



MONTHLY MARKET REVIEW · MAY 2026

Sell in May? They did.

Alexandr Rodionov

Advisor at EarnPark

ex Private Portfolio Manager — \$20M+ AUM

ex Commercial Director, Freedom Finance (NASDAQ: FRHC, \$10B+ market cap)

A word from EarnPark

At EarnPark, we believe that growing your crypto with confidence starts with understanding the market you're in. That's why we're launching a monthly market review — a look back at the events that moved crypto, what they mean, and what to watch next.

This review is written by Alexandr Rodionov, who recently joined EarnPark as an Advisor. His monthly reviews will help you cut through the noise, understand risk, and make more informed decisions.

PLEASE NOTE

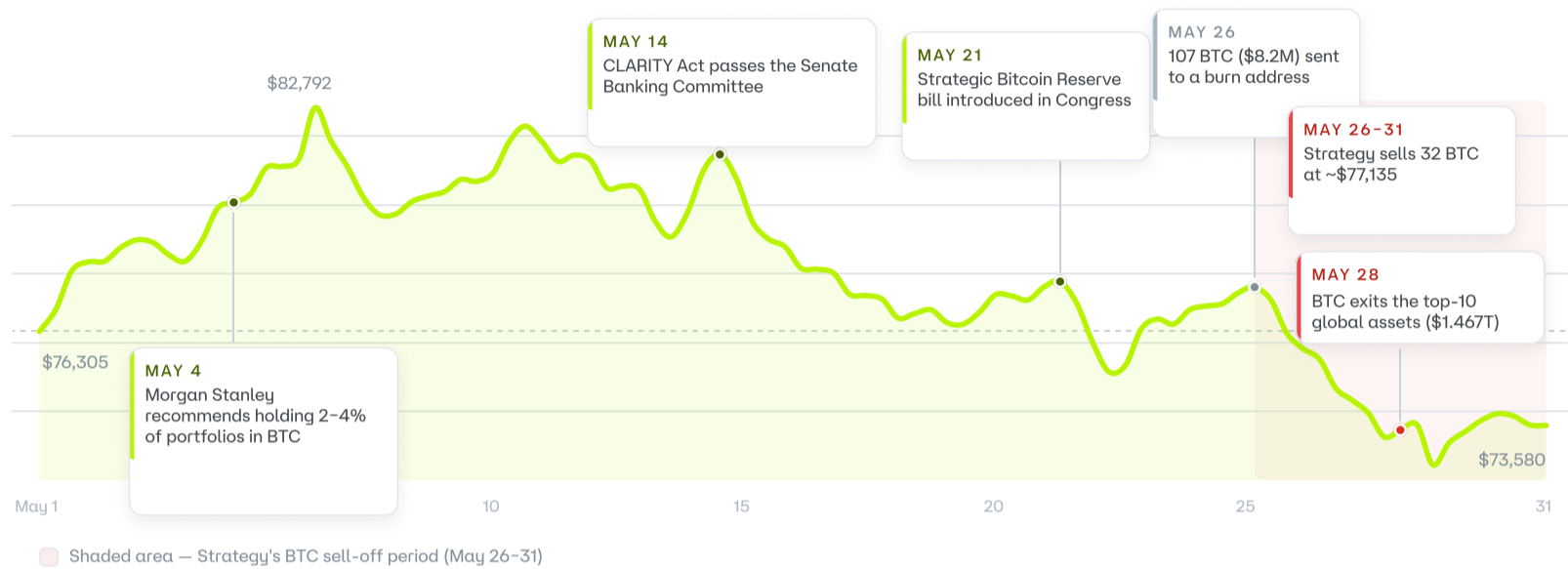
This review reflects Alexandr's personal views and analysis. It is not investment advice. See the full disclaimer at the end of this document.



So sell in May...

BTC TIMELINE

What moved Bitcoin in May



Market Review · May 2026

Before May 15 and after — that’s the cleanest way to split the month. The rally that began in April lasted exactly until mid-month, a steady trend fueled by inflows into spot ETFs, positive headlines, and expectations. Even the fact that BlackRock was moving BTC and ETH from its spot ETFs to an exchange for sale almost daily didn’t faze the buyers.

