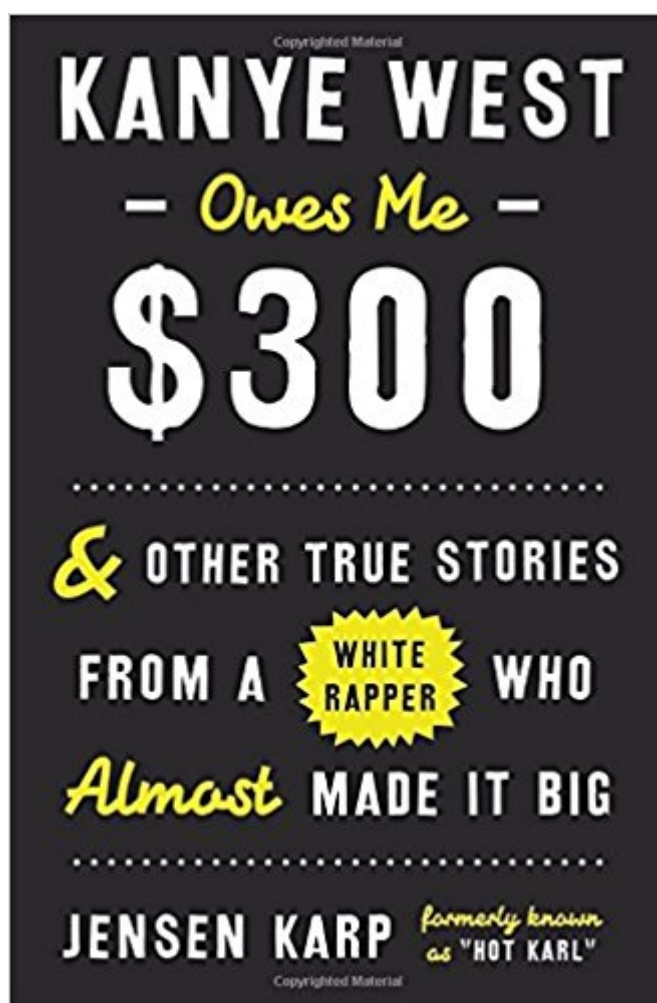




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Kanye West Owes Me \$300: And Other True Stories From A White Rapper Who Almost Made It Big



Synopsis

“Kanye West Owes Me \$300” might be the funniest rap memoir ever. After Vanilla Ice, but before Eminem, there was “Hot Karl,” the Jewish kid from the L.A. 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 2000s. 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.

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Customer Reviews

"Triumphantly funny...Karp has a gift for crafting portraits of hip-hop stars that are as funny and revealing as they are succinct, and his take on a pre-fame West is funny but also, like much of the rest of the book, surprisingly emotional and poignant.... A book that is something special."

•AV Club "A superbly unsentimental chronicle of growing up in the 90s as a white kid who loved rap more than anything. It's a classic L.A. redemption story of an artist narrowly missing stardom and failing at his first dream, but surviving to write his own second act, and ultimately, one of the best hip-hop memoirs in years."

•LA Weekly "If the title doesn't grab your attention, the story definitely will."

•PopSugar (The 13 Hottest Books Hitting Shelves This June) "Hilarious."

•Harper's Bazaar (Must Read Books for Summer) "[F]unny, irreverent. There's plenty of juicy anecdotes, celebrity gossip, and shady industry dealings."

•GQ "The funniest person I follow on Twitter finally got smart and wrote about his unlikely and hilarious odyssey as teenage rapper Hot Karl. Karp's sharp wit and gossipy giggles keep you turning pages, but what lingers is the story of a survivor. This book should be mandatory reading for or anyone who has ever wanted to be famous."

•Kevin Smith, New York Times bestselling author of Tough Sh*t "If I had kids, I'd read passages from this to them at night. Rap careers definitely haven't been explored from this perspective, and I'm excited to see the ripples. Jensen's gonna make some enemies, though. I've been on television."

•Hannibal Buress "I remember hearing faint whispers about a white kid on the west coast who got like the craziest deal ever from some radio freestyles or some shit. But we never saw anything concrete, so I assumed he was hip-hop's Bigfoot and left it at that. Who knew it was real??!! This is the story of the rap game's Sasquatch."

•Bun B, Grammy-nominated rapper "Jensen's story is so funny and so well-written that it's impossible there's any truth to it."

