

[FOOTSTEPS]

Titles: Belfast, Northern Ireland.

A student carrying a backpack enters a university building.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I think whenever something bad happens to someone, we get to see what their strength of character is.

[PENSIVE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PLAYS]

Students sit in a lecture hall. The student with the backpack, now wearing a quarter zip, sits behind a long desk. His Mac laptop sits open before him. A professor in a blazer lectures at the front of the hall.

Professor: All right, so for this week, we continue with business awareness and analysis. We're looking...

The student in the quarter zip uses the trackpad on his laptop.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: It's been a good achievement for me to get to university, and that was sort of always – it was defying all odds.

Cut to black. Large white text appears on a black backdrop.

Titles: RORY.

[MUSIC ENDS]

Now, a tree sways outside a rain-streaked window.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I was probably a quarter way into my A-levels.

Rory, the student in the quarter zip, sits on his bed and uses AirPods and an iPad.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I was sitting in the middle of my construction class, and it was sort of then that I realized that I could no longer see what was on the interactive whiteboard anymore.

Light from the iPad flickers on Rory's face, and his eyes follow the motions on the iPad's screen. Rory's parents sit together at a kitchen table, giving an interview.

Rory's father: That's when it really all kicked off, to be honest with you. He got an emergency appointment and there were numerous tests done.

Rory's mother: I think we just didn't actually know what we were dealing with.

Now, Rory's mother stands at a kitchen counter, making tea.

[CLATTER]

From the table, Rory takes a photo of his mother with his iPad. He swipes through apps, their icons enlarged on the screen. He opens Procreate.

[MUSIC RESUMES]

Rory [VOICEOVER]: Over the next two to three months, I went from not being able to read the board from about 15, 20 feet away, to not being able to read text that's right in front of me on the screen either.

Rory draws on the photo of his mother in the kitchen with Apple Pencil.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: The genetic test came back around the time of my 17th birthday. I found out that I had a condition called Leber hereditary optic neuropathy. Best way to describe it is that I've got three to five percent of my vision left.

He adds white shading to the photo.

Interviewer: Can you tell me what you're doing?

Rory turns toward the interviewer.

Rory: I'm trying to draw an accurate representation of what I can see. It is hard to explain, but it gives a good visual representation of what's there and what's not there.

The shading obscures the image.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: When something like this happens in your life, you can either feel sorry for yourself or else you can say, "I'm going to figure this out because there has to be a way."

Rory attaches his Apple Pencil to his iPad.

[CLICK]

In a school classroom, a teacher gives an interview.

Teacher: You're looking at someone with straight A's the whole way through their school journey, and that was something Rory defined himself with. All he wanted was to go to university. I think we all knew that this was going to be a real uphill struggle.

Back at the kitchen table, Rory works on his Mac laptop.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: Whenever I was in the hospital, I started playing with accessibility features on my phone.

He lifts his wrist with an Apple Watch and taps on the watch face.

[PINGING]

He rises.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I thought if I could work out how to use my phone, everything else would fall into place.

Rory grabs his iPhone from the kitchen and grins.

Rory: Someone moved it. [LAUGHS]

He walks outside, across the backyard.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: Whenever I got home, I just said, "You know what? I need to get back to work here. This condition isn't going to rob me of the grades that I should be getting."

At a desk, he pulls his laptop from a bag and places it on a stand. He removes a keyboard from the bag. At the kitchen table, Rory's parents continue their interview.

Rory's mother: He focused all his energies into his studies. He adapted to a whole new way of learning.

Rory's Mac, hooked up to an external monitor, stands centred and forward on the desk so that it's close to Rory's eyes.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I took the Mac out and opened Settings and then the accessibility features. The first thing I turned on was the larger text and the Zoom.

Rory uses accessibility features on his Mac.

Rory: It was a real game changer because the computer was like that.

He points to a small Finder window on the monitor.

