



*Leslie Johansen Nack*

## 407: Public vs. Private Personas: Crafting a Novel Based on Historical Figures

**Gabriela Pereira:** Hello, and welcome, word nerds, to DIY MFA Radio, the show that will help you write more, write better, write smarter. I'm Gabriela Pereira, instigator of DIY MFA, and your host for this podcast. Now, let's talk writing.

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Now, today, I have the pleasure of interviewing Leslie Johansen Nack. Leslie's newest book, *The Blue Butterfly*, A Novel of Marion Davies comes out next week; and it's what we're going to be talking about today.

Her debut is a memoir titled *Fourteen, A Daughter's Memoir of Adventure, Sailing, and Survival*. This book received five indie awards, including the 2016 Finalist in Memoir at the Next Generation Indie Book Award. Leslie said that she did everything late in life, including getting her degree in English Literature from UCLA at age thirty-one.

Before she started writing, she raised two children, ran a mechanical engineering business with her husband, took care of her aging mother, and dreamed of retirement when she could write full-time. She currently lives in San Diego; and in addition to writing, she enjoys sailing, hiking, and reading.

Welcome Leslie, I am so excited to talk to you today.

**Leslie Johansen Nack:** Thank you, Gabriela. It's nice to be here.

**GP:** And as you can tell, Office Kitty is super excited about your book; and as we were chatting about it before we started this interview, I'm also super excited to talk to you because I'm a total film nerd. But before we get into any of that, I like to start with the story behind the story. So, can you tell us, what first inspired *The Blue Butterfly*?

**LJN:** Well, I got inspired to write it while I was writing *Fourteen*, oddly enough, we had company and we went to Hearst Castle for a tour; and the docent in one of the rooms said, "Did you know that Marion



Davies loaned William Randolph Hearst a million dollars when he was near bankruptcy in 1937?

And I was shocked to hear this. I mean, not that I knew a lot about their histories or anything, but this seemed like an important thing that no one had really made a big deal about; a woman, his mistress saves him from bankruptcy? How come no one ever said anything about that before?

So, that was sort of the beginning kernel that got me on the road to wanting to find out more information about Marion. And when I did, I didn't find much out there as far as, there was only one biography written about her in 1972. So, I kind of put it to the side and kept writing my first book.

**GP:** I love that. And actually, this leads me to something I was wondering about as I've been reading the book. And first of all, no spoilers, I'm about two-thirds of the way through.

So even though, I guess, it's based on a true story, so I guess there aren't really spoilers, but anyway, just putting that out there. But what I'm curious about is the subtitle of the book is A Novel of Marion Davies, and you mentioned that there was only one biography out there, but this isn't a biography, this is a novel.

So, can you talk a little bit about how you conceived of this idea and what drew you toward leaning into fiction for this project, as opposed to nonfiction, like a biography or essays or something like that?

**LJN:** Right. Well, I'm a writer, I want to be a writer, I want to write novels. And I wanted to have the freedom to be able to write the scenes that I could imagine would've happened based on certain events.

So, when I started doing the research and I would read the history of the events of what happened, I was trying to imagine how she got from Point A to Point B on that; and so, I would write a scene to fill that in. And that, to me, was exciting; that to me, was part of why I wanted to be a writer.

And I had been reading books like Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald, and I read other books, The Paris Wife, and I sort of was aiming for that genre, aiming to tell the story historically accurate, but in a way that it reads like a novel. So, it has to be a novel because I wasn't there recording the dialogue. But most of the events that are in the book are accurate. They are historical.

**GP:** So, let's dig into that a little bit more, because obviously, there are different levels of historical fiction; like someone could write historical fiction that is about completely imaginary characters, but just set in a given time period.

As you've mentioned, this is historical fiction, but it's also about very prominent, well-known names, especially William Randolph Hearst, but even Marion Davies, and obviously, Charlie Chaplin; like, we've all heard these names before.

So, can you talk a little bit about how you did the research, how you started to uncover these anchor scenes that you then would kind of extrapolate what would've happened in those moments? Like, how did you figure out what scenes to write in the first place?

**LJN:** Right, right. So, the first book I ordered was the only biography ever written on her by Guiles, Lawrence Guiles. I read that and I was intrigued, but I also ordered all of the biographies on Hearst because Marion Davies and Hearst were together for 34 years; all of the biographies written about Hearst include Marion Davies.

