

MEDIA REVIEW:

MPD: An Overview, Produced by Ridgeview Institute

Reviewed by
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Sandor, P. (Producer), & Ganaway, G. (Director). (1988). *Multiple Personality Disorder: An Overview* (Videotape). Smyrna, Georgia: Ridgeview Mental Health Foundation.

In *Multiple Personality Disorder: An Overview* Producer Pat Sandor and Director George Ganaway, M.D., have created a remarkable resource for the education of both professional and lay audiences. Aesthetically accomplished and superbly edited, this hour-long videotape presents the equivalent of a comprehensive state-of-the-art lecture on the etiology, phenomenology, diagnosis, and treatment of MPD, illustrated with three well-chosen patient demonstrations. It is modest and completely without sensationalism.

Those of us who work in the dissociative disorders field owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Sandor, Ganaway, Associate Producer Beth Gault, and to Ridgeview Institute for its sponsorship of their efforts. This tape expresses and demonstrates so many important phenomena and concepts so well, and explains them so eloquently, that it appears destined to become one of the landmarks in the growth of the mental health professions' understanding of MPD. I have no hesitation in recommending it for use in the training of mental health professionals. My experiences using it in teaching situations have been uniformly excellent.

What makes this tape so valuable, and elicits such an uncritical review from an individual not given to the use of superlatives? Its strengths seem to flow from the extremely high quality of the script, written by George Ganaway. Ganaway skillfully initiates the viewer to the major phenomena of MPD, and, having demonstrated them in a manner that quickly catches the viewer's interest, begins to introduce the scientific material in such a casual and easy-going manner that the relaxed pace of the tape deceptively conceals the extent and intensity of its educational efforts. Before pure expository matter has gone on long enough to exhaust or bore the viewer, there are cuts to interviews with patients, excerpts from an excellent interview with Chris Sizemore, and short cuts from videotapes of lectures, including some of my own, given at the opening ceremonies for the opening of Multiple Personality Disorder Program at Ridgeview Institute. Those sections that are straightforwardly didactic, done primarily by George Greaves and also by George Ganaway, are uniformly superior. I have observed audiences as they watched this videotape. They never showed boredom or lost their concentration.

Some of the issues addressed in this tape are phenomenology, etiology, diagnosis, and treatment. The viewer not

only observes several personalities of two patients; there also are demonstrations of trance logic, switches, and the experience of having an inner world with personalities in cooperation and conflict far below the observable surface. As an example of the tape's approach, the many suggestive signs of MPD are not only listed and discussed—a good many are demonstrated. The comments of an integrated patient offering an optimistic and reasonable description of his experience of fusion are an additional bonus.

It must be emphasized that this is an introductory level videotape. Its strength is in its clear communication of a wealth of information. In that task it succeeds admirably. There is no comparable resource in the field; in the quality of its script, editing, and aesthetics, it far surpasses my earlier phenomenology tapes. Ganaway's script reflects excellent scholarship, and presents its material very well. The main use for this videotape may well be in the education of hospital and clinic personnel, and students in the mental health professions. It is my impression that it is especially suited for use in introducing psychiatric nurses to MPD patients. I would not be surprised to see it purchased by universities for use in abnormal psychology classes. Its exposition is so lucid that it may find a place in the education of interested lay groups as well. Experienced scientific investigators and teachers in the MPD field may want to own this tape to use it in demonstrating the phenomena of MPD without compromising the confidentiality of their own patient material.

The above acknowledges the excellent jobs done by Ganaway, Sandor, and Gault, and notes the high quality of George Greaves' pieces. However a major debt of gratitude is owed to the three patients, identified as Melinda, Sue, and Jim, whose generosity in sharing themselves and their experiences cannot be repaid. Their candor and dignity are most impressive; they have done us all a great service.

Because this tape is introductory, it touches only briefly on treatment. I would like to see the same team move on from this auspicious debut and produce a comparable presentation on the psychotherapy of MPD. The value of such a contribution is self evident. ■