



Howard said, "visually, this (an execution) is less than you expect.

"Maybe it's that we live in a world of Arnold Schwarzenegger films where special effects, at least visually, represent a graphic reality, are more graphic than reality than when you see it in the flesh."

Howard said the impact of the execution was not visual, but psychic.

"Psychically, it's an experience that stays with you," he said. "Does this change your life? I suppose, but I don't know how."

But several of the witnesses said they would, if given the chance, watch another execution. But, they said, they would not do it for personal reasons — they would do it for journalistic reasons.

Howard, who said he had done many interviews about his first experience with an execution, repeated his reasons for witnessing executions for the media.

"I am willing to do this job because number one, it is my job, and number two, because I genuinely believe that the taking of a human life is the ultimate business that the state conducts in the name of the people," he said.

"And the state's business ought not be carried out behind closed doors."



Effie Johnson, left, comforts John Joubert's girlfriend, Theresa O'Brien, outside of the Nebraska State Penitentiary minutes before the execution Wednesday. O'Brien, who lives in Ireland, stayed with Johnson while visiting with Joubert this week.

Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Center: A death penalty supporter, Tabitha Miller, right, brings her 5-month-old son, Nathan, to the Nebraska State Penitentiary for the execution of John Joubert. (Photo by Tanna Kinnaman)

Above: Even children held signs Tuesday night, including this one taped to a child's toy. (Photo by Marni Speck)