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Ever since the Constitution of the United States was framed, the definition of perjury has remained somewhat the same, although perjury now goes beyond court proceedings. Perjury can be defined as a “ a crime committed when a lawful oath is administered, in some judicial proceeding, to a person who swears wilfully, absolutely and falsely, in a matter material to the issue or point in question” (Blackstone, 1765). Federal perjury laws are codified in the United States Code, in chapter 79, under title 18 (" 18 USC chapter," 2012). The definition of perjury involving judicial proceedings can be found under section 1623 of the chapter and a majority of perjury convictions are a result of the violation of this section of the federal perjury laws. One such famous violation of the federal perjury laws, specifically under section 1623, was by Kimberly Denise Jones, an actress and rapper, who is popularly known as Lil' Kim.

In February 2001, Lil' Kim was present at the scene of a shootout outside Hot 97's studios, a New York radio station. The heated gunfight in which more than 24 shots were fired involved Lil' Kim's posse and Capone-N-Noreago, a rival rap group. During the court hearing of the incident, Lil' Kim was called to the stand before a federal grand jury, and despite being under oath she untruthfully testified that her manager, Damion Butler, and Suif " Gutta" Jackson, another member of her posse were not present during the firefight. The court would have believed her testimony to be truthful if the jury had not been shown the photos taken by the radio station's security camera in which Kim's manager can be seen opening a door for her at the scene of the shootout. Moreover, witnesses present at the scene testified that they had seen both Butler and Jackson during the shootout (" Lil' kim gets," 2005).

Lil' Kim ultimately admitted, while standing before U. S. District Judge Gerard Lynch, that she had lied in trial before the grand jury. Kim claimed that that she later realized that what she did was not right. Judge Lynch stated that Kim not only insulted the court but the justice system of the United States as well. Therefore, Judge Lynch found her guilty of perjury and sentenced her 1 year and 1 day in federal prison. Additionally, the judge also sentenced her to 3 years' probation after she would be released from prison and also fined her \$50, 000. Lil' Kim requested that she serve her 1 year and 1 day sentence at the Danbury Federal Correctional Institute in Danbury, Connecticut. It must be noted that television personality Martha Stewart, who was also convicted of perjury, who also served her sentence at the same correctional institute. On September 19, 2005, Lil' Kim surrendered to federal authorities and served her sentence (" Lil' kim sentenced," 2005). The convictions and penalization of celebrities like Martha Stewart and Lil' Kim are examples of how serious the federal perjury laws truly are. Although the prosecutors in the case tried to push for a prison time 7 to 8 times higher, she was only sentenced for a year and a day. Nonetheless, the judge agreed that Lil' Kim's perjury was serious because she lied to protect individuals carrying firearms, who fired at unarmed individuals. It took the jury 2 and a half days to find Jones guilty of perjury, and although Lil' Kim was also charged with obstruction of justice, she was acquitted of the charge. Kim was not carrying a firearm at the time and Judge was unsure if she was even aware of the fact that it was member of her posse who had started shooting. Nonetheless, she lied in a court of law while under oath,

which constitutes as perjury, and therefore, served the consequences of her misstep.

References

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