So, these scholars, these well-known biographers, wrote about Hearst; different parts of de Hearst's life, his newspaper life, his architectural, his, you know, just every aspect of his life. But they all included scenes and facts and information about Marion.



So, a lot of them overlapped when I ordered all the biographies of Hearst. And I read and I skipped; I didn't read the whole biography, I read all the parts about Marion because this book is about Marion, and I really wanted to focus on her and not get sidetracked by him because he's such a large historical figure that it's so easy to go path with him.

I wanted to say, 'What was her life like? What was her life like behind the scenes with her family, with her sisters? What did she deal with, you know, when they had the baby? What exactly was Marion's life like behind this whole gilded front once she settled in with Hearst?'

So, the scenes that I picked were the ones to show when she was trying to make a decision about either continuing with Hearst. In the beginning it was difficult because he's married and he's sneaking around with her and they can't go out in public together because, you know, life in the 1920s in New York, the classes were very separated.

There wasn't a lot of overlap, and there were a lot more social rules than there are today. It's hard to imagine, but you know, women didn't get divorced; and when they did get divorced, it was a stain on them. And so, Millicent Hearst did not want to get divorced from William Randolph Hearst because she wanted to remain in high society.

So, Marion had to learn how to figure out how to deal with that. And I think it was difficult, and it was interesting to me to see what kind of choices she made. You know, she gets defiant, she's very rebellious, she's a tomboy; but she's also in love with him, and he's in love with her, and it's a love story.

**GP:** Yeah, there's so much that I want to unpack around the characters of W.R.; and obviously, Marion. But before we dive into that, I wanted to go a little bit deeper with this idea of what you said with like the researching and the sources.

And obviously, you know, you leaned into biography, particularly, the W.R. biographies, but I'm curious also, did the filmography for Marion come into play? Like, you know, looking at just her performances on screen, did you notice things that could then inform the way you would craft the written scenes for the novel?

**LJN:** I would say, no, to that probably because some of the early films aren't available and the ones that I do have, it's so hard to extrapolate what a person is really like from a movie when they're playing character.

And she's learning how to act, and you know, she had no training like, you know, this was the beginning of the movie industry; this was really the birth of the movie industry. And so, there weren't any acting coaches, per se, or places where she could go and learn the craft.

She came from the stage, and acting on the stage is very different than acting in silent films. And so, I didn't want to dive too much into her filmography. I do have a lot of the films that she made, like I hop, skip, and jump through her film career in the book; and I have some background information.

There's another book that I read called *The Silent Films of Marion Davies* by Edward Lorusso; and it just came out in 2017, and it was perfect timing for me. And he did a lot of research into things that happened behind the scenes on each of the movies, and where they were filmed and all of this.

So, I use that as a source as well because that really wasn't my focus in the book to talk about all the movies, although that was part of her life. Just like my focus wasn't really Randolph Hearst, but he's in my book.



**GP:** Right.

**LJN:** My focus really was her, and her life, and her decision, and having the baby and choosing to stay with Hearst even though she couldn't be married to him. You know, moving to California and being left by Hearst as he spends time with his family; and then falling in love with Charlie Chaplin and all of his comedy. It's just a lot. I wanted to focus on Marion.

**GP:** Yeah. You know, it's interesting also as you were talking about how, you know, at the time, this was the beginning of the film industry, she didn't have like a school that she could go to or coaches that she could learn from. Like she was learning boots on the ground, right?

Because that's the only way you could learn. And to me, what I think is interesting too, she was straddling the Silent Film Era and then also the Talkies. So, I feel like that's an interesting piece of her life as well that I imagine would play into her character in the novel.

**LJN:** Yes, exactly. Although that was like more than 10 years after she started making films, then they transitioned to Talkies. I mean, she was full-on star in Hollywood at MGM. Hearst Castle was in; they were doing parties there all the time. Her whole life was very full and very evolved at that point.

And so, when I was referencing the beginning, it's more like 1919, 1918 when she-- She made her first movie herself. She wrote a screenplay and starred it without Hearst at all, just to prove to him that she could do it.

And she was just stubborn and feisty, and I wanted to show that. But right, there were no colleges or classes she could take; it was all trial by error. She would make the movie, get the reviews, and then try to do better the next time.

**GP:** I think that's one of the things that really spoke to me about her character is, you know, you described her as like feisty and stubborn; and she's also a go-getter, and she's someone who's not afraid to live her life in progress, right?

