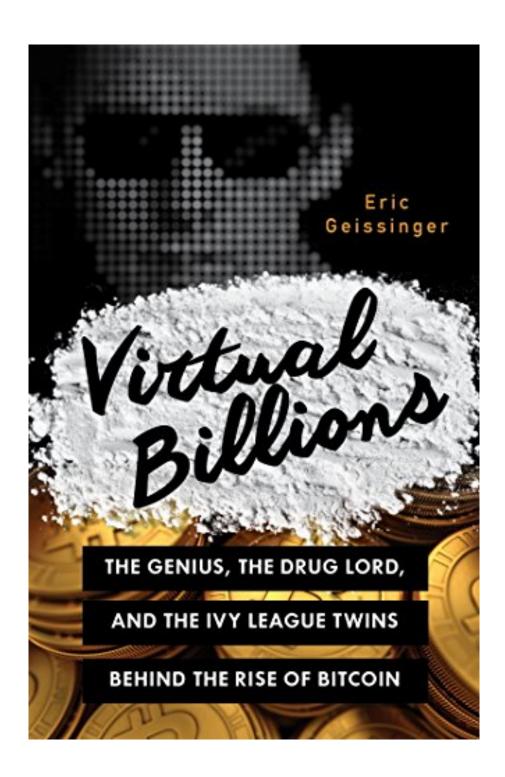


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### Review

"Like The Big Short and Bringing Down the House, Eric Geissinger's Virtual Billions tackles a fascinating but elusive subject—in this case, Bitcoin—and makes it accessible and entertaining. This is a riveting slice of instant historical journalism about the digital currency that exploded onto the scene in 2009 and in just five years was worth \$14 billion."

—RICHARD ROEPER, film critic, radio host, and cohost of Good Day Chicago

"Enthusiastic... [Geissinger's] account of Bitcoin's rise is thoughtful and generally precise.... A perceptive early look at the volatile present and seemingly inevitable future of "'crypto-currency.'"

# **—KIRKUS REVIEWS**

## About the Author

Eric Geissinger has worked as a technical writer for Silicon Valley software companies for seventeen years. His short fiction and poetry have appeared in several literary journals. He lives in the Finger Lakes region of New York with his wife and two daughters.

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Bitcoin, the digital currency, was introduced in 2009 with little fanfare; five years later, shocking the world, it was worth \$14 billion. This book explores the cyber currency by focusing on the remarkable stories and intriguing personalities of those responsible for its sudden success: Satoshi Nakamoto, the reclusive and anonymous genius who created Bitcoin; Ross Ulbricht, aka the Dread Pirate Roberts, administrator of the largest and most successful Dark Web drug superstore, using Bitcoin to fuel online sale of drugs, hacking services, counterfeit money, and assassinations; and Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss, Harvard graduates, successful litigants vs. Facebook, world-class Olympic rowers, and Bitcoin entrepreneurs who own 1 percent of all bitcoins in existence.

Equal parts The Social Network, Sherlock Holmes, and Breaking Bad, this absorbing narrative tells the stories of the reclusive genius who waged a one-man war against the global banking system (and he's winning); the quiet and affable computer geek who, until his arrest, profited handsomely from Silk Road, his online drug superstore; and the multitalented Harvard twins, who made a fortune from an intellectual-property suit against Mark Zuckerberg, and now are the chief promoters of Bitcoin as "the next big thing."

Bitcoin has introduced us to coke-fueled coding gurus, anger-crazed hitmen-hiring millionaires, and canny "Bitcoin miners" avidly adding processing power to their chilly Icelandic server farms to generate millions of dollars every month. Absurd and almost unbelievable stories abound, and sweep the reader along through the living and breathing, passionate and paranoid insiders who made it all happen.

# From the Hardcover edition.

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Read John Lanchester's Article

By Found Highways

I'm sure my questions about bitcoin are not unusual, so I was looking forward to having the whole concept explained in understandable terms. It's possible that that's what happened here, but to be honest, I didn't stick around to find out. Every time Geissinger began to address an aspect of bitcoin, he'd take us on a lengthy diversion into American libertarianism, the history of mortgage defaults, or some other topic. I'd lose interest and skim through to see how that affected the development of bitcoin, but eventually gave up. If you want a fairly concise and unbiased (Geissinger is a big fan of bitcoin so has trouble explaining the risks without dismissing them out of hand), John Lanchester has a great article in April 21, 2016 London Review of Books, titled When Bitcoin Grows Up. Explains the history, the risks and benefits, how it's used, and where it might go from here.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Stranger than fiction

By Joanna Daneman

My reaction when I started reading news articles about "bitcoin": wait, can they DO that?

I've been bemused ever since, and then when the collapse suddenly happened, we all started to read about some elusive Japanese dude named Satoshi Nakamoto, possibly a fictional person or at least a nom de guerre. The story took on a surreal aspect. Even if you were a genius novelist like Tom Clancy, you couldn't come up with this stuff--Nakamoto, the reclusive (fictional?) genius who invented true electronic currency Bitcoin; Dread Pirate Roberts, drugs, hackers, drugs, counterfeiters, MURDERS, and a guy who acted all naïve innocent but ended up with a massive jail sentence for providing Silk Road.

This book proves, life is STRANGER than FICTION.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Everyone needs to get up to speed on what may eventually become the future currency

By Abe Vigoda

A quick read:

- Starts with a quick lesson in fiat currency and libertarian philosophy.
- I learned about cryptographic principles, "e-wallets" and a "public ledger" which will be kept of all transactions.
- Dare to read about its secretive, enigmatic founder, Satoshi Nakamoto, who may be a real person, a pseudonym, or even a group of people.
- And then, of course, the Winklevoss brothers who invest in BitCoin early-on thus enabling them to make millions.
- With the increased regulation of Bitcoin, the author believes it will accelerate the cybercurrency's eventual economic impact.

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