

More

News, Quotes, Companies, Videos

SEARCH

Wednesday, February 24, 2010 As of 10:59 AM EST

[Log In](#) [Register For Free](#) [Subscribe Now, Get 2 Weeks Free](#)

PREVIOUS

SPEAKEASY

NEXT

Parties

Film

TV

Media

Music

Books

Stage

Video

Art

Style

HOT TOPICS

2010 WINTER OLYMPICS

LOST

OSCARS

AMERICAN IDOL

ESSAYS

FEBRUARY 23, 2010, 2:00 PM ET

“Blank Generation” Star Richard Hell on the Punk Film’s DVD Release

Search Speakeasy

SEARCH

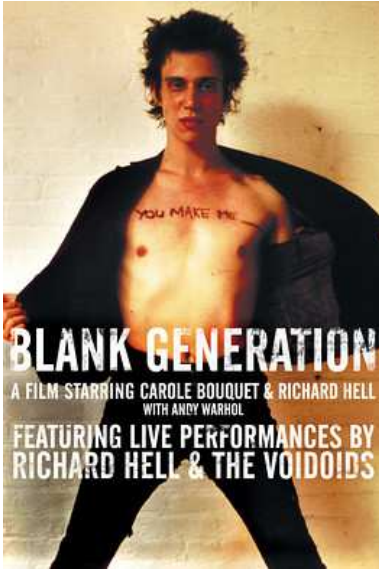
Article

Comments

[SPEAKEASY HOME PAGE »](#)

Email Printer Friendly Permalink Share: facebook Text Size

By Steven Kurutz



MVD Entertainment Group

"Blank Generation," the 1980 film starring punk rock pioneer Richard Hell, is being released for the first time on DVD today. As with many cultural artifacts dating from a fetishized period (in this case the late '70s New York punk scene), "Blank Generation" is hailed on the cover as "a classic punk rock movie" and "better than any documentary." That's not how the film's star sees things. "It's just completely incoherent," Richard Hell said of the movie, which centers on a relationship between a musician (Hell) and a French journalist (Carole Bouquet). Hell breaks down the film's many faults in a candid interview with writer Luc Sante included on the DVD. He talked with Speakeasy about the bewildering experience of making—and re-watching—"Blank Generation."

The Wall Street Journal: In the interview with Luc Sante, you say there's "not a single truthful authentic moment in the

whole movie." That's not a ringing endorsement.

I actually feel that the interview is better than the movie. It can even be said it's better as *the movie*, since it includes clips. The only thing it's lacking is some of the live performances.

Why did you participate with the DVD release if you hate the film?

It was going to come out anyway. It was good to have the opportunity to explain the conditions under which it was made. It does have a certain value as this eccentric artifact of this time and place. And it's the best existing film footage of my band at a time when it was in top condition.

You've been in several films since then. What did "Blank Generation" teach you about acting?

Nothing.

Not even what not to do?

Not even that. It was so frustrating. I never knew where I stood because the script was always mutating. I wrote a speech or two of it myself. Like that moment in bed with Carole where I'm talking about what it feels like to be on stage. I say I feel like the crowd is there like the crowd at a car wreck. To me those are the best lines — and even they're not that good.

Did the experience of making "Blank Generation" diminish your love of films?

Not at all. Oddly, I ended up acting in a lot of movies from that period. The main lesson that I got was No. 1 how intense filmmaking is. It's like how people talk about high school: they always look back on high school as this moment of intensity where people who didn't have a lot in common were thrown together in this microcosm and have to get along. Making movies is like doing that for three-month periods your whole life. No. 2 it gave me an enormous respect for actors. It takes this almost mystical willingness to make a complete ass of yourself.

[Blank Generation, Richard Hell](#)

Previous in Speakeasy
[A Tiger Golfs With Buddha \(Essay\)](#)

Next in Speakeasy
["The September Issue": Highlights from the DVD Bonus Footage](#)

[SPEAKEASY HOME PAGE](#)

Email Printer Friendly Comments (0) Permalink



Share: Facebook Twitter LinkedIn StumbleUpon Dribbble RSS



About Speakeasy

Follow us:

A blog about media, entertainment, celebrity and the arts.



Speakeasy is produced by [Christopher John Farley](#), [Michelle Kung](#), and [Steven Kurutz](#), with contributions from the Wall Street Journal staff and others. Write to us at speakeasy@wsj.com.

Most Popular

[Read](#) [Commented](#) [All Blogs](#)

1. [Skater Kim Yu-Na's Bond-Themed Short Program at the Olympics: A Preview](#)
2. [ESPN Host Tony Kornheiser Suspended by Network](#)
3. ["Lost" Season 6, Episode 5 "Lighthouse": TV Recap](#)
4. [The Beatles, Michael Jackson, and U2 Make Vatican Newspaper's List of Best Albums; Bob Dylan Snubbed](#)
5. ["American Idol" Season 9 Top 12 Women Perform](#)

Snapshots



Last night, the 52nd annual Grammy Awards took place at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, where artists such as Lady Gaga and Beyonce performed and made a splash with their outrageous fashion. [View Slideshow](#)

Popular Stories in All Topics

519 diggs [Sites That Are Helping Consumers Fight the Fees](#)

WSJ.com Account:

[My Account](#)
[Subscriber Billing Info](#)

Create an Account:

[Register for Free](#)
[Subscribe Now](#)

Help & Information Center:

[Help](#)
[Customer Service](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[New on WSJ.com](#)
[Tour the new Journal](#)

About:

[News Licensing](#)
[Advertising](#)
[Advertise Locally](#)
[Conferences](#)
[About Dow Jones](#)
[Privacy Policy - Updated](#)
[Subscriber Agreement & Terms of Use - Updated](#)
[Copyright Policy](#)
[Jobs at WSJ.com](#)

WSJ.com:

[Site Map](#)
[Home](#)
[World](#)
[U.S.](#)
[Business](#)
[Markets](#)
[Market Data](#)
[Tech](#)
[Personal Finance](#)
[Life & Style](#)
[Opinion](#)
[Autos](#)
[Careers](#)
[Real Estate](#)
[Small Business](#)
[Corrections](#)

Tools & Formats:

[Today's Paper](#)
[Video Center](#)
[Graphics](#)
[Columns](#)
[Blogs](#)
[Topics](#)
[Guides](#)
[Alerts](#)
[Newsletters](#)
[Mobile](#)
[Podcasts](#)
[RSS Feeds](#)
[Journal Community](#)
[WSJ on Twitter](#)
[WSJ on Facebook](#)
[My Journal](#)

Digital Network

[WSJ.com](#)
[Marketwatch.com](#)
[Barrons.com](#)
[SmartMoney.com](#)
[AllThingsD.com](#)
[FINS.com](#)
[FiLife.com](#)
[BigCharts.com](#)
[Virtual Stock Exchange](#)
[WSJ U.S. Edition](#)
[WSJ Asia Edition](#)
[WSJ Europe Edition](#)
[WSJ India Page](#)
Foreign Language Editions:
[WSJ Chinese](#)
[WSJ Japanese](#)
[WSJ Portuguese](#)
[WSJ Spanish](#)