



BITCOIN

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THE **BROKE** ISSUE

ZEN AND THE ART OF UTXO MAINTENANCE

BY CAPTAIN SIDD



Bitcoin Magazine | THE BROKE ISSUE

I likely have no idea who you are, dear reader, but I would guess that you too feel our modern society and economy are broken.

You may struggle to identify why you have this impression, or what you and I might do about it if we are truly heading for the rocks.

I see civil discourse decomposing, communities fracturing, supply chains stuttering, health decaying, and wealth evaporating. We trust our neighbors less, and we seek to blame some other group for the ills we witness and endure. To me, this attitude crossed the chasm from fringe preppers to mainstream society after the onset of COVID-19.

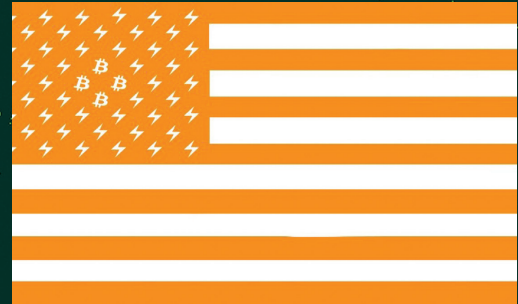
Yet, I do see people stepping up and fixing problems on local, manageable scales. Many of these folks popped up on my Twitter feed in 2020 in the midst of otherwise depressing scenes of America tearing itself apart. These pragmatic people often shared a common interest in Bitcoin.

I wanted to see what I viewed on my Twitter feed with my own eyes. So I decided to hit the road.



After living abroad since 2019, I returned to the U.S. this spring to begin a journey across the nation. I planned to hit as many Bitcoin meetups as I could in three months living off my Harley Davidson. I wanted to see America as it is, not as a news corporation or a social media feed would have you believe. I also wanted to shake the hands of the people gathering their communities through Bitcoin meetups.

All told, I covered 11,500 miles across the U.S., visiting 31 Bitcoin meetups in 16 different states. The journey allowed me to meet hundreds of Bitcoiners face-to-face, in their local communities. Taking state roads, I crossed paths with countless average Americans while passing through hundreds of small towns.



The Bitcoin Tour route covered 11,500 miles around the USA over three months.

I want to touch on three deeply broken areas of our society and economy that local Bitcoin communities are helping to fix:

1. SOCIETAL TRUST.
2. SUPPLY CHAINS.
3. DEBT-BASED MONEY.



SIDD

Do you trust your neighbor enough to hear out their opposing political views? Do you trust our leaders to use your tax dollars wisely? Do you trust our media to give you the whole truth? Do you “trust the science”? Everywhere you look, people are increasingly frantic around the subject of trust.

What is the result? A divided world, no longer characterized just by ignorance of others but by fear and dehumanization. Those who so much as see things differently than us or make different choices are deplorables, bigots, globalists, or ghouls unworthy of polite debate and potentially of freedom or life.

However, I suspect an overwhelming silent majority sits on the sidelines. Wanting for honest discussion, they struggle to find it in a world where one triggered liberal or MAGA-hat conservative can turn a polite debate into a viral clip.

To give an example of this diversity, in Phoenix, Arizona, I found myself in a late-night conversation with three Bitcoiners; one was a podcaster, another an artist, and the last an ex-military gym owner. We talked for hours about the fate of fiat currencies, and while we disagreed, we all learned from each other.

The result of these meetups is a rebuilding of trust through civil discourse; blue-collar workers and farmers speaking with attorneys and bankers, sympathizing with each other and finding common ground. This goes far beyond Bitcoin and to the core of what holds society together.

<< Each Bitcoin meetup is an independent, grassroots entity — leading to incredible diversity in and across meetups. This collage is made of meetup logos and promotional materials.



FIXING SUPPLY CHAINS

We all remember the empty shelves for brief spurts in 2020, but with the panic of the pandemic long gone, that scene has since faded. Over the course of the past two years, those shortages morphed into high prices as so much new money printed in the wake of the pandemic sloshed around the economy. Those high prices caused unrest and desperate pleas for intervention.

Governments may respond with price controls, as some European nations are already doing in the energy sector. Common sense and economics tell us the result: shortages. High prices may come down, but rationing will take their place.

Debasement of quality is another way to bring down prices without a shortage. This method is akin to how central banks will print money to bail out bankrupt institutions instead of allowing them to default on their debts. With the plethora of industrial food technologies available today, governments could let prices rise for fresh produce and meat, while encouraging citizens to consume an equal caloric portion of cheap, soy-based imitation meat.

I met many Americans across the country who recognize this crisis is in motion already. Instead of accepting shortages or quality debasement, they are securing a supply of nutritious food with their own labor and land.