•Kay Cannon, writer, Pitch Perfect and 30 Rock "Sure, everyone is curious to know what it's like to be a white rapper, but only Jensen Karp has the wit and humility to reveal what it was like to get knocked down by the music industry, dust off his Cross Colours, and keep moving."

•Paul Scheer

Jensen Karp, formerly known as Hot Karl, is a writer, comedian, and co-owner of Gallery 1988, the nation's leading destination for pop culture-themed artwork. He hosts the Get Up On This podcast on the Earwolf Network, co-owns Patti Lapel pins, and has written and produced for The Late Late Show with James Corden, the MTV VMAs & Movie Awards, Rolling Stone, WWE Raw, The Hundreds, and the ESPYs. As an actor, he's appeared on VH1's Barely Famous, NFL on FOX, Comedy Central's @Midnight, and Candidly Nicole. He is currently an Executive Producer, writer, and coach on Drop the Mic on TBS. He was influenced by early Tom Hanks comedies, Chino XL, and Dennis Miller (before Dennis became a real piece of shit). jensenkarp.com @Jensenclan88

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!

[I NEVER WRITE REVIEWS EVER - This merits a co-sign]At the time Jensen's book came out in summer 2016, the Mike Posner song "I Took a Pill in Ibiza" about the roller coaster of fleeting/near fame in the music business was a global smash. (See Here:[...])Jensen zooms out, to a macro level, and invites you ride shotgun on his analogous spin on the rollercoaster of burgeoning music stardom (at least the first long clank-clank-clank climb up the hill and moment of frightening vertigo at the top).I stayed up until 4am to finish...and it left me wishing it was all fiction.Additional fans of this should include: Anyone who... - was in (or a wannabe) in DJ AM / Brent Bolthouse "scene" at Las Palmas, Joseph's, The Lounge Hollywood nightlife circuit in the pre-social media, "no cameras allowed", real-celebrities-went-out-and-partied evenings of early 2000's Hollywood. - would repeat Jensen's story that Kanye slipped DJ AM \$50 to scratch JAY Z's shout out of his name at the above-referenced Las Palmas, back when he was a nobody.- anybody who is intrigued by the legend of Suge Knight- anybody who snarls at the disgustingness of Spring Break group trips to faux-exotic destinations like Jamaica- anybody who appreciates wordplay like: "Two glocks on my side, that's truth / Shoot through your car, now you got a sunroof."P.S. Industry Rule Number 480: Record Company People Are Shady!! Here, literally. The open question here: Are Jimmy Iovine and/or Eminem/Slim Shady Insecure Weasel Career Assassins?

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 and 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.

I became a fan of Jensen Karp from a podcast appearance he did on Smodcast & that appearance led to the birth of the Get Up On This podcast. Get Up On This is maybe my favorite podcast out there & have always been a fan of the fascinating life that Jensen has had & continues to have. I always wanted to hear more & more of a certain part of his past, his time as Hot Karl, so when I heard of this book I knew I would love it before I even read it. This is such an awesome book filled with great stories, some insight into the behind the scenes, & if you already are a fan of Get Up On This you will definitely love it & should check it out.

I liked this book so much I bought it twice. Honestly, I love Jensen's podcast Get Up On This. So this was a no brainer purchase for me. The book goes through his life and while being a fun journey it also handles his personal struggles in a tasteful and uplifting way. My best recommendation here is buy the book then buy the audio book so you can laugh at who he hired to do the rap lyrics. Spoiler, he hired an English stage performer and it's totally worth it.

KWOM\$300 is a genuinely witty, largely lighthearted, book about an industry that promised everything and ripped it away. From stories about meetings with Jimmy Iovine to name dropping tons of rappers and producers that I've never heard, but assume are worth knowing, Jensen crafts a thoroughly engaging look at being a white rapper in a period when Eminem was the only white rapper that the industry seemed to have room for. Buy it, rent it, borrow it, or sneak a few pages at a time by going to Barnes & Noble while you're pretending to be going to the restroom as your significant other's shopping at Ross, just find a way to read it.

What an entertaining book. I finished it in 2 days. It was funny and full of surprises! I can really relate to Jensen Karp because, I too, grew up in the valley around the same time period. I actually remember his long reign on Power 106 and was one of those guys who made sure to tune in. I highly recommend this book if you are looking for a fun, light and entertaining read. If you are someone who grew up in the 90's listening to rap/hip-hop, you will LOVE this book.

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