

## Misconceptions about Ross Ulbricht and his case

Many news articles about Ross Ulbricht and his case present sensationalized, inaccurate or false information.

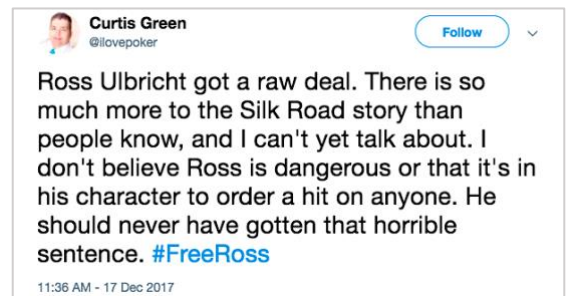
### “Ross paid to have people killed”

**False.** Never charged at trial (SDNY) or ruled on by a jury, these unprosecuted allegations were left pending for years and were later dismissed *with prejudice* by the District of Maryland (MD is where the only charge of murder-for-hire was ever filed when Ross was arrested).

The accusations relied on anonymous chat logs and text files never proven to have been authored by Ross. Hard evidence and testimony, including from the government, show that multiple administrators (DPRs) operated the site (meaning they had access to the same chat logs). Two corrupt investigators (later sent to prison) also had unfettered access to Silk Road, could act as DPR and were admittedly involved in numerous plots.

Ross has always denied these allegations. Even Curtis Green, the only alleged victim ever identified, is a longtime, fervent supporter of Ross (and has written the President asking him to free Ross).

See [Smearred with False Allegations](#) and [Proof of Multiple DPRs](#)



*From the alleged “victim”*

### “People overdosed from drugs bought on Silk Road and this was presented to Ross’s jury at trial”

**False.** This allegation was never charged at trial or presented to jurors. No victim was named at trial. No death was ever proven to be linked to the site. Ross was never prosecuted for causing harm or bodily injury.

Months after Ross’s trial ended and the jury had rendered their verdict, prosecutors discussed allegations of overdose during the sentencing hearing and brought in parents of two alleged victims for impact statements. Many believe this was another prosecutorial technique to smear Ross and justify an extreme sentence.

A detailed 11-page forensic pathology [report](#) concluded that no cause of death could neither be scientifically determined nor linked to Silk Road. Even the Court of Appeals found such testimony at sentencing inappropriate.

Many respected organizations have spoken against these uncharged allegations. Briefs can be read [here](#), [here](#), [here](#).

See [Uncharged Allegations](#)

Even the appellate court panel found certain testimony related to uncharged crimes inappropriate, with Judge Gerald Lynch concerned that testimony from parents of alleged Silk Road customers who died “put an extraordinary thumb on the scale that shouldn't be there.... Does this [testimony] create an enormous emotional overload for something that's effectively present in every heroin case?” Lynch asked. “Why does this guy get a life sentence?” He went on to call the sentence “quite a leap.” Oral Argument at

*Excerpt from [brief](#) joined by National Lawyers Guild, American Conservative Union Foundation, FreedomWorks, Judge Nancy Gertner, and more.*

### **“Silk Road allowed the sale of child porn, human organs, hitmen, and other violent listings”**

**False.** Even the government never alleged this. Silk Road was a free market based on the libertarian non-aggression principle. The site’s guiding philosophy was that transactions must be voluntary, and no third party is harmed. The Seller’s Guide, part of government evidence, clearly banned child pornography, and generally anything used to “harm or defraud” others. The lead government investigator’s testimony at trial also confirmed this.

with respect and courtesy.

#### **Restricted items**

Do not list anything who's purpose is to harm or defraud, such as stolen items or info, stolen credit cards, counterfeit currency, personal info, assassinations, and weapons of any kind.  
Do not list anything related to pedophilia.

*Silk Road Seller’s Guide (trial exhibit 120)*

See [What was Silk Road](#)

Note: In 2020, Ross [published](#) his idea for a new, revolutionary technology using artificial intelligence that would help fight the sharing of harmful content online. Unfortunately, he cannot access the resources to work on this further from prison. Ross is committed to positively contributing to society, once free.

### **“Silk Road facilitated \$1.2B worth of transactions”**

**False.** This \$1.2B figure originated from the 2013 criminal complaint against Ross. However, the government later revised it to \$183M total sales. There was no billion-dollar figure in Ross’s indictment or any following legal proceedings, including trial.

According to the government, between 2011 and 2013, thousands of vendors used Silk Road to sell approximately \$183 million worth of illegal drugs, as well as other goods

*Excerpt from Ross’s [Writ of Certiorari](#) by Kannon K. Shanmugam*

Note: In 2012, a comprehensive [study](#) from Carnegie Mellon University concluded that “the quantities being sold [were] generally rather small (e.g., a few grams of marijuana)” and marijuana was “the most popular item.”

Note: At sentencing, Ross was held responsible for the illegal drug quantities [sold](#) on Silk Road. The drug sellers were given from [3 to 10 years](#) in prison (they are free today).

### **“Ross was the only one running Silk Road”**

**False.** The prosecution claimed that Ross controlled Silk Road from start to finish and was the only person behind the accounts of the top administrator, “Dread Pirate Roberts,” aka “DPR.”<sup>1</sup> (This narrative was also the basis for the false, now-dismissed allegations of murder-for-hire used against Ross.) Yet, this claim is contradicted by hard evidence and testimony—including from the government—and was forbidden, among other key information, from being discussed, or developed, in front of Ross’s jury:

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<sup>1</sup> A character from *The Princess Bride*, who passed his name and identity on to his successors.

- The lead government investigator, who worked undercover on Silk Road for two years, never suspected Ross as being DPR, but pursued another suspect.
- DPR granted an exclusive interview to Forbes in 2013 and stated that he “inherited” the website from someone else and wasn’t its original creator.
- A Silk Road administrator told prosecutors that DPR failed an identity authentication “handshake,” indicating multiple people shared the DPR accounts.
- DPR logged into the Silk Road forum several weeks after Ross’s arrest, when Ross was in solitary confinement. (Discovered after Ross’s trial.)

See [Proof of Multiple DPRs](#)

### **“Silk Road was created to sell illegal drugs”**

False. Silk Road was created as a libertarian free market, not as a drug market. When he made the website, Ross was a libertarian passionate about individual freedom, free markets, privacy and Austrian economics.

Although many people did buy and sell illegal drugs on Silk Road (most commonly personal amounts of cannabis, as shown by a Carnegie Mellon University study), there were also over 20 legal categories on the website. Like on eBay, it was up to individuals what was listed (as long as it didn’t break the site’s rules).

*“Silk Road turned out to be a very naive and costly idea that I deeply regret...It was supposed to be about giving people the freedom to make their own choices, to pursue their own happiness however they individually saw fit...I do not, and never have, advocated the abuse of drugs...I understand what a terrible mistake I made.”* – Ross in [letter](#) to the Court

See [What was Silk Road](#)

### **“Ross created Silk Road for financial gain.”**

False. Ross was a young libertarian who wanted to provide the experience of a truly free market. He had worked on the Ron Paul campaign, studied Austrian economics and was driven by ideals of liberty, individual choice and privacy.

As attested to in nearly 100 letters to Ross’s judge and 105 letters to President Biden by those who know him, Ross has always been an idealist and led a modest, frugal life with few possessions. At the time of his arrest, he was sharing an apartment with three roommates and didn’t own a car.

See Ross’s [letter to the court](#)