

Popshifter

One Giant Leap for Fankind

- [Blog](#)
- [Issues](#)
- [Masthead](#)
- [Manifesto](#)
- [Submissions](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Links](#)

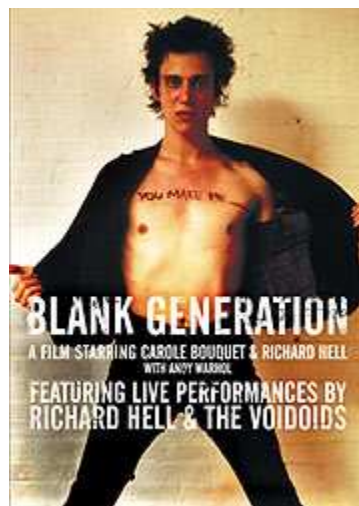
Mar
30

Blank Generation On DVD

Posted in [Culture Shock](#), [DVD](#), [Films](#), [Music](#), [Reviews](#) |

By **Less Lee Moore**

Richard Hell got me my first paying job in the music industry. Sort of.



I'd pasted an old *Star Hits* photo of him and former wife Patty Smyth in a fanzine I did in the mid-90s. During a job interview for Monkey Hill Records in New Orleans, then-co-owner Jimmy Ford, zeroed in on the photo. "They met in rehab," he chuckled, and pointed outside to an old behemoth that looked like something from a movie. "That's Richard's car in the driveway. We're old friends."

I'd had a strange fascination with Richard Hell ever since repeated viewings of *Smithereens* on USA's *Night Flight* in the early '80s. Then there was his "cameo" in *Desperately Seeking Susan*. I even got his autograph at a poetry reading at Café Brasil in New Orleans (before the Jimmy Ford interview, even).

Thus, I found the description of *Blank Generation* was intriguing:

“. . . the classic punk rock movie from 1980. . . illustrating the end of the first wave of New York City punk rock better than any documentary. Nada, a beautiful French journalist on assignment in New York, records the life and work of an up and coming punk rock star, Billy. Soon she enters into a volatile relationship with him and must decide whether to continue with it, or return to her lover, a fellow journalist trying to track down the elusive Andy Warhol (playing himself).”

Wow, I'd love to see a movie like that! Unfortunately, *Blank Generation* is not that movie. The music, by the acclaimed Eliot Goldenthal, is stunning; the cinematography by Ed Lachman, shows the burned out, sleazy New York you've heard about but never seen (unless you're of a certain age); and the performances by Richard Hell and the Voidoids illustrate why they're still spoken of in awed tones.

Even all that can't save this mess of a film. There's a whole lot of forced conflict; a practically non-existent story arc; awkward stabs at acting; a bizarre attempt to introduce a faux-*Videodrome* theme commenting on the false nature of the media (which fails miserably); and perhaps worst of all, many examples of why high-waisted jeans are a bad idea for men.

Richard Hell is gorgeous (high-waisted jeans aside) and the live performances are grand, but awkward lines like, “Who'd even want to feel like me? I don't,” are truly cringe-worthy. The continuing saga of journalist Hoffritz (played by director Ulli Lommel) trying to schedule an interview with Andy Warhol (whose three minutes of screen time are awesome) is kind of hilarious, but completely destroys the dramatic tone that the movie tries to create in the first half.

The best line in the whole film is spoken by Hell: “We would've separated long ago except for the children,” he tells Hoffritz, who looks confused. “Me and Nada,” continues Hell, with a smirk on his face. Although this probably wasn't even intentionally funny, it makes me wish that the whole movie had the same kind of ironic, satirical tone of a David Markey film. Now that would be something worth revisiting.

If you manage to sit through the whole thing (and honestly, if you like Richard Hell or Andy Warhol it is totally worth it), the real payoff comes in the bonus feature, a 40-minute interview with Richard Hell, conducted in 2009 by writer and critic Luc Sante.

Hell and Sante deconstruct—okay, they totally eviscerate—the film and Ulli Lommel. After a while you almost feel sorry for poor Lommel (that is, unless you are familiar with his [oeuvre](#)) except that he seems like a raging prick who brought it all on himself.

