**COMEDIAN AND AUTHOR MARK WATSON EXPLORES INNOVATIVE WAY OF ONLINE STORYTELLING WITH PUBLICATION OF NEW NOVEL AND 100 ACCOMPANYING SHORT STORIES**

On **Thursday 31 July**, Picador publish Mark Watson’s new novel ***Hotel Alpha***. It is set in an exclusive central London hotel against the backdrop of the digital revolution, beginning in the 1960s and ending in July 2005, the week that London won the Olympic bid and was hit by the 7/7 bombings.

*Hotel Alpha* has been written to be read in two stages: there is the novel itself (available as a £14.99 Picador hardback) and 100 stories which can be found on the website [www.hotelalphastories.com](http://www.hotelalphastories.com). Both the novel and the individual stories stand alone and can be read in any order. Some of the stories are 1000 words, others a paragraph, some the length of a tweet but all shine an alternative light on the plot, solve mysteries, and give voice to some of the minor characters in the novel.

Mark Watson said: **‘Everyone knows that human stories are always bigger and more complex than they appear** – **the relationships and connections between us all are infinite and a book can only do so much. The Internet, though, removes the physical limitations of the novel, opening up possibilities that have never before existed for readers and writers** … In order to tackle the subject of the internet and the changes it's brought upon us, **it felt like I needed to do something huge and sprawling and interactive** … I wanted the online version to contain a huge amount of information which you can dip into. You won't have to read it, it's not essential. It's like deleted scenes or DVD extras.’

Picador Editorial Director, Francesca Main said: ‘[www.hotelalphastories.com](http://www.hotelalphastories.com) allows the reader to discover these 100 stories in myriad ways – they are tagged so that you can read all the stories set in a particular decade, or in a particular room of the hotel; you can choose a character to follow, or pick a theme. The more stories you read, the more connections you discover.’

To celebrate the publication of *Hotel Alpha*, a number of short story sites and blogs will each be posting one of Mark's accompanying stories online this week.

Mark Watson is the acclaimed author of four novels, which have been published in twelve languages. He is an award-winning stand-up comedian, regularly appears on TV, has had his own cult Radio 4 series and been named the Edinburgh Fringe Festival's highest achiever of the decade by *The Times*, having performed a series of legendary 24-hour shows. He has a home in north London, but mostly lives in hotels. You can find him on Twitter **@watsoncomedian**

