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Melody Gilbert's documentary shines a light on an adventurous hobby

[Emily Denaro](#) on Sunday 04/06/2008 3:30 pm , (4) Recommendations

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Madison does not offer many urban exploring opportunities for folks like myself who relish jumping fences and getting dirty in tunnels, so being able to live vicariously through the adventurers in *Urban Explorers: Into the Darkness* was a treat and a half. The film does a thorough and engaging job of showcasing the multitude of personalities, gear, rules, fears and hopes that compose this exhilarating pastime.

Perhaps my opinion is biased, given my deep interest in the subject, but given the oohs and ahhs from the audience in the sold out Play Circle in UW Memorial Union, it seems fair to surmise that most of the yellow rating cards were ripped by the positive 4s and 5s.

Urban Explorers: Into the Darkness introduces us to a world that is exciting, dangerous and beautiful. We crawl inside everything from the crispy walls of Xanadu, an abandoned "futuristic" home in Florida, to the bone-lined catacombs of Paris. Stunning photographic montages of sludge-filled tunnels and decaying mental asylums are paired well with a moody, punk score that revs up the imagination for real quests -- and we get them.

The camera follows a colorful array of characters everywhere from a retired rocket buried in the Everglades to the explorers' own backyards and apartments. Meeting quirky and hilarious Iowan explorer Slim Jim is worth the ticket price.

Most things won't make someone itch to photograph forgotten historical relics amidst the sticky murk of raw sewage. Turns out *Urban Explorers* has achieved a remarkable feat.

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