

THE UNDIEBOMBER HEARING

The UndieBomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, had his first day in court since he decided to represent himself today. The outcome of the day was to schedule another pre-trial hearing on January 12.

The only drama of the day pertained to whether Abdulmutallab would grant his standby counsel, Anthony Chambers, access to discovery. Abdulmutallab stated he thought it was unnecessary. But then Judge Nancy Edmunds overrode that judgment and ordered the government to hand over discovery. Abdulmutallab did waive his right to speedy trial, thus granting Chambers the 90 days he requested to review the discovery. (Prosecutor Jonathan Tukul suggested that Abdulmutallab should just hand over the discovery – which would have had the effect of depriving Chambers of discovery – but Chambers objected with Edmunds' support.)

Abdulmutallab seems to have no objection to Chambers himself, and it seems likely Chambers will be doing more than just stand-by counsel, while still giving Abdulmutallab the ability to object.

Abdulmutallab, by the way, was brought into the court room in khaki pants and a short-sleeve khaki shirt over an untucked t-shirt and blue sneakers – which all looked like a boy scout uniform, particularly given that Abdulmutallab is so short (probably shorter than my 5'6"). He had only a thin set of red handcuffs, and those were removed for the hearing itself.

Another day, another uneventful civilian hearing for an accused terrorist, yet more proof that the civilian courts can handle terrorist cases.

Update: The big news of the day in the Detroit court house, I should say, was not that a scary terrorist had a hearing leading up to his civilian trial. Rather it was that 85 people

(many of whom appeared to be, as would be normal in Detroit, Arabs) got sworn in as American citizens.

Rule of civilian law and a bunch of immigrants becoming citizens. It's a good day in America!