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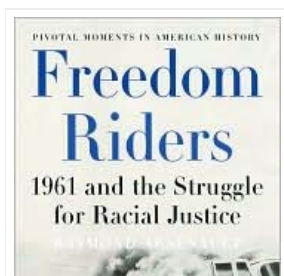
Freedom Riders Latest Stop: Sundance Film Festival

Posted [January 12, 2010](#) at 12:17 pm by [Melanie Marquez](#)

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(St. Petersburg, Fla.) January 12, 2010 – From the 862 films submitted to the Sundance 2010 U.S. Documentary Competition, only 16 were selected to compete at the acclaimed film festival. And one – Freedom Riders – is based on the similarly named book by Raymond Arsenault, the John Hope Franklin Professor of Southern History and graduate director of the Florida Studies Program at USF St. Petersburg.

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The documentary is scheduled to premiere on PBS in February 2011, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides. The release will coincide with a number of events including an interactive Web site with additional footage, a 20-city museum exhibition tour, a new abridged version of the book, and several university symposia. Arsenault will lead a two-week re-creation of the freedom rides with a group of college journalists documenting the journey.

The film's director, Stanley Nelson, is a 2002 MacArthur Fellow known for groundbreaking historical documentaries. He won a Primetime Emmy in Best Direction, nonfiction, for his film, *The Murder of Emmett Till*, which was broadcast nationally on PBS's flagship American history series *American Experience* and helped reopen the investigation of a 14-year-old black boy murdered by white supremacists in Mississippi in 1955. The *American Experience* series is produced by WGBH Boston, the source of one-third of prime-time PBS programming, including *Nova*, *Frontline*, *Antiques Roadshow*, *Arthur*, *Masterpiece Theatre* and *This Old House*.

The documentary is part of the National Endowment for the Humanities' *We the People* project, an initiative to encourage and strengthen teaching, study and understanding of American history and culture through projects that explore significant events and themes in U.S. history and culture.

Arsenault is a specialist in the political, social and environmental history of the American South. *Freedom Riders*, the product of extensive research over many years, is widely recognized as the definitive work on the Freedom Rider movement.

-USF St. Petersburg-

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