THE GINGHAM DOG

Gloria and Vincent pack up their apartment.

GLORIA
You want this slag glass or whatever the hell it is? And these winter clothes, want them sorted or what?

VINCENT
I don’t want any of it. Just throw it all out, for all I care.

GLORIA
You’ll want ‘any of it’ next winter.

VINCENT
I may not even be in this temperate zone next winter, how do I know?

GLORIA
What, are you going ‘on the road’? Vincent the vagrant. Little late to start a new life as a box-car hopper, don’t you think?

VINCENT
That’s very good.

GLORIA
Of course you’ve hopped everything else. Bandwagons-

VINCENT
-You! Just leave it all alone. I don’t know why you’ve suddenly decided to move just because I am.

GLORIA
You think I’m in love with the Lower East Side? What have I suddenly got the hots for the electric sitar?

VINCENT
I’d leave all this stuff with you, it’d save everyone a lot of headaches.

GLORIA
I don’t know why you even came back—just so you could be compulsive all over the living room.
VINCENT
I’m being compulsive? - if that’s not the pot calling the kettle -

GLORIA
Black.

VINCENT
(Both speak bracketed)
If you clean it up, they’ll only say “What a pretentious [educated nigger], she only cleaned up her filth to prove [how white she was]. If you leave it dirty they’ll say [‘what would you expect?’].

GLORIA
Well, they can disinfect all they want. I don’t care if they come in here with gasoline and burn out the walls and ceiling. I said it was clean when we moved in and I’ll leave it that way.

VINCENT
“I’ll leave it that way” What a martyr you are.

GLORIA
...Black martyr?

VINCENT
What a Black martyr you are.

GLORIA
It’s alright- I’m under fire for standing up for what I believe.

VINCENT
Or sitting down as it were.

GLORIA
In the history of mankind there hasn’t been a more rotten, more disgusting- (overlapping)

VINCENT
-You obviously aren’t familiar enough with the history of mankind-

GLORIA
-The White people have-
VINCENT
-The Black people didn’t-

GLORIA
-The Black people at least-

VINCENT
-The Black people rotted from screw-worms in the jungle that they didn’t have the sense to cultivate-

GLORIA
In the jungle? We had empires and temples- don’t try to tell me the White man is responsible for one single advancement-

VINCENT
My God, we sent you missionaries.

GLORIA
Missionaries?

VINCENT
You ate them!

GLORIA
You’re damned right we ate them!

VINCENT
-White Man Is A Cancerous Growth and Shouldn’t Exist-

GLORIA
-Well, baby, you haven’t said anything yet to make me-

VINCENT
-I won’t be here long to bother you. Go through those books at least, see what you want.

GLORIA
Your benevolence overwhelms me. I want a book, I’ll read it at the library. I’ll take my clothes and that’s all.

VINCENT
You’ve grown into one callous bitch. My family said all along it wouldn’t work, so did yours- we can finally make them both happy.
GLORIA
Who ever thought we’d be the cause of so much happiness? At least they won’t know it didn’t have anything the hell to do with color.

VINCENT
Indirectly. As a matter of fact—directly. It had to do with the change in you. Our separation—

GLORIA
-If you’d look at yourself honestly—

VINCENT
-came about because I married a girl who was a bit of a nut, a bit vulgar, a bit smart, and in one year she was a goddamned crusader, for Christsake.

GLORIA
When you see it all day, you begin to breathe it, and that’s all there is. Like air!

VINCENT
You joined CORE and SORE and POOR and God knows what other equal rights group—every excuse to hate and fight. And fight for what? The right to fight, I think—

GLORIA
Right. You’re dead right!

VINCENT
You used to be a human being, but in the last two years you’ve become a “Black”; a professional Negro, and I didn’t marry a Black.

GLORIA
Like hell you didn’t. If you didn’t know it, I’m telling you now.

VINCENT
No, sweetheart. The girl I married thought all people were equal and you— the girl now, Gloria, have managed to convince yourself that you’re not equal at all. And frankly I’m inclined to agree.
GLORIA
Good. You’ve suddenly noticed you
don’t consider us your equal, I’m
glad you finally realized it.

VINCENT
It’s so easy, this new found hate.

GLORIA
Well, how can you expect anything
else, considering the conditions
Blacks live in today?

VINCENT
Hate equals hate. Never netted
anything else.

GLORIA
Well, baby, you taught me how to
knuckle under to protect your
position—that bulge in your pants
is your money belt.

VINCENT
Aw, for Christsake—

GLORIA
Well, I don’t need security, baby,
and the boy in the hutch, may he
rest in peace, because he died
there— he wouldn’t have needed it
either. You— whoever you are— can
get packed up and go.

VINCENT
You don’t have to tell me I died
there; you don’t know how much.

GLORIA
I’m sure you’ll find when you trot
back uptown some nice white
liberalette’ll cure you soon enough.

VINCENT
You really don’t— how can I make you
understand what you’ve done to me?

GLORIA
Just get out. I know what you’ve
become, and I didn’t have anything
to do with it. A company man, a
heartless pile of-
VINCENT
-After the knifing and twisting of life with you, my capacity to care for anyone has gone Gloria. Rotted.

GLORIA
You are what you are. A yes man, a-

VINCENT
-I will never have the stomach to get near another living soul again. I loathe people for every political, hypocritical word-

GLORIA
Your people maybe— not-

VINCENT
-And I loathe “your people” after hearing you scream civil rights for three years, I loathe every group, congregation, complexion that ever existed, automatically-

GLORIA
You should listen to you sometimes-

VINCENT
And Gloria, I loathe you. The look of you, and the oily feel of you and the bitter ear-wax taste, the sour orange-rind smell of you. You disgust me in every way— your muscle and firm stomach, and your narrow-mindedness. I loathe you because you made me hate. You destroy. It’s all you know.

GLORIA
I used to pray, that first year at the hutch when I loved you— I said, this could be saved with a child. I pictured him— light as you, sometimes dark as me— all kinds of funny hair problems. Equal parts you and me and that’s why I loved— him and— wanted him. He was the love of the hutch embodied. And now the— thought— of that child curdles me and I thank God— because if a son existed now I’d bash his brains against the Goddamned radiator! You used to be— I don’t care a damn if you loathe me, or my people, and if you’ve lost your faith, and heart, and hope—
VINCENT
I’m going...

GLORIA
...and your humor, and your balls. I just don’t care a Goddamn about you. I’ll never think of you except to thank God for saving me from killing my child! I want a child now, more than ever. And I’ll have one— with a man— a Black man like me— And my son will be so black he’s blue.

Vincent leaves.

GLORIA (CONT’D)
By God he’ll be black as the night!

END SCENE