

= Magic Alex =

Yanni ( later John ) Alexis Mardas ( Greek : ?????? ?????? ; born May 5 , 1942 ) is better known as Magic Alex , the nickname given to him by The Beatles when he was involved with the group between 1965 and 1969 , including being head of Apple Electronics .

Mardas arrived in England in 1965 , exhibiting his Kinetic Light Sculptures at the Indica Gallery . He impressed John Lennon with the Nothing Box ; a small plastic box with randomly blinking lights , and allegedly said that he could build a 72 @-@ track tape machine . Mardas was then given the job of designing the new Apple Studio in Savile Row , and was in India with The Beatles at the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi 's ashram in India .

In the 1970s , the anti @-@ terrorism industry offered bullet @-@ proof vehicles , bugging devices and security hardware , so Mardas set up various companies offering these products to royalty and VIPs . King Hussein of Jordan bought a fleet of cars that Mardas had customised . In 1987 , Mardas was a managing director of Alcom Ltd , which specialised in electronic communications and security . He now lives in Greece .

= = London and The Beatles = =

The 21 @-@ year @-@ old Yanni Alexis Mardas first arrived in England on a student visa in 1965 , befriending John Dunbar of the Indica Gallery in London , and later moving in with him in a flat on Bentinck Street , which was where Mardas first met Lennon . Known as Yanni Mardas , he found employment as a television repairman . Dunbar later introduced Mardas to Brian Jones , after Mardas exhibited his Kinetic Light Sculptures at the Indica Gallery . Dunbar worked with Mardas on the ? psychedelic light box ? for The Rolling Stones ' three @-@ week tour of Europe in 1967 , although they were not impressed with the results . Dunbar later said : " He was quite cunning in the way he pitched his thing . He knew enough to know how to wind people up and to what extent . He was a fucking TV repairman : Yanni Mardas , none of this ' Magic Alex ' shit ! "

Jones introduced Mardas to Lennon , and it was at this point that Mardas impressed Lennon with the Nothing Box ; a small plastic box with randomly blinking lights that Lennon would stare at for hours while under the influence of LSD . Lennon later introduced the renamed John Alexis Mardas as his " new guru " , calling him " Magic Alex " . Mardas allegedly told Lennon about ideas for futuristic electronic devices he was " working on " , which he later denied either promising or discussing : a telephone that responded to its owner 's voice and could identify who was calling , a force field that would surround The Beatles ' homes , an X @-@ ray camera , paint that would make anything invisible , car paint that would change colour by flicking a switch , and wallpaper speakers , which would actually be a part of the wallpaper . Mardas later asked for the V @-@ 12 engines from Lennon 's Rolls @-@ Royce and George Harrison 's Ferrari Berlinetta car , so he could build a flying saucer . Mardas also denied making these claims .

The Beatles set up a company for Mardas called Fiftyshapes Ltd . , in September 1967 , and Mardas later became one of the first employees of the newly formed Apple Corps , earning £ 40 a week and receiving 10 % of any profits made from his inventions .

The Beatles often called Mardas the " Greek wizard " , and Paul McCartney remembered being interested in his ideas : ? Well , if you [ Mardas ] could do that , we ? d like one " . It was always , ' We ? d like one ' ? . Mardas ' ideas were not confined to the realms of electronic wizardry , but included songwriting involvement , with a Lennon @-@ Mardas composition , " What 's the New Mary Jane " , originally meant for inclusion on The White Album .

