

## Blu-ray Review: Terrence Malick's 'Badlands' Joins Criterion Collection

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 3, 2013 - 7:15pm

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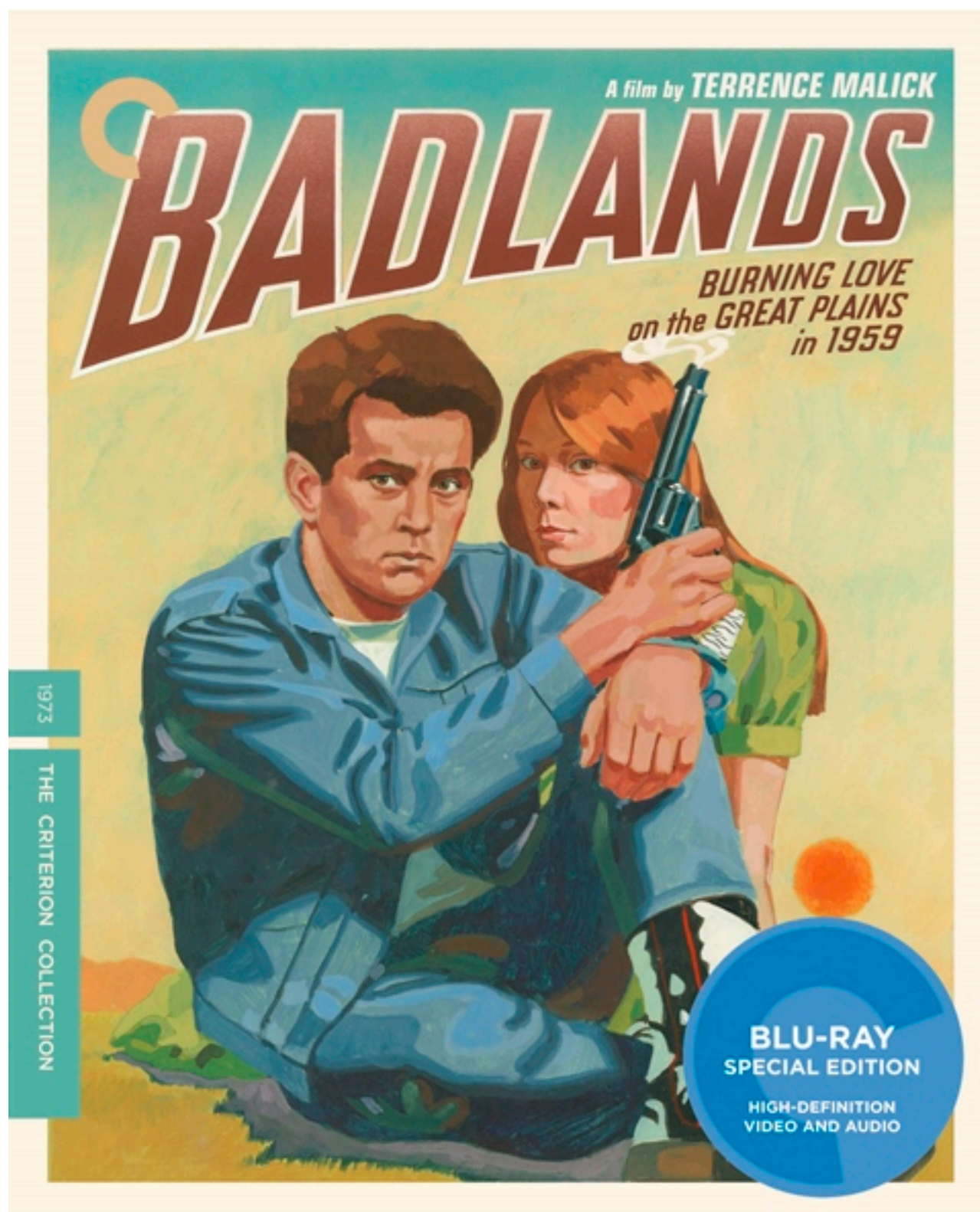
CHICAGO – Any list of the most influential films of the '70s that doesn't include Terrence Malick's brilliant "Badlands" is incomplete. It's one of those cinematic works that's so important to its era and how it influenced filmmakers that saw it that it's hard to put into reviews in a brief review such as this one. It is iconic in the way Malick took the familiar (it's based on a true story that was well-known at the time) and made it artistic. It's also a great selection for The Criterion Collection, joining Malick's "Days of Heaven" and "The Thin Red Line" in the most important series of Blu-rays ever released.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

On the surface, "Badlands" could have been another take on "Bonnie and Clyde," star-crossed young lovers united and divided by violence. And it would have been a beautifully made film with great performances if that's all that was going on here. But it's not. Malick is playing with Americana in general, dressing Kit (Martin Sheen) like a wannabe James Dean and having Holly (Sissy Spacek) twirl a baton like she should be in an Independence Day parade. They are the boy next door and the girl next door gone wrong. Not only will the local tough kid come and date your daughter but he'll kill you in the process. And Malick addressed the growing sense that smalltown America was falling apart as kids like Kit & Holly looked for something that most of the country couldn't provide — excitement. With two of the career-best performances of its iconic stars, Malick's already fully-formed visual sense, and his fascinating ability to turn the real into the lyrical, "Badlands" still resonates today.

The Blu-ray of "Badlands" makes this clear not just through the film itself but some great special features, the highlight of which is a collection of new interviews with three of the major players: Sheen, Spacek, and art director Jack Fisk (who has made invaluable contributions to every one of Malick's films and even married Spacek after meeting her on this set). New interviews with the associate editor and executive producer along with a 1993 TV program about the real crimes on which "Badlands" were based round out a nice collection, but it's the film itself, presented in a glorious 4K restoration, that only gets better every time I see it.



Badlands was released on Criterion Blu-ray and DVD on March 19, 2013

Photo credit: Courtesy of The Criterion Collection

#### Synopsis:

Badlands announced the arrival of a major talent: Terrence Malick. His impressionistic take on the notorious Charles Starkweather and Caril Ann Fugate killing spree of the late 1950s uses a serial-killer narrative as a springboard for an oblique teenage romance, lovingly and idiosyncratically enacted by Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek. The film also introduced many of the elements that would earn Malick his passionate following: the enigmatic approach to narrative and character, the unusual use of voice-over, the juxtaposition of human violence with natural beauty, the poetic investigation of American dreams and nightmares. This debut has spawned countless imitations, but none have equaled its strange sublimity.

#### Special Features:

- o Making Badlands: A New Documentary Featuring Actors Martin Sheen And Sissy Spacek And Art Director Jack Fisk
- o New Interviews With Associate Editor Billy Weber And Executive Producer Edward Pressman
- o Charles Starkweather A 1993 Episode Of The Television Program American Justice, About The Real-Life Story On Which The Film Was Loosely Based
- o Trailer
- o Booklet Featuring An Essay By Filmmaker Michael Almereyda

*"Badlands" stars Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek. It was written and directed by Terrence Malick. It was release on Blu-ray and DVD by The Criterion Collection on March 19, 2013.*



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