Rory: I can see nothing there, so I might as well not have the computer.

He zooms in and closes the Finder window. He zooms in on the text of a Word document. Now, he types.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I could still work my own way around the screen using the Zoom to zoom in to read the text. For most people that would be a really small thing, but for me that was massive. I remember that first night, I must have sat at the computer for about six hours and just knocked out a pile of work and just said, "This is going to work. I'm going to do this."

[KEYSTROKES]

Rory [VOICEOVER]: As my vision deteriorated more, I could make the writing size bigger, I could turn on different features. I was able to still be in class and do the work by myself.

Rory captures an image of a printed document on his desk using his iPhone.

[CAMERA SHUTTER]

He uploads it to the Mac, then zooms in on the text of the document, which includes instructions for an exam. Back in the classroom, the teacher speaks.

Teacher: He was then able to have that ownership of his learning again. So without him having the Apple devices, I genuinely don't think he would have been able to complete his A-levels.

On his bed, Rory opens his Mac laptop.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I got three A*s, which was one of the top achievers in the school.

Teacher: He got 90 out of 90, and I haven't seen many full raw marks in a paper.

Rory's father: He said to us, "I'm going to write an email to Apple." And I thought, "Right, about what?" [LAUGHS]

Rory [VOICEOVER]: It was sort of two things. One was a thank-you, and the other was to offer help and support for other people coming down the line with a similar condition as me.

Rory works on an email on his laptop. The subject reads, "How Apple Accessibility Changed My Life – Thank You!" He reads from the email.

Rory: In January 2024, my life changed completely. And in the weeks that followed...

He zooms in on text.

Rory's mother: It is so difficult for other people to have any understanding. He doesn't want anybody's sympathy. He wants people just to enjoy him for who he is.

Now, at a gym, Rory and a coach embrace.

Rory: Good to see you.

Coach: Yeah.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: It has changed my perception of people with hidden disabilities. You wouldn't know that I'm legally blind.

The coach wraps Rory's hands and wrists. They enter a boxing ring and spar.

[GRUNTING]

Rory [VOICEOVER]: You just don't know what's going on for anyone.

[PANTING]

[GRUNTING]

Now, Rory rides in a car and holds his iPhone.

Rory: Text Lindsay. Do you have much done for the group work today?

The multicolour Apple Intelligence band glows around the iPhone screen.

Siri: Send it?

Rory: Yes.

A message sends.

[MESSAGE SENT TONE]

Now, Rory carries a backpack and walks with another student. They cross a city street.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I kept it very close, even for a long time.

In class, he sits with another student.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: Now I'll type the stuff up on my laptop. I can just zoom it back out and then other people around me can read it and use it like a normal laptop.

The other student holds an Apple Pencil and points to his screen.

Student with Apple Pencil: So there's one. Hold on, zoom out. One, two, three, four. So there's five of them. So you do the introduction and recommendation.

Rory: Yeah, what do you want to do?

Student with Apple Pencil: Technological movement.

Rory sits back in his chair and looks toward the other student. He smiles.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I bring it back to the point of inclusivity. They have the same features, just they're not using them.

Teacher: Rory has left a lasting mark on all of us as teachers here. He taught me how to think differently with my teaching. To actually say to a student, "I need you to show me how to do this."

Now the teacher stands at the front of a classroom and lectures. Back in the lecture hall, Rory works on his Mac.

Professor: When you succeed, there's always that ripple effect that comes back to you.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: Yes, this is a part of me. It's not me, but yes, it's a part of me.

At night, Rory enters a studio. A person leads him into a recording booth.

Rory [VOICEOVER]: I don't know what I'll do in the future. Maybe my path's carved out for me somewhere, just don't know where yet.

Rory sits at a microphone.

Rory: I'm Rory. I'm 18. And yeah, I started losing my vision nearly two years ago now, but it hasn't been the end of the story. It's just been the start of a new chapter.

The Apple logo.