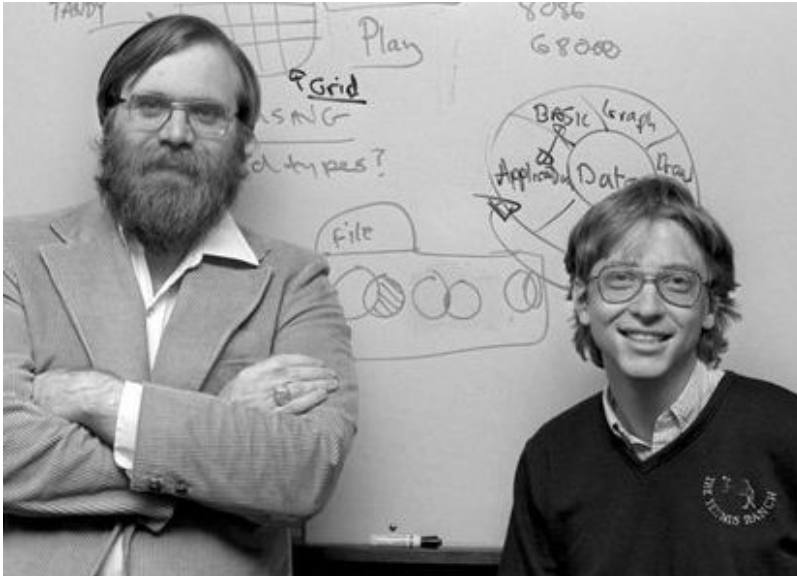


Allen's Wrench: The Idea Man Gets No Respect

Written by Bob Snyder
11 May 2011

It's perhaps the cruelest cut of all. Paul Allen, the forgotten Microsoft man, the lost partner, wants to set the record straight by publishing his memoir: **Idea Man**.



Written with best ghost writer money can buy (and thanks to his time with Microsoft, Paul Allen can afford the best), Allen gives his side of how Microsoft started. But instead rallying to the Idea Man, reviewers scathe Allen and defend Bill Gates.

One must-read review comes from the *New York Times Sunday Book Review*, the authoritative weekly with 1 million readers where most English-speaking writers pray for kind words that sell a lot of books.

Instead, this NYT review condemns Allen to the book bins of returns... with some of the best put-downs in tech history. Here are a few...

"..Is it possible to be beside the point in your own memoir?"

"...He's like Forrest Gump in his own autobiography."

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"...Peter Gabriel, he tells us, is the kind of person who will offer you a spot of afternoon tea. But after 350 pages, it's not clear what kind Allen might be."

"...the accidental billionaire who reveals himself to be little more than an overgrown kid playing with his money. "

And my personal favorite: *"He has only just met Paul McCartney but reports Sir Paul as saying, 'Everyone wants to talk about John, John, John. You know, I wrote some songs, too.' That might have been a moment for the author to delve into his own psyche ("Bill, Bill, Bill, but I wrote some code, too, you know")* ."

Ouch, ouch and ouch...

What most people ask is **"What more could a billionaire possibly want?"** Now you know: he wants a place in history as an important tech visionary. He was in 10th grade when he met Gates, only an 8th grader. He felt senior then and he still believes now he, the Idea Man, set the intellectual direction.

It's hard to tell his story without climbing on the back of Bill Gates, using I-told-him-so stories as a ladder to climb. (Allen lost \$40 million when Gates talked him out of AOL stock. Etc...etc...etc...)

But for all this...the book is worth a read and a chance to decide on your own. The reviewer is Gary Rivlin, a former New York Times reporter, but he's also the author of *The Plot to Get Bill Gates*." Of course, he is on Bill's side.

And, of course, **no one ever likes a whiny, wingeing, Windows zillionaire...**

Paul Allen wrote the tools that helped Bill write the program that become Microsoft's first

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product. Yet...unlike Steve Wozniak, affectionately dubbed as The Woz and recognized as the tech genius that was a technical Robin to Steve Jobs' Batman...**Paul Allen will never be the Idea Man of computer technology, the title that he most covets.**

Perhaps he can take solace in what Bill Gates has said: "*At Microsoft there are lots of brilliant ideas but the image is that they all come from the top-- I'm afraid that's not quite right.*"

Go [NYT Review of Paul Allen's Idea Man](#)