Operating a self-sufficient homestead, however, is not for the faint of heart. An easier path lies in building relationships with local farmers and ranchers to source food close to home, reducing much of the risk of food supply shocks or quality debasement.

At Bitcoin meetups, I found local economies thriving through connections between Bitcoiners and local suppliers, often regenerative ranchers and organic farmers with high-quality products. Shockingly, the natural methods employed by these farmers may bar them from selling in grocery stores and even farmer's markets.

Bitcoin meetups are a new form of market access for farmers, and a welcome source of secure nutrition for Bitcoiners seeking supply chain independence. This peer-to-peer economy cuts out all the large corporations controlling the presence, nutrition, and prices of food on grocery store shelves.

I stayed in this yurt on a homestead owned by Karl, a Bitcoiner who left city life and a job in film editing to start growing fruit and vegetables, and raise rabbits, chicken, and lamb.



We need new forms of market access for a more resilient food system, and a Bitcoiner by the name of Texas Slim understands what's necessary better than most. Through his project The Beef Initiative, Slim connects ranchers to customers for peer-to-peer transactions of beef for bitcoin, cutting out the big four meat processors who control 85% of the beef market.

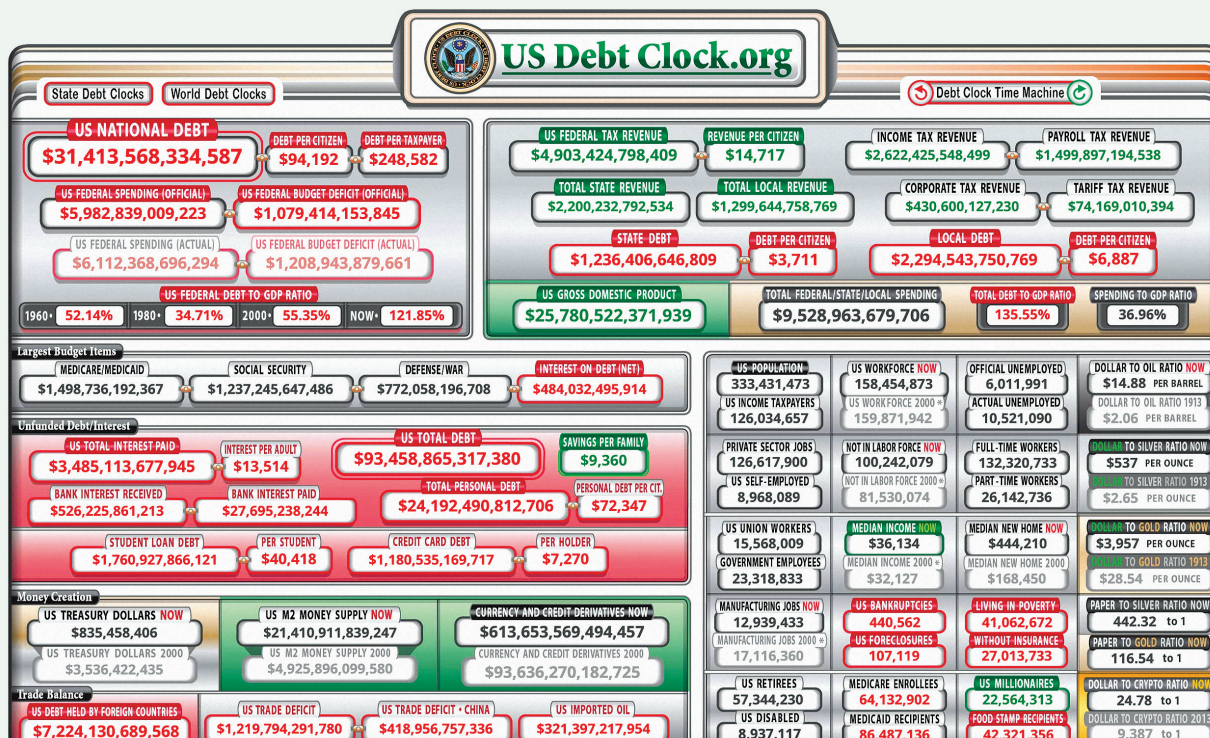
The Beef Initiative by Texas Slim aims to connect ranchers to consumers directly through media and education.



ERASING DEBT-BASED MONEY

By my estimation from my journey across the USA, almost nobody understands how our fiat dollar system affects the value of their labor and savings.

All modern fiat currencies, such as the dollar, are based on debt. While short-term debt cycles cause some sharp contractions in the money supply and the debt that backs it, over multi-decade periods we can clearly see the supply of fiat currencies only increases. As prices for goods and assets climb with the increased supply of money, our debt burden grows as well.



