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#### Amazon.com Review

Noah Hawley quickly sucks us into his loopy, frightening first thriller by creating a perfect world of presenttense paranoia. "Here among the tabouli salads and unprocessed soy drinks the three conspiracy theorists meet each week to discuss developments in the interconnected network of plots driving the world toward a new order," he writes about the lunches that his hero--Linus Owens, a 35-year-old professor of conspiracy theory at Modesto College in San Rafael, California--has with his two friends. "Edward and Roy, despite Roy's innocuous job at Radio Shack and Edward's mostly shut-in status, are cutting-edge anarchists, publishers of anarchic newsletters, organizers of the new virtual revolution. Linus, in contrast, feels sheltered in the fat nest of academia. Sometimes he doubts his phone is even bugged...." But when Claudia, the perfectly normal wife he has somehow managed to acquire, is apparently killed in a plane crash on her way to Brazil (Owens thought she was in Chicago visiting her mother), he has to leave that fat nest and move out into what passes for the real world. It's a place where CIA agents lie about being FBI agents, where his wife's advertising business has sinister connections, and where nothing--or everything--is what he and his crazy companions think it is. --Dick Adler

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From Kirkus Reviews

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Linus Owen is a young professor of conspiracy theory at a small college just outside San Francisco. He teaches graduate-level classes on JFK and gives seminars on magic-bullet theories and how the symbols on the dollar bill reveal the presence of a secret government that is leading the world to ruin.

Linus' marriage is foundering and his wife, Claudia, an up-and-coming advertising executive, has gone to Chicago to visit her mother. But if Claudia is in Chicago, how is it that two FBI agents show up at Linus' office and inform him that Claudia has been killed in a plane crash on her way from New York to Brazil? And why did a man named Jeffrey Holden, the vice president of a major pharmaceutical company, buy her ticket and die beside her?

Enlisting the aid of Edward and Roy -- his friends and fellow conspiracy theorists -- Linus heads across the country in search of answers. Along the way, the trio encounters a legion of disturbing and provocative characters and clues, including an irascible talk show host, a mind-controlling drug, and art emerging link between Claudia's ad agency and the U.S, Government. As their journey progresses, it becomes frighteningly clear they've left the realm of the academic and are tangled up in a dangerous, multilayered cover-up. Finally, deep in the heart of the American desert, stunned by an ominous revelation, Linus sees he has a new minion: to try to stay alive.

With writing that is electric, whip-smart and suspenseful at each turn, Noah Hawley draws us into a deliciously labyrinthine world of paranoia and plots.

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. well written, well plotted

By A Customer

For once, a thriller that does not insult my intelligence. The plot is good, but even better, the writing is clever and observant, and has a lot ot jokes in it. Treats the whole subject of conspiracy nuts as perfectly rational and follows perfectly from there.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Not bad for a first novel - glad he kept writing

### By Jeff M

After reading his latest book, "Before the Fall," I went back and read every novel Hawley has written. This is his weakest book, but it still shows flashes of the terrific writer Hawley would become. He loves shades of

gray, and "Conspiracy" has one of the most conflicted characters you'll ever meet: a conspiracy theorist who is falling out of love with both his wife and the shadowy world he has embraced for most of his life, who is then thrust into an X-Files-styled conspiracy that could help him redeem his wasted life (and maybe even his wife!). The book is at its best when Hawley is inventing dialogue for his whacked-out characters, who fumble for clarity in a world that seems to be rapidly going off the rails. But I found myself skipping whole pages devoted to Hawley's musings on life, travel and philosophy. Hawley is now a much more disciplined writer, and his last two novels - "Before the Fall" and "The Good Father" - are among my favorite books of the past 20 years.

11 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Thriller/ conspiracy-theory satire will keep you up nights

By Carol S.

This book defies genre. It is at heart, a thriller in the manner of a Hitchcock man-against-dark-forces movie, but at the same time it is a satire of the 90s tendency to see conspiracies everywhere while at the same time a chilling & credible vision of one possible conspiracy. It is also a well-written book with a lot of funny observations about our culture & insights into human relationships.

To say this book is like a bad X-files episode is, I think, to miss the point - like criticizing Mel Brooks' "Young Frankenstein" for being like a bad monster movie. As satire, it necessarily takes the elements of the conspiracy thriller and exaggerates them. What is so unique about this novel is that at the same time as it skewers this paranoid mentality, it sucks you into believing that the conspiracy played out in the book could/does really exist.

The book has a very postmodern feel, so if you like your fiction to be more traditional in writing style, this rapid-fire present-tense perspective-shifting style may turn you off. Given the subject of the book, I thought it worked.

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