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## BABIES SATISFACTORILY BORN

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“Legends of the Bomb”

Pages: 7 comic, 17 script

This comic will work best with a simpler style. If you’ve read Larry Gonick’s “Cartoon History of the Universe” or “Cartoon History of the United States”, you’ll know what’s needed.

There are a number of World War II-era personalities mentioned here. Let me know if you need them and I can make and send scans ASAP:

- Niels Bohr
- General Dwight Eisenhower
- Adolf Hitler
- Albert Speer
- Philip Morrison
- President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- President Harry Truman
- Albert Einstein

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## Page 1. INTRODUCTION

The first panel is the biggest, although it might look nice to make the second panel eat into the first, and the third eat into the second. Perhaps top left, middle right, bottom left? Whatever works best.

### *Panel 1. OPPOSITION TO THE BOMB*

A mushroom cloud over the planet Earth. James Frank's typewritten report to the president superimposed over it. The paragraph that we can read is part of a larger document, but we don't want to be able to read that, focus on the quote given here and make the rest unreadable.

**CAPTION: MANHATTAN PROJECT SCIENTIST JAMES FRANK WROTE  
IN OPPOSITION TO USING THE BOMB:**

**REPORT: If the United States were the first to release this  
indiscriminate destruction on mankind, she would precipitate  
the race for armaments and prejudice the possibility of  
reaching an international agreement on the future control of  
such weapons.**

**CAPTION: FAIRLY PRESCIENT FOR 1945.**

### *Panel 2. MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION*

An EAGLE with nuclear missiles for feathers shielding the earth under its wing, perched atop the Japanese islands. Philip MORRISON is talking to the reader. The EAGLE is labeled "Mutually Assured Destruction".

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**CAPTION: PROJECT SCIENTIST PHILIP MORRISON, EXPLAINING WHY HE REFUSED TO WORK ON THE HYDROGEN BOMB AFTER THE WAR, SAID:**

**MORRISON: ONE WAR WAS ENOUGH. WE SAW THAT BOMBS WOULD BE MADE NOT BY THE ONES BUT BY THE THOUSANDS. OBVIOUSLY, THE WORLD WOULD NOT SURVIVE THESE THINGS.**

**EAGLE: DON'T WORRY, I'LL PROTECT YOU! IF I HAVE TO KILL YOU TO DO IT!**

*Panel 3. THE MANHATTAN PROJECT*

Postal workers sorting mail. POSTAL WORKER 2 is dropping birth certificates onto a stack of birth certificates. POSTAL WORKER 1 is dumping a pile of letters onto the floor. Some of them may read "PO Box 1663" if the addressee is visible. (And it should be on at least one.)

**CAPTION: THE MANHATTAN PROJECT CONSISTED OF SIX THOUSAND CIVILIANS AND SOLDIERS AT LOS ALAMOS ALONE, THEIR LOCATION A SECRET FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY. ALL SIX THOUSAND RECEIVED THEIR MAIL AT POST OFFICE BOX 1663 IN SANTA FE. BABIES BORN AT LOS ALAMOS DURING THE WAR LISTED THIS BOX AS THEIR PLACE OF BIRTH.**

**POSTAL WORKER 1: THIS GUY GETS A LOT OF MAIL!**

**POSTAL WORKER 2: HE GETS AROUND A LOT, TOO...**

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**CAPTION: INEVITABLY, WITH A GROUP THAT LARGE IN A SITUATION THAT STRANGE, ODD LEGENDS AROSE. SOME OF THEM MIGHT EVEN BE TRUE...**

*Panel 4. THE TITLE BANNER*

Spread the banner across the bottom of the page.

**CREDITS: BABIES SATISFACTORILY BORN  
“LEGENDS OF THE BOMB”  
-LIST CREATORS--**

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## Page 2. NIELS BOHR'S WATER BREAKS

### *Panel 1. NIELS BOHR AND HITLER*

Niels BOHR and HITLER in short pants, BOHR holding an atomic missile behind his back, HITLER trying to grab it: playing around like kids.

