

MEGAFIRE

*The Race to Extinguish
A Deadly Epidemic of Flame*

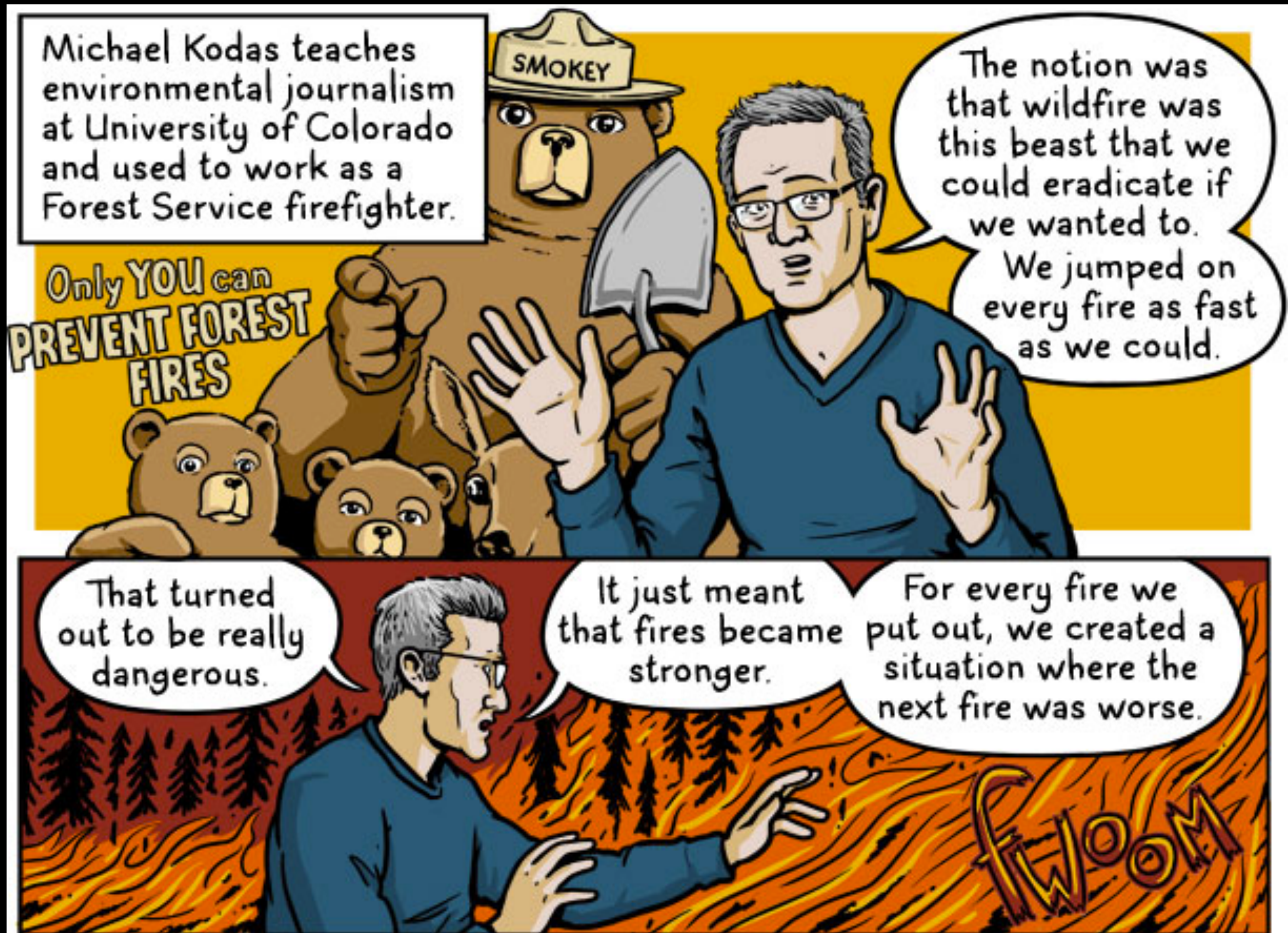


Helen Richardson/The Denver Post

Michael Kodas

Deputy Director of the Center for Environmental Journalism
University of Colorado Boulder

A comic produced by KQED,
the NPR station in San Francisco.



I came to be known as a “go-to” journalist for stories about wildfire, but, as my first experience covering a wildfire shows, I was once completely ignorant and naive about them.

When you speak to the press, you may get someone like me who has covered them for decades, studied scientific research about them and trained to work on them.

Or you may get someone like the younger me, who has never seen one before, has no idea how they are managed or fought and doesn't know how to be safe around them.



“Any fire you go on statewide, whether it be small or large, the inmate hand crews make up anywhere from 50 to 80 percent of the total fire personnel.”

