## Media, victim's parents watch Dodd hang

WALLA WALLA, Wash. (AP) - We expected it to be gruesome. Death penalty opponents had gone to court Monday to argue that hanging, one of Washington state's methods of capital punishment, was barbarous, cruel and unusual punishment.

But the quick and clinical way the state put to death convicted child killer Westley Allan Dodd surprised the dozen media representatives chosen as official witnesses.

At 12:02 a.m., a screen in front of a second floor window in the death chamber was raised and the 31-year-old Dodd spoke his final words, a hard-to-hear message of a last-minute religious conversion.

When Dodd finished, at 12:04 a.m., the screen was dropped and the silhouettes of two hangmen could be seen. One placed the black hood over Dodd's shoulders. The other chewed gum as he placed the noose around Dodd's neck and snugged it up behind his left ear.

At 12:05 a.m., the chamber's stillness was broken by the crack of the trapdoor springing open. Dodd's bound body dropped into sight in a lower window.

There was no noticeable violent movement or twitching.

'I tried to cover the hanging with a reporter's detachment ... But when I got back to my motel room from the prison, I threw up.'

> John Wiley Associated Press correspondent

I watched Dodd's hands, which were slightly crossed in front of his groin, and could see no movement.

Corrections Department officials had said earlier that if they prepared correctly for the nation's first hanging since 1965, there would be very little suffering as the 7-foot-1-inch drop would snap Dodd's neck

A minute later, at 12:06 a.m., Prison Superintendent Tana Wood drew the blinds on the lower chamber. Department of Corrections spokesman Veltry Johnson picked up a white telephone and announced that a physician had set the time of death at 12:09

Tears welled up in the eyes of Darrell Lee, the Vancouver attorney who had assisted Dodd in cutting through appeals so the

execution could go quickly. Jewell 'Cornell, the mother of one of the boys Dodd killed, patted Lee on the back. Clair Neer, father of Dodd's two other victims, shook Lee's hand. Both parents then quickly left the chamber.

Some of the media witnesses had been chosen in advance, but eight were selected by a lottery based on the size of their newspaper or station.

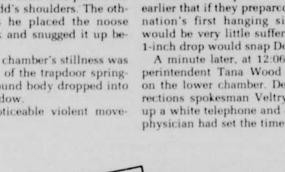
We were taken to a room behind the media center, pat searched and made to put all of our valuables in brown envelopes that were then sealed.

We walked through the bitter cold to an adjacent brown brick building, the state's death chamber.

I tried to cover the hanging with a reporter's detachment and wasn't sure how it would affect me.

But when I got back to my motel room from the prison, I threw up.

John Wiley is the AP's correspondent in Spokane, Wash.





Microsoft at Your **UO Bookstore** 

<sup>6</sup> Oregon Daily Emerald Wednesday, January 6, 1993