Hadley

It’s Not Often We Encounter an Angel

Presented by Douglas Walker

**Douglas:** Hello, and welcome to the Insights and Sound Bites podcast, where people facing vision loss share insights about what has helped them cope and adjust.

**Voice 1:** You cannot do this alone. You need people who are experiencing the same thing.

**Voice 2:** Probably the hardest part was just navigating through the emotions of it.

**Douglas:** My name is Douglas Walker. Today we’ll hear from Bill. Bill will share with us how a chance encounter, changed his entire outlook.

**Bill Massey:** Hi. My name is Bill Massey and I am calling from Raleigh, North Carolina.

In 2008, at the conclusion of a routine eye exam for an eyeglass prescription, my optometrist suggested that I get a field of vision check to see if I had glaucoma. But he was so complacent in his suggestion that I didn't take it seriously and ignored it.

That was my bad, because two years later, in 2010, when I was back for another eyeglass prescription refill, he asked why I had not had the field of vision check and then insisted that I get one and gave me the contact information for the Duke Eye Center here in North Carolina. Well, about a month later, I went in for my field of vision check, and it was determined that I already had a fairly advanced case of glaucoma.

And I was prescribed a regimen of three different eye drops twice a day in each eye. But despite the eye drop regimen and several procedures to install in my eye what my doctor called the bleb. My vision continued to deteriorate until 2016, when I had to surrender my driver's license to DMV and my car keys to my wife.

And so to say that that was disappointing to me would be an understatement. But a couple of weeks after that, I was back at Duke Eye Center for a routine eye pressure check, and I was sitting in the always crowded waiting room. And I was so wrapped up in my grievance about having lost my driving privileges and thus my independence.

I didn't even notice this elderly, snow haired gentleman who plopped down in the chair beside me and he said, “Good morning.” And so, I returned his greeting and we struck up a conversation that was pretty much dominated by me and lamenting my woes about having lost my driving privileges. And he indulge me until I stop to take a breath.

And then he said in his soft Southern drawl, “Well, I expect you can't drive no more, but I expect you can still walk.”

I didn't say anything. So he went on and he said, “And I expect you can see no more. But I expect you can still hear.” And so while I was formulating some kind of response to point out what I thought was his misplaced optimism, a nurse, stepped around the corner and shouted out Mr. Webb, and without saying a word, the gentleman stood and shuffled off down the corridor with his walker and the nurse guiding him by his elbow.

Now, I had never seen Mr. Webb in that waiting room in the dozens of times I had been there previously, and I had not seen Mr. Webb in that waiting room in the dozens of times I have been there since. But I have concluded that that is because it is not often that we encounter an angel. And I'm convinced that that's who he was.

Because since that day I have focused on my future and not my past.

**Douglas**: Was there something that someone said to you or something that happened along the way that made all the difference in the world in helping you adjust to living with vision loss?

We‘d love to hear from you if you’d like to share with us, just leave us a message on our Insights & Sound Bites voicemail by calling, 847-512-4867. Or, you can use your smartphone or computer and email us a recording to podcast@Hadley.edu. Again, my name is Douglas Walker. Take care and I’ll see you next time.