

Legal Matters



Why credentials matter

Darcy Merkur,
Personal Injury Alliance

Q When evaluating a personal injury lawyer, what credentials are important?

A First, look for the "CS" designation after their name, which means they're a certified specialist in civil litigation. The designation is granted to lawyers who have proven to be competent and experienced trial lawyers.

Second, is the lawyer recognized as an expert in personal injury — and on the peer-voted lists published by Lexpert and Best Lawyers in Canada?

Third, is the lawyer with one of the top 10 personal injury law firms in Canada? The list is published by Canadian Lawyer magazine.

Only about a dozen lawyers in Ontario have all of these credentials, and the vast majority are from law firms of the Personal Injury Alliance. A listing of these lawyers can be found at pialaw.ca/credentials.

Q Why are credentials so important?

A They're important because they validate a lawyer's expertise in personal injury cases. These types of cases can be complex, time-consuming, and expensive, sometimes costing in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The lawyer and firm must be able to accept the financial risks. Personal injury law firms only get paid when the case is resolved favourably.

Q Should someone who has had a catastrophic injury compare lawyers' credentials?

A Absolutely. Anyone can call themselves a personal injury lawyer, but credentials and objective endorsements make the case best. Accident victims are under an enormous amount of pressure, and the last thing they need is a bad experience with a lawyer. Remember also that a client can change their lawyer at any time if they're not happy with their legal representation.

If you've suffered a catastrophic injury

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No fault in 'nerdfighter' star

YA fiction. Unassuming Writer guy John Green finds fame as teen bestseller becomes film

When *The Fault in Our Stars* landed on bookshelves more than two years ago, John Green's enthusiasm was non-existent for a screen version of his story featuring teens with cancer.

"I had had some Hollywood experiences before that weren't great and I felt like Hollywood would struggle to make a movie where the female romantic lead has nasal cannula tubes in her nose for the entire movie," he said.

Well, hello 2014, and Monday night's premiere of *TFIOS*, the movie. It's the first of Green's bestselling books to go Hollywood after he was won over by the script's dedication to his characters in the clutches of adolescence. Oh, and it didn't hurt that one of the producers was a huge Liverpool soccer club fan like Green.

Already a rock star among young readers, mostly of the



Author John Green speaks at a recent *The Fault in Our Stars* fan event in Nashville. RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES FOR ALLIED

teen girl variety, the Orlando, Fla.-raised Green, the guy who looks straight out of central casting as Unassuming Writer, now walks red carpets, clowns on morning TV and banters with new BFF Nat Wolff and the movie's other young stars, Shailene Woodley and newcomer Ansel Elgort.

In a plaid button-down shirt and conservative suit jacket, it was the bespectacled, 36-year-

old Green — not the hunky, younger Wolff — who got the loudest screams Saturday from several hundred girls who showed up for a panel discussion about the movie during the publishing industry's annual BookExpo America.

Green leapt off the stage of the stuffed conference hall to bear hug a 16-year-old amputee, Robert Berger of Damerest, N.J. Berger, a high school soph-

omore with a prosthetic like *TFIOS* love interest Gus Waters, made his way to a microphone and referenced a bedroom scene when he offered: "I'd like to thank you, John, for answering a lifelong question of mine, which is, whether during sex, I keep my leg on or off."

Green, a father of two, is ever respectful of Berger and his other "nerdfighters," the community of fans worldwide that has led him to Hollywood's door and greet each other with his tagline: "Don't Forget to Be Awesome!" They even have a special thing they do with their arms, crossing at the chest and spreading their fingers in twos. You sort of have to be there.

The writer was vigilant as a presence on the movie's set, sobbing when the filmmakers got it right and cheering on Woodley, Elgort and Wolff. Wolff is slated to star in the next stop on Green's big-screen journey for his *Paper Towns*.

So, can Green hold on to his mojo? Does the writer part of his brain now need to make peace with his developing big-screen brain? "I hope that I'm not developing a Hollywood brain, to be honest with you. I love books. I love writing books. I love movies, too, but I am a book writer and if I'm lucky enough to be able to work with people who are great at making movies then I feel very fortunate, but I have no desire to become a movie person," he said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Getting your leg over

"I'd like to thank you, John, for answering a lifelong question of mine, which is, whether during sex, I keep my leg on or off."

16-year-old amputee Robert Berger with a prosthetic like *TFIOS* love interest Gus Waters, references a bedroom scene during a panel discussion about the movie.

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