

## SEEDS OF FREEDOM

### Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

<i>Mary</i> <i>Ernestine</i>	Narrator
<i>IRA</i>	Mrs. Evers
<i>Ray</i>	Darrell Kenyatta Evers
<i>Amelia</i>	Renee Denise Evers
<i>Delois</i>	Jennifer - a white woman
<i>Mary</i>	Annabelle - a white woman
<i>James</i>	Butch - Jennifer's husband
	Jack - a cab driver
<i>James</i>	District Attorney
<i>Jewel</i>	1st Prospective Juror
<i>Mary D.</i>	2nd Prospective Juror
<i>Royce</i>	Police Chief
	Thomas MacIntyre
	Dealer
	Taxi Driver
	Robert Pittman
	Car Hop
<i>Jewel</i>	Byron De la Beckwith
<i>Loyal</i>	Former Governor Rose Barnett
<i>Roy W.</i>	Retired General Edwin A. Walker
	Woman
<i>Mother, Madam, Clara</i>	Group of Hoodlums
	White Couple
<i>Ray</i>	Charles Evers
	Freedom School Students, Teachers and
	Voter Registration Workers

## SEEDS OF FREEDOM

A play based on the life and death of Medgar Evers

by Deborah Flynn

and

students of the 1964 Holly Springs Freedom School in Marshall County, Mississippi

(Note: This play was first created and constructed in the Drama and Creative Writing Workshop of the Holly Springs Freedom School through improvizations and role-playing before one word was put on paper.

The author, Deborah Flynn, therefore was guided in large part by the students' interpretations of the characters they wished to portray.

In any future productions, the dialogue should not be considered as words to be learned by rote, but as guides to the action of the play. The actors and actresses are to be encouraged in the interest of creativity and spontaneity to interpolate; certainly to declare -- for instance -- "What Freedom means to me" in his or her own words.)

As house lights go down, a spot picks out a guitarist and small group of singers standing below the empty stage.

Prologue

Song:

Everybody sing  
Freedom, Freedom, Freedom, Freedom, Freedom.  
Fight for freedom  
Freedom, etc.  
In Mississippi  
In .... (name of city where play is being presented)  
All across our land  
Sing it softly now  
Freedom, etc.

(Music fades away into background as narrator walks forward and addresses audience)

Narrator: Yes, that's a Freedom song. And this is a play about Freedom. . . about us! Yes, us! because every step we take along the Freedom Road, every time we act, every time we move forward along that Freedom Road we plant a seed. And seeds are blowing in the wind today. Just think of it! Something you do today, something you may do tomorrow, may be going to the courthouse, filling in a voter's registration form, will plant a freedom seed in someone else's heart or mind. And seeds are things for growing and growing things are beautiful and strong. I have a freedom seed in my heart.

Let me tell you what it means to me --- what freedom means to me. It means opportunity -- the opportunity to love one another for this is a law of God. It means equality of opportunity to learn and to work, to work together for a better land, a brighter future for all and for all our children. Working together, learning together, and from each other, we can heal the ancient wounds of division. That's what freedom means to me!

This I learned from many things, not the least of which was the life and death of James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, Herbert Lee, Lewis Allen, Medgar Evers, all walkers on the Freedom Road, all workers in the field of voter registration. How did they live? How did they die?

Did they say as the poet, Claude Mackay, "If we must die, let us nobly die so that our precious blood need not be spilled in vain."?

→ In vain! Who's to make that decision, render judgment? History? Whose responsibility is it? Yours? Mine? I know I want a share of it. Do you? Then let's go to Hinds County in Jackson, Mississippi. Let's visit the home of Medgar Evers in June of 1963.

Scene 1.

(Lights go up on stage. Mrs. Evers is sitting at her desk busily addressing envelopes, obviously a mailing for the NAACP. The children are playing a game of checkers on the floor.)

Darrell: Mommy, (impatiently) why isn't Daddy home yet?

Mrs. Evers: He's busy, son. You know he has important work to do.

Darrell: What's so important that he can't come home for supper like other Daddies?

Mrs. Evers: (softly) He's working for freedom, Darrell.

Rene Denise: (chanting) Freedom, freedom. That's all I hear around here.

What is freedom, Mommy?

