



Confessions of a Mnemonist

Kadrey, Richard

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About Kadrey:

Richard Kadrey is a novelist, freelance writer, and photographer based in San Francisco.

Kadrey's first novel, *Metrophage*, was published in hardcover in 1988 by Victor Gollancz Ltd., and went on to various other American and foreign printings in paperback. Mac Tonnies' *Cyberpunk/Postmodern Book Reviews* calls *Metrophage* "one of the quintessential 1980s cyberpunk novels," going on to describe "a gritty acid-trip through an ultraviolent L.A. where nothing is what it seems... . Alongside novels such as [William Gibson's] *Neuromancer* and Lewis Shiner's debut novel *Frontera*, *Metrophage* helped establish the cyberpunk aesthetic: relentless, paranoid and playfully cynical."

Kadrey's second novel, *Kamikaze L'Amour*, is described by the same source as "mesmerizing... a surreal (and distinctly Ballardian) account of synesthesia and mutant desire set in the jungle-choked ruins of L.A."

Kadrey's short story *Carbon Copy: Meet the First Human Clone* was filmed as *After Amy*.

The publisher website, Amazon booksellers, and other sources list a July 15, 2007 publication date for Kadrey's next book, *Butcher Bird: A Novel Of The Dominion* (Night Shade Books). Other works include collaborative graphic novels and over 50 published short stories.

His non-fiction books as a writer and/or editor include *The Catalog of Tomorrow* (Que/TechTV Publishing, 2002), *From Myst to Riven* (Hyperion, 1997), *The Covert Culture Sourcebook* and its sequel (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993 and 1994); Kadrey also hosted a live interview show on Hotwired in the 1990s called *Covert Culture*. He was an editor at print magazines *Shift* and *Future Sex*, and at online magazines *Signum* and *Stim*. He has published articles about art, culture and technology in publications including *Wired*, *Omni*, *Mondo 2000*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *SF Weekly*, *Ear*, *Artforum*, *ArtByte*, *Bookforum*, *World Art*, *Whole Earth Review*, *Reflex*, *Science Fiction Eye*, and *Interzone*.

Source: Wikipedia

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- *Butcher Bird* (2005)
- *Zombie* (2002)

- *SETI* (2002)
- *A Cautionary Tale* (2002)
- *Ubiquitous Computing* (2002)
- *Second-Floor Girls* (2002)
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In the morning it's Mad Love with the dregs of last night's vodka. In the afternoon, a couple of lines of Crazy Ivan with a port chaser and maybe a tab of Sky Saw to turn on the flood lights in my skull and drown out the world with white electric jitters. This ain't no party. This ain't no disco. This is medicine, son. I'll take Crazy Ivan migraines over drooling Haldol fuzzouts any day (Haldol turns you to warm pudding, but doesn't numb the memory centers and what's the use of annihilation when old Dragnet episodes keep streaming at you through the fog?). I need to turn off the past. To escape the third grade. Summer barbecues. The snows of Stalingrad. The day God drowned the world.

Fun facts to know and tell: I've never lost a key, a glove or a sock.

Forget. Forget. Forget. Be a mouse. So small. So quick to live and die. Live in the now. Be like the Buddha. Hum mane padme hum.

I am the past on two legs. I am history's broken-back coolie. They showed me MRI glossies of my brain (January twenty-first, nineteen ninety-nine, two forty-four p.m.), bright and colored like an infant's first crayon scrawl. Those swollen overheated temporal lobes and medulla oblongata. The poison fish swimming in my cerebral fluid.

I am a mnemonist. I don't forget. I can't. Junkies have heroin. I have every pitiful moment and sensory experience of my life. Fuck your diaries and your datebooks. I have the facts, cold and hard and burning like dry ice crammed behind my eyes. I'm drowning. Sinking in black seas of fishstick school lunches, first kisses, old songs, a brown shoestring I broke on March fourth, nineteen seventy-eight.

Drugs ease my pain, but they're not enough. Sometimes the desire for obliteration is like slow seduction. Suicide smells like fresh-cut daisies and tastes like candy. What kind? You name it. I know them all, remember every gummy treat, fruity goo and chocolate you-name-it I ever tasted.

I remember every pill and electroshock session in the King's County Hospital (the taste of the rubber bit in the my mouth so I wouldn't bite my tongue, the nurse's blue eyes which were like the blue of icebergs which were like the blue on Dutch ceramics which were imperfect like the Indian bones we saw at the Museum of Natural History, June thirtieth, nineteen fifty-seven, which was the year they arrested Ed Gein and he had a lot of bones in his house...). You see what I mean? Imagine eating Proust's madeleine a hundred times a day.

While "curing" me, the doctors magically figured out how to make my condition worse. Hypnotherapy sessions with Dr. Janice Elizabeth Cruz,

left-handed, black-haired, a mole on her left ear. She buried me in my past, looking for childhood traumas, sexual abuse, gruesome head injuries. Dr. Cruz jimmied and kicked in the doors of my consciousness, looking for a reason or an excuse for what I was.

She broke something in the attic of my brain. Opened a door I can't close. Other people pay a fortune for this and call it "past life regression." Who were you in former lifetimes? I know who I was. Those babbling strangers exploded into my head like a volcanic eruption. Boiling memories of a hundred lives poured into my skull, a bright and burning magma of recollection. Armies. Whale hunting on ice floes. Desert sands, like oceans of gold. Sea voyages with hard tac for food. Leprous sores, fevers and aneurysms. Wives, husbands, children and friends gone to dust, history's fodder. Horses, trains, airships, burning longboats. I knew the story of every scar on my body. Now I know the scars of a hundred. I remember God's great flood. Ice Ages flowing and receding. Dying in snow, fire and water in countries that haven't existed for a thousand years.

I need to forget. Undo time. Rewind consciousness. Help me. Smother me. Distract me with your bright lies, your sweet sex, your chemical dreams (the first dream of my first life, still in the crib: darkness, milk, the dusty scent of my mother's breasts; my dream last night: burning water, needles in my eyes, the pattering of the little engine that's my heart beating; it's beaten 7200 times as I've written this and I remember each and every beat). Kiss me or kill me. As long as this moment lasts, the others won't come. Is that too much to ask? I want a single moment that is itself and nothing else. Don't let me drift away and get lost in sunny pre-school playgrounds, Moroccan souks, mud trenches behind German lines, blacksmith shops, the claustrophobic stink in the belly of slave ships, the black death, herds of mammoths.

I am less than the sum of my shattered parts. I am everything that has ever happened to this body (these bodies). I am nothing.

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