



# **Kanye West Owes Me \$300: And Other True Stories from a White Rapper Who Almost Made It Big**

*Jensen Karp*

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**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 '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.

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