

Evanston Mother-Son Duo's Raw, Bittersweet Novel Illuminating America's Boy Crisis is Badly Needed for Our Times

Promising Young Man by Elias Axel is an unforgettable, often biting, story about a boy looking for purpose in modern America.

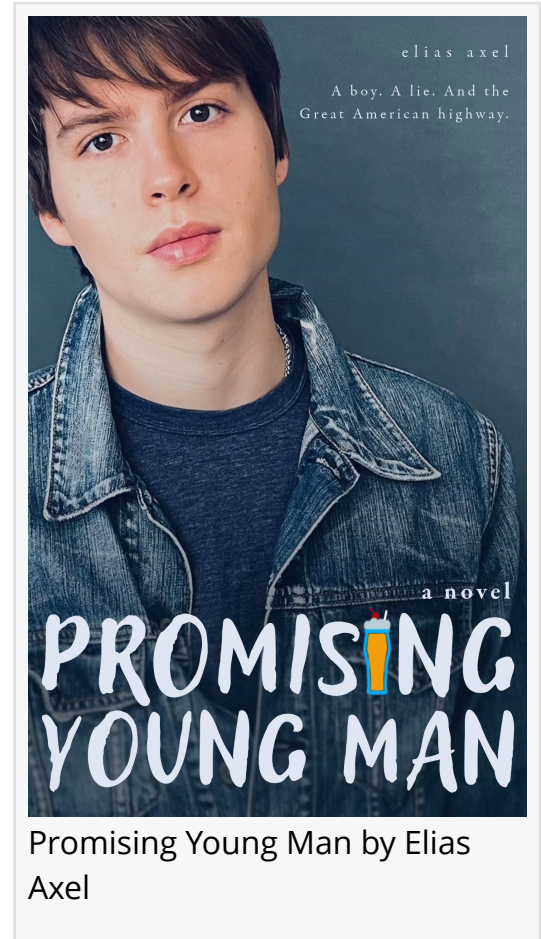
EVANSTON, IL, UNITED STATES, March 25, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Published by My Delightful Life Press on February 11, 2025, Promising Young Man by Elias Axel (pen name of writer Patricia L. Stankovic & editor [Julian Josip](#)) is a coming-of-age story narrated by misunderstood, mistake-riddled, Oscar, a troubled-18-year-old on the cusp of high school graduation who loses his sense of wonder as he tries to navigate societal expectations and his own perceived shortcomings until a scrape with the law changes everything.

"At times funny, at times raw, at times so poignant you'll find yourself tearing up, Promising Young Man provides a glimpse into what it means to be a boy on the cusp of becoming an adult in the world today... this is your first step to understanding their hopes, their challenges, and their profound and often troubling reality." —Maggie Smith, award-winning author of Truth and Other Lies

A perfect blend of humor, nostalgia, and heartbreak, the novel drives readers on a delightfully uncomfortable road trip across America while serving up compassion for a struggling young man who bumps along rock bottom as he slowly unmask his ADHD. His story deviates from the norm by featuring a male protagonist with a well-developed interiority and complex emotional life. "Oscar feels all the feels, but somehow they all feel wrong," says Stankovic. "Despite his enviable exterior, Oscar spends his days wanting to be like everyone else; sometimes not wanting to be at all."

"I love this book. It's a page-turner..." —Jill Wine-Banks, author of The Watergate Girl; MSNBC Legal Analyst; co-host Webby-winning #Sistersin Law podcast



What started as a project to help defy ADHD stereotypes, Stankovic says that over the six years the novel took to write, their family lost ten young men within one degree of separation to suicide: neighbors, classmates, teammates, nephews of friends. She was heartbroken but also bewildered that everyone wasn't talking about it. "First I became distraught; then I became obsessive." She learned that the teen suicide rate skyrocketed since 2007, and the suicide rate for boys was 80% higher than for girls. "Male suicide is a national epidemic but I was getting the impression people thought 'boys' was a topic unworthy of discussion." Then she read Brookings Institution's Richard V. Reeves' October 2024 essay "[Willful Ignorance of the Male Suicide Crisis](#)" in which he asserts the unwillingness to simply show the strongly gendered nature of suicide risk has been institutionalized. Stankovic realized the focused of Oscar's story changed to include young men's issues, defying male stereotypes, as well. "Something is going on with our boys, and we have to make talking about it politically correct."



