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Word Is Out (COLOR-DOCU)

Intelligent and well-handled series of interviews with 26 homosexuals. No attempt to preach or teach.

Variety 3-8-78

A Mariposa Film Group production. Produced by Peter Adair. Directed by Mariposa Film Group (Peter Adair, Nancy Adair, Veronica Selver, Andrew Brown, Robert Epstein, Lucy Massie Phenix). Camera (color), sound, interviews, editing by Lucy Massie Phenix, Robert Epstein, Andrew Brown, Veronica Selver, Nancy Adair, Peter Adair; technical services, Fantasy Films, Ferco Inc., Monaco Labs; women's music composed by Trish Nugent; men's music performed by Buena Vista. Reviewed in screening room, New York, Feb. 16, '78. (No MPAA rating). Running time: 135 MINS.

Careful to avoid as much as possible most of the cliches and stereotypes of the homosexual world, a team of San Francisco-based young filmmakers have made a fascinating and intelligent documentary in which they interview 26 individuals who have "come out of the closet." Of the group only a few are of the outre or obvious types who would have disclosed their proclivities in sexual preference and lifestyle to even the uninformed. Most are only "gay" in their declarations, certainly not in their appearance or behavior and could have, seemingly, pretended to lead "normal" lives.

The film, budgeted at \$250,000, looks considerably more expensive and in every technical area is outstanding. The color photography is crisp and clean and, with the exception of some murky shots in a gay discotheque and a recording studio, is one of the major assets of the film.

The Mariposa Film Group, made up of six documentary filmmakers, are never shown during their interviews, but their voices indicate they're all quite young. Their subjects are from every spectrum — an actor, a college professor, a filmmaker, a veterinarian, two factory operators, a secretary, a Chinese-American student, a black Princeton student, a singer, a waitress, a militant feminist, a corporation official, a worker in a factory, a former member of the Frisco Board of Permit Appeals and lawyer, a writer, a female impersonator, a comedienne and former WAC, a truckdriver, and a musician. Some have been married, several have children. In some instances, coming out of the closet has meant being parted from their kids; in some rare instances, with an understanding former mate, they still have visiting privileges.

An equal share of the film is given to such side issues as the ethnic gay (both sexes) and feminism from both the viewpoint of the lesbian and the heterosexual feminist. With such a mixed bag, some of the subjects come across more interestingly than do others. Carrying the most emotional impact are two New Mexican lesbians (one evidently of Mexican origin) who live in a house without plumbing or electricity, but don't mind it and just want to be left alone. As the "oddities" in a small community, they rarely are, however, left to themselves.

Some of the descriptions of the subjects of methods some of them used in the past to avoid a final commitment to homosexuality skirts on the macabre — one young man allowing himself to be committed to a mental institute and shock treatments.

A powerful answer to why more of the militant homosexuals are declaring themselves, it's a generally fascinating film. Overlong, it could be edited, with care, to a more manageable length. Because of its subject matter, bookings may be difficult to find. —*Robe*.