

Braille Institute Library Services
John Nuanes

1 The first time I noticed a vision problem was...I
2 think I was a senior in high school, maybe a junior. My
3 good buddy, Mike Morones and I went camping up in the
4 sequoias, and everyone else seemed to be able to find their
5 way around at night much better than I could. And I just
6 thought, "Geez." I thought it was just really dark. And
7 then I started noticing I didn't see quite as well at night
8 as other people. I didn't put a lot of stock into this. I
9 just figured, well I have some night vision problems and
10 went about my life.

11 It started to get worse, so I went to the Stanford
12 health clinic, and I went through a whole battery of tests.
13 And finally, when it was over, the doctor sat me down in
14 his office and he said, "What career do you have in mind?"
15 and I told him I was going to law school...that I'd been at
16 the law school...and he said "Great! I know a number of
17 blind lawyers." And that's how I found out I had a vision
18 problem that was a little more serious than I had
19 anticipated. I can laugh about it now. At the time it was
20 one of the more devastating—maybe the most devastating
21 thing I'd ever heard.

22 But fortunately, I was able to go through law school
23 and being naive enough and not knowing anything better, I

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1 just assumed I'd be able to get a job in the entertainment
2 field. And for whatever reason—luck, karma, whatever you
3 want to call it—I was hired by Universal, and I really
4 loved working there. It was a great job.

5 There was a point at which as my vision was going, it
6 became very difficult to get through those...those legal
7 briefs and all that reading that you have to do as a
8 lawyer. And I approached my partners and said "This isn't
9 fair to you. It's not fair to the clients. I think I need
10 to move onto something else and give up the every day
11 practice of law," which I did.

12 And my mother kept telling me to come to the Braille
13 Institute, and I kept saying "Yeah, right, mom." And I'm a
14 tour guide here, and the reason I mention that is that when
15 I give a tour here in the library I always tell people "You
16 should always listen to your mother, 'cause your mother is
17 always right."

18 I took a ceramics class and—only because I had to—and
19 I don't want to say I'm gonna...you know...a famous artist
20 or incredibly skilled, but the teachers here made me
21 realize I do have some talent. Again, I'm not, you know,
22 going to win any awards or anything, but I can create some
23 things that are actually very nice and give as gifts and

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1 that we can display on our house without embarrassment.

2 That was a real...ummm...that was a real eye-opener, if you
3 will. I'm sorry, I tried to use something else, but...

4 I teach the history of film, where we show movies; we
5 watch them, if you will. I talk about the film and its
6 importance, if it has importance, and the actors. And
7 sometimes they're descriptive where they have a narrator
8 describing the action. *Double Indemnity*, 'cause you have a
9 narrator who describes much of what's happening...that
10 works really well in a class like that.

11 And then, of course, the library is wonderful. I mean,
12 all the books that are available. As someone who has always
13 loved to read...to have all these books available to you on
14 tape and, you know, all the benefits that come with it in
15 being able to pick up a book and return it here to the
16 library...which I'm down here anyway...or mail it back, is
17 just wonderful. It's a wonderful service, and it's just
18 expanded my horizons greatly 'cause I read so many books
19 now.

20 I've thought about this many times...in some ways it's
21 been a positive... Well, it definitely has been a positive.
22 I sometimes wonder if it's better that it happened than
23 not. I mean, obviously, I'd like to have my vision back.

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1 Don't get me wrong. And there are times when it's
2 frustrating, but...gosh, you know...I would have missed so
3 much if this hadn't happened. There would have be so many
4 things I wouldn't have been able that I am able to do now
5 or have been able to do—spending more time with the
6 children, spending more time at home and getting to know my
7 neighbors, being able to read as much as I have been able
8 to read, or—again, listen—to books. I've been able to
9 travel more as a result, because I have more time to do it.
10 I would have never found out I had an artistic side. And
11 that apprec...makes me appreciate art more. My perspective
12 on life is much better, I think, than it would have been
13 otherwise. I appreciate life more, I think. I appreciate
14 you and the kids more, I think, and my family and my
15 friends. They've all been so helpful to me.

16 The other, of course, real wonderful benefit is all
17 the great people I've met here at the Braille Institute—my
18 friends, people I've known over the years here, who I would
19 have missed out on if this hadn't happened to me. My being
20 able to teach and hopefully make people enjoy movies again.
21 It's all been a really good thing in many ways. So, maybe
22 this was the right thing to happen for me. And that's okay.
23 I mean, my life is good so I guess it was.