**CAPTION:** NIELS BOHR WAS JEWISH, BUT THE NAZIS ALLOWED HIM TO CONTINUE HIS RESEARCH BECAUSE HIS BRILLIANCE WAS LEGENDARY EVEN THEN. BOHR, HOWEVER, DID NOT WANT TO HAND HITLER THE SECRET TO ATOMIC EXPLOSIVES.

**HITLER:** WHAT'S WRONG, NIELS, DON'T YOU TRUST ME?

**BOHR:** I TRUST YOU AS FAR AS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL IS WIDE.

**BOHR (THOUGHT):** WHICH I INTEND TO CROSS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...

### *Panel 2. NIELS BOHR'S REEFER*

Niels Bohr's refrigerator. Beer bottles, old sandwiches, wedges of cheese, cold fish. Most of the bottles are labeled "Lite Beer". One of the bottles is labeled "Hevy Beer".

**CAPTION:** ONE OF THE RARER SUBSTANCES NEEDED TO MAKE 'THE BOMB' IS HEAVY WATER. BOHR HAD SOME, BUT HE HID IT IN A BEER BOTTLE AND ESCAPED WITH IT TO ENGLAND IN 1943.

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*Panel 3. HIDING IN THE BOMB BAY*

Niels Bohr is lying on a cot outside of a bomber in rainy, damp England, surrounded by British and American soldiers. He is holding up a bottle of beer.

**CAPTION: BOHR HID IN THE BOMB BAY OF THE PLANE THAT BROUGHT HIM OUT. HE WAS SO ABSENT-MINDED HE FORGOT TO PUT ON HIS OXYGEN MASK, AND ARRIVED UNCONSCIOUS.**

**BOHR: BUT AT LEAST I REMEMBERED TO BRING THE HEAVY WATER.**

**CAPTION: ALAS, THE BOTTLE, WHEN OPENED, CONTAINED BEER.**

*Panel 4. LITE BEER JOKE*

The Danish Underground is raiding Niels Bohr's refrigerator. A German soldier is tied up in the kitchen.

**CAPTION: FORTUNATELY, THE GERMANS DID NOT THINK TO RAID BOHR'S REFRIGERATOR FOR THE PRIZED LIQUID.**

**GERMAN: WATER? I THOUGHT IT WAS COORS LIGHT.**

**CAPTION: THE DANISH UNDERGROUND LATER RETRIEVED THE CORRECT BEER BOTTLE FOR THE ALLIES.**

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### Page 3. EXPLODING THE EARTH

#### *Panel 1. THE CHAIN REACTION THEORY*

The moon is shielding its eyes from the Earth. This earth is burning up, a fireball roaming from one side of the planet to another.

**CAPTION: UNTIL THE FIRST EXPLOSION, SOME THOUGHT THAT THE INTENSE HEAT OF AN ATOMIC BOMB MIGHT SET UP A CHAIN REACTION IN THE ATMOSPHERE, TURNING THE EARTH INTO A HUGE SUPER-BOMB.**

**MOON: I TOLD YOU NOT TO PLAY WITH MATCHES!**

#### *Panel 2. SCIENTISTS SAY NO CHAIN REACTION*

SCIENTISTS saying it ain't gonna happen. And crossing their fingers behind their backs.

**CAPTION: IN AMERICA, SCIENTISTS PROVED THAT THIS WAS "UNLIKELY".**

**SCIENTIST 1: NOPE, NOT GONNA HAPPEN.**

**SCIENTIST 2: BY THE WAY, HOW'S THE SPACE PROGRAM COMING?**

#### *Panel 3. NON-ARYAN SCIENTISTS*

Four German SCIENTISTS are discussing what to tell the military. A blackboard with mathematical symbols, and  $E=MC^2$  among the formulae.

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**CAPTION:** IN GERMANY, WHERE BOTH SCIENTISTS AND RESEARCH COULD BE TOSSED IF THEY WEREN'T 'ARYAN', SCIENTISTS WERE LESS CERTAIN AND ALSO UNWILLING TO ASSURE THE MILITARY THAT THESE BOMBS MIGHT WORK.

