



[EXILE ON MOAN STREET](#)

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

[Richard Hell trashes re-release of 'Blank Generation' movie](#)

Singer and bassist [Richard Hell](#) has accomplished much in his career. First he co-founded the Neon Boys in 1972 that later became the legendary punk group [Television](#). He left the band in 1975 to join the Heartbreakers and then later became the leader of the Voidoids. In addition to releasing albums, most recently last year's 'Destiny Street Repaired,' Hell is a writer of several books.

Yet there is one project in Hell's resume that he is probably not excited about: his participation in the 1980 movie '[Blank Generation](#),' which shared its title with Richard Hell and the Voidoids' 1977 debut album. Directed by [Ulli Lommel](#), it starred Hell as Billy, a New York musician engaged in an on-and-off romantic relationship with a television reporter from France named Nada, played by [Carole Bouquet](#).

"Well, it's diplomatic to call my feelings 'mixed,'" Hell tells Spinner. "Apart from my biased appreciation of the movie for providing a unique record of my original band playing three or four songs live, the film is ridiculously, irredeemably bad."

However, the musician recently revisited the film for its DVD release, which came out last week, by participating in a new interview for a bonus feature. It was at the request of the film's rights owners.

"[I] told them I'd do an interview," Hell, who also co-wrote the film, says, "if they'd let me be honest in it. It seemed like fun to me to bring out a rerelease DVD, the main bonus feature of which was a relentless trashing of the movie itself by its main actor."

The film also contains footage of Hell and the original Voidoids -- drummer Marc Bell and guitarists Ivan Julian and Robert Quine -- performing onstage. "In my opinion, apart from my band, there's not a good scene in the film," Hell says, "though there are people it's a kick to look at."

One of the movie's highlights is an appearance by [Andy Warhol](#) as himself who takes a photograph of Bouquet. "Typically of Lommel, the director, he wanted Warhol for the marquee value, but he treats him disrespectfully in the movie," says Hell.

Still, in his DVD interview with the writer Luc Sante, Hell does pay compliment to Elliot Goldenthal's musical score as well as the cinematography. Because he liked the way 'Blank Generation' was shot, Hell suggests that the movie footage could perhaps be used for something else.

"It would greatly help to insert some naked body doubles for a little spice, but that might create legal problems," he says. "Whatever you did, it would end up a comedy. And if I took it on, I'd want a lot of money because it would be really hard to make it interesting. I'm available though! It would be cheaper than making a new 35mm color movie in 1978 with people as pretty as us."

Hell recalls 'Blank Generation' having a limited release in theaters back in 1980. "I can't remember anyone telling me they'd recognized me from having seen me in the film," he says. It didn't disrupt Hell's acting career as he would go on to star in the 1982 [Susan](#)

[Seidelman](#)-directed film '[Smithereens](#).'

Asked what the legacy of 'Blank Generation' the movie, would be, Hell responds:
"Legacy??? My interview on this [DVD] rerelease is its greatest legacy."

@'[Spinner](#)'