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# HBO Bitcoin doc ‘Money Electric’ hunts for Satoshi Nakamoto—see a first look at the trailer

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Fast Company spoke with filmmaker Cullen Hoback about

his new movie, which airs on HBO and streams on Max.



[Photo: HBO]

BY **SAM BECKER** 7 MINUTE READ

## Who is Satoshi Nakamoto?

This is the burning question at the heart of the cryptocurrency space, and it has been since Bitcoin was first introduced to the world more than 15 years ago.

Satoshi Nakamoto is the moniker used by the individual (or individuals) who developed Bitcoin, **published the Bitcoin white paper**, and laid out a vision for how the cryptocurrency could be used to change the world. The thing is, nobody knows who Satoshi Nakamoto is. At least nobody has admitted to knowing who

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they are, even though **some people have claimed** to be Satoshi in the past.

As such, here we are, with Bitcoin now more or less a fixture of the financial system and trading for more than \$60,000 as of writing. With Satoshi, whoever they are, still holding (and having never touched) a stash of 1.1 million Bitcoins, they could be one of the wealthiest people in the world. That makes Satoshi a pretty important person with, potentially, a significant amount of power.



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Money Electric: The Bitcoin Mystery | O...



That's one of the reasons that filmmaker Cullen Hoback set his sights on unmasking Satoshi in his new film, *Money Electric: The Bitcoin Mystery*, which airs on HBO on October 8 at 9 p.m. ET and will be available for streaming on Max.

Hoback—whose previous work includes *Q: Into The Storm* and *Terms and Conditions May Apply*—spoke with Fast Company about the new film, including what sparked his interest in the Satoshi mystery, why unmasking Satoshi is important, and why he thinks the film's conclusions will be controversial.

*This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.*

**I knew about the Satoshi Nakamoto mystery and have always wondered why somebody didn't just spend some significant time trying to figure this out. So, what sparked your interest in this, and what was the genesis of the project?**

How do you spend three intense years just reading forum posts and looking through emails? I knew what Bitcoin was before 2017,

and that's when I really started to wrap my head around the inner workings of it. I think anybody who is interested in investigations in general, or, like, has a penchant for trying to solve mysteries, looks at the Satoshi case and goes, that'd be a fun thing to get into.

But it's also something that so many people have speculated on over the years, and there's this question of whether you can actually solve it or not. Or, can you at least put together a really good case? Of course, I didn't know if we were going to be able to solve it. And the reason that I jumped into this story following the Q series (Q: Into the Storm), was, actually, Adam McKay.



**Cullen Hoback** [Photo: HBO]

It's just a story that has been out there for so long, and I wanted to be able to put together a pretty sound case. And I hoped that we would be able to use some of the experience gained from, doing previous digital forensics on Q and kind of the lessons learned with the cat and mouse of these anonymous figures who are doing a lot of things to cover their trail, but then also the psychology of what it's like to have created something, you know, previously, like Q, but now the psychology of what it's like to create something like Bitcoin, and if they're alive, be holding on to that secret.

And that, to me, is pretty fascinating. I think that puts us in a pretty good position to try to crack it. And having the privilege of three years really, to just devote to investigating this story, digging into everything we could read on it, looking into every suspect, reading every forum, reading an unreasonable amount of forum posts, put us in a position to be able to do something that I just don't know that most have the resources or time to really be able to pursue.

**If we can start at the beginning, can you**

**explain how you start to investigate? Was there a larger strategy, or did you see what was already known, and pick up the trail from there?**

You have to pick up where other researchers have left off. There's obviously been a lot of energy and research put into trying to crack this mystery. And that's part of why there are four or five key names that people tend to circle back to—people who seem like, even if they're not Satoshi, they might know who Satoshi is. Or, you can start to map that Bitcoin's origin story emanates from this network or these individuals.

I put that on a shelf for a while and said, all right, if I can get prolonged access to one of them as an entry point, that might unlock the larger story. That entry point was Adam Back[...]so it became a key entry point to unlocking the bigger mystery.

