

# NEWS RELEASE

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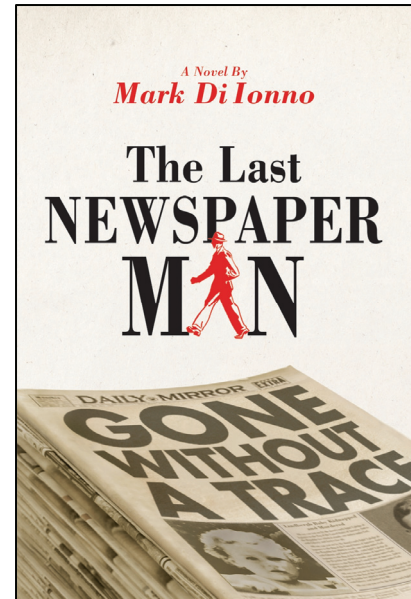
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## **The Last Newspaperman**

### **Award-Winning Journalist's "Great American Newspaper Novel" Gets a September Launch**

***Star-Ledger* Columnist Mark Di Ionno's Debut Novel Centers on the Lindbergh Baby Case That Rocked 1930s New Jersey and the Nation**



August 1, 2012, Medford, NJ—Plexus Publishing, Inc., the small independent publisher whose *Boardwalk Empire* gave rise to an Emmy-winning HBO series and became a surprise *New York Times* bestseller, announced the September 17 release of Mark Di Ionno's highly anticipated first novel, *The Last Newspaperman*.

*The Last Newspaperman* is a story about tabloid journalism in the 1920s and 30s, and how it created the crime-saturated and celebrity-obsessed media we have today. Author Di Ionno—award-winning columnist for *The Star-Ledger*, New Jersey's largest newspaper—will make numerous personal appearances in support of the novel's national launch this fall.

“While much of the action is set in New Jersey in the 1930s, *The Last Newspaperman* is not strictly a historical novel,” Di Ionno said. “My goal was to connect the past with the contemporary, sensationalist media that dominates the airwaves, newsstands, and internet.”

The novel's fictional protagonist is Frederick Haines, a one-time star tabloid reporter for the *New York Daily Mirror* now nearing the end of his life. A young reporter on assignment listens with rapt attention as Haines gives him the back stories on the Lindbergh baby kidnapping, the *Hindenburg* disaster, the deadly *Morro Castle* cruise ship fire, and the hysteria that followed Orson Welles's “War of the Worlds” broadcast.

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By his own admission, Haines is reckless with the facts, with little regard for the truth or the feelings of the people directly impacted by the stories he covers. “Victims are merely characters in a newspaper story,” he tells his interviewer.

Later in the novel, Haines pays the price for his reprehensible lack of ethics by losing a woman he loves, and it alters his view of his own work. He begins to lament “the paper-thin characters” he created, the half-truths he told, and the injured people left in the wake of his ambition.

The narrator and Haines extend their friendship beyond the first series of interviews, and during their conversations, the young reporter makes the link between Haines’s sensational cases and problems that define contemporary media. The Lindbergh kidnapping is about media intrusion into the private lives of celebrities. The *Hindenburg* explosion is exploited by a media mogul with a political agenda. The *Morro Castle* becomes a runaway false narrative making a national hero out of the man who, it was later discovered, set the fire. The “War of the Worlds” broadcast presages alarmist reactions to new technology.

“It is through the eyes of ruthless reporter Fred Haines that we see how modern media evolved from the remorseless, sensational journalism of the 1930s,” according to Robin Gaby Fisher, author of the national bestseller, *The Woman Who Wasn’t There: The True Story of an Incredible Deception*. “With *The Last Newspaperman*, Mark Di Ionno has written the Great American newspaper novel.”

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Mark Di Ionno is a lifetime newspaperman and a four-time winner of the New Jersey Press Association’s first-place award for column writing. In addition to his twice-weekly column in *The Star-Ledger*, his “Mark in the Morning” column appears daily on NJ.com. Di Ionno is the author of three award-winning nonfiction books. *New Jersey’s Coastal Heritage* and *A Guide to New Jersey’s Revolutionary War Trail* won the New Jersey Academic Alliance Award, which is judged by a consortium of librarians and historians. *Backroads, New Jersey* was named among the most notable New Jersey books (1995–2005) by the New Jersey Center for the Book.

Di Ionno is the father of six children, who reside with him in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey.

The author is available for interviews and personal appearances through the Plexus Marketing Department. Contact Rob Colding, Book Marketing Coordinator, at 609/654-6500 or by email to [rcolding@plexuspublishing.com](mailto:rcolding@plexuspublishing.com). For more about *The Last Newspaperman* including a schedule of author appearances, visit [www.plexuspublishing.com](http://www.plexuspublishing.com).

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