

Queen Bee of Hip-Hop Speaks On Prison Sentence

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Female rapper, hip-hop's 'Queen Bee', Lil' Kim tells Newsweek that after she was sentenced in July to a 366-day prison term, she became a "workaholic zombie" in the recording studio, since she has no idea what to expect after she gets out. "It's been nonstop since the day I found out," says the rap artist, whose real name is Kimberly Jones. "I knew when the verdict came down, and then the sentencing, that I didn't have any time to play around. I had to get the album done, and all the other things in my life settled quickly. I'd never done an album so fast before, and in a way it was a good thing. The music just kind of rolled out."

Lil Kims' album "The Naked Truth" will be in stores Sept. 27. She tells National Correspondent Allison Samuels in the current issue that she never got as personal on her other albums like she did on this one. "I wasn't ready before now to break my life down for real. But this time around, things needed to be said. It all came from the heart. I wanted people to understand me and see me for who I am," Jones says in the September 26 issue of Newsweek (on newsstands Monday, September 19).

One song predictably name-checks Martha Stewart, but the Queen Bee and the Diva of Domesticity don't really have that much in common besides criminal records and intermittent blondness. "I admire Martha, but that's all I can say," says Jones. "Our situations are totally different. One paper said I mentioned how she lost weight in prison and that was good. I'd never say anything that stupid -- like that made it worth it."

Samuels writes that the album is hard-core New York rap: spine-jolting beats (with a tinge of reggae) and the harshest diss lyrics anybody's recorded in years. Kim saved her angriest diatribes for the former members of her hip-hop posse who she feels sold her out during her trial -- "dropping dimes like Sprint."

"What happened to me wasn't fair," Lil Kim insists of her sentence. "And lot of people let me down. A lot of people I thought were my friends turned on me -- but I'm still blessed. I've never been the person to turn on my friends. That's just not who I am." Lil Kim continued "I had a lot of offers for movies and television before this all happened," she says, "and all I can pray for is that they will still be there when this is over. They will if it's meant to be."