**What do you think the value is of figuring out who Satoshi is? Why might this be important, especially to people who aren't in the crypto space?**

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There's real value. I think there's a narrative that exists that Satoshi disappeared and was never heard from again. I think if Satoshi is actively involved in driving global Bitcoin adoption, rendering themselves the richest person on Earth? That's a different story. You know how we used to rely on a gold standard? There's a drive right now to rely on a Bitcoin standard, and it would be like one unknown person controlling one-twentieth of all the gold.

Just having this massive stockpile, because Bitcoin is being baked into the backbone of countries now, it's being used as legal tender in some places. It's being used in 401(k)s. It's now being traded on Wall Street. This question of



whether or not there's an anonymous figure out there who controls a giant share of Bitcoin becomes increasingly relevant. And I think this is very important, and this is one of the things I kept coming back to, is that Satoshi could have destroyed their stash in a public way for everyone to see. Assuming they were alive, this is something they could have done. This would have been good for, you know, sort of Satoshi's security and for the security and longevity of Bitcoin. But Satoshi didn't do that—which means that the possibility still exists. So, trying to understand who is behind this, whether or not they would pull that lever, is very important.

**As a filmmaker, there's no guarantee that you were going to have an answer all that digging into who Satoshi is. How do you gauge that? How do you consider the fact that you could work so hard and potentially, not see any payoff?**

I guess that's the risk of these kinds of projects. We're not looking at a case that's been in the courts or something like that. We're not looking at something in the past. We're looking at a

real-time investigation. And there's always a risk with any real-time investigation, especially when you're pouring your own resources into it. HBO came on somewhere in the middle of this project.

Once we'd secured what I felt was enough access to be able to start to gauge the network in real life, not online, you know, because that's the other thing about these types of stories, is that you can only get so far with, you know, what's left on the internet? I think that if this could be solved on the internet, it would've been solved, I think that helps in that it's like a compass, and it points you in the direction of the key networks and key players. And then you just have to spend time with them, get to know them, get to know who they know. See who they interact with and who they introduce you to.

**Not to spoil anything, but do you feel like you've made headway in solving the mystery?**

I think we make a hell of a case in the film, and I think that who we land on is unexpected and is going to result in a fair amount of controversy. I think that people are going to

debate it regardless of how strong of a case we made, and that's fine. That's the nature of this space. We had a lot more evidence than we were able to include in the film.

But it's going to be up to the audience—how they view the case, how they view the evidence, and whether or not they're convinced.

*See the trailer for Money Electric [here](#) or via the embedded video above.*

*Correction: An earlier version of this story misspelled Cullen Hoback's last name.*

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sam Becker is a freelance writer and journalist based near New York City. He is a native of the Pacific Northwest, and a graduate of Washington State University, and his work has appeared in and on Fortune, CNBC, TIME, and more. [More](#)

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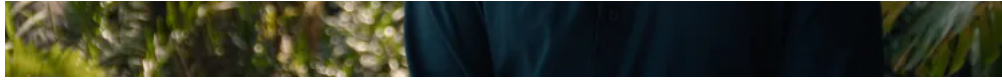
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# Growing green jobs

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Global efforts to address climate change are creating a green economy that’s hungry for skilled workers and innovative solutions





Dov Rosenmann is featured in the new docuseries “Green Works;” his work with Earthworm Foundation in Brazil promotes sustainable practices and enhances organizational development.

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BY **FASTCO WORKS** 4 MINUTE READ

The increasingly visible effects of climate change—extreme weather, drought, rising sea levels, and other ecological disasters—have driven individuals and organizations around the world to search for solutions. Governments are spending billions of dollars on infrastructure. Consumers are demanding that companies provide more sustainable products. Companies are investing heavily in research, leading to breakthrough technologies.

Collectively, these efforts have created an emerging—and fast-growing— “green” economy. Signs of it are all around. Power companies are pumping huge sums of money into ambitious renewable energy projects. Automakers are opening EV manufacturing plants. Consumer goods firms are reformulating products and switching to new forms of packaging in a bid to be more sustainable.

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This ongoing transformation of the global economy will require workers with specialized skills, such as environmental engineers to help corporations measure and reduce carbon footprints, agricultural experts to redesign farm practices, and material scientists to innovate more sustainable products.

Worldwide, we may see **300 million** new “green collar” jobs by 2050.

