Who Is Peter Todd, The Man Named By HBO As Bitcoin's Mystery Creator Satoshi Nakamoto?

[Billy Bambrough](#)   Oct 8, 2024,

Satoshi Nakamoto—[the mysterious, anonymous creator of bitcoin](#)—has successfully kept their real identity hidden since they published bitcoin's white paper in 2008.

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Bitcoin has become a $1.2 trillion asset ([though one Wall Street giant has predicted it could be about to go far higher](#)) over the last 15 years—making the man, woman or group known only as Satoshi Nakamoto worth almost $70 billion if they still control the 1.1 million bitcoins they're believed to hold across a series of wallet addresses.

Now, HBO documentary film maker Cullen Hoback has named Peter Todd, a bitcoin core developer who has been involved with bitcoin since 2010, as who he believes to be the real-world identity of Satoshi Nakamoto.

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The mystery of Satoshi Nakamoto has gripped the bitcoin world for the last 15 years as the bitcoin ... [+]

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"What if the real reason for using the name Satoshi, for the anonymity, was so that people could take bitcoin seriously, so they could believe it was created by [a famous cryptographer] and not some kid still in school," Hoback said during the [Money Electric: The Bitcoin Mystery](#) documentary on HBO before putting his theory directly to Todd—who was in his early 20s and finishing a fine arts degree in 2008, the year Satoshi Nakamoto published the bitcoin white paper.

"Here's what I think happened, possibly," Hoback said, speaking on camera to Todd and Adam Back, the chief executive of bitcoin development

company Blockstream that Todd has worked with since the earliest days of bitcoin.

"I think that John Dillon [an anonymous BitcoinTalk contributor that some believe to have been linked to the intelligence community] was created so you would have an excuse to make replace-by-fee, a concept you had envisioned years earlier but needed some kind of cover in order to make, and you also needed some cover for the 2010 post," Hoback told Todd, referring to the Bitcoin Improvement Proposal 125 introduced by Todd in 2015 and a 2010 BitcoinTalk post replying to Satoshi Nakamoto that Hoback believes was accidentally posted using Todd's profile.

Hoback's theory relies on a chat log message written by Todd in which he claims to be the "world's leading expert on how to sacrifice your bitcoins ... I've done one such sacrifice and I did it by hand," Todd wrote.

Hoback characterized the message as an "admission" by Todd that he destroyed his ability to access the 1.1 million bitcoin believed to be held by Satoshi Nakamoto, something Todd denies.

"It's ludicrous," Todd told Hoback, also denying he's John Dillon. "This is going to be very funny when you put this into the documentary and a bunch of bitcoiners watch it."

Ahead of the documentary airing, leaked clips appeared online, spreading on the social media site X.

In a statement to *Coindesk*, Todd denied he's Satoshi Nakamoto, saying Hoback is "grasping at straws."

Who Is Peter Todd?

Todd is a Canadian who started contributing to bitcoin's code in 2012 and [describes](#) himself as a "cryptochronomancer" on X.

During bitcoin's so-called blocksize war, waged from August 2015 to November 2017, Todd was on the side of the "small blockers"—along with Adam Back and Blockstream—who wanted to keep bitcoin's 1 megabyte limit, arguing against the "big blockers" who wanted to increase the block size to enable cheaper and faster transactions.

The small blockers won, forcing those who had opted to increase the blocksize to "fork" from bitcoin, creating the bitcoin cash cryptocurrency.

Todd is the founder of OpenTimestamps, an open-source project designed to provide a standard format for blockchain timestamping.

He has worked on so-called "bitcoin 2.0" projects, including Counterparty, Mastercoin and Colored Coins and was involved in the launch of privacy coin zcash in 2016 [alongside](#) NSA whistle blower Edward Snowden—[publicly](#) destroying the computer he used to create the cryptocurrency.

In 2019, Todd was accused of sexual misconduct by privacy-tech expert Isis Lovecruft, a developer of the Tor identity-masking onion browser, [settling](#) his defamation suit filed in response to the allegation in 2020.