

Meek Mill has finally been released from prison

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Meek Mill is a free man.

Mill left the Chester State Correctional Institution Tuesday via helicopter after the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania ruled that the lower court must immediately issue an order to release the rapper, whose prison sentence for violating parole has sparked national discussion, out on unsecured bail.

The chopper belongs to Philadelphia 76ers co-owner Michael Rubin, who previously said Mill's first stop out of prison would be the team's playoff game against the Miami Heat.

The businessman shared a selfie shortly after takeoff that showed a freshly sprung Mill flashing a smile and a peace sign. The rapper went straight to the Wells Fargo Center, where he rang the bell to kick off the game.



Mill, seen here before boarding a helicopter after his release, has been behind bars since November, when he was sentenced to two to four years for violating probation.(David Swanson/AP)

The long-awaited development comes one week after Philadelphia prosecutors said they want the rapper's drug and gun convictions tossed in light of recent developments, namely accusations that his arresting officer lied under oath at his trial a decade ago.

The judge presiding over the case, Genece Brinkley, had refused to free the star on bail after the prosecutor's recommendation, and scheduled another hearing for June. "While the past five months have been a nightmare, the prayers, visits, calls, letters and rallies have helped me stay positive," the rapper said in a statement.

"To the Philadelphia District Attorney's office, I'm grateful for your commitment to justice. I understand that many people of color across the country don't have that luxury and I plan to use my platform to shine a light on those issues. In the meantime, 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."

In a separate statement, Mill's attorney, Joe Tacopina, praised the court's decision and doubled down on his belief that the rapper was "unjustly convicted" and should never have been behind bars.

"We are also pleased that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has noted that Judge Brinkley may opt to remove herself from presiding over any further proceedings in Meek's case in the interests of justice," the statement read. "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."

.@MeekMill ringing us in! ☐☐ pic.twitter.com/Ze0BKelRXn

— Philadelphia 76ers (@sixers) **April 25, 2018**

The court's decision comes the same day comedian Kevin Hart paid a visit to his incarcerated pal.

The "Ride Along" star said that while the rapper is staying optimistic, Hart finds it "the craziest thing" that he's still locked up.

"I just left seeing my guy. The first thing I want to say is I'm really happy to see that he's in a positive mindset," Hart told reporters at a press conference. "The frustration for me is, why is he still there?"



Mill leaves in a helicopter after being released from prison.(Steven M. Falk/AP)
Mill, whose real name is Robert Rihmeek Williams, has been behind bars since November, when Brinkley sentenced him to two to four years in prison for violating probation stemming from a 2008 drug and weapons possession conviction.

His offense was popping a wheelie in New York during a music video shoot in August.

Various factors have sparked controversy, including the fact that Brinkley has been accused of having a "personal vendetta" against the rapper, as well as the recent development that Mill's arresting officer – and the lone witness at his trial – was recently revealed to be on a "do not testify" list of potentially tainted cops kept by the District Attorney's office.

I'd like to thank God, my family, and all my public advocates for their love, support and encouragement during this difficult time. While the past five months have been a nightmare, the prayers, visits, calls, letters and rallies have helped me stay positive.

— Meek Mill (@MeekMill) [April 24, 2018](#)

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— Meek Mill (@MeekMill) [April 24, 2018](#)

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Hart told reporters he believes Mill is innocent of arresting officer's Reggie Graham's claims that the rapper pointed a gun at him during his initial arrest – a claim that was also disputed by an ex-Philadelphia cop, who in February accused Graham of lying on the stand.

"When you know that you're innocent, it's tough to sit through something that you know you didn't do. This is a guy I've known for years, and through those years of this

relationship, the talk of probation has always been a distant conversation because it was b-----t," Hart said.

"It's something that he didn't do. Pointing a gun at a cop as a black man – guys, we all know the consequences behind that – that you'll end up dead in today's time. So I doubt that that could happen and you're able to walk away from it."

Hart – who, like Mill, is a Philadelphia native - also reiterated Mill's attorney's claims that Brinkley held an unexplained but "obvious" personal vendetta against the star, and deemed his sentence "the craziest thing I've ever seen in my life."

Still, just as the rapper himself has done in recent interviews, Hart identified the silver lining of the fact that the situation has grown into a national debate.

"I think the good with this situation is that he now has a platform and I think coming out he'll be able to use that platform to really shine a light on how corrupt the system is, man, and hopefully keep the younger generation from going through this," the actor said. "When you have these probation violations that are turning into four to eight year sentences, I think that should be reviewed... It takes certain situations to shine a light on it – this is the situation for me."

He added that Mill will leave his stint in prison motivated to "poke holes in the justice system that are there and (correct) them."

Shortly after the news that Mill would be released on bail, Hart celebrated the occasion with an Instagram post also featuring Rubin, who accompanied Hart on his Tuesday visit.

"Meek Mill is FrrrrreeeeeeeeeI just left from seeing him in jail with @michaelgrubin and we were just told that he is being released.

Wooooooow.....Stand Up Philadelphia!!!!!" Hart wrote.

Rubin chimed in, too, saying that he was on his way to retrieve the rapper. The businessman also told the New York Times that Mill will "more likely than not" attend Tuesday night's 76ers playoff game against the Miami Heat, and will ring the ceremonial bell before the game if he's able to make it in time.