



Murder in Mississippi movie guide

BACKGROUND

The film is based on a true story that happened in the summer of 1964. That summer was called *Freedom Summer* because of a program to help register Blacks in Mississippi to vote. Over 1000 young white college students came down from northern colleges to help in the effort. The story takes place in Neshoba county and the larger city of Meridian, Mississippi.

MAIN CHARACTERS

- James Chaney - a 21 year old activist from rural Mississippi
- Mickey Schwerner - a 24 year old activist from Brooklyn, New York
- Rita Schwerner - Mickey's wife
- Andrew Goodman - 20 year old college student from Queens College New York

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At times Mickey and James disagreed over what tactics to use. How were their ideas different? List several examples of these differences.
2. What was the reaction of most of the Blacks when they were asked by the civil rights workers if they wanted to register to vote and have freedom schools in their churches?
3. How had places like Meridian successfully kept African Americans from voting even though the Constitution gave them this right?
4. Why were Freedom Schools necessary for the movement to be a success?
5. How were the Freedom Summer volunteers prepared?
6. What happened to the murderers of Mickey, James, and Andrew?
7. What did Congress do in 1965 to ensure that African Americans were given the right to vote?
8. The fight for civil rights was intense during the 1950's and 1960's. Can you think of any other movements since then that have used the tactics and the ideas of the Civil Rights movement?