

# 'The Notebook' Author Nicholas Sparks Hits Back At Claims He's Homophobic And Racist

---

 [uproxx.com/movies/the-notebook-nicholas-sparks-homophobic-racist-claims](https://uproxx.com/movies/the-notebook-nicholas-sparks-homophobic-racist-claims)

June 13,  
2019

Good news: Nicholas Sparks is taking advantage of Broadway's craze for movie adaptations by turning the popular romance *The Notebook* into a musical. Bad news: He's also been accused of homophobia as well as racism. In a series of tweets, caught by *Deadline*, Sparks slammed these charges, claiming they're untrue.

On Thursday *The Daily Beast* dug up a long-going legal battle between the romance author — whose other works include *A Walk to Remember*, *Message in a Bottle*, and *Dear John*, all turned into movies — and the Epiphany School of Global Studies, a North Carolina prep school Sparks helped co-fund in 2006. In 2013 the institution received a new headmaster and CEO, Saul Benjamin, who tried to expand diversity and inclusivity.

Sparks allegedly took umbrage with this approach. In a series of alleged emails, Sparks slammed Benjamin for adopting "an agenda that strives to make homosexuality open and accepted." Sparks also allegedly made comments about the dearth of black students at the school, "too poor and can't do the academic work."

Benjamin, who left the school after the tussle, sued Sparks and the fellow trustees for, among other things, defamation of character. A trial is set for August.

Advertisement

Following the article's publication, Sparks took to social media to deny these claims.

[pic.twitter.com/y4nZX6TByD](https://pic.twitter.com/y4nZX6TByD)

— Nicholas Sparks (@NicholasSparks) June 13, 2019

"Since 2014, I have vigorously been defending the lawsuit brought against me and the Epiphany School of Global Studies by its former headmaster, Saul Benjamin," Sparks tweeted. "The article appearing in today's *The Daily Beast* is not news, and repeats false accusations and claims made against Epiphany and me, and largely ignores the overwhelming evidence we have submitted to the Court."

It went on:

“I am pleased that the Court has dismissed nearly every claim against me, my Foundation and Epiphany. Very importantly, the Court has dismissed all claims of discrimination or harassment against me. While there will be a trial on a few remaining issues, I am confident that a jury will evaluate these claims fairly and decide those claims in our favor as well. As we prepare for trial, I want to make one thing clear: Epiphany is and remains a place where students and faculty of any race, belief, religion, background or orientation should feel welcome. My commitment to these values, as well as Epiphany’s commitment to these values, have been and remain constant. At this time, we will not have any further comment. Thank you.”

Benjamin’s lawyer Lawrence M. Pearson, responded to Sparks’ response, saying, “The emails written by Nicholas Sparks speak for themselves. Despite Mr. Sparks’s attempts to downplay his discriminatory actions, he does not get to decide what is or isn’t “news.” We look forward to vindicating Mr. Benjamin’s rights at trial in August.”

This latest scuffle makes the second such stage musical controversy of late, following the cancellation of the Michael Jackson show *Don’t Stop ‘Til You Get Enough* following the broadcast of the HBO doc *Finding Neverland*, which alleged that the former pop star had molested multiple young boys.

The Sparks controversy is not quite as seismic, and could be resolved in the author’s favor. If so, Broadway will see a musical take on the 1996 book that became the 2004 smash film, which starred Rachel McAdams and Ryan Gosling as lovers separated by fate and some particularly melodramatic plot twists.