

Nakamoto hires lawyer in Newsweek bitcoin fight

March 17 2014, by Ryan Nakashima

The man Newsweek claimed is the creator of bitcoin has hired a lawyer in an attempt to clear his name, repeating a denial he made to The Associated Press more than a week ago that he has never had anything to do with the digital currency.

In a statement issued by his lawyer, Ethan Kirschner, Dorian Satoshi Nakamoto said Monday that he "did not create, invent or otherwise work on" bitcoin. In the magazine's return to print this month after more than a year, Newsweek's cover story declared Nakamoto to be the "face behind bitcoin." Despite the repeated denials, the magazine has stood behind the story.

Nakamoto, 64, did not say whether he plans to sue the magazine.

Nakamoto repeated that he had not heard of bitcoin until his son told him a reporter asked about it in mid-February. He said he has not been able to find steady work for 10 years and had cancelled his Internet service last year "due to severe financial distress."

Nakamoto added that he is trying to recover from prostate surgery in 2012 and a stroke he suffered last October.

"My prospects for gainful employment has been harmed because of Newsweek's article," he said in the statement. "Newsweek's false report has been the source of a great deal of confusion and stress for myself, my 93-year-old mother, my siblings, and their families."

Newsweek said in a statement that it "has not received any statement or letter from either Mr. Nakamoto or his legal counsel. If and when we do, we will respond as necessary."

On March 6, the day Newsweek posted its story online, about a dozen journalists descended on the home where Nakamoto lives with his mother in Temple City, California. Nakamoto denied ever being involved with bitcoin multiple times, including during an exclusive two-hour interview with the AP in which he discussed his life, career, family and addressed the assertions in Newsweek's piece.

The magazine developed its thesis on the creator's identity by matching Nakamoto's name, educational history, career, political views and writing style to the alleged creator of bitcoin, who has been known only as "Satoshi Nakamoto." Many believe the name to be a pseudonym.

It's not clear whether Nakamoto sought out legal counsel or was approached after the story and his denial reverberated around the globe. Kirschner's website says he handles business and entertainment matters, and a listing on movie database IMDbPro indicates that the rapper KRS-One is a former client.

Kirschner graduated from law school at the University of Minnesota and became qualified to practice in California in 2005, according to the State Bar of California. His office is on a residential street in the hip Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Nakamoto said his statement will be his last public statement on the matter. Neither he nor his lawyer responded to requests for further comment.

In the days since the Newsweek story and Nakamoto's denial made headlines, a barrage of criticism has been leveled at the magazine.

Meanwhile, Nakamoto has been the target of charitable donations. Nearly 1,900 people have contributed bitcoins worth about \$29,000 to an account created by bitcoin entrepreneur Andreas Antonopoulos.

Antonopoulos said on the website Reddit.com that it seems "increasingly unlikely" that Nakamoto was indeed the [digital currency](#)'s creator and that the fund was created to "soften the damage caused by irresponsible journalism."

Antonopoulos said he plans to convert the bitcoins into U.S. dollars at the end of March and deliver them to Dorian Nakamoto or donate them to a charity of his choice.

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