

Philly judge in Meek Mill case accused of vendetta



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Meek Mill and ex-girlfriend Nicki Minaj, who were allegedly invited into a private meeting with the judge handling his case. (Wikimedia Commons)

At a bar in Center City one night, I struck up a conversation with an older man that I recognized as a lawyer who had in the past represented rapper Meek Mill.

I brought up the case and the fact that Meek was at the time back behind bars for a probation violation when the man's attention turned to Judge Genece Brinkley.

“She was a c—t,” he said. “Put that in your newspaper.”

The attorney, a white man, went on to add: “All she wanted to do was punish that black boy for being successful.”

While the attorney’s insult was extreme and offensive (and is NOT endorsed by Metro), there has been plenty of agreement with his second point in the anger seething amongst hip-hop fans and on social media, with fans incensed by rapper Meek Mill’s recent re-imprisonment.

Meek, 31, born Robert Williams, got a two- to four-year sentence from Brinkley last week for three recent violations of his probation from a 2008 illegal gun possession case. It was the second time she jailed Meek, previously locking him up for five months in 2014 for probation violations.

On social media, some social justice enthusiasts have expressed shock that Brinkley, 61, is an African-American woman who attended Spelman College, an HBCU in Atlanta. Others have said Meek is to blame for his own conduct and questioned the lack of attention to similar cases in the probation system.

But Meek’s attorney, Joe Tacopina, is claiming Brinkley had a personal feud with the rapper.

Tacopina is a powerhouse defense attorney from New York, known for his affection for custom suits, luxury watches and cars, his 49-foot yacht and Italian soccer (he co-owns the Venezia FC soccer team).

In court papers, Tacopina argues that Brinkley never forgave Meek for not signing with Charlie Mack's talent management company and for refusing her request to cover a Boyz II Men song.

That request allegedly came when Meek was in court for a February 2016 hearing, at which his then-girlfriend Nicki Minaj testified that she would assist Meek in meeting his probation.

Brinkley invited the hip-hop power couple into chambers for an off-the-record conversation, during which, Tacopina contends, Brinkley made the request.

“Judge Brinkley suggested that Mr. Williams record a version of a song by the popular group Boyz II Men called ‘On Bended Knee’ and to mention the judge specifically in the song,” court papers stated. “Mr. Williams declined to do so, to which (on information and belief) Judge Brinkley replied, ‘Suit yourself.’”

Under a hailstorm of nationwide stories, Brinkley is believed to be seeking legal representation.

But regardless of whether or not the motion for recusal is successful, Meek, who was found to have violated his probation for being arrested for riding a dirtbike, testing positive for Percocet and another arrest after a scuffle with over-aggressive fans in the St. Louis airport, can't expect to get out of state prison at Camp Hill anytime soon. The actual appeal process is lengthy.

Pennsylvania Lt. Gov. Mike Stack, who chairs the Board of Pardons, said in response to questions about the case of Meek Mill that it would be heard in the order it was submitted.

“Despite the outstanding and aggressive effort by Board of Pardons staff, which is processing applications at a record rate, a backlog of cases remains before the board,” Stack said.