She gets up off of her rock, crouches down and puts her hand to the side of Aldo's face.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

You climbed this hill knowing that  
you were guilty of something that  
could never be forgiven.

ALDO

Yes.

VERONICA

Why?

SWAT JESUS

(drawing the pistol)

Because he knows that there's no  
escape from God's judgement.

ALDO

I did kill my father.  
(locking eyes with Swat  
Jesus)  
But you did, too.

SWAT JESUS

What?

ALDO

(struggling to his feet)  
You killed him, too.

*Image flashes across the screen of the actor who's playing Swat Jesus playing the role of Aldo when he stoned his father to death.*

When we return to the scene, the actor playing Swat Jesus is playing Aldo and the actor playing Aldo is playing Swat Jesus.

SWAT JESUS

That's madness.

ALDO

And you created the New Tree of  
Life, just like I did.

The actors playing Swat Jesus and Veronica switch roles with the actors playing Dr. Pus and Bitter Water.

VERONICA

He's using magic! He's trying to  
trick us!

Swat Jesus stands with the gun leveled at Aldo's head. The sound of a film camera and he turns to see the Film Director and the Camera Man standing a little ways off recording the scene.

FILM DIRECTOR

(pointing to Aldo)  
Listen to him.

Swat Jesus turns back to Aldo.

ALDO

My sin is your sin.  
(to Veronica)  
And so is your good work.

*Image of the actor playing Aldo healing people with  
Veronica's cloth.*

When we come back to the hill, these two actors have switched roles also.

The Film Director and Cameraman are making no effort to hide themselves. The Director steps to the edge of the hill and motions to the people below.

FILM DIRECTOR

Come on! Storm the hill!

Dr. Pus and Bitter Water lead a charge of ROBOTIC PEOPLE up the hill. Swat Jesus starts firing at them, but The Film Director stops him.

FILM DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

You know you can't stop them with  
that. Go on, run!  
(shoving him)  
Go!

Swat Jesus shoves the Film Director away and continues firing down the hill. These Robotic People move much faster than the sick ones and soon they're at the plateau, grabbing and shoving Swat Jesus and Veronica.

VERONICA

(pulling at Swat Jesus)  
Let's go!

FILM DIRECTOR  
 (pointing)  
 Go that way!  
 (to the Cameraman)  
 Stay with them.

Veronica takes Swat Jesus' hand and leads him away. Dr. Pus and his gang of Robots make chase. We hold until all of them disappear into the surrounding woods.

Cut to black.

EXT. BARREN FIELD - TREE - DAY

TITLE CARD: **THE NEW PARADISE**

A dead tree trunk about fifteen feet tall.

The Film Director, Camera Man and Other CREW MEMBERS are propping up a ladder on the far side of it.

The actor playing the PILLAR SAINT is getting into wardrobe near-by. One of the Crew Members climbs up the ladder and secures a dummy waist and set of legs on top of the trunk.

The actor playing the Pillar Saint then climbs up, positions himself behind the prop legs so it looks like he's sitting up there, but he's actually standing on the ladder.

The Camera Man positions himself so that the tree trunk itself hides the ladder. The Film Director steps away and the rest of the crew people move out of the shot.

FILM DIRECTOR  
 Action!

PILLAR SAINT  
 O Jesus, who, in Thy cruel Passion  
 became the 'reproach of men  
 and the Man of Sorrows,' I worship  
 Your divine Face. Once it shone  
 with the beauty and sweetness of  
 the Divinity; but now, for my sake,  
 it is become as 'the face of a  
 leper.'

FILM DIRECTOR  
 (to the Camera Man)  
 Tilt up. Slowly.

## PILLAR SAINT

Yet, in that disfigured  
 Countenance, I recognize Thy  
 infinite love, and I am consumed  
 with the desire of making Thee  
 loved by all mankind...

The camera tilts up into the sky and further into...

## SPACE

## PILLAR SAINT (V.O.)

The tears that flowed so abundantly  
 from Thy Eyes are to me as precious  
 pearls that I delight to gather,  
 that with their worth I may ransom  
 the souls of poor sinners.  
 O Jesus, whose Face is  
 the sole beauty that ravishes my  
 heart, I may not see here below  
 the sweetness of Thy glance, nor  
 feel the ineffable tenderness of  
 Your kiss...

Among the scattered stars, one of them starts to burn more brightly. It expands to form the shape of a cross. This is the very same one that had been hovering over the actors during the cast changes.

TILT BACK DOWN

## EXT. WOODED OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

Veronica is lying on her back looking straight up into the sky. Swat Jesus is standing near-by with the pistol drawn.