A few of the events that pushed the market higher are worth highlighting:

- Morgan Stanley recommended its clients hold 2-4% of their portfolio in BTC and opened crypto trading on its E*Trade platform. Charles Schwab, the largest broker, finally launched its own retail crypto platform.
- BTC-based products were actively bought up by all kinds of players — the UAE sovereign fund Mubadala increased its position in the IBIT ETF, while a whole group of institutionals and corporates (the Swiss National Bank, BNY Mellon, the New Jersey pension fund, and Finland’s Varma) added to their positions in Strategy stock.
- American Bitcoin, the mining company linked to the Trump family, bought another 300 BTC for its balance sheet — the total now stands at 7,300 BTC. Eric Trump himself declared that American Bitcoin intends to beat Michael Saylor’s Strategy at buying BTC. He also stated that American Bitcoin has no intention of selling its BTC at all — not even in the event of some catastrophe.
- Strive Asset Management, run by Vivek Ramaswamy — Musk’s former partner at the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) — kept adding BTC to its stack. They showed up twice in May: \$34 million early in the month and another \$70 million closer to the end.
- Stablecoin issuers Tether and Circle kept printing billions of new stables, supplying the market with liquidity, although their activity slowed in the second half of the month.

In the second week of the month, as many alts rallied, the internet buzzed with talk of the start of altseason! TON, ZEC, HYPE, and others moved up in unison. Everyone was wildly positive, anticipating progress on the Clarity Act — the long-awaited crypto market structure bill.

Riding this wave of optimism and rising prices, nobody noticed the dangerous signs of weakness in the move:

- despite growing demand in futures, many pointed to weak demand on the spot market — they saw a “dead cat bounce” and short covering, not a real bull market
- more and more often, true holders and even Bitcoin OGs were selling their coins.

The last day of the rally fell on May 14, when the US Senate Banking Committee voted in favor of the Clarity Act. But, as so often happens on Wall Street, the old rule kicked in: buy the rumor, sell the news.

The very next day, May 15, investors remembered the market adage: Sell in May and go away. Bitcoin never managed to hold above the psychological \$80,000 level. The second half of the month turned into a series of painful blows: a wave of long liquidations swept the market — nearly \$2.8 billion in longs were force-closed over the period. We’d barely gotten used to the happy headlines — shorts getting liquidated in a rising market — and just like that, the long liquidations were back...

The news flow flipped instantly, as if everyone started selling at once. Billionaire Mark Cuban said he had sold most of his BTC. Trump Media moved 2,650 BTC to an exchange for sale, continuing to dump at a loss the coins it had bought at \$118,522. And crypto projects Syndicate Labs, Bitcoin Depot, Fantasytop, Everclear, and ZERO Network went straight to declaring bankruptcy, adding fuel to the fire.

Outflows from BTC ETFs over 10 days (starting May 20) hit a record \$3 billion, and on May 27 BlackRock recorded the second-largest daily outflow in its history (~\$528 million). Spot demand fell to YTD lows, and CEX trading volumes dropped to a two-year low.

It wasn’t just “paper hands” selling at a loss — so were truly long-term holders who had owned coins since before 2010! On May 25, a Bitcoin OG of the Satoshi Nakamoto era, whose wallet was created back in 2009–2010, sold 2,650 BTC. For reference: Bitcoin OGs (Original Gangsters) are the people who believed in Bitcoin and started mining, buying, or building it at the earliest stages of its existence, when thousands of BTC could be mined on an ordinary home laptop. They remember Bitcoin at \$10 — and even less!



Outflows from spot BTC ETFs began before May 15 and continued through the entire second half of the month

The HYPE phenomenon: DeFi living its best life

Despite the global decline in trading volumes, the decentralized sector keeps developing and is going through a real boom – and the main hero here is still the HYPERLIQUID exchange (HYPE). The platform keeps overturning assumptions about liquidity: today it alone accounts for half of all DEX trading.

The HYPE phenomenon comes down to this: DeFi has become flat-out safer, more convenient, and more attractive for users than the heavily regulated CEXs. Deep integration into non-custodial wallets and a constantly expanding toolkit mean capital is choosing decentralization.

