

Garrett Klein
by Dustin Nelson

PAGE ONE – EIGHT PANELS

Panel 1: GARRETT KLEIN is an 18-year-old boy who recently graduated from high school. He's scruffy with unkempt shoulder-length hair and the shadow of a beard he can't quite grow. He's young, but there's a hint of bags developing under his eyes, as though he just pulled an all-nighter.

GARRETT is biking down a suburban street in the winter. The hair that sticks out from underneath his helmet is blowing in the wind. He carries a backpack and has a light on his handlebars for night biking. Snow is piled up on the side of the road.

1. CAPTION: I, Garrett Klein, was *HIBERNATING*.
2. CAPTION: Then I was, uh... not hibernating?
3. CAPTION: I was *WAKING*. That's it. I, Garrett Klein, was *WAKING*.

Panel 2: An aerial shot of GARRETT turning into a large parking lot on his bike. At the far end of the lot sits Cup Foods, a large suburban grocery store.

1. CAPTION: The world is full of amazing, unexplainable, horrible things.
2. CAPTION: Star jelly. The Taos Hum. Fairy circles. More than half the animals on this planet are *fucking bioluminescent!*

Panel 3: GARRETT walks into the grocery store through the automated glass sliding doors. The only people in the frame are walking in the opposite direction of GARRETT. He's a bit like a salmon swimming upriver through the rush of carts and bodies. The person closest to him is an attractive teenager wearing the store's red polo uniform and white plastic nametag. This is MISTY SAUCEDO.

1. CAPTION: Don't be stupid.
2. GARRETT: Hi, Misty.
3. CAPTION: We aren't even seeing half of reality as it actually exists.

Panel 4: GARRETT stands in the same spot, looking after MISTY, who just walked past. His face is a blank slate. She didn't acknowledge him.

1. CAPTION: I'm talking about monsters. They totally exist.
2. CAPTION: Dinosaurs, Big Foot, sure. But it's bigger than that.

3. CAPTION: It actually affects your life.

Panel 5: GARRETT standing in the same spot, looking down at the ground, dejected and a little beaten back.

1. CAPTION: It's affected mine.

2. CAPTION: Monsters were *HERE* before. Everyone knows this.

3. CAPTION: Evolution churns on and you somehow accept there's nothing out there!?

Panel 6: GARRETT stands next to a timeclock in the store's break room, pulling a starched red polo over his head. On the polo, there is a nametag that reads "GARRETT."

1. CAPTION: It follows, then, that these *THINGS* are sometimes seen, and the traces of the sightings must exist despite the inevitable cover-ups.

Panel 7: GARRETT sits in the break room, wearing his red polo, reading the newspaper.

1. CAPTION: Well, I'm the squeaky wheel.

2. CAPTION: Err... I'm humanity's bullshit detector.

3. GARRETT: Bingo.

Panel 8: Close-up of a newspaper clipping. It's ripped along two edges. It's only a portion of the article, so the text is cut off on the bottom at some point during the final paragraph. The caption bubbles cover parts of the article.

1. HEADLINE: With a Flash of Light a Frozen Lake Shatters and a Teen Nearly Drowns

2. ARTICLE TEXT: A local teen is recovering from both burns and frostbite after nearly drowning in a mysterious accident at Lake of the Isles on Sunday. Tom Rossman, a resident who was driving past, recalls an "otherworldly" flash of light and a bang "as though a plane landed."

Police haven't released details, but neighbors believe an object fell from the sky onto the lake, shattering the ice across the entire northern portion of the lake.

Officer Soren Jonsson suspects the object was quite large. "The ice is real thick this time of year," he said. "But the whole thing

shattered like a window pane.” As the ice broke, the teen and at least two shanties dropped into the icy waters.

3. CAPTION: GARRETT!!

4. CAPTION: Get on your register!

PAGE TWO – EIGHT PANELS

Panel 1: GARRETT stands at a grocery store checkout lane. An OLD MAN with a fistful of coupons stands in front of him, groceries on the conveyor belt. GARRETT has a bit of a smile on his face. The first five panels are in a single row in smaller panels, showing the progression of his day.

1. CAPTION: How was that?

Panel 2: A MOTHER stands in front of GARRETT, groceries on the conveyor belt. In her cart sits a screaming child. Any trace of a smile has left GARRETT’s face, but he’s not quite beaten down yet.

1. CAPTION: I’ve been practicing in case anyone asks.

Panel 3: A little girl is in line in front of GARRETT. She is handing him a candy bar, but can’t even see over the counter. GARRETT looks beaten down.

1. CAPTION: No one has asked.

Panel 4: There is finally no one in line in front of GARRETT. He stands looking relieved in his red polo at an empty register.

1. CAPTION: Yet.

Panel 5: GARRETT pulls out his cell phone while still standing at his station. He is simultaneously looking over his shoulder to make sure the coast is clear.

Panel 6: Close-up of GARRETT on the phone.

1. GARRETT: Uh, yeah. I’m looking for a room number.

Panel 7: An OLD WOMAN is standing in front of GARRETT. He is still on the phone. She’s holding a checkbook and coupons and has loaded the conveyor belt full of cans, cat food, and cat litter. Nothing but cans and cat litter. GARRETT is still talking on the phone.

1. GARRETT: No, I understand.

2. GARRETT: I just want to send him a get-well card. He's a coworker and fell through the ice in some kind of freak accident, I guess.

3. GARRETT: Geez, thanks.

Panel 8: GARRETT has hung up the phone and looks happy again, staring at the OLD WOMAN, who looks offended at his lack of manners.

PAGE 3 – FIVE PANELS

Panel 1: An aerial shot of GARRETT biking into the parking lot of a hospital. It echoes the aerial shot from Page 1. It's night.

