

Oscar Wilde wrote that “the way of paradoxes is the way of truth.” Rapper and producer Jason Mills has faced sobering paradoxes his entire life. He thought it was only fitting to create another with his stage name: IDK (Ignorantly Delivering Knowledge).

“Ignorance and knowledge do not go together. When you see my name, you automatically think it stands for “I Don’t Know,” which some people would consider a stupid name. In reality, it’s smarter than it looks.”

Born in the UK and raised in the US, IDK grew up analyzing the central paradox of Glenn Dale, his hometown in Prince George’s County, Maryland. Though it was an outwardly affluent neighborhood filled with gorgeous homes, the area was often plagued by violence and crime. While his mother and stepfather sometimes struggled to pay the bills, IDK knows he was privileged to grow up with two educated and hard-working parents. His upbringing, however, didn’t deter him from going to destructive lengths to impress rule-breaking classmates.

At 17, IDK’s quest for approval and identity ended in court. Tried as an adult for a felony, he became the first person in his family to go to prison. Originally sentenced to three years, he spent a total of one year in prison, where he often wrote rhymes to pass the time. Inspired by artists like A Tribe Called Quest, 50 Cent, and Eminem, all of whom his stepfather had played in their home, IDK’s lyrics resonated with fellow inmates. Once he was released from prison, he radically changed his life, working several jobs, attending community college classes, and making music. After one semester of sleepless days spent shuttling between classes, work, and the studio, recording consumed every minute of his time. In a poignant and powerful essay for *HuffPost* entitled “The System,” IDK chronicled all of these harrowing years and questioned the inequities of the criminal justice system.

*SubTrap* (Suburban Trap), IDK’s debut independent project, was a nuanced and inventive exploration of the intersection of drug dealing and addiction. Heralded for IDK’s wordplay and incisive rhymes, *SubTrap* received millions of streams on Soundcloud. *Empty Bank*, his 2016 follow-up, was a brilliant dissection of capitalism displayed his developing talents as a vocalist. In addition to making another thought-provoking record scored by dynamic, genre-bending production, IDK upended music industry convention by ensuring that *Empty Bank* became the first album premiered on *Forbes*. A testament to his business savvy, he’s since been featured in *Forbes* two more times.

In 2017, IDK continued to make forward-thinking moves in the studio and the industry, orchestrating an unprecedented partnership with Adult Swim for the release of *IWasVeryBad*. With features from artists like DOOM and Chief Keef, *IWasVeryBad* showcased IDK’s inexhaustible versatility and consummate ability to balance the grave and the comedic. 2018’s

*IDK & FRIENDS* :), which included features from Denzel Curry, Wale, and Rico Nasty, among others, reaffirmed IDK's range, as he made thunderous trap with his unique stylistic flair ("Bad News") and deftly wove strings of intricate bars ("Good News").

*Is He Real*, IDK's forthcoming major label debut, is not another pivot. It is an ascent to another artistic plateau. Released jointly via Warner Bros. Records and IDK's new label Clue, *Is He Real* features rapping, singing, and production from the PG County native that's unlike any he's done before. An existential album that weighs the religious and the scientific, it will question accepted truths and reveal new ones. *Is He Real* is the illuminating paradox rap needs.

"People aren't going to expect this album from me. They know I can rap and make good music, but this is such a step up for me."