Darrell: (importantly to his sister) Oh, any baby knows that! It's.. it's..

(Lights dim on stage. One soprano voice rises from the darkness as if voicing Mrs. Evers' thoughts.)

Song:                    This may be the last time  
                          This may be the last time  
                          This may be the last time  
                          I don't know.

Male Voice:            This may be the last time  
                          That we'll walk together  
                          This may be the last time  
                          I don't know.  
                          This may be the last time  
                          That we'll see each other  
                          This may be the last time  
                          I don't know.

Chorus:                This may be the last time, etc.

Scene II                LIGHT UP ON NARRATOR

Narrator:            On the other side of town, in another home, a woman is telephoning her friend about her problems with her maid.

Annabelle: Hello.

Jennifer: Hello. Is that you, Annabelle? I know it's late, honey, but I just had to call you. Butch isn't home and I'm so upset.

Annabelle: Well, I'm glad you did, hon. I just finished setting my hair. And you know how that exhausts me. I'm right jealous of you because your Earline always sets yours for you.

Jennifer: Earline! Don't you mention that nigger maid to me again, ever!

Annabelle: Why Jennifer, I thought she was a jewel.

Jennifer: Jewel, ha! I had to set my own hair tonight because she just up and announced she wasn't coming in tomorrow! So I asked her: Earline, why aren't you coming in tomorrow? Know what she said?

Annabelle: No. You going to tell me?

Jennifer: She said she was going downtown to register to vote.

Annabelle: Register to vote!

Jennifer: That's exactly what she said. I don't know what's getting into these niggers lately. They're just getting as uppity as they can be. They sit right down next to you in the bus and now they're registering to vote... Well, I don't know. I just don't know...

Annabelle: It never would have happened if it hadn't been for that Medgar Evers. Stirring them up about their rights. As if we weren't treating them good... uh ... just like we always did. Something's going to have to be done about him!

Jennifer: That's just the way I feel. Butch and I were ~~were~~ talking about that the other day. And I told him I was just about worried to death. Oh, Annabelle...

Annabelle: Yes.

Jennifer: Hold on a minute. I think that's Butch coming in the door now. ... Hi, honey.

Butch: Hello, darling. Who are you talking with?

Jennifer: Why, Annabelle. We're just talking about how that Medgar Evers is just ruining all our good niggers.

Darrell: (continuing) uh.. to be able to go to the school of your choice, to... to.. to worship God in any church, to live where you want, you know, and get a job... (as Denise attempts to move a checker) Hey! It's not your turn yet.

It's my move.

Mrs. Evers: (To herself, looking over the heads of the audience)

Freedom is being able to live without fear ... to live!

Darrell: (Pausing in his play) But I thought I heard you saying on the telephone before that Daddy was investigating a beating.

Mrs. Evers: (Coming back from her reverie) That's right, son. But to help another human being is to work for freedom. The only thing the young man who was beaten had tried to do was to register to vote.

Darrell: (Proudly) Can I do the same kind of work Daddy is doing when I grow up?

Mrs. Evers: By the time you're grown, darling, I pray there won't be need for it any longer.

Rene Denise: When I grow up too, Mommy?

Mrs. Evers: Yes, sweet, by the time you're grown even more surely.

(Telephone rings. Children return to their game as Mrs. Evers answers.)

Mrs. Evers: Hello.

Threatening Voice: Listen! Someone's going to have to do something about that damn husband of yours. Don't you black bastards ever learn?

Mrs. Evers: (Fearfully) Who is this?

Voice: Never mind who this is. That husband of yours has just stuck his neck out too far. And this time we're going to hack it off his black bottom!

Mrs. Evers: (With an expression of horror and revulsion, places the receiver carefully on the desk. For a moment we hear the voice still speaking, but cannot distinguish the words.)

Darrell: Who was that?

Mrs. Evers: No one we know, dear.

Rene Denise: (getting up to embrace her mother) Why are you so .. upset, Mommy?

Mrs. Evers: No reason, dear. I guess.. I guess I'm just tired.

Rene Denise: (reaching across to the telephone) You forgot to hang up the phone.

Mrs. Evers: (sharply) Leave it be! (More softly) Why don't you get the new coloring book Daddy bought for you last week, and make a nice picture for him? If you both play quietly I'll let you stay up until he gets home.

