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Kanye West Owes Me \$300: And Other True Stories From A White Rapper Who Almost Made It Big



Synopsis

After Vanilla Ice, but before Eminem, there was "Hot Karl", the Jewish kid from the LA suburbs who became a rap battling legend - and then almost became a star. When 12-year-old Jensen Karp got his first taste of rapping for crowds at his friend's bar mitzvah in 1991, little did he know that he was taking his first step on a crazy journey - one that would end with a failed million-dollar recording and publishing deal with Interscope Records when he was only 19. Now, in *Kanye West Owes Me \$300*, Karp finally tells the true story of his wild ride as "Hot Karl", the most famous white rapper you've never heard of. On his way to (almost) celebrity, Jensen shares his childhood run-ins with rock-listening Southern California classmates who tell him that "rap is for black people" and then recounts his record-breaking rap battling streak on popular radio contest The Roll Call - a run that caught the eye of a music industry hungry for new rap voices in the early '00s. He also introduces his rap partner, Rickye, who constitutes the second half of their group, XTra Large; his supportive mom, who performs with him onstage; and the soon-to-be-household-name artists he records with, including Kanye West, Redman, Fabolous, Mya, and will.i.am. Finally he reveals why his album never saw the light of day (two words: Slim Shady), the downward spiral he suffered after, and what he found instead of rap glory. Full of rollicking stories from his close brush with fame, Karp's hilarious memoir is the ultimate fish-out-of-water story about a guy who follows an unlikely passion - trying to crack the rap game - despite what everyone else says. It's 30 Rock for the rap set, 8 Mile for the suburbs, and quite the journey for a white kid from the valley.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is really a hysterical look at the Rap/ Hip Hop scene from the early 90's-2000. It tells of the near rise but sudden fall of an artist that tried to be true to his art. Anyone in their 30's-40's will identify with the celebrities and stars that Karp references. This is a fun and light read that is written for the younger crowd.

I've been a casual Get Up On This podcast listener for a few years. My girlfriend and I tend to binge-listen on road trips and love listening to Matty and Jensen banter. When Jensen started promoting his upcoming book on the show, I immediately pre-ordered it here on . The book (and Jensen's story) was far from what I expected. I'm sure many people will read this book and think "wow, people have real problems, you just didn't make it as a rapper." But those are probably the same people who talk loudly on their phone while at the checkout counter of the grocery store. It's easy to look at Jensen's story and shrug off his hardships, but I can't imagine many of have invested so much of our lives, our hearts, and our souls into doing something and having our dreams completely crushed. There are plenty of rise and fall stories out there, but I think it takes more courage than most people have to be as vulnerable as Jensen has been in his book. To share such painful stories and memories that he probably wanted to keep locked up inside forever. I thank you for your courage Jensen. Many people will just read this book at laugh at the story of Tyrese and wonder if Hedonism II is still as geriatric as you described. But your story really moved me. It's not something I expected to read and I'm really happy that you've been able to move on in your life. (I wrote these last sentences directly to Jensen, because I'm sure he's the type of author, like I am, who will read every word of every review). Do yourself a favor and read this book. Then take a moment to realize how it would be for you to list out all your fears, doubts, embarrassing stories, and vulnerabilities for the world to read.

This book is... important. It is the story of the real & modern American dream: wanting something, life throwing you curveballs, and overcoming an insane ordeal to come out better and stronger than you knew was even possible on the other side. Jensen Karp's story is crazy and amazing and one in a million, yet it's somehow so relatable. Karp is a brave, witty, and capable writer whose style and bold honesty makes this the kind of book you simply cannot put down. You need to know what happens next because you are right there with him every step of the way. A phenomenal story, a hilarious account of the weirder parts of fame, a real and heart wrenching look at what happens when your dreams are crushed, and at its core, a book that's rooted in a deep love and connection

with family. Karp's mom is my new hero. I couldn't recommend this book more.

The unlikely rise of Hot Karl, Jensen Karp's alter ego, is told in his engaging autobiography. From his youth as a Jewish kid in wealthy suburban LA who liked rap music to his record deal with Interscope, Karp lays it all out there. He manages to be humble (unlike his alter ego) and genuinely likable, making it easy to wish that his career had come to fruition to see where he could have gone. The book is peppered with amazing references to famous rappers and his interactions with them - again, hilariously told, and all told without disparaging anyone. The end of the book, after his career falls apart suddenly, is poignant and sad, even as the book has a happy(ish) ending. I rarely give 5-star reviews, but this book is excellent.

I heard about this book on the Best of Friends podcast and from the author's verbal description was very intrigued. I am SO glad I decided to buy it and read it. I laughed HARD at this book and I almost never laugh at books. The stories about Hot Karl's mom were my absolute favorite. The book did take a very dark turn at the end, but it was real and well-earned. Like Jensen said on BOF, if the description of the book even remotely intrigues you, read this book!

This is one of those books that is a complete enjoyable surprise! An early 1990 shy, Jewish white kid loves rapping and specifically "battles". And is damn good at it. How does this 14 year old kid end up recording with gangster rappers? But after graduating and attending USC he next appears on a radio show doing weekly battles in a contest until he retires undefeated and with a recording contract as he is clearly talented. Which leads us to the book title. If you want to know what an early Kanye West was like, here it is and very interesting (I'm a non fan). This book is exceptional! A fast, funny read! I strongly recommend this book if you like rap, comedy, or the period of the 90s. Really well done.

I honestly never heard of Jensen Karp, or Hot Karl but this book came up in my recommended based on some other browsing I was doing. The title intrigued me and I read some reviews and took a shot. Overall, I enjoyed this book, it was entertaining and written in a conversational tone. The stories were funny, and it does provide some insight into a music industry that was in one moment spending money quicker than could be printed, and in the next moment crumbling to its knees. For those readers who love hip-hop or good comedy writing, I would check this out.

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