

Arar sentenced to max of 5 years for Moscow bank robbery

Probation in four months if treatment program goes well

Samantha Malott/Moscow-Pullman Daily News

Ebrahem Arar was sentenced to a maximum of five years in prison in Latah County 2nd District Court on Monday after pleading guilty to grand theft in connection with the September Wells Fargo robbery.

The 31-year-old Moscow man pleaded guilty in October under a plea agreement with the state.

Judge John Stegner sentenced Arar to a minimum of two years in prison and retained jurisdiction over him. Arar will complete a nearly four-month long treatment program with the Idaho Department of Corrections and will return to Latah County in April when Stegner will rule to either release Arar onto probation or order him to serve his full prison sentence, depending on his performance in the program.

"Your future is really in your own hands," Stegner said.

Arar was also ordered to pay \$2,335 back to Wells Fargo and \$245.50 in court costs.

"I'd like to express my remorse for what happened," Arar said at his sentencing. "I acted against my nature, morals and character. There's nothing I can say to make it better. I wish the victims were here so I could say I'm sorry for scaring them, if I did scare them in any way."

He also asked the judge to show mercy so he could continue trying to better himself and keep his job in town.

Arar said he was under the influence of a lot of medications at the time from treatments and issues over the summer, but despite that he wants to take responsibility for what happened.

Latah County Prosecutor Bill Thompson said the case presented a curious dilemma. Arar is a man with no criminal history aside from juvenile issues and has expressed remorse, but he still did something extremely criminal.

Arar's defense attorney Cathy Mabbutt said Arar wasn't the most intelligent criminal, having bought his disguise at the Pullman Wal-Mart the day before the robbery.

Thompson said Arar was actually smart in his execution of the crime, buying a disguise and taking the license plates off the vehicle he used. The clothing he wore that day was never recovered, prompting them to believe he disposed of it before his arrest.

It is still unknown why the robbery happened from an individual who had no criminal history, he said.

According to the pre-sentence investigation, Arar told his counselor he had worked for the CIA for four years, which is either a lie or a fantasy, Thompson said. He also reportedly told his counselor he may plead guilty after he already had, Thompson said. His mindset and what caused this is unclear, he said.

"I cannot say there is undue risk he won't commit another crime," he said.

Stegner said he also cannot make a positive determination of Arar's risk to re-offend but could determine emotional harm was caused by the act.

"I don't think you can ever fully compensate the bank tellers (for the) emotional trauma that caused," he said.

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