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## Blank Generation: Richard Hell & The Voidoids

Score: **88%**  
Rating: **Not Rated**  
Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**  
Region: **A**  
Media: **DVD/1**  
Running Time: **78 Mins.**  
Genre: **Drama / Independent / Musical**  
Audio: **English Stereo**

### Features:

- 2009 Interview with Richard Hell by Luc Sante about the making of and stories behind **Blank Generation**
- Live Performances by Richard Hell & The Voidoids

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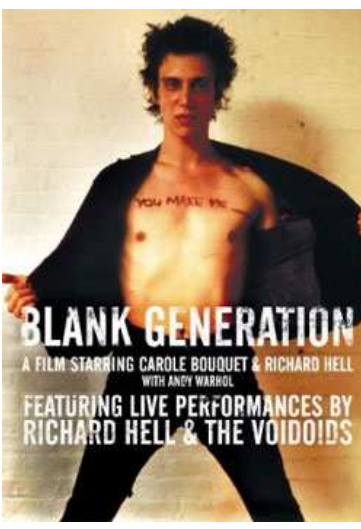
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**Blank Generation** is a classic song, chosen by music writers from the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame as being among the "500 Songs That Shaped Rock." **Blank Generation: Richard Hell & The Voidoids** is part film and part documentary of Hell and his New York City surroundings, circa 1978. It brought to mind a corollary film from the jazz world, *'Round Midnight*, which was based roughly on the lives of Bud Powell and Lester Young. Where *'Round Midnight*, was cast with real-life jazz musicians playing fictional characters based on different real-life jazz musicians, **Blank Generation** was cast with real-life punk musicians playing fictional characters based on themselves... Yes, it does sound weird and indulgent, but that's punk in the '70s for you! Cast alongside Hell are the predictably strange Andy Warhol and the improbably beautiful Carole Bouquet. Other members of Hell's group **The Voidoids** make an appearance, but only in cameo like Warhol. **Blank Generation** attempted to be more of a film about personal experience, rather than just another raucous punk movie, full of behind-stage interviews and blurry crowd shots.



Bouquet, who men of a certain age will remember as the character Melina Havelock from the Bond film *For Your Eyes Only*, is just ravishing. Whatever you think of punk or Richard Hell, Carole Bouquet is worth the price of admission. She plays a brash (is there any other kind?) French filmmaker in NYC named Nada, who has become romantically entangled with the character Billy, that Hell plays based on his own life. Billy is on the cusp of stardom with his band (strategically garbed in "Voidoids" tee-shirts during their filmed performances), but is conflicted about where success is taking him in life. Nada's admonishments about getting paid and taking care of his career just push Billy further toward the cliff's edge. This culminates in a few scenes that are well acted between Hell and Bouquet, where they try unsuccessfully to bridge the gulf between them. Nada demonstrates in her interview with Warhol that she is perpetually falling in love with her subjects, on either side of the camera. Where her brand of revolt is pageantry, Billy is shedding attachments like it's going out of style. Whether either of them ends up happier when the credits roll is an open question, but it would appear that Billy's future is the brighter one.

All this meaning is infused by the viewer, rather than set out explicitly by Director Ulli Lommel. Lommel's style, as Hell outlines in the bonus interview session with Luc Sante, was to drop his actors in front of the camera with very little structure. As a result, **Blank Generation** can seem at times very studied and at others completely frenetic. Lommel plays a role in the film alongside Bouquet's character, as a visiting director. Lommel and Bouquet observe their subjects in **Blank Generation** the way an anthropologist might study a remote and alien culture, but there's a role reversal in the sense that Hell and his punk aesthetic send the viewers away changed. The Luc Sante interview helps flesh out the time


period in which **Blank Generation: Richard Hell & The Voidoids** was made, and lends more humanity to Hell than he ever had during the film. Lommel went on to make his career as a director in largely forgettable horror films, but **Blank Generation** draws more from his acting work with German legend Rainer Werner Fassbinder. The stylistic nods are many, and Billy even manages to drop Fassbinder's name at one point during the film. If you're interested in the roots of punk, this is a great film, albeit one that shorts live performances in favor of capturing all the things happening off the stage that formed so many musicians flocking to New York and especially CBGB in the late '70s.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications AKA Matt Paddock

**Related Links:**

**Blank Generation: Richard Hell & The Voidoids** on IMDb.com  
Richard Hell Bio on AllMusic.com  
**Blank Generation: Richard Hell & The Voidoids** at MVD Entertainment  
Richard Hell Official Site

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