

MUSIC

## MEEK MILL RELEASED FROM PRISON ON BAIL

"I plan to work closely with my legal team to overturn this unwarranted conviction," rapper writes

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APRIL 24, 2018



**Meek Mill** has been released from prison following an order from the Philadelphia Supreme Court, CBS [reports](#). The rapper, whose legal name is Robert Rihmeek Williams, served an up-to-four year sentence for violating probation stemming from a 2008 conviction on drug and gun counts. He has been in jail since last November.

The decision was a sudden boon for Williams' team. Last week, Judge Genece E. Brinkley denied Williams' bail and scheduled his subsequent hearing two months later to rule on the rapper's conviction. On Tuesday, the Philadelphia Supreme Court overruled Judge Brinkley, saying she "may opt to remove herself from presiding over any further proceedings in Meek's case in the interests of justice," said Williams' lawyer, Joe Tacopina, to [WPVI-TV](#).

Williams' defense team had been urging Judge Brinkley to recuse herself for months, particularly after March, when the Philadelphia District Attorney's office **filed a motion that stated they would not oppose Williams' release from prison on bail**, which Judge Brinkley did not acknowledge.

"Meek was unjustly convicted and should not have spent a single day in jail," Tacopina said. "Meek is excited to be reunited with his family, and we, along with Meek, intend to continue to shine the light on a justice system in need of reform to prevent any other citizen from being put through what Meek has endured."

Williams **issued a grateful statement following his release**, thanking his fans, family, legal team and Jay-Z, among others. "While the past five months have been a nightmare, the prayers, visits, calls, letters and rallies have helped me stay positive," he wrote. "To the Philadelphia District Attorney's office, I'm grateful for your commitment to justice – not only for my case, but for others that have been wrongfully jailed due to police misconduct.

"Although I'm blessed to have the resources to fight this unjust situation, I understand that many people of color across the country don't have that luxury ... I plan to use my platform to shine a light on those issues ... I plan to work closely with my legal team to overturn this unwarranted conviction and look forward to reuniting with my family and resuming my music career."

The rapper's prison sentence sparked an important conversation about **wrongful convictions, race and sentencing, alleged police misconduct** and other ethical issues within the judiciary system. The Philadelphia District Attorney's office acknowledged that circumstances surrounding the original conviction might lead to it being reversed.

In the motion, the D.A. cited that the arresting officer Reginald V. Graham gave false testimony. Graham was the only government witness during Williams' trial and was part of the search warrant that produced the alleged evidence against the rapper. The officer's name was also listed among police whom the D.A.'s office had identified as untrustworthy to testify.

Williams' defense attorneys filed appeals, which provided two affidavits from other officers – retired narcotics officer Jerold Gibson and ex-officer Jeffrey Walker – who allege that Graham lied, “both in general and specifically in Petitioner’s [**Meek Mill**’s] case.” Gibson corroborated with Mill’s claim that Graham and other officers **beat him during his arrest**.

Prior to his release on bail, Williams’ legal team questioned the judge presiding over the rapper’s initial conviction and subsequent violation of probation hearings. The defense petitioned to have Common Pleas Court Judge Genece E. Brinkley removed over alleged ethical violations, which included allegations that she impeded the rapper’s ability to promote albums he released following the conviction, by jailing him or restricting his travel.

“There’s brothers locked down that did nothing to be here but piss off people like Brinkley,” Williams told *Rolling Stone* of some of his fellow inmates during an exclusive interview from jail. One lawyer called her a “sadist,” another said, “Brinkley’s the judge you’d least want to be supervised by. Any failure to live by her rules will be punished.”

*Additional reporting by Paul Solotaroff.*