On the other hand, for being such a well-known and accomplished artist, Hell is extremely humble, albeit obviously intelligent and incisive, with a low key sense of humor and spot-on observations about what an “atrocious and profoundly worthless” exercise the film was and still remains. Trust me, every exasperated, embarrassed, annoyed feeling that you had watching *Blank Generation* is dissected and validated completely by Hell and Sante. It's tempting to list all their hilarious comments, but it's way more fun to suffer through the movie and then watch them for yourself, like a *Mystery Science Theater 3000* episode for the new millennium.

Even though *Blank Generation* the movie is almost an abysmal failure, it's well worth picking up this DVD.

Blank Generation was released by MVD Visual on February 23 and is available from [See Of Sound](#) and [Amazon](#).



Leave a Comment

Your Name: (required)

Your Mail (will not be published): (required)

Your Website:

Comment:

Submit Comment

Search!

• Issues

- [Issue 001: Nov/Dec 2007](#)
- [Issue 002: Jan/Feb 2008](#)
- [Issue 003: Mar/Apr 2008](#)
- [Issue 004: May/June 2008](#)
- [Issue 005: Jul/Aug 2008](#)
- [Issue 006: Sep/Oct 2008](#)
- [Issue 007: Nov/Dec 2008](#)
- [Issue 008: Jan/Feb 2009](#)
- [Issue 009: Mar/Apr 2009](#)
- [Issue 010: May/June 2009](#)
- [Issue 011: Jul/Aug 2009](#)
- [Issue 012: Sep/Oct 2009](#)
- [Issue 013: Nov/Dec 2009](#)
- [Issue 014: Jan/Feb 2010](#)
- [Issue 015: Mar/Apr 2010](#)

• Twitter Updates

- [@megashaun: That song by The Move is Ayshea's "Farewell" & you can listen to it in the latest Popcast here: <http://snipurl.com/v71sk>](#)
- [@MST3KInfo - Lamberto Bava directed "Devil Fish"? WHOA. FWIW, I love "Macabro," one of the most unsettling horror films I've ever seen.](#)
- [@megashaun - RELEASE THE KRAKEN!](#)

• Categories

- [Art](#)
- [Best Of Lists](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Books](#)
- [Canadian Content](#)
- [Candy](#)

- [Cartoons](#)
- [Comedy](#)
- [Comics](#)
- [Concert Reviews](#)
- [Conventions/Expos](#)
- [Costumes](#)
- [Crafts](#)
- [Culture Shock](#)
- [Current Faves](#)
- [DVD](#)
- [Editorial](#)
- [Encounters of the Fankind](#)
- [Eulogy](#)
- [Feminism](#)
- [Films](#)
- [From The Fanzine Vaults](#)
- [Gaming](#)
- [Halloween](#)
- [He Had Good Taste](#)
- [Holidays](#)
- [Horror](#)
- [Interviews](#)
- [Kiss Me I'm Irish](#)
- [LGBTQ](#)
- [Lost & Never Found Again](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [Magick](#)
- [Music](#)
- [New Issue](#)
- [New Old Stock](#)
- [OMG British R Coming](#)
- [Over the Gadfly's Nest](#)
- [Pop Culture Holy Grail](#)
- [Podcasts](#)
- [Q&A](#)
- [Radio](#)
- [Retrovirus](#)
- [Reviews](#)
- [Science and Technology](#)
- [Science Fiction](#)
- [Smell-O-Rama](#)
- [Soundtracks and Scores](#)
- [Sparks Spectacular](#)
- [Teh Sex](#)
- [Television](#)
- [Thank You](#)
- [The Internets](#)
- [The Ren Faire](#)
- [The Summer](#)
- [Thrift Store Delights](#)
- [Top Five Lists](#)

- [Top Ten Lists](#)
- [Toys and Collectibles](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [True Crime](#)
- [Uncategorized](#)
- [Underground/Cult](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Waxing Nostalgic](#)
- [We Miss The Nineties](#)

• Meta

- [Log in](#)
- [RSS](#)

© 2007-2010 popshifter.com. Designed by: [Megashaun](#)

☺