

APL Volumes

Season 3, Episode 1: LONG ISLAND TEA

This episode was transcribed by APL volunteer Martha Ladyman.

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

GENN: Hello, fellow lit lovers, and welcome to Season Three of APL Volumes, coming to you from the very heart of downtown Austin, your Central Library. I'm your host, Genn Mehalik, avid reader and admin senior for the Customer Access division at APL.

This season we're turning the pages to explore the intriguing connections between books and the lives of their authors. Each episode will have a unique theme and guest. All of our guests are fellow staff members—brilliant, passionate folks that I'm so lucky to work with. So I'm very excited to hear their hot takes.

Whether you are a dedicated bibliophile or just looking to add a new chapter to your podcast playlist, you can go to bed at night knowing APL Volumes, Season Three, was made just for you.

MUSIC

GENN: This episode is all about celebrity memoirs, and I'm talking with Jana White. Jana, would you like to introduce yourself?

JANA: Hello. I am a Library Assistant at the Pleasant Hill branch for the last seventeen years. So you've probably seen me there.

GENN: Whoa. That's awesome. I didn't know you worked here that long.

JANA: Yeah. I've been in a library since '93.

GENN: Where else?

JANA: In New York.

GENN: Oh, cool. Like New York Public Library?

JANA: No. Long Island, baby.

GENN: I watched *Long Island Medium* recently. Is it small? How big is Long Island?

JANA: Long Island is very big. And long. Thus the name.

GENN: Because people on that show always say, like, "I knew I was going to see you. I felt it." I was like, "But you live on Long Island. It can't be that big."

JANA: It's big. That's what's weird about it. Long Island medium, she's one of our greatest exports. Long Island iced tea. And the *Long Island Medium*. Right there.

GENN: Oh yeah, I forgot about the Long Island iced tea. Do you go home sometimes?

JANA: I try to get home for Christmas. Usually I'm there for Christmas. Hi, Mom! Hi, Dad! Sometimes twice a year if I can swing it.

GENN: Yeah. But you've never seen her.

JANA: No, I've never seen the Long Island medium. I would love it.

GENN: That would be so cool.

JANA: I would love that so much. "I see someone! Do you have some background with spaghetti? Yes? OK." Which you are going to hit almost everybody on Long Island with the spaghetti.

GENN: I know. But have you seen the show?

JANA: I have.

GENN: I know this isn't what we are talking about. But she probably has a memoir. I haven't read it, but.....

JANA: I didn't even think of that.

GENN: I would read it. I feel like I've read some other psychics' memoirs, like Sandra Brown. Is that her name?

JANA: Oh, yeah! Cassandra?

GENN: I don't know. But it's been a long time. When I was growing up she was everywhere.

JANA: Always on the Montel Williams show

GENN: Yeah. Jerry Springer and stuff like that.

JANA: I would love to run into her.

GENN: Yeah. But with her I feel like she has some things that I'm like, "Oh, that's freaky." But I don't know. With the TV shows I'm like, they think there is no way she could have known that, but you can see who buys tickets to your things and kind of, like, look at social media. I don't know.

I want to believe, though.

OK, so you read what book?

JANA: I read *Dear Girls: Intimate Tales, Untold Secrets, and Advice for Living Your Best Life*, by Ali Wong.

GENN: And she's a comedian.

JANA: She is a stand-up comedian, but also an actress, writer, producer, director.

GENN: What has she been in, acting-wise?

JANA: So most recently she starred in the dark comedy *Beef*. Did you see that?

GENN: Oh yes. I loved it. I know exactly.

JANA: So it's topical. She just won a Golden Globe and an Emmy for that. She was the first Asian woman to win a lead acting Emmy. So topical, yes.

GENN: I've read that book, actually, but it's been awhile. I don't know if I remember much, just because I read so many memoirs, they go in and out. I can't keep them, or I wouldn't have space for the new stuff.