## VERONICA

(a whisper)

I bow to your Will, but I pray That  
 you imprint in me your divine  
 likeness, and I implore you  
 so to inflame me with your love,  
 that it may quickly consume me,  
 and that I may soon reach the  
 vision of your glorious Face in  
 heaven.

(a pause)

Amen.

And with that 'amen', the cross in the sky appears to her. She stands up, stares at it.

We pull back and see that all of the filmmaking apparatus is in the frame. The work lights, the Crew and Film Director are present.

FILM DIRECTOR  
 (to Veronica)  
 Take his hand and follow the star.

Veronica turns. The Film Director and Crew are gone. She steps over to where they were, looks around.

She then takes Swat Jesus by the hand and follows the star to...

EXT. TREE - NIGHT

The Pillar Saint is just a glowing body, seeming to hang in space of himself. When Veronica and Swat Jesus arrive, they too seem to hang suspended in the darkness, though below him.

SWAT JESUS  
 The Sovereign has come.

PILLAR SAINT  
 I know that.

SWAT JESUS  
 Are you prepared to be judged?

PILLAR SAINT  
 The Final Judgement is over.

Swat Jesus draws his pistol and pulls the trigger. But it clicks empty.

PILLAR SAINT (CONT'D)  
 What makes you think you're The Sovereign, anyway? The Bible and a pencil?

SWAT JESUS  
 That's all anyone needs if they want to know man's past, present and future.

PILLAR SAINT  
 Well I've got something better than that.  
 (holding up a script)  
 I have the script.

VERONICA  
 The what?



PILLAR SAINT

The script. Haven't you seen these people following you around with cameras?

SWAT JESUS

(extending his hand)  
Give me that!

PILLAR SAINT

What for? You're going to do everything that's written in here whether you know ahead of time or not.

VERONICA

Does it say in there that we're The Sovereign?

PILLAR SAINT

It does. But it also says that I'm The Sovereign. Steven is The Sovereign, so are Rock Solid and Dr. Pus...

(pointing to the film crew)  
Even those guys.

VERONICA

How?

PILLAR SAINT

Because of the one thing we all have in common, the indwelling of Christ. We're all one body. Why else do you think you can mix and match all those body parts that come falling out of the sky?

VERONICA

But what about The New Paradise?

PILLAR SAINT

The New Paradise is within you.  
(to Swat Jesus)  
And within you.

He unbuttons his shirt and reveals an image of Christ on his bare chest. It's identical to the one on Veronica's poncho.

PILLAR SAINT (CONT'D)

And within me.

Long pause.

SWAT JESUS  
That's not true! I'm special!

PILLAR SAINT  
(smiling)  
See for yourself, then.

He tosses the script into the air so that the pages scatter all over. Veronica chases after them, but Swat Jesus tries to take another shot at The Pillar Saint.

The gun keeps clicking empty, though. And the saint and the pillar he's sitting on disappear.

Veronica meanwhile is scanning the pages that she's managed to find.

VERONICA  
(handing him a page)  
Look at this.

SWAT JESUS  
It's nothing. He's just some guy in a tree.

VERONICA  
Rock Solid was just some guy in a river...

SWAT JESUS  
Don't say that! We're The Sovereign. You and me. And we still have the rest of the world to judge!

VERONICA  
We don't, though. All that's left are Dr. Pus and those people that he brought back to life.

SWAT JESUS  
We'll judge them, then.

VERONICA  
We can't. They're soulless now.

She picks up a few more pages and reads them quickly. Swat Jesus runs out of patience, snatches the pages away from her.

SWAT JESUS  
Enough! This is garbage! The Bible and a pencil... THE BIBLE AND A PENCIL!

They engage in a quick tug of war. But as they struggle, a GROUP OF DR. PUS' ROBOT PEOPLE emerge from the darkness and swoop down on them.

Swat Jesus and Veronica struggle mightily as the Robots tear at their clothes. They wrest the gun from Swat Jesus' hand and Veronica loses her poncho.

They can do nothing but struggle free and run further out into the darkness. The star cross in the sky shifts its position further North.

Swat Jesus and Veronica follow it to...

EXT. MANGER - NIGHT

A derelict shed out in the middle of nowhere. It's only visible because it's surrounded by film lights.

Swat Jesus and Veronica scramble inside, slam the rickety door behind them.

The Robot People are not far behind. They surround the structure and try to force their way in.

INT. MANGER - NIGHT

There's hay stacked up on the floor as well as some ratty blankets and crates. There are also more film lights and the Film Director and the Cameraman are crouched in a far corner recording the action.

