

# Into the abyss

by Bill Paul

The choral music at the beginning of *The Abyss* tells you that this film is not going to be a typical action, adventure flick. Writer-director James Cameron has fashioned a science fiction action film that turns into a sappy love story.

Fast and furious action in *The Abyss* begins when an inexplicable 'underwater alien force'

(UAF), travelling at 130 knots, jolts a manned US nuclear submarine equipped with nuclear warheads into a reef, killing everyone. The US military top brass think that Soviet sabotage is behind the accident.

A petroleum rigging crew working near the scene of the accident are hired by the military to team up with three US Navy personnel to investigate the incident.

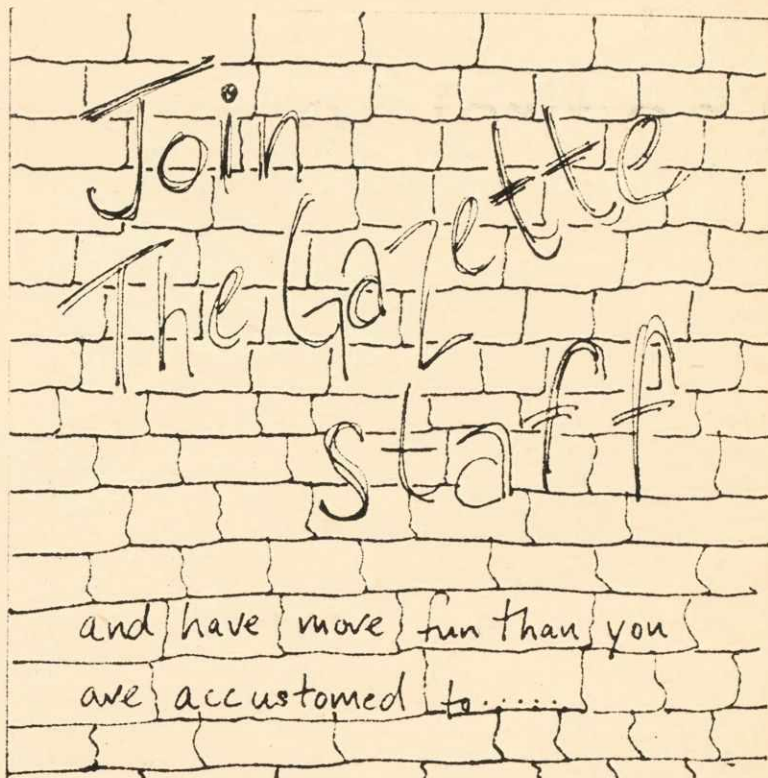
But before you can say 'underwater alien force,' a hurricane loosens the rig from the top platform leaving both crews stranded underwater with enough oxygen for about 12 hours of survival time.

The rag tag bunch of characters that make up the oil rig crew is led by Bud and Lindsay, a husband and wife team whose marriage is on the rocks. Coffey, a patriotic, paranoid, naval officer, heads the navy squad.

What follows is an ideological battle between the two crews on how to deal with the 'underwater alien force.' The navy says the 'UAF' is a Soviet conspiracy and they declare war on it. The oil rig crew want to communicate with it.

This benign 'underwater alien force' plays a large role in determining the survival of the stranded crew members. And it certainly plays a spiritual role in reuniting our estranged husband and wife team.

The script is clever and the underwater drama and frantic sub-plots in *The Abyss* pack a good punch. However, Cameron's depiction of the 'underwater alien force' as a healing spirit is a sweet but heavy-handed message.



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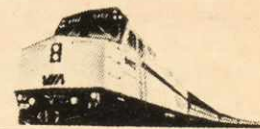
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