Like from the very beginning, she's saying how she aspires to comedy; and then she meets Charlie Chaplin. And so, she starts seeing like how he does what he does. It's almost like she's just soaking in the world around her and learning from it constantly and pushing herself constantly to be better, to do more. You know what I mean? Like it's really kind of cool.

**LJN:** Yes, exactly. I think she really loved being an actress. I think she really wanted to be better at it. And I think that comedy was a calling for her, but Hearst really didn't approve of comedy. It wasn't highfalutin enough when he wanted her in dramas – he wanted her in dramas in these big costumed spectacles – when she wanted to be tripping over furniture and making people laugh.

That was her love, but Hearst didn't like that. And then later in her film career, she really wanted to start playing the more sexy vixen roles of the 1930s, and Hearst just shut that down.

He did not want his mistress to be a sexy vixen in the movies. He wanted her to be young and sweet and innocent; and he just wouldn't let her evolve as an actress. And that was one of the things that she had to reconcile with him.

It was either leave him and go do what she wants in the movie, or stay with him and accept what he says. And so, that was one of the big choices in her life that she had to make. And she keeps making it.



And, it's not just one choice; it's a continuous choice over the decades, every time she wants to make a movie that's funny and he says, "No, no pie in the face. No. You know, I don't want you to be embarrassed on film. I don't want you to look silly. I don't want you to look, you know, frivolous. I want you to be high and mighty and dressed well and speaking upper." You know?

**GP:** Yeah, I totally hear what you're saying. And I'm like, as you were talking, I'm playing out the scenes that I've read so far and seeing, kind of, how that it really is sort of a power play between the two of them.

And while he's certainly, you know, he's incredibly wealthy and he's male, like, there's clearly a lot of power plays on his side, she's not someone who just rolls over. Like, she also kind of finds ways to get what she wants; and we see that as the story evolves, like you said, she reconciles, but she doesn't just go lightly into that good night. Like, she sometimes fights back and makes her needs and feelings known, which I think is really kind of fun to see. One of the things--

**LJN:** Oh yeah.

**GP:** Oh, go ahead.

**LJN:** I was just going to say she could throw a good fit.

[laughter]

**GP:** You know, that Hollywood acting is got to count for something, right? Like, at least the melodrama you can bring the melodrama. So, throughout the story, we have a number of thematic elements that come into play. One of these things is the idea of reality versus the perception of reality.

And you've already alluded to this a little bit with how Marion wanted to be on screen, you know, like first the comedy, then the vixen role, but then how Hearst was kind of standing in her way and not letting her be perceived in the way that she wanted to be perceived.

But there are a whole lot of other places where this idea of like, what's real and then what seems real but isn't real comes into play. So, I'm curious if you could talk a little bit about that theme as it evolves and plays out in the story.

Like, for example, W.R. insists that he's really in love with Marion. Like she's the one he really loves. He just happens to be married to Millicent, but yet, he, you know, obviously isn't divorcing Millicent, and for the reasons that you explained earlier.

And there are also a lot of places where, you know, sometimes the realness of his devotion to Marion comes into question, like, is he really that devoted if he's going off with his family and ignoring her for months at a time?

So, that would be like one example of a place in the story or a way that this theme of real versus not real kind of comes into play. And so, I was wondering what your thoughts were on this aspect of the story.

**LJN:** When I was writing it, I was wondering myself about just how committed he could be to her, but the evidence is there that they stayed together. I mean, they had some rough years, but he had a lot of obligations.

And I think that she was pretty sympathetic to the fact that he not only had 39 newspapers and half of the country reading what he wrote every day, which is an enormous pressure and responsibility, he was running for governor of New York and even tried to toss his hat into the ring of presidential politics.



I think that Marion understood a lot of that. And, on the side, she was being very patient. I think when he finally lifted her family up out of middle-class Brooklyn neighborhood into super wealth in a mega mansion on Riverside Drive, not far from Millicent's house; I mean; just a few blocks down the road, he installed the whole Douras family in this mega mansion and they decorated it.

And I think he tried to prove to her how much he loved her with the things that he bought her. He bought her a building in Manhattan, and he named it the Marion Davies Building. He bought her endless jewelry, and all kinds of smaller gifts. She was young, and I think she was an impressionable, and I think she believed that he loved her.

I think it was difficult, and I think they both made the sacrifices. I think she hoped to be the wife; she always hoped to be the wife for many, many years after they were sneaking around together.