**SCIENTIST 1:** HERE COMES THE GENERAL AGAIN. WHAT DO WE TELL HIM THIS TIME?

**SCIENTIST 2:** IT CAUSES BLINDNESS?

**SCIENTIST 3:** GROWS HAIR ON YOUR PALMS?

**SCIENTIST 4:** DESTROYS THE EARTH IN A MASS OF FLAMES?

*Panel 4. HITLER'S GLOWING STAR*

HITLER talking to the reader.

**CAPTION:** ALBERT SPEER WROTE THAT ONE OF THE REASONS HITLER VACILLATED ON THE BOMB WAS THAT HE WAS "NOT DELIGHTED WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE EARTH UNDER HIS RULE MIGHT BE TRANSFORMED INTO A GLOWING STAR".

**HITLER:** IT MIGHT BE A STAR OF DAVID!

*Panel 5. SWORDS INTO SWORDS*

A German SOLDIER with a rifle, holding up a U235 bullet and squinting at it. Albert SPEER is talking to the SOLDIER.



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**CAPTION: AFTER THE GERMANS GAVE UP ON ATOMIC RESEARCH,  
THEIR STOCK OF URANIUM WAS SENT OFF AND MADE  
INTO SOLID-CORE AMMUNITION.**

**SOLDIER: THAT'S BEATING SWORDS INTO... SWORDS.**

**SPEER: NOTHING SINISTER, WE WERE RUNNING OUT OF  
OTHER METALS TO MAKE BULLETS WITH!**

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## Page 4. THE FIRST CHAIN REACTION

### *Panel 1. THE SQUASH COURT*

In a converted squash court underneath the University of Chicago, lots of holes in the walls with rods coming out. Other scientific generica would be cool also, but leave out the computers: they didn't have any. An oscilloscope would be fine, as would a desk, bookshelves, and file cabinets. The squash target wall has a map of Europe on it, with an 'X' at Germany. One SCIENTIST is holding a racket and a tiny nuclear missile, getting ready to lob one towards the wall.

**CAPTION: THE FIRST MAJOR BOMB RESEARCH FOR THE WAR TOOK PLACE IN A CONVERTED SQUASH COURT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.**

**SCIENTIST: JOIN US IN A GAME, BERLIN?**

### *Panel 2. ARGONNE NATIONAL FOREST*

A SCIENTIST and an OFFICER are looking at a part of the forest, the OFFICER holding some blueprints. Various trees, gophers, and birds look on.

**CAPTION: THE CRITICAL FIRST CHAIN REACTION EXPERIMENT WAS SET FOR THE ARGONNE NATIONAL FOREST, TWENTY MILES FROM CHICAGO, IN CASE THE EXPERIMENT EXPLODED.**

**MAJOR: BUILD THE LAB HERE. THIS WAY, WE ONLY LOSE TREES.**

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SCIENTIST (SMALL): AND A FEW SCIENTISTS.

TREE & FAUNA: I DON'T SUPPOSE ANYONE CARES ABOUT US?

*Panel 3. MOVE TO CHICAGO*

Back at the squash court, a scientist holding a fire extinguisher. A squirrel looks on from some pipes up top.

CAPTION: BUT WHEN THE SCIENTISTS WERE READY, THE ARGONNE LAB WASN'T. SO THEY CONDUCTED THE EXPERIMENT AT THE CHICAGO SQUASH COURT.

SCIENTIST: MRS. O'LEARY'S COW HAD NOTHING ON US!

GOPHER: BETTER TO BLOW UP CHICAGO THAN MY HOME!

*Panel 4. PALE AS A SHEET*

A civilian CHAIRMAN and a Chicago Cub with a baseball bat.

CAPTION: WHEN THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ATOMIC RESEARCH EFFORT WAS INFORMED OF THE DECISION, HE "TURNED PALE AS A SHEET".

CHAIRMAN: I'M A CUBS FAN!

CUB: YOU CAN'T BLOW US UP, THIS IS THE ONLY TIME WE'VE EVER WON!

