

**AN  
ELEGANT  
THEORY**

**NOAH MILLIGAN**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **LOCAL AUTHOR'S NEW NOVEL EXPLORES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVE, GUILT AND CONSCIOUSNESS**

Delta, BC – Central Avenue Publishing is proud to present ***An Elegant Theory***, by Edmond author Noah Milligan. Milligan is an acclaimed writer and his debut novel has garnered the interest of well-respected and award-winning novelists.

***An Elegant Theory*** follows Coulter Zahn, a promising PhD candidate completing his dissertation in theoretical physics. But with the stress of his research, the impending birth of his child and the return of his estranged mother, Coulter snaps, altering the paths of everyone around him. But the very next morning, he catches a break in his research, discovering the true shape of the universe. Influenced by those around him and his own untrustworthy psyche, Coulter must decide whether to face the consequences of his actions or finish his research, perhaps making the greatest contribution to science since Einstein's theory of relativity.

"A delightfully intelligent psychological thriller, Noah Milligan's debut novel is as ambitious and complex as its main character, Coulter Zahn, who aspires to nothing less than a complete understanding of the universe," says Rilla Askew, Oklahoma Book Award winner and Oklahoma Writers Hall of Fame member. "*An Elegant Theory* intrigues the mind, thrills the senses, and keeps the reader engaged straight through to the surprising ending. An auspicious debut."

***An Elegant Theory*** was published on November 1, 2016. Mr. Milligan has several upcoming appearances, the first of which is at Full Circle Bookstore, 50 Penn Place, Oklahoma City on Saturday, January 21 at 3pm.

Noah Milligan was shortlisted for the Horatio Nelson Fiction Prize and appeared in the Fall issue of the highly regarded Foreword Reviews. His short fiction has appeared in numerous literary magazines, including MAKE Literary Magazine, Storyscape Literary Journal, Empty Sink Publishing, and Santa Clara Review. Recently, his story "A Good Start," featured in Cowboy Jamboree Magazine, was nominated for Best of the Net 2016 and a Pushcart Prize.

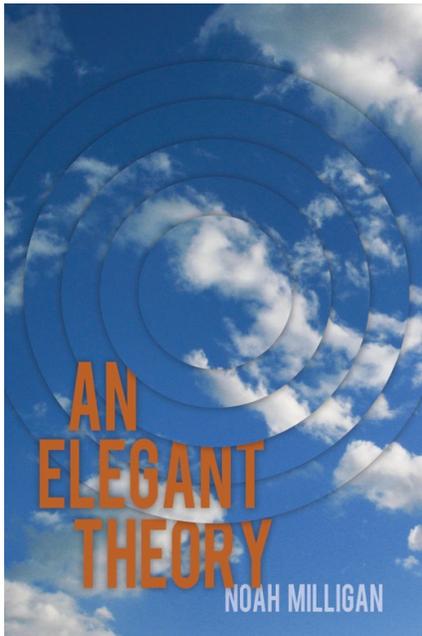
Central Avenue Publishing is an independent press located near Vancouver, Canada featuring award-winning and popular writers of original fiction and poetry. Central Avenue's books are distributed globally by Independent Publishers Group based in Chicago.

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If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with either Noah Milligan or Central Avenue Publishing, please contact Michelle Halket at 604.765.8194 [michelle@centralavenuepublishing.com](mailto:michelle@centralavenuepublishing.com) or Noah Milligan at [noah.m.milligan@gmail.com](mailto:noah.m.milligan@gmail.com).

# AN ELEGANT THEORY

A modern take on the mad scientist motif, *An Elegant Theory* is an intricately layered rumination on ambition, consciousness, and guilt that resonates long after it's been read.



<b>TITLE</b>	AN ELEGANT THEORY
<b>AUTHOR</b>	NOAH MILLIGAN
<b>MARKETING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional author appearances</li><li>• Goodreads giveaways</li><li>• Print &amp; e-galley review campaign</li><li>• Social media campaign; local press &amp; media coverage</li><li>• Featured at regional trade shows</li><li>• Compared to <i>The Shimmering Go-Between</i>; <i>Echo Lake</i>; <i>Charmed Particles</i>; <i>Fat Man and Little Boy</i></li><li>• Shortlisted for the 2015 Horatio Nelson Fiction Prize</li></ul>
<b>SYNOPSIS</b>	<p>Coulter Zahn sees reality differently than others. Much like light can theoretically be in all places at once, Coulter sees multiple versions of his life. A promising PhD candidate at MIT, he and his young wife are nervously expecting their first child. When his dissertation comes under intense criticism, his estranged mother returns, and Sara tells him she's leaving him, Coulter's already delicate mental state becomes further fragmented.</p> <p>One evening, with his life and mental health unraveling, Coulter loses control, irreparably changing the course of the lives around him. But the very next morning, he catches a break in his research, discovering the true shape of the universe. Influenced by those around him and his own untrustworthy psyche, Coulter must decide whether to face the consequences of his actions or finish his research, perhaps making the greatest contribution to science since Einstein's theory of relativity.</p> <p>An existential psychological thriller, <i>An Elegant Theory</i> explores how the construction of memory and consciousness can shape motive, guilt, and identity through the lens of a modern-day mad-scientist motif.</p>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Noah Milligan splits his time between words and numbers and is a longtime student of physics, prompting him to write his debut novel, <i>An Elegant Theory</i> , a draft of which was shortlisted for the 2015 Horatio Nelson Fiction Prize. His short fiction has appeared in numerous literary magazines, including <i>MAKE Literary Magazine</i> , <i>Storyscape Literary Journal</i> , <i>Empty Sink Publishing</i> , and <i>Santa Clara Review</i> . He is a graduate of the MFA program at the University of Central Oklahoma, and he lives in Edmond, OK, with his wife and two children.
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# ABOUT NOAH MILLIGAN