JANA: No. Something comes in, something goes out. 100 percent.

GENN: Exactly. Somehow I'm really good at remembering the numbers of your life. Like I know all my bank account numbers by heart, the long ones. And just things like that.

JANA: That's so good. Me and numbers don't get along.

GENN: The numbers stay, so I have to let the anecdotes about celebrities go.

JANA: You can't hold everything.

GENN: Exactly.

I didn't know you were reading that, but I knew you were going to read a comedian and a female comedian, but I thought it was a different one. But that's OK.

So I also read a female comedian memoir, which was Leslie Jones's.

JANA: I didn't even know she had something out!

GENN: It just came out in September, 2023. And the title is *Leslie F-ing Jones*, which is fitting for her. It's not spelled out that way. It's spelled the right way, but with an asterisk in the U.

JANA: Cartoon style? With little symbols?

GENN: Yeah. Like comic book.

So I just did that so we can make some comparisons. But I don't know. Let's hear what you liked about your book.

JANA: So I had a hard time picking. I don't generally read celebrity memoirs. They are self-indulgent, and I kind of hate most celebrities.

GENN: We should talk about that.

JANA. Yeah. I kind of don't care. And I didn't want to talk about a memoir that's been talked to death. Britney Spears. Prince Harry. Paris Hilton. I'm not going to add anything to that conversation that hasn't already been said.

I wanted it to be topical, so I figured she had just won those awards. And I thought with a stand-up comedian, at least it's going to be funny.

So I looked at a few, and I loved her stand-up specials.

GENN: What do you normally read?

JANA: What do I normally read?

GENN: Fiction?

JANA: You know, not to sound like one of those people, but nonfiction.

GENN: Me too!

JANA: Microhistory. I have one out right now. It's like the history of fabric, something like that.

GENN: Like textiles?

JANA: Yeah.

GENN: I have a friend who went to school for textiles. I was like, "How do you go to school for that?" But there's a lot you can do.

JANA: It's a whole thing.

GENN: Yeah. Her thesis was a physical thing from one of those giant looms. Not a thesis. I use that word, you know, flexibly.

JANA: Yes. Is that a word?

GENN: I don't know. I was struggling. You heard the pause. I had to come up with something.

JANA: I like it. If it's not a word, it's a word now. Done.

GENN: I think that you would actually have something to add even on those books that have been talked to death, because you don't care much about celebrities or because you are going in with the idea that they are self-indulgent.

JANA: Interesting.

GENN: I read a lot of memoirs. And especially celebrities. It's because I'm fascinated by what fame does to the psyche.

JANA: I was just going to ask you why.

GENN: Other than celebrity memoirs, or just memoirs, I also like to read psychology-related books. I'm interested in the brain, mood disorders and all that.

So, ever since I was young, I never wanted to be famous. But I wanted to talk to someone famous. I want to ask them, I don't know. When I was younger I had actual questions. Now I feel like maybe it's because that's weird or I've thought it through too much. But I don't know what I would actually ask somebody. Because they are not going to tell you, really.

I remember one time when I met Tegan and Sara when they were here signing their memoir at BookPeople, and I tried to talk to Tegan, who is super down to earth and chill, about being spotted in public and stuff. Because they said they were going to come here to the library to see it. And that was a good segue into what was that like?

And I really thought that she would just tell me more, but later on it made perfect sense. She was basically like very diplomatic and like, "Oh, no, people are so nice." And all this stuff. But I'm like, I know there is another side to it. I know it's weird, people knowing who you are. I don't know. Either you are feeling like you are being watched all the time probably or you forget about it. But you are being watched. So that's a whole another thing.

JANA: Who did you want to meet when you were a kid?

GENN: No, I didn't care. It was just like anybody famous. I mean, I probably wanted to meet Hanson because I was obsessed with them. Zack in particular. But that was like in the nineties, and they were too young to have maybe figured out what fame does. But also they are still, like I follow them on Instagram and they seem so normal. They all have ten kids each.