He put her in an apartment, he would come and visit her there. And she believed he was working on getting a divorce and he hired a private investigator to follow Millicent. He was trying to do everything to get free of his wife because he really did believe he belonged with Marion.

But as the years tick on, they start becoming more and more enmeshed in their own relationship; reality is that it's not going to happen. And it's not black and white, everything's gray. It's like with anything, he's got a huge empire he's servicing; and he is got this dream of building this castle out in California.

And he's very preoccupied with a lot of things, but he is also pretty silly. He's a pretty silly fun guy who likes to be with Marion because she's still in fun. And I think it brings out the youth in him. And I think that people don't see that; people in public don't see the private side of them.

**GP:** Yeah. And isn't that, of course, like the ultimate real versus not real, right? Like the versions of ourselves that everybody puts forward when we're in public is always going to be a little bit different from the version of ourselves that exist when we let our hair down and are hanging out in our jammies and whatnot.

**LJN:** Absolutely.

**GP:** So, in a way, it's like that dynamic of how Hearst is kind of embodies that theme.

**LJN:** Right. I think the time, the era that this all takes place, the 20s and 30s that was even more stark than it is even today. I mean, I think back then, they had a public persona and they had a private persona. And in the movies, for sure, that was all cultivated once they moved to Hollywood.

Her public persona, not so much hers, but all the other actresses, you know, they were all pretty much given their role of how they were going to be in the public; and then, privately, they could be how they wanted to be as long as they didn't get caught.

So, there was a much bigger divide between private and public back then than I think there is today. The distance is smaller, for sure. People are more authentic, people are more genuine; they're more real, they're more who they really are in life.

I think back then, you didn't get to really show who you really were; and well, especially if you were having an affair, you know, this was not acceptable. I mean, men did it all the time, but nobody as powerful as William Randolph Hearst, you know, nobody else in history.

I mean, the only other person I can think of that I was reading about at the time was Frank Lloyd Wright. He left his wife and kids and went off with his mistress, but he did it in a public way. See, Hearst is trying to hide it.





He's trying to make everyone happy. He's trying to make Millicent happy, he's trying to make Marion happy, he's trying to make his businesses happy; he's trying to do all the right things in all the right areas, I guess.

**GP:** Yeah. And you know, that again, is that whole idea of like the public persona versus the private persona. And it's interesting also, what you said about how that gap between public and private has shortened. I think a huge part of that is because of social media, right?

Like, when people started in the 2000s writing about their breakfast cereals, you know, and like what they did in the morning and whatnot, suddenly, that public-private persona thing just gets blurred together very quickly.

And it's interesting, as you said, like authenticity, it almost cuts both ways because these days, yes, people are more authentic in a good way. But then, there's also that feeling that like "being authentic" – and I'm doing air quotes here – is almost like a marketing strategy now, which isn't very authentic.

**LJN:** Right.

**GP:** So, it's kind of interesting how these things evolve.

**LJN:** Yes. And with social media, you can project a certain life to the whole world. Like I'll see people smiling and posting amazing stuff; and then you go, were like, "Wow, you're not in a good place. I'm sorry to hear that," but you're not going to post that on social media, you know?

So, there is that disconnect as well today. But it seems less than it was back then. Back then, it feels like when I was doing the research, I just felt more manufactured. It felt more purposely manufactured, and people had to dress a certain way and act a certain way in public. And it's less so that way, but we have other problems.

**GP:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**LJN:** It's all evolved.

**GP:** It's interesting too, as you were saying, like they dressed a certain way, they act a certain way; it's like being in a movie, right? Like the movies are the epitome of this real versus not real, perceived real.

Like people would watch films and feel immersed in what is the reality of the film; and yet, they're watching a film that is completely manufactured, and it's produced in some sound stage and has nothing to do with the reality. Like it could be a desert scene, and it's being produced on a set and it's completely manufactured.

Leslie Johansen Nack: Right. Exactly. Yeah. You never know what's real and what's not; it's so true. And today, like with the movie stars, everyone's always loves to talk about the behind-the-scenes stuff, how they got the characters, how they did--

They didn't talk about any of that stuff back then. It was all very much presented to the public as this is the reality; this is the reality of this movie, of this time, of this actress or actor.

**GP:** Yeah, and it's interesting too, like I love what you just said about the behind-the-scenes stuff, because even these behind-the-scenes things are manufactured, right?



Like you watch a making-of whatever movie or a making-of whatever video, DVD extra or something, and you see that there's like, there's a director and producers and there's editors and there's all sorts of people on the back-end who produce and manufacture this supposed like documentary style version of how the movie was made.

