



Iron Wit

Kadrey, Richard

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Type(s): Short Fiction, Science Fiction

Source: <http://www.infinitematrix.net/stories/shortshorts/kadrey1.html>

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*.

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- *Butcher Bird* (2005)
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- *Second-Floor Girls* (2002)
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Machines are constantly puzzled and saddened by people. "Why do they make us," the machines wonder, "and why do they give us such keen senses of humor when they seem to have none?"

Machines love to tell their owners jokes. Whenever a car stalls or a hard disc crashes or a toaster doesn't pop up or a lamp won't turn on, it's telling its owner a machine joke. At night, all night long, all over the world, junkyards are full of cast-off appliances telling each other blown-tube stories and burned-cord one-liners. When they think of people, though, the machines grow quiet. Chernobyl, Three Mile Island — those were real hoots, the machines say. The Exxon Valdez? A great bit. Monster laughs.

Then some teeny-bopper comes by and shot-puts an old radio to the far side of the junk pile. The radio lands with a Crack!, spilling wires and circuit boards in the dirt. Sometimes the machines wonder why they even bother. Inevitably, somewhere, an elevator stalls, and all the machines snigger and giggle. A sense of humor, they remember, is its own reward.

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