

# Alpha Decay

Dewey Dabbar

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Out of a pale, scrawny, and academically struggling child had grown a physics graduate with sine-curve biceps, an olive tan, and the moniker Arnie. For a while, he was the dominant voice in his post-university social group: the bestowers of the nickname.

As he turned to environmentalism, though, that voice spoke too many awkward truths. And thus, like protons and neutrons being shed by a once-stable atom, the friends slipped away.

Now he was called Brian.