

He heard the footsteps behind him, the cocking of the hammer. He sensed the sweaty finger wrapping its way around the trigger. "Give me all your money or I'll blow your brains out," a voice mumbled. He sighed. Not again. Frankly this ATM holdup thing was getting, well, overdone. Not even the

threat

varied. His roommate last week at the convenience store? Exactly the same line. Or I'll blow your

brains out. Right. Why not something new... something like ... or you won't live to see another sunrise. No, too John Wayne. Okay, Okay, what about ... or you'll never get a chance to test-drive that new ... Oh, forget it. He scooped

the stack of bills from the ATM withdrawal door and turned,

calmly facing the deadly weapon. What

was it about bad guys, anyway? Don't they keep up? "Give me the money now," the voice demanded coarsely, the gun rising to a 90 degree angle. No, make that 98 degrees; clearly the guy was nervous.

The student smiled faintly. Sure, prolonging it like this was dangerous,

but this time he wanted it all. **The bright flash.**

The deafening sound. The tiny steel rocket ship skimming straight

toward his heart. His jaw flinched as he watched the bad guy slowly

squeeze the trigger... BANG! The student ducked quickly to his left, the

flash instantly triggering the whirring ATM retinal-scan freeze

mechanism. **The bullet screamed** to

a stop a chest hair before impact, the man who fired it frozen

in place like some gigantic ice cube, a puzzled look on his

face. The police would arrive any second, haul the bad guy

away. The student chuckled. Turned back to retrieve his card.

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