CAPTION: FORTUNATELY, THE REACTION DID NOT GO OUT OF CONTROL AND THE CHICAGO CUBS REMAIN THE CHICAGO CUBS.

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## Page 5. THE GAMES

### *Panel 1. PLAYING CHICKEN*

A scientist with a tail and three eyes, holding two halves of a glowing sphere together.

**CAPTION:** STUCK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT, FORBIDDEN TO GO ANYWHERE, MANHATTAN PROJECT SCIENTISTS DEVELOPED SOME VERY STRANGE GAMES. ONE SCIENTIST PLAYED CHICKEN WITH URANIUM-235. ATOMIC BOMBS NEED WHAT IS CALLED A “CRITICAL MASS” OF URANIUM. THIS IS THE AMOUNT OF URANIUM THAT RESULTS IN A SPONTANEOUS EXPLOSION. THE GAME INVOLVED HOLDING TWO HALVES OF CRITICAL MASS APART, AND MOVING THEM TOGETHER BY HAND, UNTIL THE FISSION PROCESS BEGAN IN EARNEST, AT WHICH POINT THE TWO HALVES WERE TAKEN APART AGAIN.

**SCIENTIST:** TUMOR? WHAT’S THAT?

### *Panel 2. THE BET*

**CAPTION:** DESPITE ASSURANCES BY MOST SCIENTISTS THAT AN ATOMIC EXPLOSION WOULD NOT CAUSE THE EARTH’S ATMOSPHERE TO BURST INTO ATOMIC FLAMES, MANHATTAN PROJECT WORKERS MAINTAINED A BETTING POOL. ONE HAS TO WONDER HOW THE DOOMSAYERS WOULD HAVE COLLECTED IF THEY WON.

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## Page 6. DROPPING THE BOMBS

### *Panel 1. UNTESTED BOMBS DROPPED*

A fat kid and a skinny kid. The FAT BOY is waving at the reader and the LITTLE BOY is showing off the FAT BOY. FAT BOY is holding a lollipop.

**CAPTION:** AT THE OTHER END OF THE GAMBLE, NO ONE KNEW IF THE HIROSHIMA BOMB WORKED: THE BOMBS DROPPED ON HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI WERE DIFFERENT DESIGNS, AND HIROSHIMA'S, NICKNAMED 'LITTLE BOY', HAD NEVER BEEN TESTED. THE ALAMAGORDO BOMB TEST WAS A TEST OF THE NAGASAKI 'FAT BOY' DESIGN. THE PROJECT HAD ENOUGH MATERIAL TO BUILD ONLY ONE 'LITTLE BOY' BOMB SO IN TRUE SPACE OPERA STYLE THEY BUILT IT AND USED IT UNTESTED.

**FAT BOY:** THIS IS MY BROTHER! HE'S UNPREDICTABLE.

### *Panel 2. THE FLOP HEARD ROUND THE WORLD*

Writing on a tiled (bathroom) wall. Other graffiti is scrawled around it.

**CAPTION:** A MANGLED VERSION OF THE CONCORD HYMN REFLECTS THE ANXIETY OF PROJECT MEMBERS:

**WALL:** FROM THIS CRUDE LAB THAT SPAWNED THE DUD,  
THEIR NECKS TO TRUMAN'S AXE UNCURLLED,  
LO, THE EMBATTLED SAVANTS STOOD  
AND FIRED THE FLOP HEARD ROUND THE WORLD.

**WALL:** FOR A GOOD TIME, WRITE SANTA FE 1663.

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**WALL: JUST CIRCLING URANUS, CAPTAIN.**

*Panel 3. THE DEATH TOLL*

A panel of text superimposed on a mushroom cloud.

**CAPTION: ON AUGUST 6, THE "FLOP HEARD ROUND THE WORLD"  
KILLED 80,000 PEOPLE IN HIROSHIMA AND DESTROYED  
MOST OF THE CITY. AT NAGASAKI THE FIRESTORM KILLED  
AND MAIMED 100,000, AND THE BOMB CARVED OUT A  
CRATER A MILE WIDE.**

**CAPTION: SORRY, I COULDN'T THINK OF A JOKE FOR THIS.**

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## Page 7. WHY THE BOMB?

