

Underwater, no-one can hear you scream

by Gilles Castonguay
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So you thought *Alien* was pretty cool and *E.T.* was pretty cute? Then you'll love this year's multi-million dollar hit *The Abyss*, right? Wrong--unless your into total rip-offs.

Hyped as the epic adventure of the summer, *The Abyss* is the story of a rag-

The Abyss
Directed by
James Cameron

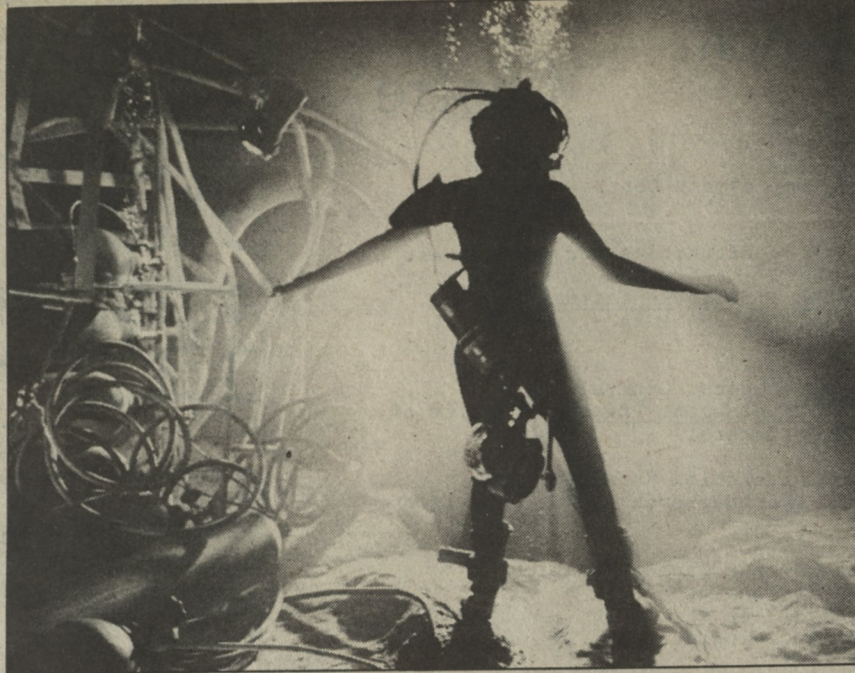
tag crew isolated from the rest of the world who are being held captive by a crazy army officer with a nuclear device threatening to blow up everyone--including himself.

It has it all--a dark and lonely place, ugly hardware, sophisticated machinery, a good guy, a bad guy, rekindled love, a mysterious lifeform combined with stupid dialogue, a boring climax and a predictable ending.

One expects more from James Cameron who brought us *The "fuck off, asshole" Terminator* and that rollercoaster-ride of a movie, *Aliens*.

But as it turns out, *The Abyss* shows little promise.

Ed Harris and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio got themselves involved in this fiasco as crew members of Deepcore, an underwater oil-rig work-



They're heeere.

ing at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean near the Caribbean.

Their colleagues are the usual despicable lot of hard-nosed employees of Benthic Petroleum, your basic anonymous corporation which owns the rig.

With the mysterious disappearance of the USS Montana, the U.S. Navy

persuades the crew to search for the nuclear submarine with the help of four specially-trained Marines, one of them being Michael Biehn, who starred in Cameron's two earlier films, as Lt. Coffey.

Stubborn military officials and overzealous commandos inevitably bring

the operation near the brink of disaster with Deepcore hanging perilously at the edge of the Cayman Trough, or, more notably, the abyss.

What's more, pink-glowing gummy butterflies whizz around occasionally to captivate the divers and annoy the audience. Are they an intelligent life form? Are they friendly? Can they save these mortal humans from themselves? Does anybody care?

At this point in the movie, one cannot help but be reminded of Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and Ridley Scott's *Alien*--but don't make the mistake of comparing *The Abyss* with either of them.

Cameron fails to evoke the same warm fuzzies with Mastrantonio's alien encounters as did Spielberg in *E.T.* and *Close Encounters*. The scenes of the terrified crew running around in the dripping bowels of the Deepcore oil-rig, encountering relentless confrontations with a psychopathic being have already been done with the spaceship *Nostromo* in *Alien*.

Sure, *The Abyss* has some neat special effects, great underwater stunts and breathtaking cinematography, but that alone does not constitute a movie.

Save your \$7.00. Buy a container of Jiffy-Pop, rent *Alien* and *E.T.* and enjoy some original sci-fi suspense and action. □

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