

# Rolling Stone

(9/6): <http://www.rollingstone.com/country/news/jason-aldean-on-cma-snob-and-acm-persistence-w438200>

Jason Aldean on CMA Snub and ACM Persistence: 'I Watched My Openers' Win



There's a simple fact to keep in mind when analyzing the nominees of any awards show: There's just not enough room for every worthy artist to be included. But when the reigning Entertainer of the Year from one of country's two biggest events doesn't show up at all on the final ballot of its counterpart, people will start talking.

That seems to be the case for Jason Aldean this year, who was not included in any category when the 2016 CMA Awards nominations were announced last week, even after taking home the top prize at April's ACM Awards.

Speaking at a recent press event about his upcoming album, *They Don't Know* (out September 9th), Aldean was asked about his apparent snubbing, and after initially taking the high road, the ultra-competitive singer let his true feelings out.

"Somebody's gonna get left out and it seems to be us. . . You just go out do your thing, put yourself in the position to be there next year," he said (quote via *One Country*). "Here's my thing: If we can't get enough votes to be nominated, we sure aren't gonna get enough to win, so what's the point? I'm not a 'it's good to be here' guy."

The nomination votes Aldean mentions are not tallied by fans, they're from CMA members — a group of mostly industry professionals. The insiders-only process has

long been accused of preventing artists on smaller labels from getting a real shot, because big organizations can pool their votes in any direction they like (namely, toward their own artists), artificially skewing the contest.

As part of the Broken Bow Records imprint, Aldean is one of those under-represented artists, and speaking with Rolling Stone Country a day before the CMA nominees were announced, he seemed to know what was coming.

"A lot of times over the years, we've felt like the underdog," he said. "We're on a smaller label. We don't have a lot of the resources of a lot of the other labels. . . you know, our label has like 10 votes where some labels have 50, so we're already behind the eight ball."

The West coast-based ACMs have always seemed like a better fit for Aldean, anyway, he explained —he's won eight ACM trophies over the years as opposed to two CMAs — but even getting proper recognition there took some time. He finally won his first Entertainer of the Year award from the ACMs this year after five frustrating years in the category, so this latest development is nothing new.

"I guess they just figured out we weren't gonna go away," he said of his eventual win. "Kenny Chesney told me a few years back [when] we didn't win, 'You're gonna get it one of these times. Trust me, if anybody knows it's me.' So you're sitting there going, 'Shoot, maybe.' And then year after year you just don't get it. I mean, I watched my openers get it. Luke Bryan was my opening act the [first] year he won, so you sit there and watch that and you go, 'Man, maybe it just ain't gonna happen.'"

The 2016 CMA Awards air live November 2nd at 8 p.m. ET on ABC.