–LT. KEITH RADEY
COMMANDER IN CHARGE OF CALIFORNIA
TRAINING CAMP FOR INMATE FIREFIGHTERS

Learning that prison inmates fight wildfires gave me an insight into how big a challenge they were for our nation and led to a decades-long interest in them.

Eventually I trained and worked with firefighters from Connecticut who were fighting fires in the West so I could document how those challenges affected my state.







OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Wildfires at Your Doorstep

By Michael Kodas

Oct. 26, 2017



An aerial view of homes destroyed by fires in Santa Rosa, Calif., this month. Jeff Chiu/Associated Press

I'VE COVERED WILDFIRES FROM
DOZENS OF DIFFERENT ANGLES.

- Breaking news stories
- Explanatory and analysis stories
- Dramatic narratives
- Profiles
- Investigative stories

Tom Wolfe, novelist and pioneer of New Journalism, dies at 87



A dangerous opioid is killing people in California. It's starting to show up in cocaine and meth



At 'BlacKkKlansman' press conference, Spike Lee goes on expletive-laden rant against...



10 children found living in squalor; most were tortured for 'sadistic purpose,' authorities...



Long before discovered staple in

OP-ED OP-ED

The Thomas fire is terrifying. Fire trends are even more terrifying



By MICHAEL KODAS DEC 17, 2017 | 4:00 AM



Residents watch the wildfire burn in the mountain ranges north of Ojai, Calif., on Dec. 6. (Marcus Yam / Los Angeles Times)



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TRENDING

OBITUARIES

Tom Wolfe, novelist and pioneer of New Journalism, dies at 87

1h



HOW DID PALM OIL BECOME SUCH A PROBLEM — AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Production of this ubiquitous ingredient is devastating for the environment. Solutions are complex, but they are out there.



Photo: © iStockphoto / Shutterstock.com



WRITER
Michael Kodas

November 3, 2014 — Last August, from the window of a jet high over Sumatra, I counted nearly a dozen plumes of smoke rising from the vast jungles and plantations below. Some more than a half-mile wide, they looked like pillars holding up the sky. That week the Indonesian Disaster Mitigation Agency detected 143 new wildfires in Riau Province, the area beneath my flight. All of the fires were almost certainly related to deforestation for timber operations and agriculture — predominantly oil palm cultivation.

BUSINESS



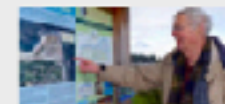
The race is on to decarbonize the 50,000-plus ships that carry our stuff around the world. International shipping produces as much CO₂ as aircraft. Here's what we can do about that.



You know clean air is good for your health. It's good for the economy, too. Poor air quality is linked to decreased productivity, school attendance and even lifetime earnings.



What will we do with all those solar panels when their useful life is over? As solar power booms, businesses are exploring ways to ensure valuable components don't end up in...



New life for toxic land: Across the U.S., Superfund sites are being repurposed as recreational areas, renewable energy...

FEATURES



U.S. environmental groups are largely white. Here's what some are — and some aren't — doing about it. Talk of increasing diversity has not turned into widespread action, but some organizations are...



How the growing "One Water" movement is not only helping the environment but also saving millions of dollars. Solutions to floods, droughts and pollution that look upstream, downstream and everywhere in...



The race is on to decarbonize the 50,000-plus ships that carry our stuff around the world. International shipping produces as much CO₂ as aircraft. Here's what we can do about that.



From Australia to El Salvador to Vietnam, the environment is...

Indonesia Is Still Burning

Consumer demand for palm oil is driving destruction of woodlands and wildlife, but stopping deadly forest fires means conserving the country's unique peatlands.

Most media's interest in wildfires will start with breaking news, often related to tragedies or threats to communities.

Yarnell Hill Fire, Arizona June 30, 2013







Breaking news stories will usually lead to other stories, sometimes dozens of other stories, that use the incident as a “news peg” to study other aspects of wildfire.



THE RACE TO EXTINGUISH
A DEADLY EPIDEMIC OF FLAME

MEGAFIRE

MICHAEL KODAS

AUTHOR OF *HIGH CRIMES*

MODERN NEWS VALUES

- Timeliness
- Proximity
- Impact
- Conflict
- Prominence
- Novelty
- Currency/Engagement
- Solutions

JOURNALISTS AREN'T THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO CAN ASK QUESTIONS!

(CONSIDER ASKING THE REPORTER INTERVIEWING YOU SOME OF THESE.)

- What is your deadline?
- How much space/time are you planning to focus on my work or what we're talking about?
- Is this a multimedia story (photos, audio, video, graphics)?
- How long will the story be?
- What angle are you taking?
- Who else are talking to?