Noah Milligan splits his time between words and numbers and is a longtime student of physics, prompting him to write his debut novel, *An Elegant Theory*, which was shortlisted for the 2015 Horatio Nelson Fiction Prize. His short fiction has appeared in numerous literary magazines, including *MAKE*, *Storyscape Literary Journal*, *Empty Sink Publishing*, and *Santa Clara Review*. He is a graduate of the MFA program at the University of Central Oklahoma, and he lives in Edmond, OK, with his wife and two children.

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## PRAISE

\*\*\*\*\* Shortlisted for 2015 Horatio Nelson Fiction Prize

"A delightfully intelligent psychological thriller, Noah Milligan's debut novel is as ambitious and complex as its main character, Coulter Zahn, who aspires to nothing less than a complete understanding of the universe. *An Elegant Theory* intrigues the mind, thrills the senses, and keeps the reader engaged straight through to the surprising ending. An auspicious debut." ~ Rilla Askew, Author of *Kind of Kin*

"*An Elegant Theory* is a vibrant puzzle of a novel, an unstoppable force—full of twists, turns, and surprises while remaining fully grounded in real life to today. I sped straight through this one and when I got to the last page, I even considered starting again just to see how the story might change knowing what I knew by the end. I'll be watching out for Noah Milligan. Surely, this is the start of a great literary career." ~ Jessica Anya Blau, Author of *The Trouble with Lexie*

"*An Elegant Theory* is a remarkably suspenseful literary novel -- deeply felt, and truly fascinating. Noah Milligan's ambitious debut novel is a page-turning story of obsession, and the human mind stretched to its limit, where we discover both the remarkable power and fragility of our brains." ~ Peter Mountford, Author of *A Young Man's Guide to Late Capitalism*, and *The Dismal Science*

# INTERVIEW WITH NOAH MILLIGAN

**Q. How did you come up with the idea of *An Elegant Theory*?**

A. I've always been fascinated with the form of a confessional and with physics. Growing up, I'd loved Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Camus' *The Stranger*, and Kafka's *The Trial*. I was captivated by them, really: the idea of existential crisis, of a man grappling with the idea of his own intrinsic goodness and value to the world, but at the same time being capable of such terrible deeds, trying to come to terms with the earth-shattering ramifications of his actions, and justifying it by their utter meaninglessness in the grand scheme of things. And I found physics to be a wonderful vehicle to explore these themes, especially quantum mechanics and string theory. They are just so strange, the ideas of quantum probability theory and of hidden dimensions were perfect ways for me to illustrate Coulter's existential crisis and competing worldviews.

**Q. Is this why you chose to tell Coulter's story in both a first and third person point-of-view, these competing worldviews?**

Partly, yes. But mainly it comes down to why Coulter is telling his story. What are his motivations in confessing his crime? He wants to come clean, yes, but he also wants to justify his actions, obfuscate the degree of his guilt. When it comes to killing a person, our judicial system has defined these as first degree murder, second degree murder, manslaughter, negligent homicide, and all of it comes down to two things: criminal intent and circumstance. By claiming to be suffering from these hallucinations and through providing different versions of the murder, Coulter is trying to blur the lines about what actually happened the night he killed Sara. It's up to the reader to decide how reliable Coulter actually is, what elements contain truth, and which do not. This, I hope, is part of the fun of the book.

**Q. How much research did you do for *An Elegant Theory*?**

Tons. Several years' worth of research. I read and read and read. I read Brian Greene, Michio Kaku, Richard Feynman, and Stephen Hawking. Also, iTunes U is absolutely awesome. If you haven't checked it out, you should. It has thousands of lectures on a variety of topics, taught by top-notch universities like MIT, Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford, all for free.

**Q. What are you working on now?**

A few things. I'm always working on one or two short stories, and I have a new story entitled "A Good Start" that will soon be published by *Cowboy Jamboree*, a literary journal focused on Western writing. They were gracious enough to nominate my story for Best of the Net 2016 as well as a Pushcart Prize. I'm also working on a new novel, sort of a coming-of-age story about a young boy whose mother convinces him he is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and that the end of the world is coming.