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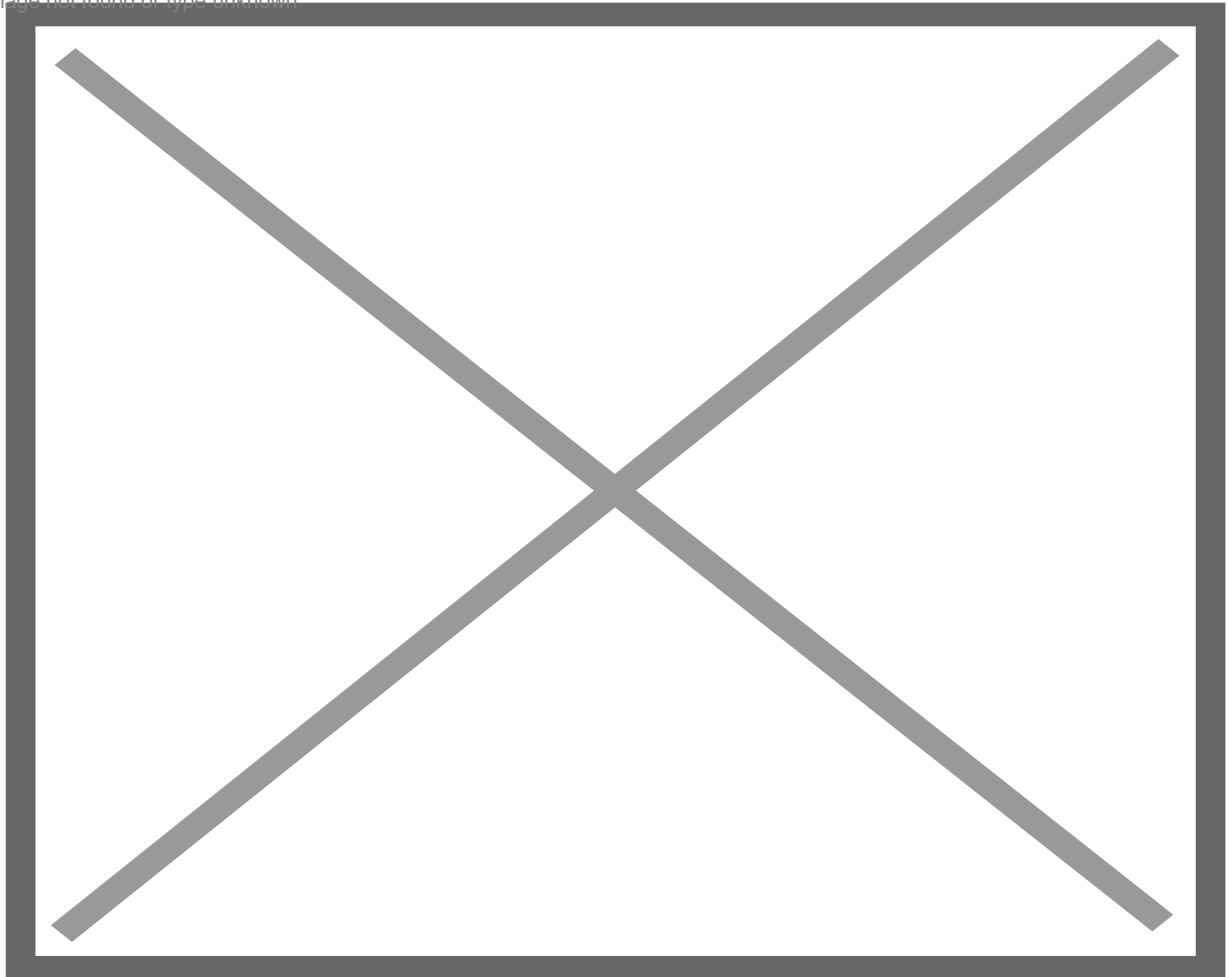
Vybz Kartel's Murder Conviction Overturned

Jamaican Dancehall star wins appeal over jury misconduct concerns

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Vybes Kartel

In a landmark decision, Jamaican dancehall artist Vybz Kartel, born Adidja Palmer, has had his 2014 murder conviction overturned, according to the BBC. The ruling came from the Privy Council in London, where Kartel's appeal highlighted critical jury misconduct during his trial.

At 48, Kartel, a celebrated figure in the music industry known for collaborations with Jay-Z and Rihanna, has been serving a life sentence for the killing of Clive "Lizard" Williams.

The Privy Council's judgment focused on the failure to dismiss a juror accused of attempting to bribe other jurors, deeming it a significant violation of Kartel's right to a fair trial. This flaw, the justices stated, was "fatal to the safety of the convictions" that followed, thus undermining the

trial's integrity.

Vybz Kartel's trial, lasting 64 days, stands as one of the longest in Jamaica's legal history. Initially, Kartel was mandated to serve at least 35 years before eligibility for parole, a sentence later adjusted to 32-and-a-half years. The trial's narrative centered around two men, Clive Williams and Lamar Chow, allegedly attacked after failing to return unlicensed firearms to Kartel. Chow's testimony described a violent confrontation at Kartel's residence in August 2011, which purportedly led to Williams' death, whose body has never been recovered following the subsequent burning of the house.

Throughout their legal ordeal, Kartel, along with co-accused Shawn Campbell, Kahira Jones, and Andre St. John, maintained their innocence. Their final appeal to the Privy Council, a court serving as the highest appellate for Jamaica among other Commonwealth realms, rested on the jury's compromised integrity and the mishandling of crucial evidence.

Aside from the jury issue, the appeal also argued that the jurors faced "undue pressure" for a verdict due to late deliberations and contested the lawful acquisition of a pivotal text message from Kartel's phone presented as evidence. The Privy Council, however, did not address these additional concerns directly, finding the jury misconduct sufficient grounds to overturn the convictions.

Following this reversal, authorities in Jamaica will now decide whether to retry the case. Kartel, known globally for hits like "Fever", "Summer Time," and "Ramping Shop," has significantly impacted the dancehall genre.