**Mississippi Burning Worksheet**

**Choose any 5 of the questions below to respond to based on your viewing of this film;**

• ***Please use complete sentences with adequate details to convey your opinions.***

• ***Please avoid single sentence responses. Each response should be at least 4+ sentences in order to earn credit.***

• ***Please make sure that when responding to questions with multiple parts, you answer each component.***

1. What do you learn from these opening images?

• the white man drinking from one tap, the black boy drinking from another,

• the burning wooden house,

• the sound of a gospel choir singing,

• the car on the road at night,

• the car being followed.

2. When FBI agents Anderson and Ward drive into Jessup, Mississippi, what do the visuals tell you about the town?

3. Sheriff Stuckey’s character is shown through his appearance, his speech and what he says. Explain.

4. Who were the boys who were killed at the beginning and what was their history?

5. When Special Agent Ward eats in the area of the diner reserved for the blacks, we learn several things. Explain.

6. The film makes great use of editing. That is, excerpts from two separate scenes are shown side by side so that they comment on each other. For example, the scene where the FBI agents are interviewing in the black household cuts to the scene where the white thugs go into the black area looking for Hollis.

Why do you think the director uses this technique on this occasion? What effect does it have?

7. Explain what you think is meant by Ward’s comment to Anderson: “Some things are worth dying for” and the reply, “Some things are worth killing for”.

8. Of what significance is Anderson’s story about his father and the mule?

9. This film makes use of the convention of the mismatched duo who end up learning from each other. Keep a record of the changing and developing relationship between Anderson and Ward.

10. In the barber’s shop scene the mayor and sheriff try to frighten Anderson off. Examine the camera angles and show how they emphasise the power relationship between the men.

11. What is the effect of the image of the FBI men in suits wading through the swamp? What comment do you think is being made?

12. Comment on the way in which the film makes use of sound-bite interviews with the locals while the search continues for the bodies of the civil rights workers. Why are these included? (Sound-bite interviews are quick comments from individuals who are involved in some way in a particular event)

13. Why does the director include the scene with Pell’s wife and Betsy’s child? Note the close-ups of Pell’s face and Mary’s face. What do you imagine one of them is thinking?

16. Two events mark the turning points in the film. The first one is the result of the court case. What is the second one? What change does this second event cause in Ward, in particular?

17. If asked, Anderson would probably say that *the end justifies the means*. What are the things that he, Ward or other FBI men do in this film that could be said to be wrong in themselves but which are done for good reasons? What is your response to this particular philosophy; do you think that the end can justify the means?

18. At one point Ward says, “Anyone’s guilty who watches this happen and pretends it isn’t.” About what is he referring? Explain.

19. How are the final images of the film meant to be optimistic ones? Did you feel optimistic at this stage, as you watched the movie end?