

Excerpt from Dr. Sebi Speaks of Dembali by Beverly Oliver

“You had some good times in L.A.,” I say, watching the beam in his eyes.

“Yeah, I have some good times with everybody. Everybody like me and I like everybody. And I’m saying that including Ron Karenga. Ron doesn’t hate me, and how can I hate Ron when Ron is one of us, right?”

Ron Karenga, now known as Dr. Maulana Karenga, is the creator of the African American and Pan-African holiday Kwanzaa.

Sebi continues. “But there was always a little thing between me and Ron because I could never digest what Ron was delivering. And it could have been because I came from such a culture that just couldn’t process certain things. And this is why I couldn’t get into debates about the dialectics, Karl Marx, and socialism. I could not understand those things because I come from an environment where corn and beans is the thing of the day. Corn and beans, and then we jump in a little boat and go get a fish. And we were satisfied. Now I have to be deciphering what Karl Marx said and also Socrates. Now how can I do that?” Sebi asks and chuckles. “I couldn’t devote any energy to that, you know. But Lee didn’t talk that way though. Lee was pragmatic. Yeah, he was. I remember Lee Drawn, oh yes, in so many beautiful ways. I wish I could see him again. I wish I could see him again.”

“Does he still live in California?”

“Yeah, he lives in L.A. And I saw him. I looked for him recently, and I think I found him. Where I went and found him? I think it was Pasadena. Anybody would love Lee Drawn. Any woman would love Lee Drawn. Oh, he’s graceful. Oh, he’s bad. He’s a bad brother. He’s bad. Look, I can’t say enough. But then there was another brother there that I loved equally, and he helped me tremendously, Gregory MacLemore. He worked with me. MacLemore, yeah. The great MacLemore. That’s right. His wife told me that they been married for seventeen years and he talk about me every day.” Sebi chuckles. “But what she doesn’t know is that I talk about him every day. You see, my relationship with people, whether male or female, I’m not going to have a relationship with you unless that relationship is based on love and affection, because I’m not going to be your friend if I’m uncomfortable with you. I’m not going to be around you because I become uncomfortable. I’m going to put space, because it may be my own, my own immaturity why I have felt a way, or maybe you have done something to me. That’s the only time that I know that I put space between me and you. It’s that you have done something.

“Like when I was sent to Chicago with a very incriminating letter to Elijah Muhammad condemning Malcolm, and the brother that sent that, well, I don’t think that I really wanted to be around him anymore because I didn’t want to be part of conspiracy. Why do I have to be part of conspiracy? I mean, I already know that life is about food, clothing, and shelter. Where does the conspiracy come in? I don’t know.