Darrell: (wonderingly) No matter how late?

Mrs. Evers: No matter, (She smiles as the children settle back contentedly on the floor. Darrell reading a book, his sister drawing in her coloring book. Then becoming lost in her own thoughts, she paces up and down front of stage - thinking aloud.)

How could I tell the children I didn't dare hang up the phone for fear he would call back again. He or another. They always call back if I try to answer them or if I hang up while they're still speaking. I've learned just to leave the receiver off the hook. I wonder if Medgar too has been getting more threats than usual? He called me three times from the office today. And when I got worried, he said he just wanted to hear my voice. But he seemed so worried this morning when he asked the good Lord for his blessing. He hardly touched his breakfast. How tenderly he embraced me before he left for work; how closely and for how long he held the children as if he feared .. it might be for the last time.

Butch: Well, don't you worry about it any more. There are good men in this town who will take care of a situation like that! You just leave everything to us. Oh... this is Jack. He drives a cab around town. I asked him in for a drink.

Jennifer: Oh. How do you do.

Cab Driver: Nice meeting you, ma'am. (Shakes hands awkwardly) And if I may say so, I think you can listen to your husband, ma'am. You ladies aren't going to have to worry much longer. You're going to find things is going to be nice and peaceful pretty soon.

Jennifer: Well, I'm sure glad to hear you say so. Excuse me. Hello, Annabelle, you still there?

Annabelle: Yes...

Jennifer: Well, hold on for just another minute. Butch, why don't you take Jack into the dinnette? I have the ice cut on the bar and ... I'll be in in a minute. (The two men exit) Annabelle? That was Butch. He just brought a friend ~~of~~ home and from the way they're talking... Well, Butch assures me something's going to be done about this nigger Evers.

Annabelle: Well, I'm sure relieved. And I certainly hope he's right. Because you know, my poor heart's so bad, I can't stand any of this strain.

Jennifer: Well, I'd better go now. I'll talk to you tomorrow, hear?

Annabelle: Sure thing. Goodbye now.

Jennifer: 'Bye.

#### EXIT

Scene III (Light dims and then goes up again on upper stage where we see Mrs. Evers and the two children exactly as we left them. Mrs. Evers is still pacing front of stage obviously continuing her monologue of Scene I.)

Mrs. Evers: Sometimes I wonder... Will we ever be able to live a normal life like any other family? Will my children always have to keep away from the windows at night so as not to be targets for someone with a shotgun? It breaks my heart to watch Medgar teach them how to fall to the floor quickly, without hurting themselves, when we hear a strange sound on the street, just as the army taught him to protect himself when he was in the war. What a thing for a father to have to show his ten-year-old son, his baby daughter! I suppose we're both more nervous since that fire bomb was thrown at our house last month. But I must stop this way of thinking. It is worthwhile - all of it - the pain, the worry, the humiliation, watching people turn their heads and sniff the air in disgust as we pass by. It is worth while because soon, soon, perhaps, all people of good-will will band together and work for ...

(Sound of car pulling into the driveway interrupts her thoughts. She listens for a moment, her face lighting up with joy.)

Children! I think that's your Daddy.. pulling into the driveway.

Darrell: Hurrah!

Denise: Yippee!

(They squeal with delight. Darrell throws his book into the air and both run toward the window overlooking the driveway.)

Mrs. Evers: (sharply) Stay away from the window! (as they start moving toward the door) And don't go near the door. You know your Daddy doesn't want you to stand in the doorway with the light at your back. Daddy will be in in a minute. Just be patient.

(Mrs Evers stands watching the door. The children inch toward it.)  
 (Sound of car door closing. Mrs. Evers takes one step forward. Sound of shot.)  
 (Time freezes on stage. Not a muscle in Mrs. Evers' face or body moves. Slowly the children turn from the door to look wonderingly at their mother. Mrs. Evers, suddenly released, races between the children, tears open the door. Children follow)  
 Off stage: Mrs. Evers gives one agonized scream.  
 Children: (from off stage) Get up, Daddy! Please, please get up, Daddy.  
 (Lights dim on empty stage)

Chorus: Oh, Freedom, oh Freedom, Oh Freedom over me, over me,  
 And before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave,  
 And go home to my Lord and be free.  
 No more bloodshed, no more bloodshed, no more bloodshed over me,  
 over me,  
 And before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave,  
 And go home to my Lord and be free.

