

ROSS ULBRICHT CASE OVERVIEW

[Ross Ulbricht](#), a peaceful first-time offender, is serving a double life sentence plus 40 years, without parole, for all [non-violent](#) charges associated with creating an e-commerce website called Silk Road. An Eagle Scout and scholarship student, he was a 26-year-old idealistic libertarian—passionate about free markets and privacy—when he made the site. Ross was never prosecuted for causing harm or bodily injury and no victim was named at trial.



ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY

Ross has expressed heartfelt remorse for creating Silk Road and accepts responsibility for the mistakes he made. Now much wiser and more mature, he has vowed that, should he be released, he would never reoffend again.

[Silk Road](#) was an online marketplace similar to eBay, that emphasized privacy and used Bitcoin as the means of exchange. Based on the non-aggression principle, it allowed people to voluntarily buy and sell what they chose, as long as no third party was harmed. Consequently, the site [prohibited](#) child pornography, violent services, and generally anything used to “harm or defraud” others. Items exchanged included books, art, clothing, and electronics. However, because of the site’s anonymity, many also chose to exchange drugs, most commonly personal use amounts of marijuana (as shown by a Carnegie Mellon University [study](#)). Ross was not accused of selling drugs or illegal items himself, nor did he launder money or hack computers, but was held responsible for what others listed on the site.

SENTENCING DISPARITY, UNCHARGED CONDUCT, AND MORE

Ross was smeared with unprosecuted, [false allegations](#) of murder-for-hire that never occurred—and were later dismissed *with prejudice*. His case was also tainted by [corrupt investigators](#) (later sent to prison).

All the other [defendants](#) received sentences of six years on average, including the actual drug sellers, the men who helped run Silk Road, and the men behind Silk Road 2.0, a larger replica. Nearly all are free today.

In 2018, Ross and his legal team at Williams & Connolly, supported by [21](#) organizations, [petitioned](#) the Supreme Court challenging important 4th and 6th Amendment violations, but the Court declined to hear the case.

WIDESPREAD SUPPORT

Ross has been steadfastly supported by family and friends, and by many across the political spectrum. There is a strong consensus that his sentence is unjust and disproportionate. The broad, diverse and bipartisan support for his clemency includes over [250](#) organizations, eminent individuals and leaders. Ross’s clemency petition has over [1/2 million](#) signatures and is the largest to President Biden on Change.org.

EXEMPLARY CONDUCT

October 1, 2023 will mark the beginning of Ross’s **11th** year in prison. He has been a “model” prisoner as recognized by BOP staff—leading classes, tutoring, and mediating conflicts. He also serves as a Suicide Watch Companion. He has never received a disciplinary sanction.

Ross also dedicated part of the sale of his art to helping current and former prisoners, through a charitable fund called [Art4Giving](#). Nearly \$700,000 has been donated to charity so far.

Ross clings to the hope of a second chance, and dreams of a future where he can start a family with his fiancée and make positive contributions to society.



For more information, visit [FreeRoss.org](#)