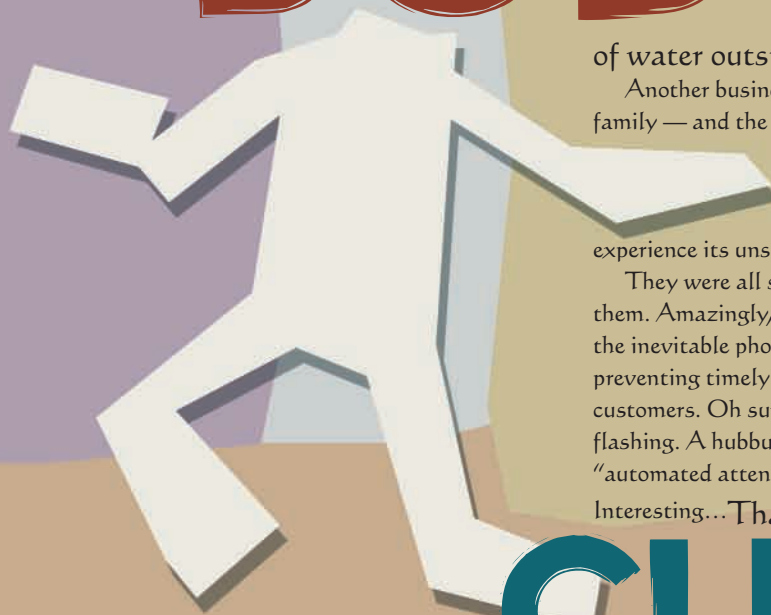


I stared down at

THE BODY



of water outside my hotel window.

Another business trip. It's tough being away from the family — and the gadgets that make my life easier. Funny, the hotel hadn't mentioned their new Avaya GuestWorks® communications system. No need. I was about to experience its unsurpassed pleasures.

They were all smiling like circus clowns. Every last one of them. Amazingly, the hotel employees didn't seem to have the inevitable phone-in-ear syndrome, the typical problem preventing timely service for real, live, at-the-counter paying customers. Oh sure, there were phones ringing. Lights flashing. A hubbub of pleasant activity. Something about the "automated attendant" routing calls to patrons' rooms.

Interesting... That was my first

CLUE!

I couldn't wait to see my setup. I didn't have to. Whoever said, "There's no place like home" had never stayed here. Starting with that automatic wake-up call programmed from my own phone, complete with soothing music, not that heart-pounding

SHRIEK

in the night.

In-room high-speed Internet connectivity. Fax. Voice messaging, personalized with my own message, in my own voice. In a word: Heaven. Communications Heaven. Like any good Dick, I grilled the manager, "Where'd ya get this fine system?"

"Oh, it's GuestWorks, installed by Expanets. They've taken care of all our hotels across the country. I think you'll find it to your liking."

And I did. Just last evening I'd gone into the city. I accessed my messages from the corner bar. I could've gotten 'em in German, if I wanted. When I returned, the waiting message notification on my phone was blinking. I was on it in a flash.

As they say, "All good things must come to an end." I dialed the front desk to tell them I was leaving. "Dial" wasn't really the word: It's just a push of a button to call the front desk, the concierge, room service or housekeeping in moments of need. I love this place...

THE END

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866 279-3004.