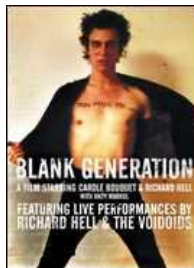




### Case Number 18447: Small Claims Court



## Blank Generation

**MVD Visual** // 1979 // 78 Minutes // Not Rated  
Reviewed by Appellate Judge Tom Becker // March 4th, 2010

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Appellate Judge Tom Becker thought this was a big-screen version of *The Match Game*.

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#### Scales of Justice

**Judgment:** 40

#### Perp Profile

**Studio:** [MVD Visual](#)

**Video Formats:**

- Full Frame

**Audio Formats:**

- Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono (English)

**Subtitles:**

- None

**Running Time:** 78 Minutes

**Release Year:** 1979

**MPAA Rating:** Not Rated

**Genres:**

- [Bad](#)
- [Concerts and Musicals](#)
- [Drama](#)
- [Romance](#)

#### Distinguishing Marks

- Interview

#### Accomplices

- [IMDb](#)
- [RichardHell.com](#)

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[SXSW Band](#)
[Manhattan Live](#)

#### The Charge

"I belong to the \_\_\_\_\_ generation."

#### The Case

It's the age-old story. Hipster punk boy meets beautiful French journalist girl. Hipster punk boy loses beautiful French journalist girl. Hipster punk boy, who's a musician, becomes despondent and spends a lot of time walking off stage in the middle of concerts, which much to his surprise, becomes a sort of shtick that his audiences expect and appreciate. Beautiful French journalist girl, in the meantime, has her snapshot taken by Andy Warhol.

Yes, it's another trip down memory lane, this time to the ennui-laden late '70s. The film is **Blank Generation**, the star is Richard Hell—seminal punk rocker and author of the song, "Blank Generation"—the director is Ulli Lommel, who's given us such diverse fair as [Cocaine Cowboys](#), [The Boogeyman](#), [Warbirds](#), and [Zombie Nation](#), and the result is a tedious exercise in guerilla punk filmmaking.

Hell plays Billy Blank, a provocative name that could also describe his performance. Walking around in a series of strategically ripped outfits, he meets a hot French videomaker with the intriguingly apt name Nada (Carole Bouquet, **That Obscure Object of Desire**). Since he's an up-and-coming punk star in the East Village of New York City, she decides to make a video about him and follows him around until he seduces her, which takes all of three minutes. They move into her unusually large but messy apartment, make love, fight, talk about nothing in particular, make love, fight some more, and then she steals his car, which drives a wedge in the relationship.

Unbeknownst to the unfortunate Blank, Nada has another lover, a German journalist who flies to New York to fulfill his dream of interviewing Andy Warhol. The famously elusive Warhol proves famously elusive, and the German fears his trip will be a failure until an apparently hung-over Andy miraculously appears at the studio German guy booked in the hope that Andy would miraculously show up.

Nada decides to leave New York with her German swain, and Billy offers to drive her to the airport. He meets the German and makes a joke that the German doesn't get, probably because he's German. Nada has a last-second change of heart and decides to stay with Billy, but by the time she gets out of the terminal, he's already driving away. She looks sad, and gamely goes back in to use her nonrefundable plane ticket. Roll credits.

Kind of a low-rent [Glitter](#) for the ripped jeans and t-shirt set, this relic is not completely without interest. The main reasons to see it are the few performances by Hell's group, the Voidoids, and shots of the East Village "back in the day." The Voidoids perform at the now-defunct CBGB, which lends an air of authenticity to the proceedings, and the music is very good, except that Blank/Hell keeps walking off stage. The East Village looks all seedy and dank, like it used to, and there's a great shot of a guy walking down the Bowery—back when it was a place of derelicts and not a place of condos—and encountering a bunch of bums warming themselves by a burning trash can.

Any film about the New York punk scene in the '70s would have to include Richard Hell, but this isn't a film about that scene. The focus is firmly on Billy and Nada and their fatally dull attraction. There are no appearances by any other significant musicians from the era—no Ramones, no Blondie, no Patti Smith, no Johnny Thunders, no Tom Verlaine. It's as though there was no "scene" at all, and CBGB was just another dingy club where depressed punkers could play a few tunes



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and then stomp offstage in an *amour fou* funk.

Far more interesting than the film is the disc's sole extra, a recent interview with Richard Hell by writer Luc Sante. Hell's opinion of the film is no better than my opinion of it. "There's not a single authentic, truthful moment in that movie," he muses cogently, and words such as "abysmal," "painful," "infuriating," and "misbegotten" pepper the conversation. It's rare to have a DVD supplement that actually tears apart the film you've just watched, and this is a lot of fun; the articulate Hell is always a good listen.

The transfer and audio are both serviceable but dull. The cover art is the iconic shot used on Hell's *Blank Generation* album.

By the way, don't confuse this with Amos Poe's 1976 documentary **The Blank Generation**, which, while profoundly flawed, at least gives you some idea of the '70's downtown music scene.

#### The Verdict

Like a shampoo commercial for people who don't wash, **Blank Generation** has some pretty people, but it's pretty pointless. Guilty and blankety-blank.

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- [The Bridesmaid](#)
- [Cupid And Cate](#)

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