John McAfee

Not so long ago John McAfee, the creator of the world's first antivirus, died. In this article you will learn about his life, problems, and crazy ideas. Enjoy the reading!

John McAfee was born a long, long time ago, in 1945, in the United Kingdom. But only John's mother was English, but his father was a U.S. serviceman who was then serving in Britain. "Holiday romance" grew into a serious relationship - the newly minted McAfee family did not stay in Britain and went to live in the United States, the city of Roanoke, Virginia.

McAfee's childhood was a sad one. His father was a raging alcoholic, and when John was still only 15, the elder McAfee committed suicide. Nevertheless, John did not become an unsupervised criminal drug addict. On the contrary, he earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from a private college in Virginia in 1967. He made his living and his studies with cunning and self-confidence--walking from house to house and telling every owner that he had won a subscription to a magazine--just had to pay small delivery charges and the like. Naturally, the cost of the magazine was included in these fees, but of course this fact was hushed up. According to MacAfee's story, the ruse worked well and made him a lot of money.

In 1968, John began working on his doctorate in mathematics at a college in Philadelphia, but he was kicked out for having sexual relations with a female student. A little later John married her.

After college, he spent two years as a programmer at NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). And at the same time he became actively addicted to alcohol and drugs. He was kicked out of his next job after NASA because of accusations of buying marijuana. In those years in the U.S., you could get jail time for this, but John was lucky to have a lawyer who helped him avoid jail. He was still asked out of his job, though this did not stop McAfee from experimenting with substances. In 1969, John took a job with the Missouri State Railroad Company, with the help of one of IBM's computers, to try and automate the creation of train schedules. Six months later, McAfee was able to get the process going, but by then he had dabbled not only in marijuana, but also in LSD, including in the middle of the workday.

Even so, he managed to work for other well-known companies. For example, at Xerox, and in the 1980s at Lockheed, one of the largest aerospace and defense companies. A very cool track record, I must say.

Still, his life in those years could not be called a dream - in the '80s John no longer spent a day without whiskey and cocaine, mostly alone, as his wife left, he gave his dog away, and even his friends were tight. Many times he thought about suicide, especially since he had a shining example - his father. And, as the story goes from McAfee himself, in '83 he finally despaired of getting his life together and finally turned to the local Alcoholics Anonymous society for help. As he later confessed, they helped him give up alcohol and drugs forever.

In the 80's the most important event in the life of a future millionaire happened. In 1986 two brothers from Pakistan wrote the first computer virus for MS-DOS. True, it wasn't that bad. "It only slowed down floppy disks and bypassed hard drives. In addition, it showed messages with the names and phone numbers of the authors. But the fact that someone else's program had infiltrated the computer frightened a lot of people, and the authors started calling incessantly, demanding the removal of the virus.

John McAfee had been in the wind for four years, living in Silicon Valley and working hard for Lockheed, working on a classified voice-recognition program. He stumbled across an article in a local newspaper about the uncontrolled spread of a horrible Pakistani computer virus that infected computers for no apparent reason. It reminded John very much of his childhood - after all, his father could often hit him just like that, completely unexpectedly and without any warning. And he, being a boy, couldn't hit a grown man back. And John suddenly realized that all these people were in the same situation now - someone harms their computers for no reason, and there was nothing they could do about it, because there were no anti-viruses and no specialists in the field back then.

Being an entrepreneur by nature, John did not limit himself to just writing anti-virus, but in 1987 he founded his own firm, McAfee Associates. Its office was McAfee's home, but at first he was not in the business of selling software. John bought a big van, eight meters long, loaded it with computers, and in that form acted as an emergency anti-virus service. That is, he would go to companies on call and help them eliminate the effects of virus attacks.

In the years that followed, McAfee regularly appeared in the media warning of viruses multiplying, of companies being ravaged by them, and wrote an entire book about it. In other words, quite a bit intimidated the public with scary pictures of destroyed and stolen data, financial crashes, and so on. This, plus the ever-growing computer market, led McAfee Associates to wealth and success. In the early '90s, the firm had an annual turnover of millions of dollars, and its software was used by half of the Forbes 100.

McAfee once said in an interview that being the creator of the world's first anti-virus was not the most glorious thing in the world. According to him, it made him a target for many hackers, for whom "hacking" him was a special, very important achievement in their careers.

In 1994, John left McAfee Associates. And two more years later, he sells his stake in the company for $100 million. In 2010, the company was taken over by Intel.

After the sale of the company for a long time, McAfee led a fairly quiet and measured life. He was engaged in his own small projects, gave lectures to students and gave advice to startups. He developed the messenger PowWow, which you have never heard of, because it never became popular. He even founded a yoga institute and wrote several books about yoga.