JANA: I have seen that.

GENN: It's just so very basic life. They go around doing talks about music and playing music.

JANA: That's the dream, right? You made your money, and now you are just like, "I'm just going to talk about music, and maybe do some shows if I want."

GENN: It's like a dream in a way because you got to experience fame, I think. And then you get to go back to your regular life, which is rare. But then everyone is always going to be saying you are a, what's that saying? Like five minute?

JANA: One-hit wonder?

GENN: One-hit wonder. Yeah. I was like, five-minute wonder. I couldn't remember.

JANA: Warhol. Everyone's going to be famous for five minutes? Ten minutes? I have to look that up. We're at the library.

GENN: He has a memoir that I read. It was like 2003. It's called *From A to B and Back Again*, and I loved it so much. He was one of the first people's memoirs I read, probably. I super related to it. I saw that we were very similar. It's really all his random thoughts, that's all it is.

And I was just, I was young, I was seventeen or eighteen. But I was like, "We're so similar." That might be one of the first things that got me into reading memoirs.

JANA: Maybe that's one of the things. I don't feel I can relate to that. Or I think I'm not going to be able to. So I don't pick the book up.

GENN: It does actually seem like you are deciding before you read it.

JANA: I am judging books by their covers.

GENN: But that is so normal. I've done a book display about that, just based on book covers, because I think that people should stop feeling bad about that. The cover is a big part.

JANA: We actually have a discussion at our branch the other day. And my coworker, I think it was Richard, said, "But then why do they make covers so great?" And I was like, "Oh, that's a good point."

GENN: Because we all know that we are doing that.

JANA: We're selling books. And we're judging them by the cover. That's a good point.

GENN: And I mean, nobody just sees a cover, and I can't say nobody. But you also pick it up and read a couple of sentences. And I will say I literally read a couple of sentences. I don't go past that usually. And decide. Which is kind of insane when you think about it. Like, what makes me think that me opening a book randomly and reading two sentences should be a good decider. But I do that.

JANA: I like that about you. Just diving right in. Committed to taking chances.

GENN: Because I feel like life is too short and there are so many books. I'm going to have to love it for me to want to give it my time. And I'm always reading a million books. So clearly there are a lot of good ones.

JANA: That's another thing we talk about a lot at work. There are so many people who say, "I've started it. I'm just going to plow through and finish it. Even though I hate it." People are like, "I'll give it a chapter."

GENN: When I was growing up my brother used to always read the last sentence of a book to decide. And I hated it. It gave me anxiety. It still does.

JANA: That's terrible!

GENN: I think it was just a teenaged, I'm quirky or something. I don't know. I'll have to ask him if he still does that.

JANA: I think I'm feeling that too. Why would you do that?

GENN: Why would you do that? Why would you ruin that?

I feel like the last sentence of a good book is like eating dessert after a good meal or something. But when you are not too full because then dessert sucks.

But you were asking me what's my deciding

JANA: Yeah, like do you do a chapter?

GENN: I read the inside flap, which when it's a paperback they don't have that. Sometimes the back is just reviews, other writers saying good things. And I hate that! Where's the snippet?

JANA: Yeah, it's telling me nothing.

GENN: You have to look it up on the internet. But you know, I read nonfiction, so generally I know something about them. Like, not too long ago I read the Elon Musk biography that came out. It was by the same person who wrote the Steve Jobs biography. And I didn't even realize that. But I noticed it because the covers look exactly the same. They are black-and-white photos, really close up. And I was like, same font, you know. I looked it up and it was the same person. It makes sense.

So that cover did a good job of giving me information about who was writing it. If you just see it you might think it's a memoir, like an autobiography. But it's not. It's from somebody else.

A lot of people love Elon Musk, but a lot of people I know don't love him. They hate Elon Musk. And here's another thing we do with celebrities, is we love them or we hate them. And we forget that we don't know them really at all.

