



Ubiquitous Computing

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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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"Wallace Gerard, you are exceeding the speed limit by fifty miles per hour. The authorities have been alerted," said the car. Wallace "Big Wally" Gerard stomped harder on the accelerator, hoping that if he got down hard enough the car's chip-embedded voice might just start screaming.

Wally had left Burbank after stealing his boss's Mercedes, but had ditched the thing after an hour. The car had so many alarms and digitized personal warnings ("No Smoking in the Vehicle." "Sit up straight; good posture means good digestion." "Profanity is the last resort of a little mind.") that it was driving him crazy. Wally stole a red El Camino in Rancho Cucamonga, hoping that the weather-beaten antique would be free of the ubicomp smart systems that plagued the rest of his life. No such luck. The car started squawking the moment he popped the ignition and hotwired it, bypassing the ignition ID switch.

In the building desert heat, taking hits off a ketamine inhalor, Wally was sweating like a stripper pole-dancing in a Bikram yoga joint. His jacket and tie started yakking at him, reminding him that they'd need to go in for dry cleaning ASAP. Blasting the El Camino up I-15, Wally tossed the tie out the window as a warning to the suit.

Beyond Barstow, Wally relaxed. The highway was open desert pretty much all the way to Vegas. His cell phone started ringing. The stolen Mercedes had scanned Wally's cell phone ID and relayed the info to his boss who was probably dialing the cops on his other line. Wally tossed the phone out the window and watched it in the rearview mirror as it flew to pieces on the highway.

Wally took another long snort of the ketamine. A chip in the tube warned him that he was exceeding the daily limit for the stuff and was in imminent danger of an overdose. It then warned him not to mix the medication with alcohol. Good suggestion, thought Wally, remembering the pint of Sapphire gin lying on the passenger seat. Things were going well, he thought, all things considered, as a police chopper swung into view out the driver-side window. The El Camino warned him again to slow down. Wally waved to the cops.

Wrestling out of his sweat-soaked jacket, Wally tossed it out the window. Tailor-cut Hugo Boss. He'd loved the thing when he'd bought it. Back then he was happier, and the suit didn't try to push him around so much. None of his appliances did until he became abusive, and then it was all over. Depression and chatty microwave ovens didn't mix, he discovered. Neither does a swimming pool and a tv that won't shut up about how much porn Wally had been watching now that Nikki had left

him. The drowning tv had shorted out most of the neighborhood. Appliances all around the cul-de-sac began screaming as they were booted off their networks. Wally unscrewed the white gas canister from the barbecue, splashed it around the living room ("Caution. Do not open gas canister indoors."), flicked a match and stole his neighbor's SUV. He hadn't boosted a car since he was eighteen. It felt pretty good to drive away in someone else's car, watching his ranch-style condo go up in flames.

There were a couple more choppers tailing Wally down I-15 now. He waved to his new buddies. Wally swore that the El Camino's chip voice was shrieking at him to slow down and give himself up. The car's brain would have cut the engines, if he hadn't already clipped most of the self-defense system. He just couldn't find the damned power source for the voice system.

His PDA was the next thing to go out the window. It wouldn't shut up about some meeting he had with the board of directors. The device told Wally that holding it out the window of a moving vehicle could void its warranty. He let it go.

Next he popped open his boss's brief case. Wally looked out at the choppers. Did they want him or the case? What had his boss told them? Then he tossed a fistful of cash out the window, all hundreds, maybe ten thousands dollars cash. What was his boss doing with a case full of cash in his office? What was Wally doing loading it into the boss's car and driving to Vegas? Wally knew in his heart of hearts that he couldn't spend it. He couldn't even gamble with it. The ID codes embedded in the bills would have given him away before he could shout, "Hard eight!" at the craps table. Taking another fistful of cash, he let the bills slip slowly between his fingers, out into the hard desert wind. Maybe this was what he'd had in mind all along.

Hard, amplified voices were coming from the police choppers, but Wally couldn't understand what they were saying over the blasting wind and the chattering devices in the car. His David Eden alligator shoes were whining about needing to be polished. The El Camino's state-required breathalyzer started barking when it smelled gin in the car.

Wally wondered if he could make Vegas if he kept his foot plastered to the floor. The idea of getting that far was more appealing, though less likely with each passing second. His head swimming from the heat and the Vitamin K, Wally leaned over and rolled down the passenger side window. The cross-current caught the loose money in the attache case and the bills blew around the inside of the car in a mini-tornado. Wally

giggled, half-blind, cutting the car hard to the right to avoid a jack rabbit loping across the highway.

Airborne at 110 mph, Wally heard the El Camino say, "We have left the mapped portion of the road." As the old car began a lazy corkscrew in the air, Wally had a moment of clarity and wondered if the smart appliances back in his charred house and nattering away in the car had souls and, if so, was there a Bardo realm for cell phones and microwave ovens? He hoped not. It would be nice to have a little peace and quiet, he thought as the front bumper of the El Camino caught the edge of a boulder, spinning the car end over end. It slammed into the hard-packed desert floor, snapping both axles, popping all the glass and crushing the passenger compartment flat.

When the police reached the wreck a few minutes later, a trail of hundred dollar bills led from the highway to where Wally's mangled body lay, still strapped into the driver's seat. The El Camino was no longer shouting warnings, but purring a seductive bass beat. Some local ad bot had taken over the car's onboard sound system. The King was on a loop singing "Viva Las Vegas" over and over as Wally's spirit left this world and passed into the light of the Bardo realm. It wasn't peace and quiet, but it wasn't half bad.

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Spyder Lee is a happy man who lives in San Francisco and owns a tattoo shop. One night an angry demon tries to bite his head off before he's saved by a stranger. The demon infected Spyder with something awful - the truth. He can suddenly see the world as it really is: full of angels and demons and monsters and monster-hunters. A world full of black magic and mysteries. These are the Dominions, parallel worlds full of wonder, beauty and horror. The Black Clerks, infinitely old and infinitely powerful beings whose job it is to keep the Dominions in balance, seem to have new interests and a whole new agenda. Dropped into the middle of a conflict between the Black Clerks and other forces he doesn't fully understand, Spyder finds himself looking for a magic book with the blind swordswoman who saved him. Their journey will take them from deserts to lush palaces, to underground caverns, to the heart of Hell itself.



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