As many sources have reported, by 2008 John McAfee's fortune had dropped from $100 million to just four. He sold almost everything he owned, including large properties in Hawaii and a private airport in New Mexico. To cut costs even further, and to get away from people who sued him simply because they thought he was rich, he moved to Belize, a state in Central America, whose population at the time was just under 200,000. But there John's business was not computer technology, but antibiotics. He also founded a cigarette manufacturer and a coffee distribution company, and, finally, a water cab.

In time MacAfee began sponsoring the local police and giving them guns when he discovered that his estate was only a couple or three kilometers from a village teeming with people trafficking and selling drugs. And, eventually, he himself began interfering in everyone and everything: stopping suspicious cars, bribing small street drug dealers with flat-screen televisions on the condition that they would quit their illegal business. Lived like a computer game.

Yet he continued to believe that his little lab could revolutionize the world of drugs. Eventually, his paranoia that there were only bandits, drug dealers and industrial spies around began to scare his loved ones and business partners, and his small army of mercenaries guarding the area began to attract the attention of the authorities.

Eventually John had to flee Belize to Honduras because of accusations that he had organized the murder of his neighbor Greg Fowell. He had to go through a lot: changing his appearance, changing phones and places of refuge, facing racketeering by local authorities, organizing a network of spies on police action, sleeping in abandoned barns, etc. Before escaping from Belize to Honduras, McAfee found a double, paid him to change his name, sent him to Mexico, and let the authorities catch him. After that, he asked friends to confirm the arrest of "that" McAfee and made sure the news broke in the media. Only after that did he head for the Guatemalan border.

And even here he reinsured himself, because he chose a day when it was raining - he knew that on such days the border guards do not inspect the passing through meticulously.

But John's lair in Honduras was accidentally discovered by negligent journalists. They attached photos with GPS tags preserved in them to an interview with him on their website. The story ended fairly peacefully for McAfee-he was deported not to Belize, but to the United States. A few years ago, he was even going to run for president of the U.S. Libertarian Party, but lost to the former governor of New Mexico, Gary Johnson.

But the adventures of the irrepressible John McAfee do not end there. In 2017, he became very interested in the cryptocurrency market and bitcoin in particular. He became its apologist and gathered a huge number of fans on Twitter, constantly predicting "bitcoin" the most radiant fate. He even became known as "crypto-Jesus." He became such a recognizable person in the cryptocurrency world that as soon as he mentioned some unknown cryptocurrency in his Twitter blog, its price skyrocketed.

At the same time, though, John made himself look silly more than once. For example, he promised to eat his penis live on national television if one bitcoin wouldn't be worth $1 million by 2020. That against the background of the rapid growth of bitcoin in 2017 still looked too presumptuous, and certainly after the collapse of the rate in the spring of 2018...

Another puncture was the launch of a bitcoin wallet called Bitfi. McAfee claimed that this wallet was completely impossible to hack, that it was the most secure of all. And, just one week later, Bitfi was hacked by hackers. And soon the device was hacked a second time, and they were able to run the well-known game DOOM on it.

In 2018, he announced that he would run for president again in the 2020 election. John McAfee was encouraging people on Twitter to elect him president when Trump's term was over.

On October 5, 2020, McAfee was arrested in Spain. Since then, he has been in a Spanish prison awaiting extradition to the United States. The U.S. Justice Department charged the entrepreneur with tax evasion and willful failure to file tax returns from 2014 to 2018.

According to the indictment, McAfee made "millions of dollars" from promoting cryptocurrencies, consulting, speaking engagements and selling the rights to his life story for the documentary "Gringo: The Dangerous Life of John McAfee," which was released in 2016. In 2019, McAfee reported not filing tax returns for nine years, the media wrote, citing his Twitter account.

The entrepreneur hid assets, including a yacht, car and real estate, which he registered to other people. All the proceeds went under other people's names through bank and cryptocurrency accounts, the indictment documents said.

They also say that if convicted, McAfee faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison for each count of tax evasion and a maximum sentence of one year in prison for each count of willful failure to file a tax return.

In March 2021, the New York federal prosecutor's office reported that from November 2017 to February 2018, McAfee made about $23 million from recommendations for ICO participation, which the entrepreneur shared via Twitter while not licensed as an investment adviser.

Hours after a Spanish court ordered the entrepreneur's extradition to the United States, he was found dead in his cell. McAfee asked not to be extradited to the U.S., claiming that his case was politically motivated. He was an advocate of the conspiracy theory that there was a "shadow government" that ruled the world.

After reports of his death, a giant "Q" appeared on McAfee's Instagram account. It's a reference to QAnon, a conspiracy theory that a "shadow government" made up of federal bureaucrats, Democrats and celebrities is plotting against President Trump and his supporters while running an international sex trafficking network. The next day, McAfee's Instagram page was deleted.

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