But they are living their lives like knowing that everything they do is just going into the collective consciousness. And the idea of who they are. Which is what I think makes celebrities kind of crazy.

But anyway, I read that book thinking that I don't know if I liked this guy or if I didn't like him, even in that shallow way. I didn't even really know anything about him. And I felt like, especially living in Austin, everybody has an opinion about him. And I wanted to know what my opinion was. Or at least be able to talk about him, to add to conversations that happen frequently in this city.

So that was part of choosing that book. Which happens for me a lot with other books. I just want to know what I think, or come to some opinion about the person. Since it was not written by him, it was supposed to be not so biased or whatever. But you never know. He's a billionaire. He could pay for the book to be a certain way.

I ended up coming out of it knowing probably everything about him because it is a huge book. I actually liked it a lot. I think it is because this is a very mysterious billionaire who is very present in this city, at least in conversations and like the media and stuff. I've passed his plant like a million times.

JANA: It's gigantic!

GENN: I know. It's always being built. And there are like giant garage doors or whatever that are open. And I want to go in there.

But it was fascinating. It's fascinating to me to read anything about someone whose life is so different from mine.

JANA: I don't know. I'm missing that chip or something. I don't know I just want to read about someone I like already. That's not great. I feel like I should maybe think about it more like how you are thinking about it.

GENN: I'm thinking about how it is funny how you like microhistories, because it's sort of the same thing, but about objects or something. You know?

JANA: Yeah, that's interesting.

GENN: Do you only read about objects that you like?

Not really, right, because you said you were doing textiles.

JANA: Yeah, sure, I like textiles.

GENN: It's kind of like you just want to know the weird information? Weird facts or something?

JANA: Right. Yeah. That's interesting to me.

GENN: And I feel that I always want to know what's the truth? What really happened?

But reading memoirs has taught me that you are never going to know. It's actually taught me that all of it, that everything that is put out to the world about these people's lives, is kind of fabricated by somebody.

And I think the allure of a memoir is like you are going to read it from their mind, from their words, how they see it. Which is really the only truth that we have, in my opinion. Perspective is your truth, for each person.

We two could go through the same experiences and have completely different, the way that we view that experience. So I guess truth to me has always been a subjective thing.

JANA: So you are saying it is an unreliable narrator in memoirs?

GENN: No, I'm saying kind of the opposite, but not even. I just think that truth is subjective, and I think that most people like to feel that everything is black and white. This is how it happened. Even in, let's say, a relationship, right? You get into an argument. It's over what happened or who said what. And you are like, "I swear you said this," or "I swear I said that." "I really said sorry." And they are like, "No you didn't. I was there." You are like, "I was there too."

It's just, it doesn't matter who said what. We don't have a camera or a recorder on us and you are never going to be able to play that back. And it's really how you made that person feel to them. And to you it's like how you feel. So that is the truth. It's your perspective on it.

Because at the end of the day it's not if you didn't say sorry, it's that they did not feel that you were regretting whatever you did. You didn't seem sorry.

JANA: I got you. Now I got you.

GENN: So I just like to know what the person thinks about the big events that everybody is talking about. Like with the Britney Spears book.

JANA: Did you read that?

GENN: I did. Another one that I don't care about her, but it's just like topical. I'm curious.

JANA: Everybody was reading it.

GENN: Yeah. And it's at the library. I didn't have to buy it or anything. That's a big thing. I'm here all the time so I can. It's a luxury. I wouldn't be buying all these books.

JANA: Did you come away from it, like...

GENN: I came away from it with my own kind of opinions, which and, I like being able to talk about it, you know? Have some conversations with people and just ... I think books are a really good, you know, like water cooler talk?

We work at the library so maybe that's why, but yeah, I love talking about books, and about people. It's like a combination of the two. Memoirs.

JANA: And everybody knows Britney Spears.

