

# **Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement** *by Ann Bausum*

## **Synopsis**

*Freedom Riders* compares and contrasts the childhoods of John Lewis and James Zwerg in a way that helps young readers understand the segregated experience of our nation's past. It shows how a common interest in justice created the convergent path that enabled these young men to meet as Freedom Riders on a bus journey south.

No other book on the Freedom Riders has used such a personal perspective. These two young men, empowered by their successes in the Nashville student movement, were among those who volunteered to continue the Freedom Rides after violence in Anniston, Alabama, left the original bus in flames with the riders injured and in retreat. Lewis and Zwerg joined the cause knowing their own fate could be equally harsh, if not worse. The journey they shared as freedom riders through the Deep South changed not only their own lives but our nation's history.

## **Michael L. Cooper - Children's Literature**

This book tells the story of the Freedom Rides into the Deep South in the early 1960s based on the experiences of a young white man and a young black man. Jim Zwerg grew up in white, middle-class, Midwest America. John Lewis grew up in the poor, segregated rural South. The two men met in 1961 in Nashville, Tennessee where college students were protesting local segregation. Lewis and Zwerg joined in the freedom bus rides to challenge segregation. White mobs viciously beat both men, Zwerg especially so. But the violence that was intended to discourage the freedom riders led to eventual success. The black-and-white photographs and supplementary information on the Civil Rights movement enhance the story. 2006, National Geographic Society, Ages 8 to 12.

## **Biography**

Ann Bausum lives in Beloit, WI. Her most recent book with National Geographic, *With Courage & Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote*, was given the 2005 Jane Addams Award, among many other honors.