#### Scene IV

*Narrator:* Hundreds attended the funeral, not only from Mississippi but from all over the United States. The Sunday before Medgar Evers was murdered he had told his wife. "I don't mind dying if dying is necessary. My only fear is for you and the children. What will happen to you?" He worried not only about their physical well-being, but the effect his death might have on their spiritual, their emotional life. Mrs. Evers and the children are now returning from the funeral.

Denise: Mommy, why did they kill Daddy?

Mrs. Evers: Because they were afraid, darling, afraid he was succeeding in what he was trying to do.

Darrell: (bitterly) Momma, I hate white people. I hate them all!

Mrs. Evers: Oh, Darrell... don't talk that way, son. Your father wouldn't have wanted you to talk that way.

Darrell: I'm going to get me a white man. If it's the last thing I do, I'm going to get me a white man!

Mrs. Evers: Darrell... your father taught us that we must love... In the movement we must love even our enemies. Hate what they do, but love them as suffering human beings,

Darrell: But Daddy's with us no longer. He loved and they killed him.

Mrs. Evers: I know, Darrell. And we must learn to ... Darrell, if you hate, or if you kill, you will also be killing your father again, killing everything he worked for, everything he stood for. Pray to understand, ~~my~~ son.

(The three Evers, embracing each other walk slowly to front stage with bowed heads as chorus, voicing their thoughts, sings hymn, "I'll Walk With ~~God~~ <sup>God</sup>."

Chorus: I'll walk with God from this day on  
 His helping hand, I'll lean upon  
 This is my prayer, my humble plea  
 May my Lord be ever with me.

#### Scene V

*Narrator:* What kind of justice is practiced in Mississippi? Is it the same for the Negro as it is for the white man? Will real justice be administered in the Hinds County Courthouse where Byron De la Beckwith is being tried for the murder of Medgar Evers?  
 On top of the courthouse building stands a huge statue of Moses holding the ten commandments. And the sixth commandment says:

THOU SHALT NOT KILL!

Narrator: (continuing) Now, in the United States the law demands that we be tried by a jury of our peers. that means our equals, white and black. Can an all-white jury be impartial? What kind of a jury will there be at the Beckwith trial? Let's go into the courthouse and listen. Let's see how they are selected.

(In this scene, the effect must be that of a montage. The actors must follow each other upon stage in quick succession.)

District Attorney: State your name, please.

1st Venireman: George Cunningham.

District Attorney: Your occupation?

1st Venireman: I am the president of the Cunningham Insurance Company.

District Attorney: You say you have formed no opinion about this case and can render an unbiased verdict?

1st Venireman: Yes, sir. I can.

District Attorney: Do you believe that it is a crime for a white man to kill a nigger?

1st Venireman: (Drawling and obviously annoyed) Well, I... I.. would... I...

D. A.: Dismissed. Not acceptable.

(1st Venireman leaves stage slowly, looking back at the D.A. with contempt and anger. Second Venireman enters.)

D.A.: State your name, please.

2nd Venireman: John Whitefield.

D. A.: Your occupation?

2nd Venireman: School teacher.

D. A.: You say you have formed no opinion about this case and can render an unbiased judgment?

2nd Venireman: Yes, sir.

D. A.: Do you believe that for a white man to kill a nigger is a crime in Mississippi?

2nd Venireman: (with great force, but with simplicity and sincerity)  
I believe ... to kill any human being - anywhere - is a crime.

D. A.: Accepted.

(They both exit.)

Narrator: At least the prosecuting attorney did not accept anyone on the all-white jury who did not recognize murder as a crime when the victim was a Negro. Was justice served? Twice, Byron De la Beckwith, who was apprehended for the murder of Medgar Evers, our freedom worker, and field secretary of the NAACP, was tried and permitted to go free because of a hung jury. Seven jurors were for acquittal; five for conviction. Let's stop back into Hinds County courtroom, in Mississippi, and hear some of the evidence that convinced these five white jurors that De la Beckwith was guilty.

