



Ben Parks

PLAN B

HOMETOWN: London
INFLUENCES: Eminem, Michael Jackson, the Prodigy
ALBUM: *The Defamation of Strickland Banks*, due out in April
WEBSITE: time4planb.co.uk

PLAN B (BORN BEN DREW) BEGAN SINGING AND PLAYING guitar as a teenager before he turned his attention to rap, inspired by the example of the similarly hued Eminem. "He was brilliant, he changed the whole game," says Plan B. "He didn't just influence white rappers, he influenced everyone." His 2006 debut, *Who Needs Actions When You Got Words*, garnered attention in England and earned him acting roles in movies like *Harry Brown*. For his follow-up, *The Defamation of Strickland Banks*, he has returned to the soul music he loved as a child. To complement the music he created the titular character, an alter ego who Plan B says is "obsessed with the '60s" and dresses exclusively in period fashions; over the course of the album the character ends up imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit. "I think they'll be shocked that I can actually sing," he says. "Don't get me wrong, I'm going to rap for as long as I can rap. I'm going to rap until someone goes, 'Oi, mate, give it a rest.' But singing soul just feels the right thing to do now. This is who I am."