Mardas was given his own laboratory called Apple Electronics , at 34 Boston Place , Westminster , London , and was helped to obtain a British work visa . His pay eventually rose to £ 6 @,@ 000 per year , and an American patent attorney , Alfred Crotti , moved to England to assist Mardas . In a historical TV promo for Apple Corps that 's included on The Beatles Anthology DVD , Mardas is shown wearing a white laboratory assistant 's coat in Apple Electronics ( with loud oscillating noises in the background ) saying , " Hello , I 'm Alexis , from Apple Electronics . I would like to say ' Hello ' to all my brothers around the world , and to all the girls around the world , and to all the electronic

people around the world . That is Apple Electronics . " Mardas then turns and points back to a collection of two portable 2 @-@ track recorders in wooden boxes , a 2 @-@ track studio recording machine , voltage meters , a hi @-@ fi amplifier , an oscilloscope and a TV screen showing pulsating psychedelic balloon shapes . A mysterious fire at the laboratory prevented Mardas from presenting his inventions , but he later said : " I 'm a rock gardener , and now I 'm doing electronics . Maybe next year , I make films or poems . I have no formal training in any of these , but this is irrelevant " .

= = = Greece = = =

The Beatles had tried in 1964 to buy the 14 @-@ acre ( 57 @,@ 000 m2 ) Trinity Island , off the coast of the Greek island of Euboea ( pronounced EV @-@ i @-@ a ) ( resembling a guitar in shape ) but the owners were not interested in a sale . Lennon was still interested in buying or leasing an island to live on together , and discussed it with the other Beatles on 19 July 1967 . Mardas ' father was a major in the Greek secret police , and Mardas explained that through him The Beatles would have access to Greek government connections , which would speed the acquisition of an island , as many islands did have the right certificates of ownership and were subject to government restrictions . On 22 July 1967 , Harrison and his wife , Pattie Boyd , Ringo Starr and Neil Aspinall flew to Athens , where they stayed in Mardas ' parents ' house overnight until Lennon , Cynthia Lennon , and their son , Julian Lennon , McCartney and Jane Asher , Pattie Boyd 's 16 @-@ year @-@ old sister , Paula , Mal Evans and Alistair Taylor set off for Athens .

Their chartered yacht , the MV Arvi , was detained in Crete because of bad weather , so the party had to wait in Athens for three days . Taylor complained that on a trip to a small hill village , " We came round a corner of the peaceful road only to find hundreds of photographers clicking away at us " , which Mardas had organised . McCartney later said that while sailing around Greek islands , everybody just sat around and took LSD . They eventually found the 80 @-@ acre ( 320 @,@ 000 m2 ) island of Leslo , which had a small fishing village , four beaches and a large olive grove . Four small neighbouring islands surrounded it ( which were planned as one for each Beatle ) so the island was bought for £ 95 @,@ 000 ( with a 25 % premium ) but was sold for a modest profit a few months later , after all four Beatles lost interest in the idea .

= = = Apple Boutique and marriage = = =

On 1 August 1967 , Mardas , Aspinall and Derek Taylor , were invited by Harrison to stay at the home of Robert Fitzpatrick , on Blue Jay Way , and on 7 August 1967 , Harrison and his wife visited San Francisco 's Haight @-@ Ashbury district with Mardas . The Apple Boutique , at 94 Baker Street , London , was one of the first business ventures made by The Beatles ' fledgling Apple Corps , and Mardas ( at great expense ) was commissioned to create one of his ideas ; an " artificial sun " which would light up the night @-@ time sky , for the opening on 7 December 1967 . When the time came for Mardas to produce his artificial sun , he claimed that there was not a strong enough energy supply to power it , which was accepted by The Beatles . Mardas appeared ( uncredited ) in the Beatles ' TV movie Magical Mystery Tour , which was first broadcast on BBC1 on Boxing Day in 1967 . On 11 July 1968 , 26 @-@ year @-@ old Mardas married 22 @-@ year @-@ old Eufrosyne Doxiades ( the daughter of a respected Greek architect ) at St Sophia 's Church , London . Harrison and his wife attended , and Lennon ( who was there with Yoko Ono ) was joint best man , along with Donovan .

= = = Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and India = = =

Mardas and Aspinall joined Lennon and Harrison in India , where they were studying meditation under the tutelage of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi , although Starr had flown back to England ? complaining the Indian food did not agree with him ? and McCartney had left on 24 March 1968 . When Mardas first met the Maharishi , he said sarcastically , " I know you ! Didn 't I meet you in

Greece years ago ? "

Mardas was jealous about the control the Maharishi had over Lennon , and during one of their frequent walks through the woods he asked Lennon why the Maharishi always had an accountant by his side . Lennon replied that The Beatles ( or Lennon and Harrison ) were considering donating a large part of their income to the Maharishi 's bank accounts in Switzerland . When Mardas questioned the Maharishi about this , he offered money to Mardas to build a high @-@ powered radio station , so he could broadcast his teachings to the whole of India .

Alcohol was not allowed in the Maharishi 's ashram , but Mardas smuggled some in from Dehra Dun , and later reported to Lennon and Harrison that the Maharishi had sex with a young American student , and had made a sexual advance toward Mia Farrow . This was not fully supported in Farrow 's autobiography What Falls Away ( 1997 ) , writing that she may have misinterpreted the supposed sexual advance . Mardas continued to insist the Maharishi was not what he said he was ; even making Harrison unsure . Lennon mused in 1970 : " Well , it must be true , because if George [ Harrison ] is doubting him , there must be something in it " . Lennon and Harrison confronted the Maharishi , but the startled Maharishi 's answers did not satisfy them , and they decided to leave the camp . Mardas insisted that they ( Lennon , Harrison and their respective wives ) must leave the camp at once , or the Maharishi might send down some " black magic " on them . Mardas then went down to Dehra Dun to organise taxis for the next morning to take them all to Delhi .

Cynthia Lennon personally believed that Mardas invented the story about sexual impropriety to undermine the Maharishi 's influence on The Beatles , as Mardas was always jealous of anyone having Lennon 's attention . Harrison and McCartney later offered their apologies to the Maharishi ( McCartney said that he did not believe the accusation at all ) . In 2010 , Mardas issued a statement denying that he had spread rumours .

= = = Lennon 's divorce = = =

After returning to England in May 1968 , Lennon suggested that Cynthia take a holiday in Greece with Mardas , Donovan , Boyd , and her sister . Lennon said that he would be very busy recording what would become The White Album and that it would do her some good to take a break with Mardas , his girlfriend Jenny Boyd , and others . Cynthia arrived home one day early from Greece on 22 May 1968 . She and Mardas discovered Lennon and Ono sitting cross @-@ legged on the floor , staring into each other 's eyes , and found Ono 's slippers outside the Lennons ' marital bedroom door . Cynthia asked Boyd and Mardas if she could spend the night at their apartment . At the apartment Boyd went straight to bed , but Mardas got Cynthia drunk and tried to convince her that they should both run away together . After Cynthia had been sick in the bathroom she collapsed on a bed in the spare bedroom , but Mardas joined her and tried to kiss her until she ( in her words ) " pushed him away " . Brian Epstein 's personal assistant , Peter Brown , maintains that Cynthia did sleep with Mardas , saying : " She knew it was a mistake the moment it happened , especially with Alex [ Mardas ] , whom she had never trusted , nor even liked " .

Lennon went to New York with McCartney shortly after and told Cynthia she could not go with them , so Cynthia went on a trip to Italy with her mother . During Cynthia 's holiday in Italy , an " agitated " Mardas unexpectedly arrived ( pacing up and down outside Cynthia 's hotel until she returned ) , giving the news that Lennon was planning to sue Cynthia for divorce on grounds of adultery , seek sole custody of Julian , and send Cynthia " back to Hoylake " . Mardas also said that he intended to testify in court that Cynthia had committed adultery with him . She said in 2005 : " The mere fact that Magic Alex [ Mardas ] arrived in Italy in the middle of the night without any prior knowledge of where I was staying made me extremely suspicious . I was being coerced into making it easy for John [ Lennon ] and Yoko to accuse me of doing something that would make them not look so bad " .