And so, even then, it's real, but it gives us a behind-the-scenes look, but it gives us the behind-the-scenes look that the filmmakers want us to see and that they want to craft for us.

**LJN:** That's true. That is true. Everything is produced, isn't it? Yeah, that's true.

**GP:** So, this ties to one of the things that kind of looms large in the story, and I haven't quite gotten to the part where this really comes into play, but we can't not know about it because everyone knows about Citizen Kane and the fact that that was a depiction of the Hearst-Marion Davies affair.

So, speaking of producing something that is not real, but sort of hinting at reality, can you talk a little bit about how the whole Citizen Kane debacle impacted Marion's life and how that plays out without obviously giving a ton of detailed spoilers, but we all kind of know the history, anyway.

**LJN:** Right. I think that Hearst tried to keep the movie from Marion for a while, but once it became obvious that RKO was going to release this movie by this unknown person, Orson Welles, and it was previewed by Louella Parsons. who worked for Hearst.

She came and talked to Hearst and Davies; and pretty much told them, you know, "This movie is a slam on you guys." And I think Hearst already knew about it, but Marion didn't. I'm not sure that Orson Welles intended to be so mean to Marion.

I think he was getting information from Marion's nephew, George Lederer – no, Charlie – Charlie Lederer, sorry. When Marion found out that Citizen Kane was coming out and she was portrayed as a drunk talentless has-been, she was devastated. I think that this was the final cap on her career. She had just retired and she was taking care of Hearst.

Hearst had just been removed as president of Hearst Corporation, and he was struggling with his whole life. She was retired and trying to be there for him. And then this movie came out, and just slammed them both.

And I think Hearst was mostly worried about Marion's career – not her career, but her reputation. And I think that the movie took away her reputation at the end. All of her modest successes in the previous couple decades at the beginning of the movie industry and the evolution of her acting career, I think were dismissed because of this movie, not immediately, but over the years, over the next 10 years after the movie was released, because when it was first released, it didn't do very well.

It was a little too artsy for the average person, and the reviews were not that great. And pretty soon, Pearl Harbor was attacked and the whole country shifted its focus from this movie and national politics to the war. And so, I think it devastated her. I think it took all the wind out of her sales, and I think she was really ruined by it inside.

**GP:** I mean, it's heartbreaking. It's also fascinating because as a woman, in a way, you would think that it would make Hearst look really bad; in some ways, worse, right? Because he's the one who's cheating because of societal norms with so much greater-- Like the fact that even today there's one biography of her and a bajillion biographies of him, like clearly, the outcome didn't-- It did not go well for her at all. And even for him, it seems like to some degree, he recovered.





**LJN:** Right. Of course. Well, he's William Randolph Hearst, and he's the man; and the man always win. And so, that is the thing. It's like she just got stepped on; and well, she was dismissed her whole life because she was the mistress.

And you know, I think she was constantly trying to prove herself and the tidal wave of public opinion, the tidal wave of norms and mores of the time, everything was against her. And when she had her daughter, she couldn't even be a mother to her daughter publicly or even privately, really.

The whole thing was just, she was constantly swimming upstream, I think. And not to feel bad for her – I mean, I do feel bad for her and it breaks my heart, but at the same time, she had an amazing, wonderful life with so many opportunities; and she was so blessed and gifted, and she had so much that it's hard to feel sorry for her.

But at the same time, when I was writing this book and I was realizing, you know, she deals with her pain by drinking; she started over-drinking in her 20s, you know? She started a real path; her father was an alcoholic, and I think it runs in families, and we know that now.

Of course, they didn't know that back then, but that was Marion's answer was to drink. You know, she did it at home. She wasn't like her sister Rose who went out and just partied, and was like, today's version of a wild and crazy partier. You know, she wasn't like that. But at the same time, she drank a lot. And she ended up dying from alcoholism, and the complications of smoking and alcoholism; and I'm sad.

**GP:** Yeah, and the whole idea of the double standards, as you mentioned, you know, he's William Randolph Hearst; like clearly, the rules do not apply to him at all.

But even the rules applying to them as a couple, they apply differently to them than they applied to say, like, I'm thinking, for instance, of those excursions that they take on the yachts, where they'd have friends on the yacht with them who also would bring, you know, like W.R.'s friend would bring a mistress, but the only ones who get to room together are W.R. and Marion; like the other couples have to pretend like they're being proper, even if they're not.

