

# THE KITCHEN

VIDEO

MUSIC

DANCE

PERFORMANCE

FILM

512 West 19th St. (Btwn 10th & 11th Aves) New York, NY 10011

Reservations: 255-5793

★ NEW YORK CITY ★ NOVEMBER 1988 ★ \$1.95 ★

# PAPER



★ stage

## Theory of total blame

An excerpt for Karen Finley's new play at The Kitchen November 30-December 3.

*Irene (mother) on stage. Enter Jan, her daughter.*

**Jan:** (looking in fridge) Every time I wake up in this house I wake up feeling dead.

**Irene:** What you need is a good full day of housework! Clean the toilet! Take out the garbage!

**Jan:** Will you quit fucking analyzing me? I'm trying to politely say I DON'T trust anyone! And you know why? It's because you never trusted me. And I never trusted you, MOTHER! It's all your fault.

**Irene:** You know you've been a problem since the time you were born. You're in labor 28 hours and I was almost died. You've been trying to kill me since you were in a fetal position.

**Jan:** I never asked to be born! It's all your fault!

**Irene:** If you think I was going to carry you in my belly for 30 years til you were fucking ready to be born, you've got to be kidding. I accept that your life is my fault, all my fault. It's a mothers profession to take the blame for her children's psyche—Even Jesus blamed the Virgin Mary—Prince Charles blames Queen Elizabeth. It's in the mother's contract—the unwritten, unspoken contract—generation after generation—and it's your job as a child to totally blame me—your mother for your successes—your faults and your problems—Just accept the game plan. Since I blame you, I blame the fact that having children is the reason I never accomplished anything in life. It's a nice trade off.

**Jan:** (concerned) Mother, mother you have accomplished so much. You, you gave life to me, to all of us. But I guess we just weren't enough for you. My entire life is dedicated to winning approval from you!

**Irene:** I know I'm no good, I'm no good. I'm no good.

**Jan:** You never even held me! You never gave me confidence!

**Irene:** No one loves a smart woman. Why give you confidence when the only real opportunities are biological opportunities! Who are we? Our father's last name? Our husband's last name? If we change it they ask why? If we don't assume our husbands last name we're considered arrogant and dogmatic. The Chinese had it right—KILL GIRL BABIES—then when there are no more girl babies left maybe the men will miss us. But probably not. All they'll miss will be raping us and dinner on the table. As soon as they learn how to make babies in a test tube we're a goner.

**Jan:** Mom, can't you ever look at the bright side? Do you have to be such a pessimist? Women have advanced?

**Irene:** You've got it wrong. Women are already advanced, it's just that men have to advance to accept that and treat us equally and stop punishing us cause we can have children and they can't.

**Jan:** (SCREAMING) EVERYTHING is a crisis to you! Everything is a crisis situation, (more and more upset) I'm nothing! I'm worthless. You don't love people you only love their problems. You don't love me you only love my inadequacies! ★