Julian Josip

"Axel is a natural... writes with a flow and energy that is absolutely compelling," — Chris Canaan, Emmy Award-winning writer; co-creator Walker, Texas Ranger (starring Chuck Norris); screenplay, No Good Deed (starring Samuel L. Jackson and Stellan Skarsgård)

“

... deeply moving... absorbing... Promising Young Man is truly enjoyable and will appeal to readers of all ages.”

Sarah C. Maza, Professor of History Emerita Northwestern University

The novel's story starts out in Evanston (Chicago's first lakeside-suburb north) and whirlwinds its way through America's south and west, and with quirky Grammy as Oscar's wingman, makes for a hilariously painful ride. While many of the protagonist's choices and behavior could be relatable to readers with ADHD, the story's humor and intrigue ensure all readers are absorbed in his journey.

The goal was to bring awareness to their important issues, and what better way than to tell a story people can relate to that makes them laugh, learn, and maybe cry, and keeps them entertained?

"... a powerful story of survival, resilience, and hope... One of the best books I read in 2024." —Nathan Chung (early reader), Neurodivergent, recognized as a Top 50 Global Neurodiversity Evangelist, and a D-30 Impact List 2024 Honoree

The novel was a true family affair. Josip's editing was crucial in helping to craft an authentic teen-male/ADHD voice. The two older namesakes, Margareta and Iver, were inspired by Stankovic's mother, Gunilla Walstad, an Evanston resident who immigrated to the United States from Sweden in 1964 for a job in Winnetka, and Iver Hansen, a Danish-American Vietnam Veteran who grew up on a beef farm in Nebraska, then Missouri. "We could've kept editing, but Iver entered palliative hospice care. He passed away three weeks after publication," Stankovic says. Her youngest son, ETHS grad, Adrian Stankovic, helped with graphic design and business matters from Ohio where he attends Miami University's business school, and her eldest son, ETHS grad, Christian René Stankovic, contributed music (band name She Was Silver) for post-publication projects from LA. Evanston resident and film documentarian, Tom Trinley (Trinley Pictures), is producing the Promising Young Man Book Trailer (coming May 2025); Evanston Writers Workshop helped with critique, and several neighbors beta read. "This book family is actually an Evanston village," Stankovic says.

"... as humorous as it is heartfelt... the kind of book that sticks with you long after the final page."
—Hollie Smurthwaite, author of The Psychic Colors Series

Promising Young Man's story of survival, resilience, and hope will stick with readers and leave them reflecting on their own journeys of self-discovery and authenticity. Media members are encouraged to request free copies and give honest reviews.

#

Title: Promising Young Man

Author: Elias Axel

Editor: Julian Josip

Pub Date: February 11, 2025

Publisher: My Delightful Life Press, LLC.

Length: 240 pages

Paperback available to purchase at Bookshop.org, Barnes & Noble, Amazon. eBook currently free with Kindle Unlimited & by media request.

ISBN: 979-8-9920656-0-2



Patricia L. Stankovic

Themes: Self-Acceptance, Finding Purpose, Intergenerational Relationships, & The Power of Second Chances.

Coming in 2025:

Promising Young Man Book Trailer (Trinley Pictures)

Promising Young Man Audiobook narrated by Julian Josip. See Teaser.

Media Contact: patricia@mdlpress.com

[Press Kit](#)

My Delightful Life Press is a new, independent publisher (submissions currently closed).

Tom Trinley (Trinley Pictures) is an Emmy-nominated broadcast documentary film producer, screenwriter, and finance executive. His film, Monumental Myths, is streaming on PBS.org.

Julian Josip (Stankovic) is a SAG-AFTRA actor, part game-shop owner, and budding writer.

Patricia Stankovic

My Delightful Life Press

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/797069539>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.