GENN: Exactly. And I grew up in that time. I was in I think the last year of middle school when *Baby, One More Time* came out. I remember watching that video. That's like my generation. I wasn't really big into her. I was into like the boy bands, of course. My brother actually loved Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. And I was just, "What's the big deal about her?" So that's why I wanted to read it.

And also he was like free Britney and all that. That was very interesting to me because it's like a psychological aspect. Everybody just wanted to know what was the truth, again.

JANA: I guess I thought I was just going to walk away from it feeling bad for her. That's a bummer.

GENN: Actually, I think the title of *The Woman in Me* is kind of alluding to the fact that she was using this book to be kind of like "I'm strong and I went through all this, but I made it."

Which you could still feel bad for that because it is true. A lot of these people that we read memoirs about are coming from childhood fame, which is different.

JANA: Demented, if I may say.

GENN: Yeah. It definitely is, like they don't have somebody to advocate for them. Their parents are making money off of them. Everyone in their life is making money off of them.

JANA: That's the problem. That's the problem I have with that whole thing. And they are like, "She wanted to do it. At five she wanted to act." But maybe you should step in and say, "Maybe when you are eighteen. Maybe when you are older." I don't know. A five-year-old kid wants to eat candy for breakfast, too. You're going to listen to what they want? I don't know.

GENN: Yeah, and I was just like thinking recently about that book, *I'm Glad My Mom Died*. By Jennette McCurdy.

JANA: That was really good.

GENN: I loved that one. I could barely put it down. She was a childhood actress. That one really goes into the childhood actor thing where you are, where there is this adult.... For whatever reason we are so attached to our moms, or dads, or whoever is our guardian. They can do no wrong. And even if they are literally abusing you or whatever, it's like evolution has made us cling to the person.

We need them. We want to impress them.

JANA: Stockholm Syndrome.

GENN: Yes. Exactly. And you can just tell from the title, *I'm Glad My Mom Died*. To me that is really smart to choose that, even though she got a lot of criticism. But her book sold so many millions of copies. Immediately it sold out everywhere. And I think that had a lot to do with it. People were like, "What? What does that mean?"

JANA: Also I think it resonated with people. Not everybody gets along with their parents.

GENN: And it's like the audacity to say that on a book cover. But yeah, like her mom, she expressed after a bad audition when she was like really young, like nine or something, that she didn't want to do it anymore. And her mom really flipped out on her and screamed and it was kind of a 'poor me' sort of thing. Like, you have to do this.

JANA: This is exactly what I'm talking about. Terrible.

GENN: I know. I was going to say they basically made her feel like the family is depending on you. And she was a child. And then her mom had survived cancer once, and they kind of just led her to believe that her mom can't work because of that. Her dad just left or something. And it was just really her and her mom. She felt responsible.

And also for her mom's moods. She had like insane moods and probably some diagnosis that I don't know about. But yeah, she even, there were things that were psychologically done to her to make her actually change in a way she developed physically.

Like her mom realized that if she looked a certain age, which is a lot younger than she really was, she could get these roles that she had a better chance of getting because if they hired people who actually were the age she looked, they couldn't work so many hours in a day because they were kids.

So her mom had her counting calories from a very early age so she wouldn't develop fully so she would be able to get these roles and they would have an incentive to hire her. Because she could work adult hours. Just things like that.

It sort of reminds me of that Munchausen Syndrome by proxy. What's her name, Gypsy Rose? People don't realize that those kinds of insidious abuses, that are not leaving any bruises that are visible, they really go into the psyche deeply.

JANA: Absolutely.

GENN: And I don't know. I wasn't shocked at the Gypsy Rose thing, the ultimate outcome. I wasn't shocked by that. It seems like everybody was. But I am like why?

JANA: Why would you be shocked. She was her abuser.

GENN: And you are literally, like, farming your kid's body.

JANA: That's another whole podcast.

GENN: And here I read about comedy so we could talk about comedy.