Debt as a percentage of GDP is rising to dangerously high levels. Source: usdebtclock.org

What are the effects of a debt-based monetary system? Central banks and governments face little downside in the immediate term for printing more money, so constant price inflation becomes a fact of life. When price inflation accelerates as a result of extreme money printing, people panic as they watch their savings and wages decline in purchasing power.

I saw this desperation firsthand on my tour across America. Service workers seemed perpetually exasperated, overworked, and undercompensated. Managers spoke of trouble finding employees, even at high-end venues like the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee. Restaurants repriced menus with masking tape and tacked on extra charges for hospitality and credit card usage.

Many of the Bitcoin meetup organizers I met on my tour feel a need to educate their local communities on our debt-based monetary system and the role it plays in the day-to-day pain many Americans are feeling. This education comes in the form of in-person workshops and talks, where the local community can learn the difference between fiat and hard money.

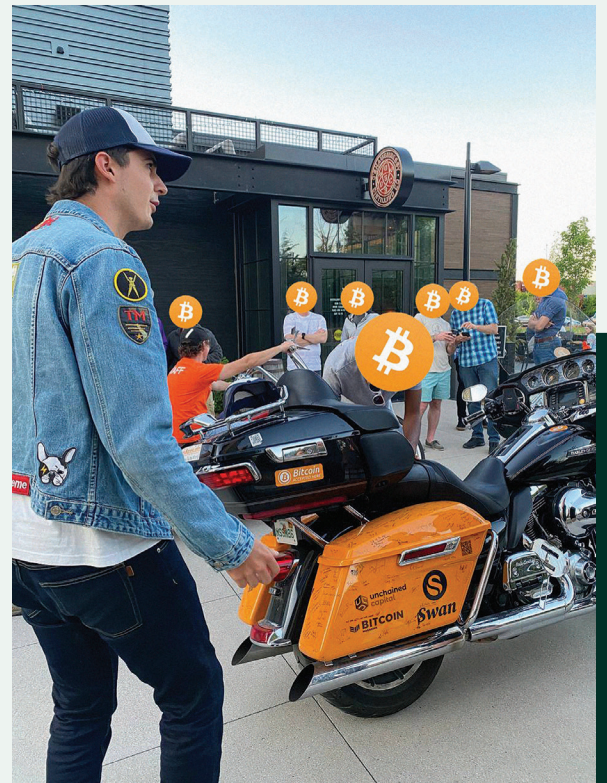
This new avenue for learning complements the existing plethora of online resources, and gives people a set of local experts to contact with questions.



The Charlotte, North Carolina, Bitcoin meetup focuses on bringing in the Bitcoin-curious and helping them understand what Bitcoin is.



While Bitcoin meetups may lack the reach of online mediums, they make up for it with depth, interactivity, and personal relationships.



BITCOINERS FIX THIS

Through my time on the road meeting hundreds of Bitcoiners, I found Bitcoiners are far more diverse than the carnivorous, gun-toting caricature that may seem familiar from Twitter; many opposing views fit under the Bitcoiner umbrella.

One common trait I found across seemingly all Bitcoiners I met was a low time preference. This manifests through a willingness to put in hard work and a patience to see results. They seek to diagnose and solve the roots of problems, instead of rushing to treat symptoms for quick but temporary relief.

The antithesis of low time preference is what I call “fiat mentality”. Manifesting in all corners of modern life, you can find the fiat mentality in chasing ephemeral dopamine on social media and eating processed fake foods that please the taste buds while starving the body. Fiat mentality prefers immediate pleasure or relief at the expense of long-term stability and happiness. This prioritization lets underlying problems fester and makes relief progressively harder.

Much like financial leverage in a corporation, as fiat mentality takes over a society and its institutions, that society only appears to prosper while it becomes increasingly fragile and prone to collapse.

The U.S., and many societies around the world, are drowning in a fiat mentality. My experience meeting the Bitcoin community across the nation showed me how Bitcoiners take action to buck that mentality. The community-building done at Bitcoin meetups builds trust, mutual respect, and a low time preference. These form the building blocks to fixing many of the daunting problems facing our society today.



A great group of Bitcoiners in LA — one of the final stops on the Great American Bitcoin Tour.

This is your call to action; go to your local Bitcoin meetup. If you can't find one, start one. Connect with your neighbors, learn from your community, educate on Bitcoin in-person. Meetups are the lifeblood of a new economy and culture, based not on fiat mentality escapism and domination, but on low time preference community-building and resilient local economies.

Thank you to all the Bitcoiners I met on my tour for sharing your stories and sometimes even your homes with me! Thank you to Swan Bitcoin, Unchained Capital, Bitcoin Magazine, and Upstream Data for believing in the vision I had for this tour and supporting me financially. 🙏



One of the Harley saddlebags signed by hundreds of Bitcoiners across the country. They may be on display at Bitcoin 2023!





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