



Sean Paul

TEXT SHIRA LEVINE

The moment he rolls up to the joint—I mean, hotel suite—it's easy to see that 36-year-old Jamaican reggae and dancehall megastar Sean Paul has it all: brains, talent and plenty of green (backs, that is). Paul took some time out of being awesome to chill with me, and, I gotta say—he is one smooth toker—I mean, talker.

“I remember being a kid about four or five years old and crying. The song ‘Ring My Bell’ was playing and I remember hearing that connection to my voice and the chorus. Without the music, it was just me crying, but when I heard the music it was like I could recognize that this was some crazy shit. I was still upset—I just remember that feeling coming back later on in life—that it was like a track, like a track I record when I’m in the studio.”

“I have Jewish blood from my father which means yeah, I got Jewish blood. His last name is Henriques; a prominent Sephardic Jewish surname routed in Portugal and migrated to the Caribbean. My Pops doesn’t practice the religion. To tell the truth, his father was turning everyone Catholic anyway.”

“The thing about reggae is you never get tired of hearing it. Reggae music has a place in people’s hearts because of people like [Bob Marley]. ‘Natural Mystic’ to me is about how the song starts. It’s like a breeze through trees; it creeps up on you. Reggae is never going to go anywhere. It just creeps up on you.”

“The biggest pastime in Jamaica is singing the latest song. I can remember playing football on the street and singing ‘People Are You Ready?’ and singing it out of nowhere for no reason. We would sing the next new song just like that, the same with the latest dance. Music and songwriting is our national pastime.”

“I could have tried to hide where I am from, and said I was the roughest, toughest. I was the gangster. I was the bad man. I run the place. And I am sure I could have acted that way for a few months.”

Sean Paul's next album drops this summer. Check out Allseanpaul.com for more info.