**LJN:** Right. He was a big stickler for following the rules of the day, you know, socially, he didn't want to be known as the guy who was holding these wild and crazy parties for all these, you know, sex parties, drug parties, drinking parties, especially during Prohibition.

You know, enough bad things happened just by accident around them that he didn't want to have these crazy wild parties. Even at Hearst Castle, I mean everyone sort of, it was accepted that at Hearst Castle, none of the single people could share a room.

The women were put in the main house in the Casa Grande, and the men were put out in one of the guest houses; and if they snuck to each other in the middle of the night, then they were removed from the property the next morning.

[laughter]

**LJN:** Yeah, I know, it's funny. He did not want to approve of this kind of behavior. See, he didn't see himself in the same light that he saw everyone else. Marion was not his mistress; Marion was his soulmate, his partner, his should-have-been wife. He never even thought of her as anything but his absolute soulmate. So, of course, none of the rules applied to her and him.



**GP:** Yeah. Again, talk about like the real versus not real and that tension between, sort of, what people present outwardly versus what's really happening right behind closed doors.

It comes up again and again throughout the story, this idea of, and the sort of tension between those two versions of the characters, how they show up publicly versus in private. And it's just fascinating to me. So, I'm curious as we wrap things up, what do you hope will come out of this book?

**LJN:** Well, I think I'm advocating for Marion to be respected for what she did do. She's been dismissed from most of the Hollywood best-of list. I think that she's been underestimated. I think there's been a couple of-- There's a documentary that Charlize Theron narrated that really shows Marion's side of it.

I think she was eclipsed by the bright light that was shown on Hearst, and I think she's been overlooked. And I hope, maybe people will get to know who she really was and not be dismissed as this drunk, bored person who loved puzzles, which is how she's portrayed in *Citizen Kane*; that's not her.

**GP:** Yeah.

**LJN:** She was devoted to her family and her sisters; and she took care of everybody, and she was amazing in a lot of ways. And she navigated that era, you know, everybody makes mistakes, but she did a great job; and I think that she's done a lot of hard work on her films. She made 44 films, and let's celebrate what she did. Let's celebrate her comedy, even her dramas; let's acknowledge her for what she's done.

**GP:** 100%. And you know, as you were talking about like her with her family too, I mean, the scenes with her sisters and her family are probably my favorite scenes in the story. But it also occurred to me that she's also really shrewd problem-solver, right?

Like there are a bunch of times where she knows she wants to help lift her family out of the situation that they're living in, lift them to another level, and she finds ways to negotiate that. Like she's, you know, negotiating in a boardroom, but except she's not, she's just talking to W.R.

But she's very smart about how she plays those negotiations out. And even just the negotiation for how to handle the baby and figuring out like, what are we going to do, and then coming up with an idea of how she can make it work, which I think gave me a very different perspective into who she was.

**LJN:** Right. Well, yeah, she was young and motivated; and she was very talented, and she did love William Randolph Hearst and he loved her back. And when they decide to keep the baby a secret, she's committed to that secret. But she takes care of Rose and the baby; and she takes care of Patricia for the rest of her life.

And it's touching, in a way, because she never got to be the mother she wanted to be. Marion is very committed to taking care of Patricia and Rose; and she's also committed to this secret that she's decided to keep with Hearst, for his sake, because it would ruin him more than it would ruin her.

She would be ostracized, of course, but she's like not anybody really in the world of publishing or the business world; it would be him that would be suffering so much, and she didn't want to hurt him. So, she kept this secret for their entire lives.

**GP:** So, what's next for you? Obviously, the book is coming out next week, so for folks who want to read more about Marion Davies, look for that; and we'll put a link in the show notes page. But what else have you got cooking in the background?



**LJN:** Well, I'm starting to work on my next book. I think it'll be another memoir. I'm just finishing up the marketing and all for this book, and we'll see what happens.

**GP:** Sounds exciting. So, I always like to end with the same question, what's your number one tip for writers?

**LJN:** Well, for me, my number one tip for me is persistence, to just keep writing and to just keep producing work. Don't ever give up.

**GP:** Always a good thing for writers to hear. I know I constantly need to remind myself of that as well. Leslie, thank you so much for being here today. It's been an absolute pleasure speaking with you.

**LJN:** Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate it.

**GP:** All right, word nerds. Thanks so much for listening. Keep writing and keep being awesome.

