

Blu-ray Review: David Cronenberg's Twisted Vision of William S. Burrough's 'Naked Lunch'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 22, 2013 - 5:37pm

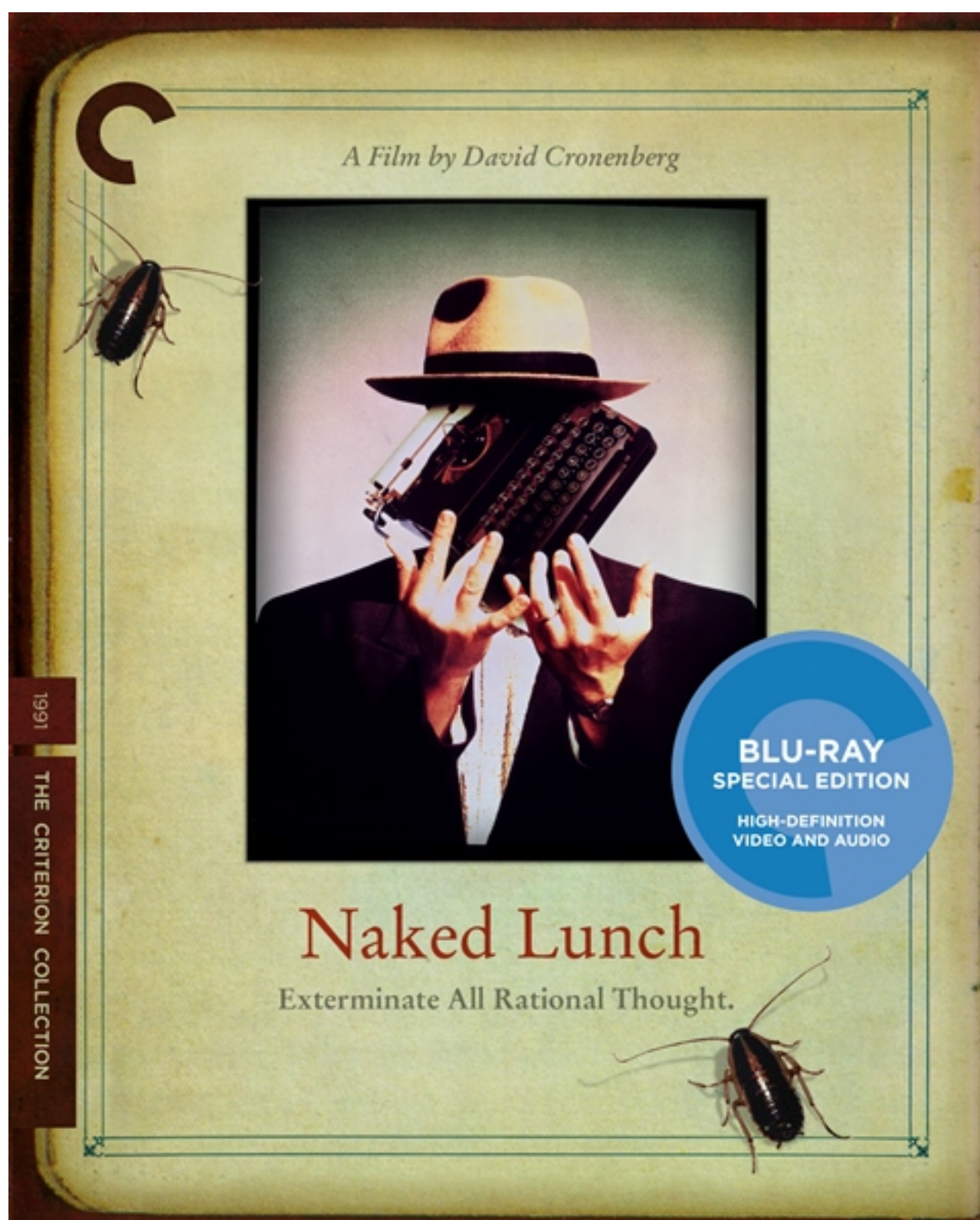
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CHICAGO – I adore David Cronenberg. He's one of the most important filmmakers of his generation from "Videodrome" (also available in a great Criterion release) to "The Fly" to "Dead Ringers" to "The History of Violence." He matters. And yet I've never been in love with "Naked Lunch," recently released in Criterion Blu-ray and DVD. It's one of those movies that I always admired but never loved. It's about all that could be done with a Burroughs' book, one that clearly could not be directly adapted into film, but I find it more interesting as a filmmaking exercise than an enjoyable piece of work on its own. Having said that, the Criterion treatment of it is expectedly stellar.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Criterion HD transfers should be the model for all. "Naked Lunch" doesn't look overly polished like too many movies from before 2000 often do. It just looks right. And the special features are notable, especially a commentary track from Cronenberg and Peter Weller that allows insight into not just the process of the making of the film but how it blends the action of the book and Burroughs' life. I love Cronenberg's approach to the novel, knowing he couldn't do a linear translation of a surreal work and it's interesting to hear the creative motives behind it. I still consider "Naked Lunch" a minor film in the history of one of our most major filmmakers but this is still a great Blu-ray release for a film that many of the director's fans adore. They'll be happy with it.



Naked Lunch was released on Blu-ray on April 9, 2013

Photo credit: Courtesy of the Criterion Collection

Synopsis:

In this adaptation of William S. Burroughs's hallucinatory, once-thought-unfilmable novel *Naked Lunch*, directed by David Cronenberg, a part-time exterminator and full-time drug addict named Bill Lee (Peter Weller) plunges into the nightmarish Interzone, a netherworld of sinister cabals and giant talking bugs. Alternately humorous and grotesque - and always surreal - the film mingles aspects of Burroughs's novel with incidents from the writer's own life, resulting in an evocative paranoid fantasy and a self-reflexive investigation into the mysterious of the creative process.

Special Features:

- o Audio Commentary Featuring Cronenberg and Actor Peter Weller
- o Naked Making Lunch - A 1992 Documentary By Chris Rodley About The Making Of The Film
- o Special Effects Gallery, Featuring Artwork and Photos Alongside An Essay By Film Writer Jody Duncan
- o Collection Of Original Marketing Materials
- o Audio Recording Of William S. Burroughs Reading From His Novel "Naked Lunch"
- o Gallery Of Photos Taken By Poet Allen Ginsberg Of Burroughs
- o Booklet Featuring Reprinted Pieces By Film Critic Janet Maslin, Critic and Novelist Gary Indiana, Filmmaker And Writer Chris Rodley, and Burroughs

"Naked Lunch" stars Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, and Roy Scheider. It was released on Criterion Blu-ray and re-released on Criterion DVD on April 9, 2013.



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