Police Chief: (testifies to audience) This 30.06 Enfield rifle with the telescopic sight was found hidden in a tangle of honeysuckle vines across the street from Medgar Evers' home. The trodden earth showed the killer hid there. (exits)

Narrator: Thomas MacIntyre, Delta farmer, 20 years old, testifies:

D.A.: Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, etc.

MacIntyre: I do. In 1960, three years ago, I traded guns with Byron De la Beckwith.

D. A.: Will you describe the gun?

MacIntyre: It was a 30.06 Enfield rifle.

D. A.: Is this the gun?

Mac: It is. (both exit)

Narrator: The FBI traced the telescopic sight on the gun found in the tangle of honeysuckle vines across the street from the Evers' home from a Chicago supplier to a dealer in Mississippi. The dealer testifies:

Dealer: Yeah, this is the scope I traded it to that man over there, De la Beckwith.

D.A.: Was that before or after June 12, 1963, the night Medgar Evers was killed?

Dealer: Just about a month before. (both exit)

Narrator: The Police Chief testifies again.

P.C.: The fingerprints on the gun were blurred but there was one clear and fresh print on the telescopic sight.

D. A.: Were you able to identify the print as belonging to anyone in this courtroom?

P.C.: Yes, sir.

D. A.: Whose was it?

P. C.: Byron De la Beckwith's.

Narrator: A white taxi driver testifies:

Driver: This here guy comes over to me and my buddy on Sunday afternoon and asks us do we know this Medgar Evers and do we know where he lives.

D. A.: Sunday, what Sunday?

Driver: Sunday, June 10, 1963.

D. A.: Two days before Medgar Evers was killed?

Driver: Yes, sir. He asks did I ever drive Medgar Evers home and do I know his address.

D. A.: Is that man in the courtroom?

Driver: Yes, sir.

D. A.: Will you please point him out.

Driver: That's him, the defendant, (De la) Beckwith!

Whites from audience: (screaming) Nigger lover! You'll never drive a cab again, here. You'd better get out of town! We'll run you out!  
(D.A. and driver exit)

Narrator: A few weeks later the driver left town. He could no longer earn a living driving a cab in Jackson. Robert Pittman, seventeen years old, son of a grocery store keeper, whose store was diagonally across the street from the Evers' home, testifies:

Robert Pittman: I seen this Valient like the one Beckwith drives. At least it was the same color, white, and it had a trailer hitch on the back and a long aerial for a two-way radio like his has. It was parked at Joe's Drive-In Restaurant next to my father's store. I seen him driving up and down Missouri Street past the Evers' house about two or three times that night.

(exits)

Narrator: A car hop at Joe's Drive-In testifies:

Car Hop: I saw a parked car at the Drive-In that night. It was parked there for a long time. It was a white Valient and it had a long aerial like the ones they use for two-way radios. The driver of the car looked like him. (pointing to the defendant) Yeah, that's him. I would say that's him.  
(exits)

Narrator: The evidence seems overwhelming, doesn't it, but not to all the jurors. Apparently some of them accepted Beckwith's statement that the cut over his right eye, which exactly matched the curve of the eyepiece on the telescopic sight, was the result of practicing shooting at tin cans. Apparently some of them believed his statement that his gun had been stolen from a closet in his house before the murder. Did they really believe his statements or were they, like other white supremacists, intent upon seeing that no white man be punished for a crime against a Negro? - like Governor Ross Barnett and retired U. S. General Edwin A Walker.

In this next scene you will see them visit Beckwith in jail:

# Scene V

(Beckwith is seated on an ordinary wooden chair looking discouraged. His face lights up as the Governor and General enter.)

Beckwith: (effusively, shaking hands) Governor Barnett! General Walker!

Governor: Good evening, Beckwith. As former governor of Mississippi, I want to assure you that you have my support. I'll back you all the way.

Beckwith: Thank you, Governor. That's mighty kind of you. I sure do appreciate it.

General: Say, you're looking well there, Delay. How do you feel?

Beckwith: I'm sick of this place, this stupid trial. Imagine putting a white man on trial because some damn nigger got himself killed!

General: Come on, now, don't let it get you down. Keep your chin up! We're behind you.

Beckwith: Thank you, General, Governor. Thank you!

Governor: You need not worry. You'll always have our support.

(They exit. Beckwith returns to his chair. Light dims on stage. Spot picks out Narrator.)