The DEX share of total futures trading volume has nearly tripled over the past two years, confirming that HYPE and the DeFi ecosystem are perfectly capable of living their own life, detached from Bitcoin’s local depression.



HYPE’s undisputed leadership in the DeFi world

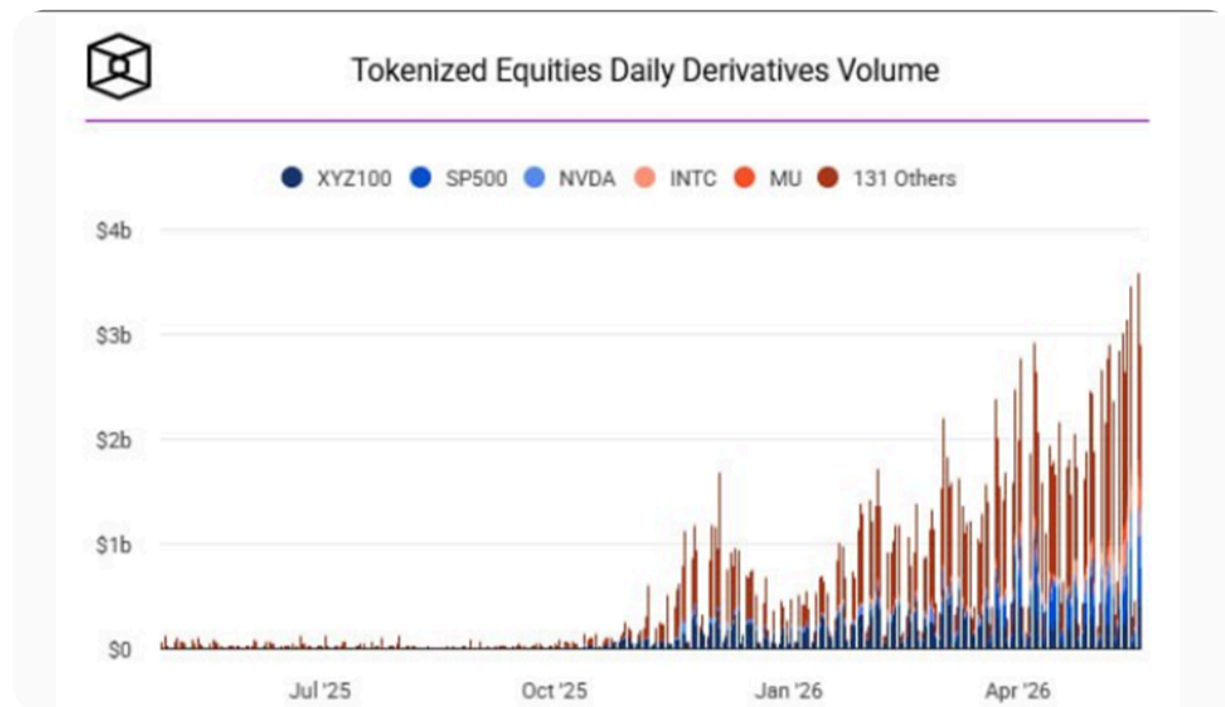
Two trends that weren't supposed to get along

May cemented two major trends that until recently seemed incompatible — trends that will define the industry landscape for years to come:

1. RWA to the Moon

Tokenization of real-world assets has hit full throttle. Nearly all major crypto exchanges have launched RWA trading: the user is no longer buying just a speculative token, but a digitized Google share or a stake in physical gold. According to CoinGecko, tokenized gold trading volume in Q1 2026 alone exceeded the figure for all of 2025.

Now, right in their wallet, yesterday's crypto fan — tired of watching their favorite coins fall for months — can buy a rising, understandable NVIDIA share or any other AI stock, even one that hasn't started trading on exchanges yet (I'm talking about SpaceX)! Simply cosmic!



Explosive growth in tokenized asset trading — six months ago there was nothing here at all!

