

# Motel 6

by Paul de Denus

## Room 205

In between long tasty tokes on a reedy blunt, Benny Kaz allowed his thoughts to bounce down the hall to the man in Room 203. The man - older, unshaven, sixties maybe, white shirt and dress pants - had given him the 'shifty eye' scan as they'd passed in the hallway, a scan any street hustler worth his salt knew suggested either to keep walking or make a move for the hardware. He had carried an oversized briefcase - heavy by the way he two-handed it — and Benny K was positive it contained something valuable like money or drugs or better still, both. Benny, now strung out and twitching for some relief, wondered if this man was a better score than the one he was waiting on - a hook up with the delivery maid and his much needed supply. He lit another reed - a new score orchestrating in his head - his thoughts swirling around the older man; there was something else going on here... like maybe the dude was the big cheese with *all* the goodies... the delivery maid just the mouse with crumbly samples and he, Benny the K... the recipient of a golden opportunity. Benny rolled off the bed, pulled on his jacket - the snub-nose weighted heavy in the pocket - and went to the door.

## Room 203

"Guy in the hall z' a punk," Powell sneered as he threw the oversized briefcase on the bed and popped the side clips; he'd have to watch his back. Inside the open case lay eight neat and thick rows of crisp twenties, a family of Jackson's staring back like a repeating Warhol pop art piece. Powell smiled a shark's grin and stretched, feeling the coolness of the gun nestled under his shirt snug against his lower back, then went to the window and looked out into the steady rain; the parking lot sat quiet except for a couple of young preppies quickly unloading golf bags from the back of their dripping station wagon. "Ahh... a not so relaxing getaway," he chuckled. His

own getaway from the bank he'd robbed a week ago across the line had been a rather smooth one. He pulled a flask from the case and took two long tugs, decided quickly that he needed ice, recalled an ice machine just outside his door.

#### Room 201

Kreskie swiped the door key and entered. He went to the window, made a quick scan of the parking lot, then pulled the drapes closed as his rookie partner Digby lugged in the golf bags and dropped them with a 'thunk' onto the bed. "Manager says our man is down the hall in 203." They had found him fast after HP saw him pass, recognized the APB car description and done the smart thing and called in the FBI. Kreskie unzipped the first bag and pulled out the M4 and fed the magazine. "We're not waiting for backup...this guy's going down quick before any more people die," and he turned for the door.

#### Room 202

Stella Beem quickly finished cleaning the bathroom, opting to skip a set of fresh towels and soap bars for the shower. She was nervous about the drop; there was always the chance of these things going bad. It was a sweet little deal though: Hugo supplying and setting up the connection, she making the drop and collecting the cash. A few more of these and she'd have enough put away to vanish out of this place, reappear in dreamy California somewhere and a new life. Stella went out into the hallway and stood still for a moment, glancing up and down the hallway's tunneling emptiness. She squatted in front of her cart, parked next to the floor's vending machine and was about to pull out a towel that folded around a fat bag of crystal meth for the drop in 205 when a door clicked open to her right; she froze, her eyes dropping to her Colt laying beneath a set of clean towels.

#### Room 204

Kyra Downs stepped out the door, faltered as the baby kicked - hard this time - and she uttered a tired groan. Gently rubbing her stomach, she padded across to the ice machine, ice bucket in hand. It was then she noticed two men at the end of the hall walking slowly toward her with what she thought were closed umbrellas. There was a click at her feet and she saw a maid kneeling by her cart, the maid's eyes not registering on her but focused wide just over her shoulder. Kyra turned, sensing someone close behind, the air defined by the distinct sweet odor of weed. There was another click then - a door opened from the room opposite them - and an older man stepped into the hallway, one hand now reaching behind his back and someone yelled, "FREEZE!"

#### Room 206

Simon Dennis was quite pleased with the progress of his novel. His old nemesis - writer's block - had hounded him for weeks and his wife's idea to getaway to this private location and perspective had been the perfect remedy. His characters were finally coming to life - the cops and the robber, the girl on the run, the shady characters...all of it. Simon stared out into the motel's parking lot, the rain falling heavy now. The lot was empty save for his old Volvo and a passing police car. He looked at his watch — it was time to check out - and he went to the door and stepped out into the hallway.