Narrator: Now the second trial is over and for the second time Beckwith walks down the steps of the courthouse a free man. For the second time, a hung jury has resulted in a mistrial.

(Light up on stage. Beckwith walks to center stage.)

Woman: (running to embrace him) Darling, I'm so glad you're out. Can't keep a good man down or a man like you in jail in Jackson!

(A group of hoodlums crowd around him, congratulate him, slap him on the back.)

Men: Hiya, Boy! Good to see you again. How are you? Come on, let me buy you a drink. Attaboy, boy! You showed 'em! Yeah, we showed them, Didn't we? Great going. You doin' just fine. Yeah! We put those niggers in their place!

Voice from crowd: What you gonna do now, Delay, old boy?

Beckwith: Guess I'll finish writing my book. You know, the one I started writing in jail.

Hoodlum: Yeah? Say, well, what's it all about?

2nd Hoodlum: Yeah, tell us. What's the name of it?

Beckwith: Oh, you know ... MY Ass, Your Goat and the Republic.

(Stunned silence, then a roar of laughter and more back slapping)

1st Hood: What does it mean, Delay?

Beckwith: (shrugs elaborately, but doesn't answer)

Voice from crowd: (indignantly) What's the difference? He's doing it anyway, ain't he?

Crowd: Yeah! Attaboy! Sure 'nough!

(Beckwith and hoodlum crowd continue to shake hands and pat each other on the back in pantomime as Narrator steps forward and speaks.)

Narrator: The white supremists, the hoodlum gang surround him now.

(Beckwith and crowd in pantomime continue to shake hands and pat each other on the back.)

But what of the night? (Crowd begins to fade away) What when he's alone?

(Beckwith alone now, stands, looking puzzled and lost. Sees a white couple; hurries over to them, hand out-stretched in greeting. They turn their backs.)

Narrator: What when decent white folk turn their backs? What when he's alone with his conscience? What when he faces his Maker?

Song: (lonely and poignant)

And how many times can a man turn his head, and pretend that he just doesn't see?

The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind, the answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many times must a man look up (Beckwith looks at sky) before he can really see the sky?

Yes, and how many ears must one man have, before he can hear people cry? (Beckwith turns around as if listening)

And how many deaths will it take till he knows, that too many people have died? (Beckwith walks off slowly - a defeated figure)

The answer my friend, etc.

## Scene VI

Narrator: So here, today, we have talked of two men: one alive but forever dead. The other, Medgar Evers, dead, but having died for a cause, a noble cause, he will live forever. Don't you believe me? Then come see, come watch the hundreds, the thousands who are carrying on the work, who are joining the movement. His wife....

Mrs. Evers: I will carry on my husband's work. For if I stop, his death would be of no meaning to my children, or to the whole Negro race. My husband believed in the cause of freedom, believed in his work and he died for it. And I believe in it.

Narrator: His brother, Charles Evers ....

Charles Evers: I am Charles Evers, brother of the late Medgar Evers. I came to Mississippi to take over as the Field Secretary of the NAACP, because I believe in the cause of equality and freedom for all men And freedom to me means equal opportunity, justice, more and better jobs for all, higher wages, more and better schools and better school facilities. And I believe that my son, when he is twenty-one years of age, must be permitted to vote as any other man. And I believe that on that day these things are assured us, on that day these things are so, we will be free -- all of us, Americans.

(By twos and threes, by groups of fives and tens, the Freedom School students come on stage in quick succession. Each group in turn, standing front stage, tells the audience their names, where they are from, why they are attending Freedom School. They then take their stand beside the Evers. Freedom School teachers, co-workers follow them until the stage is crowded with students, teachers, Civil Rights workers. It is important that each group of students, each worker tell his or her story in her own words. Here the scene is written down as it was presented in August 1964, at the first Freedom School Convention in Meridian, Mississippi. It may be used as a guide for future productions. Therefore the

1st Group: My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and these are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. The reason we are attending Freedom School is ~~the cause~~ <sup>because we</sup> believe it is time for the Negro to progress .... to assume all the rights and the duties of free men. Attending Freedom School gives us the chance to learn the proper way to make that progress.

2nd Group: These are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and I am \_\_\_\_\_. The reason why we are going to Freedom School is because we feel that now is the time for Negroes in Mississippi to join in the Movement. Don't you?