### *Panel 1. BOMBS USED AGAINST ALLIES, NOT AXIS*

Some “spy-vs-spy” spies breaking into a safe, while others photograph papers.

**CAPTION: THE ONLY SPIES WITHIN THE MANHATTAN PROJECT WERE NEITHER GERMAN NOR JAPANESE: THEY WERE OUR RUSSIAN ALLIES.**

**SPY: WE HAD TO GET IN PRACTICE FOR THE FIFTIES!**

### *Panel 2. DIVIDING UP TOKYO*

A Russian BEAR and Uncle SAM ready to dine, and playing wishbone with Japan.

**CAPTION: FOR ALL THE ALLIED LIVES SAVED, THE BOMBS WERE NOT USED AGAINST JAPAN SO MUCH AS AGAINST RUSSIA. UNTIL THE BOMB, THE INVASION OF JAPAN WAS PLANNED IN THE SAME WAY AS THE INVASION OF GERMANY: JAPAN WOULD BE DIVIDED UP AMONG THE ALLIES, AMERICANS AND BRITISH COMING FROM ONE DIRECTION, RUSSIANS FROM ANOTHER.**

**BEAR: MAKE A WISH!**

**SAM (THOUGHT): I WISH YOU WEREN'T HERE.**

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*Panel 3. No TOKYO WALL*

A Japanese woman in raggedy clothing, with gutted, destroyed buildings in the city background.

**CAPTION: BUT 'THE BOMB' WAS ALL AMERICAN, AND ONCE DROPPED THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF AN 'EAST' AND 'WEST' JAPAN, OR OF A 'BERLIN WALL' THROUGH DOWNTOWN TOKYO. THE BOMB WAS A POLITICAL ATTACK NOT ON OUR ENEMY, BUT ON OUR ALLY. THE COLD WAR HAD BEGUN BEFORE THE WORLD WAR WAS OVER.**

**JAPANESE: AND IT'S FEELING MIGHTY COLD AROUND NAGASAKI RIGHT NOW.**

*Panel 4. BABIES SATISFACTORILY BORN*

All the presidents since Roosevelt grabbing onto Japan while the Russian BEAR has fallen on its rump holding nothing.

**CAPTION: WHEN CHURCHILL, ROOSEVELT, AND STALIN WERE AT POTSDAM IN 1945 TO DISCUSS WHO GOT WHAT AT THE WAR'S END, CHURCHILL RECEIVED THE MESSAGE "BABIES SATISFACTORILY BORN." THIS ENIGMATIC MESSAGE SIGNALLED THAT THE ALAMAGORDO TEST HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL: THE ATOMIC BOMB WORKED, AND THE CONQUEST OF JAPAN BELONGED TO THE WEST.**

**ROOSEVELT: IT'S MINE, ALL MINE!**

**TRUMAN: MINE!**

**EISENHOWER: MINE!**



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KENNEDY: MINE!

JOHNSON: MINE!

NIXON: MINE!

FORD: MINE!

CARTER: MINE!

REAGAN: MINE!

CLINTON: MINE!

*Panel 5. FINAL WORD*

Neils BOHR and Albert EINSTEIN talking to the reader.

BOHR: “ALL SCIENTISTS WHO WORKED ON THE ATOMIC PROBLEM ARE INDIGNANT THAT GREAT DISCOVERIES BECOME THE PROPERTY OF POLITICIANS. AND WHAT IS NEXT? EITHER REASON WILL WIN, OR A DEVASTATING WAR, THE END OF MANKIND.”—NIELS BOHR

EINSTEIN: “IT HAS BECOME APPALLINGLY OBVIOUS THAT OUR TECHNOLOGY HAS EXCEEDED OUR HUMANITY.”—ALBERT EINSTEIN

CAPTION: THE END?

—END OF BABIES SATISFACTORILY BORN—