

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