

Lil' Kim Released From Federal Prison

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PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Lil' Kim celebrated Independence Day one day early with her release from a federal detention center Monday morning after nearly 10 months behind bars.

The rapper, who was sent to prison for lying about a shootout outside a New York radio station, walked out of the jail looking glamorous in sunglasses and an all-white, cleavage-baring outfit.

Carrying a balloon and a bouquet of white roses, she waved to dozens of cheering onlookers _ some carrying signs that said, "Welcome Home, Queen Bee" _ before getting into a silver Rolls-Royce. The car pulled into a nearby parking lot where she re-emerged to greet the throng.

"I love you," she said, blowing kisses.

Some fans stayed up all night to ensure they made it downtown in time for her 6 a.m. release.

"It was worth it," said Shakiyla Williams, 16. "She was the same Queen Bee _ fabulous."

The 4-foot-11 entertainer, whose real name is Kimberly Jones, began serving her time in the detention center Sept. 19. She was sentenced to a year and a day in prison, but was released early for good behavior.

"She has accepted responsibility and handled herself in an exemplary manner," her attorney, L. Londell McMillan, said in a statement released by Lil' Kim's publicist.

Though several high-profile rappers _ including Beanie Sigel and Tupac Shakur _ have done jail time, Lil' Kim is the first prominent female artist to serve a prison sentence.

She will remain under house arrest for 30 days and be under supervised release for three years.

Her conviction for lying to a federal grand jury and in the subsequent trial stemmed from a gun battle in 2001 that erupted outside WQHT-FM, known as Hot 97. Lil' Kim's entourage had crossed paths with a rival rap group, Capone-N-Noreaga, whose song "Bang, Bang" contains an insult to her from rival Foxy Brown. One man was hurt in the shootout.

Lil' Kim, who won a Grammy in 2001 for her part in the hit remake of "Lady Marmalade," maintained she hadn't noticed two of her close friends _ who later pleaded guilty to gun charges _ at the scene of the shootout.

Jurors at her trial saw radio station security photos of one of the two friends opening a door for her, and witnesses said they saw her at the station with both.