



# Hal Finney

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Harold Thomas Finney II (known as Hal Finney) was a cryptographer and a developer for the PGP Corporation. Some believe that he was the man behind Satoshi Nakamoto (the creator of BitCoin).

Hal was an early bitcoin contributor and received the first bitcoin transaction from Bitcoin's creator Satoshi Nakamoto. He was also a long term futurist and programmer who believed strongly in decentralization and the privacy of the individual.

## Early Life and Education

Hal Finney was born in California on May 4th 1956, and died on August 28th 2014. He graduated with a BS in engineering in 1979 and attended the California Institute of Technology [\[1\]](#).

## Career

A year prior to his graduation, Hal was hired by 'APH Technology Consultants' (hired by 'Mattel'). He was initially assigned to work on their cash register software.

Shortly after he graduated, Hal Finney went to work in the computer gaming field for a company that developed video games such as Adventures of Tron, Armor Ambush, Astroblast and Space Attack [\[2\]](#).

In 1991, he began doing volunteer work for a new software project known as Pretty Good Privacy, or P.G.P. He was the second developer hired after Phil Zimmermann [\[3\]](#).

He immediately became one of the central players in developing the program. The project was aimed at making it possible for people everywhere to encrypt electronic communication

in a way that could not be read by anyone other than the intended recipient. He remained there until his retirement in 2011.

Hal ran two anonymous remailers, during the early 1990s. He also became a regular poster on the cypherpunks listserv [\[4\]](#).

In 1992, he said that cryptographic technology appealed to him because he worried about the ability of corporations and governments to snoop on citizens.

He then created the first reusable proof of work system before bitcoin in 2004, and then he later became one of the bitcoin network's first transaction recipients in 2009 [\[5\]](#).

## Personal Life

Shortly after getting started with bitcoin, Hal learned in August 2009 that he had A.L.S., and he withdrew, for a time, from active participation in the project. He had announced his diagnosis in an essay on the blog Less Wrong that he had been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [\[6\]](#).

Before he fell ill with ALS, Finney had been an active runner. Finney and his wife Fran Finney raised money for ALS research with the Santa Barbara International Marathon [\[7\]\[8\]\[9\]](#).

One of Hal's interests outside of bitcoin is cryonic freezing, which is an attempt to preserve enough brain information to permit future revival of the cryopreserved person. As a young man, Hal developed an interest in the technique. Then in 1992, he visited the Alcor facility with his wife to determine whether he wanted to sign up his family to be preserved in Alcor's "containment vessels." [\[10\]](#)

Finney was a long-time member of the transhumanist/life extension organization the Extropy Institute, and had expressed a wish to be cryopreserved at the Alcor Life Extension Foundation's facility in Scottsdale, Arizona [\[11\]](#).

Despite eventually being paralyzed with ALS in the last few years of his life, Hal wrote bitcoin-related software using a computer that tracked his eye movement.

Hal Finney's surviving family includes his son Jason, as well as a daughter, Erin Finney. He also has two sisters, Kathleen Finney and Patricia Wolf; and a brother, Michael [\[12\]](#).

## BitCoin

Finney was one of the first to support the creation of bitcoin, even though other cryptographers were sceptical at the time.

He received the first bitcoin transaction from bitcoin's creator Satoshi Nakamoto and was an early bitcoin user. He was also the subject of speculation that he was Satoshi Nakamoto and the creator of bitcoin.

Much of the speculation is because he also lived in the same city as Satoshi Nakamoto at the time bitcoin was created. He mined many bitcoins in the early days of the project however in 2013, he was forced to cash in many of bitcoins to pay for his medical care.

Despite being paralyzed in 2013, he still continued to program the cryptocurrency until his death. He also developed an experimental software called bcflick, which uses Trusted Computing to strengthen bitcoin wallets <sup>[13][14]</sup>.

## Death

Hal Finney died on August 28, 2014 in Arizona. In accordance with his wish & plans, he was cryopreserved by the Alcor Life Extension Foundation <sup>[15][16]</sup>.

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