JANA: So I through *Dear Girls* was good. It was basically, she's described as a life guide for her daughter's journey as they reach adulthood. So it's kind of epistolary as every chapter is "Dear Girls."

GENN: Does it feel like a parent teaching you life lessons, or trying to?

JANA: Oh my gosh. Not really.

GENN: When I was younger I wanted to keep letters. I was like, "Every time I learn a big life lesson I'm going to write a letter to my future kids, and then when they turn eighteen I'll give them this binder of all these life lessons." But then I thought, "That's so dumb. They are not going to listen to me." You can't just learn something because someone tells you. You have to go out and make mistakes. You know?

JANA: Yeah. So it is mostly like, yes, they are kind of letters, but it is telling the story of her life. So it's mainly kind of like, "I did these things."

GENN: That's cool. I always wish my mom had kind of like written that kind of thing down, like her stories of her life. I feel like if you have kids you should have to do that or something.

JANA: Mandatory?

GENN: Yeah.

JANA: I thought the most successful parts, she was talking about her immigrant mom and her struggles and her immigrant grandfather on her father's side. There was racism. It's her drive; it's her constant source of motivation. So I thought those parts were really interesting.

Talking about her marriage. Her husband did most of the heavy lifting while she was out touring and doing her comedy. I listened to a podcast with her and she was like, "You have to do stand-up comedy. You've got to keep doing it."

GENN: That's the same thing Leslie Jones said.

JANA: Or you lose your edge. A couple of weeks off and you lose. You've got to stay out there. So having kids and try to do all that

GENN: Yeah. Leslie Jones was trying to say like you have to mess up a lot to know what's funny. You have to do the jokes, because you can't just keep working a joke until you think it is funny. You just have to see. She says you have to say it the way that you first thought it before you try to edit it and all that.

JANA: That's when it is funniest.

GENN: She does think that is when it is funniest, and that you might not think anybody is going to laugh. But then usually you get the biggest reaction then.

And then if you don't you know that it is not funny.

But I loved her book because she is so confident. And I feel like you see all these struggles that she went through, similar kinds of things, and you see her now in interviews and stuff and how confident she is. It is clearly a direct result of the hardships that she went through.

But to your point, apparently Jamie Foxx saw her very early on and thought she was funny and liked the show and everything.

JANA: Ali Wong?

GENN: No, Leslie Jones. He himself was not super well known. But he, I guess, gave her unsolicited advice, which was that she needed to go out and live more and have life experiences. And she actually quit doing comedy for like ten years or something after that.

And she agrees. She wasn't mad about it. She just thought it was weird at the time. But I think it was that it was hard. She was going to all these auditions, going and doing all these stand-up shows, and not making it, right? Stand-up isn't that viable unless you make it big.

And so after he said that she was probably like, "I think there is something to that." And then it was when her brother died that she went back to comedy. Which is so weird because it was in the depths of grief. And she talks about that.

But also she said that was the first time she felt truly free because she didn't care, in a way. She was able to fully be herself without worrying about what people thought.

And ultimately at the end of the day she is funny, is how she says it, so she can be that and not be like performing a character. And that's what resonates with people.

JANA: That is similar to Ali Wong. She kind of didn't care. Same thing. You've got to bomb. And she was like, "Eh, I don't care."

GENN: That's hard to do, I think.

JANA: I can't. But I think her background and stuff, and seeing struggle and stuff, it was like, "I don't care. I'm going to bomb or whatever. I thought it was funny." It's amazing to me.

GENN: That's awesome. Especially in the very heavily men industry.

JANA: Right. And of course if anyone has seen her stand-up comedy, she's a staunch feminist. She talks a lot about, there's a couple of sentences I liked. "Women are not expected to live a life for themselves. When women dedicate their lives to children it is deemed a worthy and respectable choice. When women dedicate themselves

to a passion outside of the family that doesn't involve worshipping their husbands or taking care of their kids, they are seen as selfish, cold, and unfit mothers."

