



United States Penitentiary
Tucson

THE PARDON

097 / 21 JAN 2025 / ROSS ULBRICHT / COMMON

FULL AND UNCONDITIONAL

Ross Ulbricht walks away from the prison entrance beneath a dark Arizona sky. A backpack rests over one shoulder; folded paper sits in his hand. The red shirt recalls the younger man in card 016, but more than eleven years separate the two moments.

On 21 January 2025, President Donald Trump signed a full and unconditional pardon for Ulbricht. He was released from federal custody in Arizona that evening. The date on the card follows the signed warrant, marking the end of an imprisonment that began with his arrest in October 2013.

Ulbricht had created Silk Road, an online marketplace accessed through Tor where Bitcoin paid for illegal drugs and other unlawful goods. Its shutdown became an early collision between cryptocurrency, online anonymity and law enforcement. In 2015, a federal court sentenced him to life in prison for offences including drug trafficking and conspiracies involving computer hacking and money laundering.

The pardon ended that imprisonment without erasing the conviction or establishing innocence. It changed what would happen next. Where 016 captures the arrest-era story, this card turns towards the prison exit. The building remains behind him, its name still visible; the backpack and forward stride carry the scene beyond the threshold.

DETAILS IN THE ART

01 The Tucson entrance

The blue canopy, tan facade and prison name identify USP Tucson, where Ulbricht was held. Desert planting places the building in its Arizona setting.

02 The red-shirt connection

The shirt recalls Ross in 016, Silk Road Shutdown. The older face carries the years between the arrest-era scene and the pardon.

03 The folded paper

A plain folded letter stands for the act of clemency. Its reverse faces us, leaving the warrant's words to the caption above.

04 One step beyond

A backpack sits over one shoulder as Ross moves towards the foreground. The entrance recedes behind him, making release the direction of the composition.

SOURCE & ART NOTE

Sources: DOJ, signed pardon warrant; FBI, Ulbricht's laptop and case history; DOJ, what a pardon means; Reuters, pardon and Arizona release; Free Ross, Tucson record; AW Architects, Tucson penitentiary. An illustrated reconstruction: Tucson's real facade informs the setting; the clothing, backpack and folded paper are symbolic, not a documented record of the release.