1. CAPTION: I'm working to reveal the world you're blind to.

2. CAPTION: Yes, you are blind. Look at our history.

Panel 2: Inside the hospital lobby sits ELMER MALLOY, a security guard, at a desk. He's making people check in. GARRETT is ducking behind a family to sneak past ELMER. He still has his backpack with him.

ELMER is a 50-something man with military-short hair and a thick, graying mustache that curls a little at the ends. He isn't obese, but he's not in good shape anymore. He looks a bit like an aging, ineffectual sheriff in a western.

1. CAPTION: Area 51 might not have little green men, but it exists for a reason.

2. CAPTION: Look up US Patent 4,686,605.

3. CAPTION: Or cloud-seeding programs in Vietnam. Laugh, but the memos are public record.

4. CAPTION: People, like that guard Elmer, have chosen the darkness.

Panel 3: GARRETT breaks into a sprint, emerging from behind the family he was using as a shield. He's headed toward a door marked "STAIRS." ELMER looks overwhelmed, and he's starting after GARRETT.

2. CAPTION: They want the darkness so bad, the government doesn't even have to cover up most of this. Why bother? You won't believe them anyway.

2. ELMER: GARRETT!

3. ELMER: Come on! Not today!

Panel 4: Flashback. It's a bustling city street in the middle of the day. A massive sinkhole has opened in the middle of a busy street. Emergency vehicles are everywhere. Cars are in the sinkhole and one in the middle looks like something crashed onto it from above, splitting it in two. There's blood.

1. CAPTION: Imagine the horrors they're hiding when they *DO* bother to cover something up.

2. CAPTION: I've seen the evidence. What happened to my dad when he got back from Afghanistan wasn't a coincidence.

3. CAPTION: It *WASN'T* a *DAMN* sinkhole.

Panel 5: Present. GARRETT bursts into a hallway and is racing past an orderly. ELMER's words come from the open stairwell door, still swinging shut behind GARRETT.

1. CAPTION: But Occam's Razor, right?

2. ELMER: Dammit. Where are you?

3. CAPTION: That's the thing where it's obvious, or... uh... you know what I mean.

PAGE FOUR – SIX PANELS

Panel 1: GARRETT has stopped outside a hospital room door. His backpack is open on the ground in front of him. He's putting on a ski mask with white chalk lines scratched into it. It looks like a child's imitation of a superhero mask. The lines would almost look tribal in nature if they weren't a total mess.

Panel 2: GARRETT has entered the room. THE KID who fell through the ice is lying on the bed. He's hooked up to tubes, has one arm in a sling, and has bandages over his ears. THE KID is sitting upright, freaked out by the intrusion. Next to him is a half-eaten tray of hospital food.

1. GARRETT: Don't freak.

2. THE KID: Ahhhhh!

3. GARRETT: I'm not with *THE GOVERNMENT*.

4. THE KID: What!?

Panel 3: THE KID has flung the food tray at GARRETT's face. It's a direct hit. Blood is pouring out the nose hole in GARRETT's mask.

1. GARRETT: Dammit.
2. GARRETT: I need the truth. The police don't have to know, but...
3. GARRETT: you're going to tell me... one way or... uh... the hard way.

Panel 4: THE KID has fallen out of the bed. He's peeking over the edge at GARRETT.

1. THE KID: What the hell is going on? Where's the nurse?
2. GARRETT: Tell me. *NOW!*
3. THE KID: Shit. I don't know. Fine. It was me and some friends. We were putting fireworks under the ice. It got out of hand.

Panel 5: Close-up on GARRETT's disappointed face in a ski mask, still bleeding.

1. GARRETT: *SERIOUSLY!?*
2. THE KID: Don't hurt me.
3. ELMER (O.S.): GARRETT!!!!

Panel 6: GARRETT is opening the window in THE KID's hospital room. THE KID is back in bed, holding his arm that's in a sling and wincing in pain.

1. THE KID: What the hell are you doing? Who are you?
2. GARRETT: I was never here.
3. THE KID: Okay?

PAGE 5 – FIVE PANELS

Panel 1: ELMER enters THE KID's room. He's winded and is doubled over with his hands on his knees. THE KID is in bed, wide-eyed. GARRETT is nowhere to be seen. The curtains are blowing in the breeze.

1. CAPTION: Dead end.

Panel 2: GARRETT bursts out of a closet behind ELMER, giving him a head start on going through the door back into the hallway. The blood coming from GARRETT's face is more pronounced now. It's on his shirt and on his sleeve from trying to wipe it away.

1. CAPTION: But not the end.

2. ELMER: Oh, what the hell?

3. ELMER: What's wrong with you? Talk to me!

Panel 3: GARRETT is running down the hospital hallway in his mask and backpack, bleeding and laughing like a crazy person.

1. GARRETT: Hah!

2. GARRETT: Good night, ELMER!

3. ELMER: You have to stop doing this.

Panel 4: GARRETT's enters his apartment. There is nothing that strange about it. It's a little dark and cramped, but it otherwise feels normal in the entryway. There's a table near the door with mail and a bowl full of change and keys.

1. CAPTION: Later.

2. CAPTION: One day, I will be the person standing in front of a camera, explaining what's in the shadows.

3. CAPTION: This is just the part no one tells stories about.

Panel 5: We are behind GARRETT. He's almost a silhouette, but the blood on his sleeve is still visible. He is looking at a large wall in his living room. It's absolutely covered in newspaper clippings, hand-scrawled notes, and crappy photos he's taken with a Polaroid camera. In one hand, he holds his bloody ski mask. In the other, he holds the newspaper clipping from earlier. It's small, but part of the headline is visible.

1. CAPTION: This is happening.