= = = Apple Studio = = =

Mardas often said that the Abbey Road studio was " no good " , much to producer George Martin 's annoyance : " The trouble was that Alex was always coming to the studios to see what we were

doing and to learn from it , while at the same time saying ? These people are so out of date . ? But I found it very difficult to chuck him out , because the boys liked him so much . Since it was very obvious that I didn't , a minor schism developed " . Mardas boasted that he could build a much better studio , with a 72 @-@ track tape machine , instead of the 4 @-@ track at Abbey Road ? which was being updated at the time to an 8 @-@ track ? so he was given the job of designing the new Apple Studio in the basement of Apple headquarters in Savile Row . One of Mardas ' more outrageous plans was to replace the acoustic baffles around Starr 's drums with an invisible sonic force field . Starr remembered that Mardas bought some " huge " computers from British Aerospace , which were stored in his barn , but " they never left the barn " , and were later sold as scrap metal .

Mardas gave the Beatles regular reports of his progress , but when they required their new studio in January 1969 , during the Get Back project that became Let It Be , they discovered an unusable studio : no 72 @-@ track tape deck ( Mardas had reduced it to 16 tracks ) , no soundproofing , no talkback ( intercom ) system , and not even a patch bay to run the wiring between the control room and the 16 speakers that Mardas had fixed haphazardly to the walls . The only new piece of sound equipment present was a crude mixing console which Mardas had built , which looked ( in the words of Martin 's assistant , Dave Harries ) like " bits of wood and an old oscilloscope " . The console was scrapped after just one session . Harrison said it was " chaos " , and that they had to " rip it all out and start again , " calling it " the biggest disaster of all time . " Harrison 's suspicions of Mardas ' competence had been raised when he saw him wandering around in a white coat with a clipboard , and considered the possibility that Mardas had " just read the latest version of Science Weekly , and used its ideas " . Mardas later stated that he had never been in the basement of Savile Row , as the studio equipment he was building was being tested in Apple Electronics , at Boston Place , Marylebone .

The Beatles asked producer Martin to come to the rescue , so he borrowed two four @-@ track recorders from EMI , and long @-@ time Beatles ' engineer Geoff Emerick was given the task of building and setting up a studio with portable equipment . After Allen Klein was brought in to be The Beatles ' manager in 1969 , he closed Apple Electronics , and Mardas left the company . It was later estimated that Mardas ' ideas and projects had cost The Beatles at least £ 300 @, @ 000 ( 3 million British pounds today ) . Starr once approved of one of Mardas ' ideas : " He [ Mardas ] had an idea to stop people taping our records off the radio ? you ? d have to have a decoder to get the signal , and then we thought we could sell the time and put commercials on instead . We brought EMI and Capitol in from America to look at it , but they weren't interested at all " .

= = Security consultant = =

In the 1970s , the anti @-@ terrorism industry offered bullet @-@ proof vehicles , bugging devices and security hardware . Mardas set up various companies offering these products to royalty and VIPs , using the former King of Greece as his principal salesman . Ex @-@ King Constantine II of Greece ( then exiled in Britain ) provided contacts to a half a dozen royal families for Mardas , and had close contact with the deposed Shah of Iran , who had moved to Mexico . The Shah was one of the first customers for the customised bullet @-@ proof cars that Mardas was offering , and was believed to have financially assisted Mardas ' companies .

In 1974 , Mardas held an expensive party for the then Spanish heir , Prince Juan Carlos , which secured Mardas a contract . After the assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco the Spanish royal family thought it should acquire more bullet @-@ proof cars , although one car was shipped to England , where it was parked in Chobham for almost a year as nobody knew how to do the work needed to upgrade it . The second contract ( worth over £ 1 / 2 million ) allowed Mardas to set up new security companies : Alcom Devices Ltd , and Night Vision Systems Ltd ( under the collective name of " Project Alcom " ) in St Albans Mews off Edgware Road , London , to provide a sophisticated communications system for Juan Carlos , so he could be in constant contact with his security services . Mardas employed Arthur Johnson ( known as Johnny Johnson ) , a former M.O.D. official .

