Jordan Davis transformed himself from a Nashville newcomer into a countrywide chart-topper with 2018's *Home State*. Inspired equally by the old-school songwriters of his parents' generation and the high-production dynamics of modern country radio, *Home State* was a once-in-a-decade debut, filled with fresh material — including the Number 1 hits "Slow Dance in a Parking Lot," “Take It From Me,” and "Singles You Up" — that bridged the gap between the classic and the contemporary.

That unique sound owed its diversity to Jordan's roots in Shreveport. Raised by a family of songwriters (including his uncle, Stan Paul Davis, who wrote hit songs for Tracy Lawrence during the 1990s), he grew up in the cultural melting pot of northern Louisiana, within a day's drive of New Orleans' jazz clubs, Mississippi's juke joints, and East Texas' country saloons. Music was everywhere, and Jordan happily soaked it up. "I never felt drawn to one specific genre," he remembers. "I was just drawn to songwriting. It didn't matter if I was listening to folk music or southern rock — if it was a well-crafted song, it would pull me in."

Years later, Jordan's the one pulling people in. *Buy Dirt*, his eight-song follow-up to his self-titled EP and his debut album, *Home State*, is a record for the modern-day Spotify generation — for music fans whose tastes are all-encompassing, influenced by genre-crossing playlists and the ever-widening range of contemporary country music. Songs like "Drink Had Me" and "Lose You" mix Nashville twang with poppy punch, rooted in beats that owe as much to the dance club as the honky tonk. At the same time, Jordan fills *Buy Dirt* with the same ingredients that made classic country so great: southern storytelling, timeless melodies, a blue-collar work ethic, and the willingness to break new ground.

"I've always loved artists who take risks," he says. "I'm in a different spot in my life than I was when I released *Home State*. We all are! 2020 was a tough time for everyone. I was able to use that time to recenter some things in my world, and I didn't want those lessons to go to waste. I wanted to create something special. The best way to that was to write honestly, and we did a lot of that on this record."

Teaming up with producer Paul DiGiovanni and all-star co-writers like Hillary Lindsey, Ashley Gorley, Emily Weisband, Josh Kerr, and more, Jordan Davis created *Buy Dirt* during a year that found the whole world on edge. There was an election. A pandemic. A period of social and civil unrest. Looking to write uplifting music that celebrated the commonalities that bind us together rather than the differences that drive us apart, he focused on universal experiences: breakups ("Almost Maybes"), boozy nights ("Drink Had Me"), old flames ("Need To Not"), self-improvement ("Trying"), and long-lasting love ("I Still Smoked"). Tipping his hat to those who came before him, he also recorded an abbreviated version of John Prine's "Blow Up Your TV," which opens the EP.

Featuring an appearance by Luke Bryan, "Buy Dirt" isn't just the record's title track. It's also the centerpiece. Written amidst the chaos and uncertainty of Covid-19, "Buy Dirt" focuses on the things that truly matter. The song finds its narrator sitting on a back porch with his grandfather, listening to the old man dispense pearls of wisdom between sips of hot coffee. For Davis, the story goes even further than that.

"When Covid hit, I was worried that I'd lost a career that I'd spent my entire life building," he admits. "It took me a couple months to realize I already had everything I needed — a roof over my head, a beautiful daughter that I could watch grow up, and an amazing wife. I had my family, faith, and friends. As humans, we always want what we don't have… but it's good to take a step back and refocus on what's really important."

The conversation depicted in "Buy Dirt" reminded Davis of a night he spent with Luke Bryan. The two musicians had first met at an awards show, then bumped into each other on the golf course throughout the years that followed. "We sat around the fire after a golf tournament one day, smoking cigars and talking about everything *but* music," Davis recalls. "That conversation always stuck with me. Luke isn't just a great entertainer; he's a great Dad, a great husband, and a great friend, too. That's what 'Buy Dirt' embodies. When I wrote 'Buy Dirt,' I knew he could relate to the song's message. I took a chance and asked him to join me on the recording, and he said yes."

Had Luke Bryan joined Jordan Davis on 2018's *Home State*, it might have come across as an established country headliner voicing his support for a young up-and-comer. This is something different. Here, the two artists are genuine peers, handing down advice to those within earshot.

"Those years I spent in college, driving around with the radio on… Luke Bryan *was* the radio," Jordan says. "He's the guy I was always listening to. I don't know what I would've done if someone had told me I'd be teaming up with him in 2021, singing a song that means so much to me. It's such a special moment. Something to be grateful for."

These days, Jordan Davis has much to be grateful for. With *Buy Dirt*, he stakes his claim as a country innovator, both expanding and modernizing his sound without abandoning his love for the classics. It's there — in the grey area between eras — that he's built his career, digging deep into his own sonic territory. And there are diamonds in the dirt.