Swat Jesus uses the crates to barricade the door. Veronica meanwhile crouches in the corner, takes out a scrap of screenplay that she's managed to save and looks it over.

FILM DIRECTOR

Here.

He hands her his own bound copy of the script and she pours over it greedily. But Swat Jesus grabs it and tosses it back to the Director.

SWAT JESUS

Don't give her that!

VERONICA

(standing)

Let them in.

SWAT JESUS

What?

FILM DIRECTOR  
 You have to let them in.  
 (handing him the script)  
 Says right there.

SWAT JESUS  
 (knocking the script away)  
 Get out of here.

VERONICA  
 We have to save them.

SWAT JESUS  
 You don't even have that blanket  
 anymore.

VERONICA  
 I don't need it.

She lifts up her shirt and we see that the Face of Christ is  
 on her chest, too.

VERONICA (CONT'D)  
 We all have it.

The Film Director and Cameraman lift their shirts. They too  
 have the identical image of Christ on their chests.

FILM DIRECTOR  
 But those robots outside don't. The  
 Devil has them. You have to give  
 them back their sovereignty.

SWAT JESUS  
 How?

VERONICA  
 By giving them our flesh.

SWAT JESUS  
 They're going to eat us?!

FILM DIRECTOR  
 (sticking the script in his  
 face)  
 It's right here in the script.

SWAT JESUS  
 But I don't want to die! Not like  
 that!

FILM DIRECTOR  
 Open the door.

SWAT JESUS

No.

A stand-off between them that lasts a few moments. The Film Director then pulls a sharpie out of his pocket and starts writing in the script.

SWAT JESUS (CONT'D)

I knew it! You're just making this up as you go along, aren't you?

FILM DIRECTOR

(still writing)

Kind of.

SWAT JESUS

What do you mean, kind of?

FILM DIRECTOR

Well I used the Bible, too. A lot of this stuff came from the Bible.

VERONICA

A Bible and a pencil.

FILM DIRECTOR

The Bible and a computer, actually.

Swat Jesus snatches the script away, tears out all of the re-written pages and then throws the rest against the wall. The Film Director lunges at him and the two are soon wrestling in the hay.

Veronica slowly gets up, goes over to a bag of film gear in the corner and starts rifling through it. Soon she find a pocket version of a KING JAMES BIBLE.

She turns to the Gospels and reads aloud.

VERONICA

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

The two men stop fighting, turn to her.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly.

(MORE)

## VERONICA (CONT'D)

Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

She closes the Bible, places it at her side. She then takes Swat Jesus hand and leads him into the corner. She pulls one of the ratty blankets over them and holds him close.

The Film Director then goes back over to the cameraman, taps him on the shoulder to continue shooting.

The Robot People keep banging on the door, it won't hold up much longer. Veronica holds Swat Jesus closer, they both shut their eyes.

The door comes down and the Robot People swoop down on them, an eating frenzy.

There's a carnality about the violence, the images and sounds. The blood-spattered blanket undulates like an act of conception is happening.

Then everybody slowly vanishes. The Film Director and Cameraman also.

All that remains is the blooded blanket and very slowly, the bloodstains merge to create the face of Christ. The blanket like a huge version of Veronica's poncho.

We hold on this image for a long time. Music comes up and the credits start to roll. But as they do, the blanket starts to move. It's like a balloon is inflating beneath it, distending the image of Christ.

The room starts to shake and the music cuts off. The ending credits stop mid-way through.

The blanket swells even more now, and the impression of a human face starts pushing through beneath the stain...

*The camera cuts away to all of the previous locations that we've seen in the film... The Streets of Lawrence, The Old Paper Mill, The Mountain Stream, The Residential Neighborhood where Steven's family lived.*

*The body parts that are strewn all over the place start vanishing. By the end of the sequence, it's clear that they've all gone away.*

We return to the manger to see that the blanket has been strained to breaking point, it finally splits and gives birth to...

JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF

He spreads his arms and the screen fills up with light...  
we're then transported to...

EXT. LUSH FIELD

A paradise on earth. All the sounds of nature that have been muffled all this time burst through on the audio... chirping birds, gentle wind.

And laughter.

Two children, the same actors who played Young Veronica and the sick Little Boy are running and playing. They're wearing simple garments in pure white.

Their movements are stylized, their voices echo melodiously. They clasp hands and look up to the sky to see Jesus' giant face smiling down at them. His visage is larger than the sun.

The sky itself is Veronica's new blanket now, enveloping the earth in perfect love.