

Freedom Summer

Scott Pettipas

(This song is based on actual events which happened in the state of Mississippi in the summer of 1964.)

It started in the winter, when the movement was formed.
And by the early summer, had grown into so much more.
Maybe some truly believed, it was a cause worth fighting for.
Perhaps some were too self-righteous, and maybe others just plain bored.

They were warned this summer job, shouldn't be romanticized.
That their help ain't fully welcome, was something CORE had emphasized.
'Cause most locals were the type of folks, that needn't be antagonized.
And in their closed society, Jim Crow still lived and thrived.

It was Freedom Summer. But for who? But for who?
Freedom Summer. But for who? But for who?
Yeah for who?

The students arrived in waves, as the campaign gathered steam.
These volunteers were abused, from the first moments they were seen.
All for trying to register, black folks so they could vote.
Yet locals said it was for trying to save "The Mississippi Negro".

They called them unwashed trash, they called them communist invaders.
They called them Yankee Jews, and a bunch of nigger-lovers.
Andrew, James & Michael were not the only casualties.
But on a fateful night in June, they became the famous three.

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Heading back to Meridia, on the 21st of June.
They were stopped by Cecil Ray Price, wearing a lawman's costume.
He took them to Neshoba jail, and held them 'til nightfall began.
All the while unbeknownst to the boys, that Sheriff Price was in the clan.

It was just after 10 o'clock, when the boys were finally released.
And told they best be moving on, or risk more trouble with police.
A private radio call was placed, to ensure arrangements were attended to.
Then Ol' Cecil started following the boys, up highway 492.

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Shortly later they were chased, ambushed and escorted again by Price.
Down onto Rock Break Road, and to other awaiting White Knights.
The three terrified young men, were beaten, chain-whipped and then shot.
Their bodies thrown into a car trunk, and driven to another spot.

The Old Jolly Farm was where the caravan drove off to.
And where owner Olen Burrage, was waiting with another crew.
They bulldozed the boys bodies, under an earthen dam convert.
And poor Andrew was still breathing, when they were covered with the dirt.

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CORE workers called authorities, when the boys failed to check in.
They started calling other CORE offices too, and thus the searching did begin.
Local newspapers said it was, probably all just a hoax.
To draw publicity to their cause, and help persuade outsider folks.

It was finally escalated enough, that an FBI invasion followed.
After 3 days the CORE car was found, abandoned, burned out and hollowed
Searches of the woods, fields and swamps, did not turn up the boys but then,
What they did find were the bodies, of 8 other missing black men.

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Over the course of the ten-week project, as CORE has attested.
80 Freedom Summer workers were beaten, and over a thousand falsely arrested.
37 churches were set a blaze and many homes needed to be rebuilt.
4 people were critically wounded, and another 7 supporters killed.

As for Andrew, James & Michael, who raised a National alarm,
They were found 44 days after they were buried at the Farm.
Yes Freedom Summer in '64, left outsiders in disbelief.
As 19 clansmen were arrested....., and 19 were released.

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