

Mark Jenkins

Foreign Correspondent & Award-Winning Contributing Writer, National Geographic Magazine

Mark Jenkins has been speaking for two decades and given over 200 presentations worldwide. His presentations use National Geographic photography from assignments in the field to tell the story of what corporations and institutions can learn from difficult, dangerous undertakings. He has given programs on the mountain gorillas of Congo, the rangers that risk their lives to protect them and the client/corporation relationship; on landmines in Cambodia and how corporations and institutions can detect and avoid major risks in next level endeavors; on being held captive in Afghanistan by the Tajik KGB and how corporations and organizations can discern what matters and what doesn't under severe strain. Below are three shows Jenkins is currently giving, but he often tailors a presentation to the needs and wants of an individual client.

Jumping Fire: Six Lessons From Smokejumpers. In the summers of 2016 and 2017, when wildfires were scorching thousands of acres of forest across North America, Mark Jenkins was sent by National Geographic Magazine to cover the most elite wildland fire fighters on earth: Smokejumpers. His story is a feature in the upcoming May 2019 issue of National Geographic Magazine.

Smokejumpers are the paratroopers of the war on fire—they jump from planes directly into the battle. Loaded with over a hundred pounds of equipment, they steer their parachutes directly down into the flames. These men (and women) are the definition of tough. They have more grit than soldiers, more skills than skydivers, more courage than cops. They train harder than Army Rangers, know more than Forest Service Rangers, and put their lives on the line every time they jump from a plane.

Deeply committed to the story of the smokejumper's life, Mark Jenkins spent months getting certified as a wildlands fire fighter in order to be on the frontlines with smokejumpers. He was side-by-side with them fighting fires on the North Slope of Alaska. He fought fires with them through the night, onto into the day, then into the night, for weeks. He slept in the dirt with them, ate pork and beans from tins with them, interviewed them for hours around the campfire.

In this utterly original 50-minute presentation, Jenkins reveals the lives of smokejumpers—the mortal risks, the unbreakable comradery, the forthright fearlessness. Smokejumpers live their entire lives on the edge of death, playing chess with the merciless forces of nature. Their wisdom is what Jenkins went looking for, found, and brings back to audiences in *Six Lessons from Smokejumpers*.

Dispatches From Dangerous Places: Six Lessons From A Foreign Correspondent. World-renowned foreign correspondent Mark Jenkins has been exploring the most remote, most difficult and most dangerous places on the planet for 30 years. In the past decade he has been the adventure and conflict writer for National Geographic Magazine . Jenkins has plumbed the depths of the largest cave in the world and summited the tallest mountain on earth. He has written about smoke jumpers in Alaska and landmine victims in Cambodia. He has been captured by the murderous Hutu guerillas in eastern Congo while covering the killing of mountain gorillas, arrested by the Burmese military while reporting on ethnic cleansing, taken by the Tajik KGB, interrogated and rescued by the CIA.

Pulitzer prize-winning author Annie Proulx says, “Mark Jenkins is the global version of street-smart. He is an inquisitive, thinking explorer who leavens common sense with joie de vivre as he takes us into tight corners at the back of the world. He’s the real thing.”

University of Wyoming President Laurie Nichols says, “Mark Jenkins is the real Indiana Jones. The harder the assignment, the more he enjoys it. From the war in Afghanistan to the wastelands of the Arctic, Jenkins brings back the stories and lessons of living life on the edge.”

Now, in a single stunning show that covers the globe, Jenkins takes audiences on an unforgettable journey into the mind of a foreign correspondent—the risks he takes, the promises he makes, the lies he tells, the truths he reveals. Selecting six seminal international assignments—scaling Mt. Everest, bicycling across Siberia, kayaking down the Niger River in West Africa, reporting from the Congo, Afghanistan, and Burma—Jenkins shares *Six Lessons from the Life of a Foreign Correspondent*.

Expedition Burma: Six Lessons of Leadership. Mark Jenkins was the writer for the 2014 National Geographic/The North Face Expedition to far northern Burma. His feature story about this expedition, “Point of No Return,” was published in the September 2015 issue of National Geographic Magazine.

The goal of this expedition was to climb the highest peak in Southeast Asia—19,350-foot Hkakabo Razi—the most remote mountain in the world. Hkakabo Razi, a heavily-glaciated peak rising from steaming green jungles, had only been climbed once. Closed for decades because of conflict, it had taken Jenkins years to get a permit for this peak.

The expedition began with an arduous 10-day overland crossing of Burma, followed by a grueling 15-day march through the jungle. Things started going wrong almost immediately. Permits and porters failed to arrive; leeches bloodied the climbers’ bodies, spider bites caused measles-like rashes, venomous snakes were a constant threat. By the time they reached the base of this unknown mountain, everyone was physically and mentally exhausted. The team was unraveling—and now they had to climb.

This is a thrilling 50-minute presentation about hardship and hope, the death of close friends, and the risks of being emotionally, technically, or intellectually unprepared. Using National Geographic photography, Jenkins takes the audience on an epic expedition in which bad decisions lead to bad consequences. During this hellish journey, Jenkins discovers and defines the Six Lessons of Leadership that are requisite for any endeavor to succeed.

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