Three-quarters of adults believe that green jobs are crucial to addressing climate change, according to a **global survey conducted by 3M** earlier this year. Many respondents believe our best hope of addressing climate change is developing workers with the skills, commitment, and scientific knowledge to make a difference. To spotlight the critical need for more talent to support the green transition, 3M partnered with Generous Films to produce a global docuseries called “**Green Works**.” The film highlights five individuals from diverse backgrounds who are working across industries to build a more sustainable future and aims to inspire more professionals to join the effort.

“More and more jobs are becoming green jobs,” says Gayle Schueller, senior vice president and chief sustainability officer for 3M. “Our employees and our potential employees are really motivated by that. These jobs really have the potential to change the world.”

### **“BUILDING BLOCKS FOR GREEN JOBS”**

Demand for workers with green skills is far outpacing supply, according to a 2023 [study](#) conducted by LinkedIn. The share of job postings requiring green skills increased 22.4% between 2022 and 2023, while the share of green talent in the workforce grew by only 12.3%.

The need for these skills extends beyond technical fields such as wind turbine repair or emissions control specialists. Jobs related to public policy, community organizing, healthcare, and disaster recovery are being transformed by the green economy. Skills like data analysis, project management, and collaboration can be as valuable to the green economy as engineering.

3M is working to increase the green capabilities of its entire workforce, encouraging employees

in every position to enhance their sustainability and climate skills. Resources such as **Job Function Action Guides** highlight areas that individuals can work to develop and actions they can take given their position and function within 3M. “We all have a role to play in this,” says Michael Stroik, 3M’s vice president of **3Mgives**, the company’s community impact arm. “We all need to find ways to build green skills and to ‘green’ your job overall. It’s on all of us.”

The transition to a less carbon-intensive economy will require a comprehensive and collaborative effort. Educators, industry leaders, and government agencies must work together to ensure that workers quickly gain the green skills required. They also need to collaborate across sectors to ensure people who have been traditionally underrepresented in sciences and technology have access to training.

At 3M, supporting a strong talent pipeline includes charitable giving that improves access to STEM and skilled trades education. The company’s workforce training strategy also involves opening its manufacturing plants to



outside groups and sharing information about the technologies that are changing how work gets done with representatives of technical colleges, high schools, middle schools, and communities worldwide.

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“It feels like our responsibility as a STEM jobs provider,” Stroik says. “We’re literally designing factories and labs of the future. STEM education and the trades are the building blocks for what green jobs require.”

In addition to releasing “Green Works,” 3M is partnering with **Work on Climate**, a nonprofit on a mission to build the workforce needed to help solve climate change equitably and justly. Work on Climate is known for building the world’s largest online community that helps

professionals find green jobs. Together, the companies aim to offer practical next steps and resources for professionals interested in pursuing a green career. And to help expand global support for green careers, 3Mgives is helping to fund the work of **Climate Action Pathways for Schools** in California, **WorldSkills Germany**, **Korea Science Service**, and **Earthworm Foundation** in Brazil and Canada.

## **SUSTAINABLE DESIGN**

Five years ago, 3M acted on its belief that science is the key to improving the environment. The company defined its Sustainability Value Commitment, a requirement that all new products should positively impact people and the planet—something that 100% of new products have achieved ever since. The program encourages focus on recycling, reusability, energy savings, responsible sourcing, and other aspects of sustainability.

One of the products created under the program is Scotch Cushion Lock Protective Wrap, an alternative to bubble wrap made from 100% recycled paper. Inspired by the Japanese art of

*kirigami*, Cushion Lock can twist and expand from a flat roll to fill a package while using up to 60% less material than plastic bubble wrap. This ability to transform makes it easier to ship and store, so fewer trucks are required to ship the product, and its distribution has a lower carbon footprint.

Another advancement has been granules for asphalt roof shingles that absorb smog and reflect the heat-generating elements of light—perfect attributes for construction in communities where air pollution and heat islands occur. 3M scientists developed the concept after attending conferences where builders were discussing environmental concerns, not specific materials.

“Science is the best way to solve our sustainability challenges,” Schueller says. “By applying science, we can innovate and deliver solutions that were previously unimaginable and help create a brighter future for everyone.”

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