

# \$16 million award for two misdiagnoses that caused permanent blindness and paralysis

In May 2010, John Crossley was working as a chef during the day and attending culinary school in the evenings. The 27-year-old had a history of asthma but was otherwise in very good health. On May 22, 2010, John was awakened by a sudden and severe pain in his back. The pain radiated from his back to his chest. Alarmed, John called his mother, Elaine, and asked her to take him to a doctor. Elaine drove him to MD Now, an urgent care center in Palm Beach County, Florida. A doctor examined him, and ordered an x-ray of his chest. The doctor directed John to go immediately to the emergency room at Bethesda Hospital in Boynton Beach to have them

conduct a CT angiogram to rule out the possibility of a pulmonary embolism.

The first radiologist to interpret the study was Dr. Darlene DaCosta. Her preliminary report ruled out a pulmonary embolism and concluded that John was suffering from pneumonia. John was admitted to the hospital and began receiving antibiotic treatment. The following morning, a second radiologist, Dr. Carol Adami, conducted a final interpretation of the study and also concluded that John did not have a pulmonary embolism and she confirmed the diagnosis of pneumonia. Shortly after treatment, John was discharged from *(Continued on page two.)*

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the hospital. For three or four months, he felt fine, continuing to work and attend school. On September 1, 2010, however, John collapsed at home and was taken to the JFK Medical Center. John told the examining doctors about his earlier diagnosis of pneumonia. The doctors at JFK initially began treating John for an asthma exacerbation, but quickly determined that he was suffering from massive pulmonary emboli in his lungs. Treatment for the condition began immediately. Unfortunately, the next day

he suffered a stroke. John was placed in a medically-induced coma. Eventually he was awakened, but found that he could not see and that his left arm was paralyzed. The doctors found that John's occipital lobe – the part of the brain that controls vision – had been damaged by the stroke.

With John facing a lifetime of medical care and support, his family contacted SDSBS attorneys **Jack Scarola**, **Darryl Lewis**, and **Adam Hecht** and asked if they could help the family find accountability for what appeared to be negligence and misdiagnoses. The attorneys filed an action against Bethesda Hospital and the two doctors who had failed to properly diagnose John's condition. The attorneys presented testimony from an expert radiologist and an expert pulmonologist who explained that, had the proper diagnosis of a pulmonary embolism been made at Bethesda back in May, John would have been given anticoagulants which would have prevented further clots from forming. With the use of anticoagulants, the likelihood of another embolism forming is less than 1%.

In December 2015, following a lengthy trial, the jury returned a verdict in favor of John in the amount of \$16 million. ♦