2. Wall Street wants its piece of the pie

While the crypto crowd tokenizes stocks, Wall Street is taking crypto instruments for itself. The CME exchange is launching round-the-clock perpetual futures trading, and Coinbase became the first regulated venue in the US to offer clients fully legal crypto derivatives and options. Infrastructure giant Mastercard obtained a BitLicense in New York and, together with Chainlink, opened direct crypto access for 3.5 billion cardholders. ICE (owner of the NYSE) has already filed with the SEC to launch tokenized stock trading...

Traditional exchanges don't want to miss their piece of the pie — in the shortest possible time they will offer instruments absolutely identical to those on crypto venues (or they've already become available while this review was going to press). Every TradFi client who has so far stayed away from trading crypto will be able to vote with their money and buy (or short) a crypto asset!

What's next? Buckle up

The market's short-term outlook remains challenging due to many factors that will keep pressuring liquidity — and with spot demand this weak, any bad news will weigh on price:

Macro

The ongoing blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has triggered a new round of inflation fears. The prospect of further rate hikes by the world's central banks has already pushed US Treasury yields to record levels. The next Fed meeting and rate decision is set for June 16-17 — the first under new Chair Kevin Warsh. When risk-free bonds yield this much, capital has no reason to chase risk assets. Tech stocks, apparently, didn't get the memo.

Capital outflow

The market is bracing for the tech sector's biggest IPOs — SpaceX (which, by the way, disclosed \$1.45 billion in BTC on its balance sheet), Anthropic, and OpenAI. The short-term, speculative money — the money that used to circulate in crypto and fuel the pumps — is now flowing into these listings on the stock market via RWA.

Capitulation of the "titans"

The end of the month was marked by a historic event — Michael Saylor's Strategy sold part of its BTC (32 coins, to cover obligations). Due to a \$15 billion preferred stock issuance, the company carries enormous dividend expenses (~\$1.5 billion per year). If Bitcoin keeps falling, Strategy will be forced to keep selling coins, which would create tremendous pressure. A reminder: Strategy "holds" more than 843,000 BTC! I hope this was just a test, not a new strategy...

Clarity Act

Lawmakers may pass a comprehensive crypto bill package this summer. The law's adoption is unquestionably significant and necessary for the industry, but its actual rollout after official passage will stretch over many months... and the spot market is short of institutional buyers right now.

Bitcoin: still searching for its identity

Not so long ago we made peace with the fact that Bitcoin is not digital gold — lately it has been losing the safe-haven battle outright. And now it's not even a risk asset anymore — it no longer correlates with tech or with commodities... BTC has dropped out of the world's top 10 assets (slipping to 13th place with a market cap of \$1.46 trillion) and is trailing the S&P 500 by more than 50% since last fall.

Still, looking at the crypto market exclusively through Bitcoin's lens may be a mistake. I think it's time to start separating BTC, ETH, and... the rest of the ecosystem (a special shout-out to HYPE — we've already given it its own spotlight!). ETH may not be delighting its holders either, but this coin is laying the foundation for a powerful long-term trend. ETH staking volumes hit an all-time high: more than 32% of the entire market supply is now locked in smart contracts. Ether holders are showing far more conviction than the Bitcoin crowd. Through staking and its role in stablecoins, Ether is becoming the main beneficiary of tokenization — and that is an endlessly huge market.

BOTTOM LINE

Summer lies ahead — a period of low trading activity, when assets become more vulnerable to speculation. While US lawmakers promise to pass the full Clarity Act package, the market needs buyers in deeds, not words. Bitcoin will have to find its next bottom and ride out the sellers' pressure before it can start growing again.

DISCLAIMER

This review is provided for informational and educational purposes only and does not constitute investment, financial, legal, or tax advice, nor an offer or recommendation to buy, sell, or hold any digital asset or other financial instrument.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are solely those of the author, Alexandr Rodionov, in his personal capacity. They do not represent the views, positions, or recommendations of EarnPark. EarnPark accepts no responsibility or liability for any decisions made or actions taken based on the information contained in this review.

Cryptocurrency markets are highly volatile, and investing in digital assets involves significant risk, including the possible loss of your entire investment. Past performance is not indicative of future results. Always do your own research and consider consulting a licensed financial advisor before making any investment decisions.

© 2026 EarnPark. All rights reserved.