So then she talks about the roles her husband takes on. I thought those moments in the book were really good, when she talks about, "I'm going to do my passions, too."

GENN: That reminds me of *Beef*. Did you see it?

JANA: I didn't finish it.

GENN: I just remember the father doing a lot of stuff with the kids while she's out doing all these crazy things.

JANA: That I do recall. I think it's similar to her life.

GENN: Did she write on that show, do you think? I think she did.

JANA: Yes. Not sure.

GENN: I don't know. But I think she did.

JANA: I liked it overall, though.

GENN: If there was someone who you would want to read their memoir... Is there?

JANA: Hmmm. Man, this is tough.

Well, I've been revisiting David Sedaris lately. I don't know. Can you say those are memoirs?

GENN: Not memoirs, but they are very autobiographical.

JANA: Right. And I love everything he does. But you are talking about the celebrity memoirs.

GENN: Well, that's OK. Just any person really.

JANA: Just any person. I don't know.

GENN: I thought I would love Werner Herzog's. It's like kind of new and really huge. Because I love all his documentaries. I'm obsessed with them. And I didn't get through much of it, honestly.

JANA: Oh, no! Was it just like writing style?

GENN: I don't even really remember. I just like Back to your question a long time ago, about the people who suffer through a book. I'm not like that. And if it doesn't grab my attention in a way that I can't put it down kind of, then I just don't bother. And if I'm a couple of chapters in and I still don't feel like it's getting anywhere, unless it is somebody that I really trust and value their opinion has told me that 'you have to read this,' that's the only time I'll suffer through. Hoping that it gets to a point where it's really good.

Sometimes it takes until after half the book to get that good. And then at that point I'm like, "I don't really want to read your book. I just want to read the ending." And that's not the same thing.

JANA: Like your brother, reading the last sentence.

GENN: That's an extreme version, but yes.

I remember reading Elliot Page's memoir

JANA: Oh, yeah, that was on my list to read.

GENN: I loved it. I didn't love it at first. But I love Elliot Page so I was willing to

JANA: Hang in there.

GENN: Yeah. And it's short, compared to a lot of books.

But there is something about the celebrity gossip that I like. Like I want to know, like Elliot Page talks about some actor who was a horrible person to him at a party, and that person never gets named. I just want to know so bad to this day.

JANA: Who was that person?

GENN: Yeah. And what's funny is, my partner just decided that it's Mark Wahlberg in her mind, and I'm like, "Why did you decide that?" and she's like, "I don't know. I just get the feeling." And I'm, "That's not a good reason."

She'll do this thing where she reads a lot of stuff on the internet even before, like she loves spoilers. For instance, we're watching *Love Is Blind* and she's already knows everything. And I'm like, "Don't tell me." I hate spoilers.

JANA: Me too! I love that show, by the way. It's trash. I love it.

GENN: So good. So bad.

I forgot what I was going to say.

JANA: Sorry!

GENN: No, it's OK. It happens to me all the time. Where was this train going? That's how I feel.

Oh, the Elliot Page thing. So she just decided it was Mark Wahlberg, and I thought it was based on reading all this stuff or watching things on the internet. But truthfully it wasn't after I pressed her about it. It was just a feeling. And I'm like, "That doesn't count."

Now she hates Mark Wahlberg. I'm like, "Can we watch this movie on Netflix or whatever?" And she's like, "I can't stand him." "But you don't even know if he did that. It's unfair."

JANA: The imaginary slight.

GENN: Yeah, it's like when someone has a nightmare and they are mad at the person. That's how it feels.

JANA: I was just going to say that. You're mad. "I wasn't even there."

GENN: Yeah. That's so weird to me. I'm like, "You know a dream. You know what it is, right?"

JANA: So why do people care about memoirs? For that reason? To get the behind-the-scenes stuff?

GENN: It's like why is there even pop culture in the first place? Probably like the same reason?

