**Sample Film Analysis Outline: *Five Minutes of Heaven***

**Topic/argument of the film:** This is a film about how seriously and permanently politically motivated violence can damage people and some ways they can try to heal from it. It’s definitely advocating peace and reconciliation, but it doesn’t demonize those who perpetrate this kind of violence, either.

**Audience/forum:** One logical audience would be people interested in Ireland, since the film is set there, and more generally those interested in world events and the continual struggle for peace. I’d choose a site that focuses on Irish/Irish American news and culture, such as <http://www.irishcentral.com>, because it is an Irish story and because the wounds of The Troubles are still fresh there.

In the outline itself, I’d cover the following:

**Intro (might be a paragraph block, not just a paragraph):** Establish **the topic**, the *kairos* (why the film’s argument is relevant to the audience now). I’d publish this around Easter, the time of year when the Irish commemorate both their war of independence and, several decades later, the peace treaty that ended The Troubles. *Briefly* introduce the plot/characters: The two main characters, a former IRA terrorist (Alistair, played by Liam Neeson) and the brother of one of his victims (Joe, played by James Nesbitt), both still suffering from one long-ago act of violence. Finally, I’d introduce the chief theme of the film that I’m going to discuss: the long-lasting damage political violence can have on individuals—both victims and perpetrators--and (more importantly) how they can recover.

**Context:** I might put this in the conclusion, not the intro, but to show its broader relevance, I would relate it to whatever civil wars with terrorism are going on—Israeli-Palestinian struggles, Syria, Nigeria, etc. The film brings in one character’s work with Nelson Mandella, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission project in South Africa, which provides a parallel between racial violence and sectarian violence, shows that it transcends borders and eras.

**Background on the filmmaker/film**: What the filmmaking team (writer/director) wanted to say with this film. Quote interviews. What these particular actors brought to it (the Irish actors are cast as opposites—the Catholic plays a Protestant and vice-versa).

**Insights the film offers:** (It would take at least 2 well-developed paragraphs to cover these points.)

* One way to heal is to help others learn to forgive. (Alistair). Conversely, if you cherish a grudge, make it part of your identity, you will never heal. (Joe) [**support**: give with details from particular scenes]
* Sometimes the barriers that really divide people aren’t what the combatants think they are. Here we see it is as much about class resentments as sectarian (religious) differences that keep Joe from seeing Alistair as anything but a monster. Sometimes recognizing the suffering of your enemy is what allows you to see him as human, and what allows you to see his transgressions as forgivable. [support this with details from Joe’s transformation—how he stops hating Alistair.]

**Conclusion:** I’d finish by returning to the theme of political violence and how long-lasting its effects can be, but reveal what finally helps Joe get past his own enduring fury—empathy for his enemy’s pain, and a genuine wish to put his own behind him. Bring this out from the personal to the societal—explain how what is true for individuals is true for societies.