The Sultan of Oman ordered six Mercedes 450 limousines in 1977 , but quickly discovered that they

were not as safe as he had been led to believe . His ex @-@ SAS bodyguards tested one of the cars in the desert in July 1977 , by firing at them , but a bullet hit an emergency air cylinder , which led to the petrol tank blowing up , burning the whole car . The remaining cars were immediately sent back , with a demand to refund the money spent . King Hussein of Jordan had a fleet of cars that Mardas customised , but carried out a safety test on them with live ammunition in November 1977 . One eyewitness reported that the cars could be more life @-@ threatening than ordinary vehicles , as bullets easily pierced the armour @-@ plating , and the thick armoured glass broke into jagged splinters when struck . Hussein ordered that the cars be restored to their previous state . These failures convinced Mardas and Constantine to look at the growing European market for anti @-@ terrorist protection , setting up a factory in London to produce ? bullet @-@ proof ? cars in 1978 . This was financed by an investment of over £ 1 million through anonymous Monaco and Swiss bank accounts , which were believed to be controlled by the Shah .

= = The media and the courts = =

On 28 February 1988 , The Observer published an article naming Mardas as an arms dealer , but printed an apology on 30 April 1989 . After an article on 18 September 1988 ( " Joan 's Secret Lover " ) , and another a week later , The People newspaper was taken to court by Mardas , who won £ 75 @,@ 000 in damages . The Daily Mail published an apology and gave an undisclosed sum in damages on 16 January 2004 , after an article on 11 June 2003 , which accused Mardas of dealings that would later resurface in his claim against the New York Times in 2008 .

The Independent newspaper apologised on 21 August 2006 , writing that on 14 June 2006 , the paper had wrongly reported Mardas ' involvement with Apple Electronics Ltd . They corrected the earlier piece by writing that Mardas had not been a company employee , but a director and shareholder of Apple Electronics , and was not sacked , but resigned his directorship in May 1971 , while still retaining his shareholding , until giving it to Apple Corps some years later . The paper accepted that Mardas ? did not claim to have invented electric paint , a flying saucer or a recording studio with a ? sonic force field ? or cause his employers to waste money on such ideas . We apologise to Mr. Mardas for these errors " .

In 2008 , Mardas won the right to sue the New York Times in England related to an online article which it said he was a charlatan . In a story about the Maharishi , Allan Kozinn had written : " Alexis Mardas , a supposed inventor and charlatan who had become a Beatles ? insider " . After an appeal , Mardas won the right to continue his case of defamation against the New York Times in 2009 . After the New York Times produced a witness , Sir Harry Evans , who gave evidence supporting the journalistic responsibility of the paper , Mardas said he would not pursue the case further , but only if the paper would publicly explain that by labelling him as a charlatan , it did not mean to imply that he was a conman . On 4 March 2010 , the New York Times published an editor 's update to the 2008 article , saying : " While expressing skepticism about his work as an inventor during that period , the article did not accuse Mr. Mardas of engaging in fraudulent dealings or criminality ... The Times ' s reporting on those events was attributed to Paul McCartney and based on widely published accounts from books and magazines ... " .

= = Later years and present = =

Mardas put 15 items from his collection of Lennon memorabilia up for sale on 5 May 2004 at Christie 's in South Kensington , London . Among the sale was Lennon ' s leather collar worn during 1967 and 1968 ( at the launch party for the Sgt. Pepper 's Lonely Hearts Club Band LP , and on the cover of Lennon and Ono ' s Unfinished Music No.1 : Two Virgins ) , as well as a custom Vox Kensington guitar , a coloured felt pen drawing called " Strong " , and a pen and ink drawing by Lennon entitled ? Happy Fish ? . Mardas said he planned to donate the money to a charity in Greece . The ' custom Vox Kensington guitar ' later sold at an auction for £ 269 @,@ 000 on 19 May 2013 . Link label Mardas is now living in Athens .