JANA: True.

GENN: For a lot of people maybe a way, like a stress relief? Because it's not your life? And it's also something that's public and so you can talk about it with everyone. Not everyone, but the most.....

JANA: Right. The water cooler moments.

GENN: And I guess for whatever reason, I guess because we are social beings or like a social species, we want to know if people agree with us or disagree with us. And we want to assert our opinions. That's like a big thing for people.

JANA: Yeah. Totally. Is a memoir a status symbol for a celebrity?

GENN: Oh gosh, it really seems like in the past couple of years. I was just making a list of the ones that I've read since 2022. It's so many. And then I started thinking about the ones that I haven't read and want to read. And I filled a whole page, top to bottom, like a lined regular paper, with books that I was like, "These all came out in the past year or two." And I couldn't believe it.

One of them that I feel like you would enjoy. Did you watch *Jersey Shore*?

JANA: Yeah.

GENN: The Situation has a memoir that is kind of new.

JANA: Now we might be talking!

GENN: I could talk about that too. I've read like I don't know, half of it or something?

JANA: I would like to know The Situation. That seems interesting.

GENN: You know his nickname was actually Mikey Abs in the actual *Jersey Shore*? But the MTV production, they were like, "That's not going to work." So he came up with The Situation. Which is funny because when you are first introduced to him on the show he's like, The Situation. It's like so established or something. But apparently not.

JANA: That was just, like, wow. Bummer. That makes me kind of sad.

GENN: Aww.

JANA: I might read a Snooki memoir. Did she do one?

GENN: I don't know. Not that I know of. But I would be shocked. Like you said, they need that. Like some celebrities, the work is really over for them. So they kind of like

JANA: Parlay it into other stuff?

GENN: Yeah.

JANA: So the celebrity perfume is out. But memoirs are in. Which is good for Austin Public Library.

GENN: Yes, and also because those perfumes can be overwhelming in small spaces.

JANA: True.

GENN: Did you get into the perfumes? Just curious. Like did you ever buy any of them?

JANA: Obviously Debbie Gibson Electric Youth. That was the big one.

GENN: I thought it was like Ariana Grande or something. Doesn't she have one?

JANA: She does.

GENN: Is it the one called Dream?

JANA: I think she's got a few, actually.

GENN: I just had to know if you were into that. You're like, "I don't do memoirs, but the perfumes."

JANA: But Electric Youth.

GENN: There is this podcast, and we probably can't plug podcasts, but for your own benefit, there is this podcast called *Celebrity Memoir Hour* or something, it's like two girls talking, and it's really funny. They have an episode

about The Situation. I feel like you would like it if you are interested. And he actually goes on to the episode at the end.

JANA: Wow. That's something right there.

GENN: This has been really fun.

JANA: I can't believe it went so fast.

GENN: I know. We could talk more.

JANA: So, so fast.

GENN: Yeah. We hit on a lot of books, though, which was cool. Instead of just one or two.

JANA: Which we are prone to do, you and I, in our circuitous conversations.

GENN: Well, thank you for coming. I enjoyed myself and I have a whole bunch of recommendations for you, if you want some.

JANA: All right. I'm ready. I'm ready. My mind is open.

GENN: And if you ever think about somebody who you really would read their memoir, or if it actually comes out one day, and you are like, "I'm reading this." I want to know.

JANA: All right. I'll let you know.

GENN: Maybe it's Michael Sorrentino? It seems like it might be.

JANA: Or Snookie?

GENN: Or whoever invented Peeps, because I know you love Peeps.

JANA: I do love Peeps. I would read that.

GENN: Yes!

JANA: But that would be a microhistory!

Thanks for having me. I loved it.

MUSIC

Thanks for listening to this episode of APL Volumes, Season Three. Huge thanks to my guest, Jana White, and a special shout out to the Pleasant Hill branch community that Jana loves so much.

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END TRANSCRIPT