3rd Group: (introducing) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and myself \_\_\_\_\_. As Freedom School students, we are helping in Voter registration because we feel that the fight for Freedom in Mississippi must be fought not only by the adults, but by the teenager. And we are here to do our part.

4th Group: This is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and my name is \_\_\_\_\_. We go to Freedom School because we feel this is the era of changing conditions, and we want to participate meaningfully in that change.

Freedom School Teacher: My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a Freedom School teacher in \_\_\_\_\_. I formerly taught at \_\_\_\_\_ school in \_\_\_\_\_. My story begins with a telephone call in June of 1963, the night after Medgar Evers was murdered. Long distance from California? Elizabeth come quickly. Your sister, Judy, is on the phone.

Judy: Mother?

Teacher: Yes, darling, how are...

Judy: (interrupting) Mother ... Oh, Mother, they killed him.

Teacher: Killed whom? Darling, what's wrong?

Judy: Medgar Evers... They killed him, Mother...

Teacher: (sounding relieved) Oh, you frightened me. For a moment I thought... something was wrong with you. You are not ill, How are you?

Judy: (not bothering to answer) None of the kids here at school have the money to fly to the funeral, but we are all going to march down Main Street that day ... hold a silent vigil. Oh, Mother, what are we going to do?

Teacher: (soothingly) Do, darling? What can we do?

Judy: (after a long pause - all trace of tears is gone. Her voice is cold with shock)

Mother ... is that the way you feel? If it is, you are not the mother I looked up to for so long.

Teacher: And so I joined the Movement. My daughter had reminded me of a lesson I had taught her years before, but one I had forgotten. I quote: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." I was no longer willing to stand by and do nothing. I joined the Movement and came to Mississippi.

(stands with her students)

2nd Teacher: My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a student at \_\_\_\_\_ College. I come from \_\_\_\_\_. I'm in Mississippi for a lot of reasons. For one thing I was tired of hearing about what was going on in Mississippi. I was tired of hearing about the Medgar Evers', the Emmet Tills, the Michael Schwerners, the Goodmans, the Chaney's. I was tired of hearing about people not being able to vote, tired of hearing about people not being able to get an education. Tired! Tired of seeing

2nd Teacher: (continuing) the ghetto ~~glums~~ slums of Chicago. the slums of New <sup>11</sup> York. And now that I've seen them, I'm tired of the slums in Mississippi. My objectives? Education! "For the truth shall set us free." And the negro in Mississippi does not receive an education.

(stands with students)

Folk Singer: My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I come from \_\_\_\_\_. I play the guitar and sing. One of my favorite songs has these words in it: "How can I be up when my brother is down?" That's why I am in Mississippi.

(stands beside teacher)

Narrator: (stepping forward) And how about you? (gestures to audience)  
Are you with us? Everyone here from \_\_\_\_\_ county?

Audience: (shouting in chorus) Yes!

Narrator: Are you sure?

Audience: Yes, Man. Sure! We're sure!

Narrator: Then, let's sing it.

Song: Which side are you on, boys,  
Which side are you on?  
Everyone now,  
Which side are you on, boys,  
Which side are you on.  
  
They say in Marshall County  
No neutrals have they met.  
You're either for the Freedom Vote  
Or you're "tom" for Ross Barnett.  
Which side .. etc.

Don't "tom" for Uncle Charlie,  
Don't listen to his lies  
'cause black folks haven't got a chance  
Until they organize.  
Which side ... etc.

Come all you Freedom lovers,  
And listen while I tell  
Of how the Freedom Party  
Will ring the freedom bell.

Narrator: (stepping forward) Now that you've told us which side you are one, what are you going to do about it?

Audience: (multi-tongued and strong) Vote! We're going to register to vote!

Narrator: Right! Let's tell that to the world. Come on, everybody now!

Song: We've got to vote,  
We've got to vote,  
We've got to register and vote.  
We all know we want our freedom  
To win our freedom we must vote.

We're voting now,  
We're voting now,  
We're voting now for liberty.  
Our years of slavery now are ending.  
We'll walk and talk 'till we are free.

On that great day,  
On that great day,  
On that great day for your and me,  
We will all be in that number,  
We're setting Mississippi free.