

# Social media disinformation on US west coast blazes 'spreading faster than fire' | The Guardian

By Jason Wilson

September 15, 2020

Photojournalist Nathan Howard was on assignment for a picture agency south-east of the fire-menaced foothill town of Estacada, Oregon, on Thursday afternoon when a man angrily approached him on a rural roadside. The man insisted the photographer was a looter, Howard said, and despite his repeated attempts to identify himself as a journalist, the man began yelling and became so agitated that "it was like his eyes were popping out of his head". The man eventually allowed Howard to get in his car and leave, but gave chase as Howard drove north. Then a second truck approached from the opposite direction, Howard said, and parked horizontally across the highway, blocking both lanes. A man climbed from the truck and pointed a loaded assault rifle at Howard through his car's windshield, and again accused him of looting, his finger on the trigger.

Thursday's highway standoff highlights the real life consequences of the wave of disinformation on social media about the cause of wildfires raging across the Pacific north-west. Many of the rumors baselessly claim that the fires were lit by political activists, either by the far-right group the Proud Boys or the leftist activists known as antifa.

[...]

Source: [Social media disinformation on US west coast blazes 'spreading faster than fire' | Oregon | The Guardian](#)