

Yes, I've done that. *Really.*

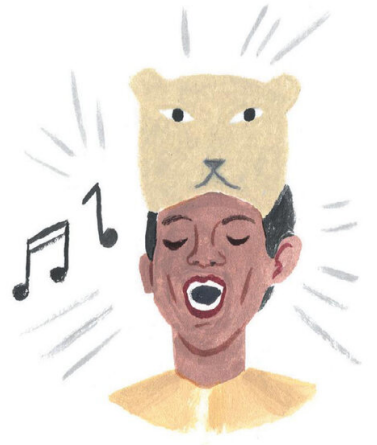
BY KIM CATLEY | ILLUSTRATIONS BY REBECCA CLARKE

SOME EXPERIENCES ARE HARD TO COMPREHEND UNTIL WE'VE LIVED THEM.

Sometimes, parallels offer a glimpse of what they're like. Anyone who has drained a winning shot in their driveway imagines it like an NCAA championship buzzer beater.

Dreaming is one option. Another option: Go directly to the source. Ask someone who knows firsthand the thrill of stepping onto a Broadway stage or the panic of running for a bomb shelter.

Spiders are everywhere, and they have incredible experiences. Here are some who tell the tales of things many of us have imagined but few will ever do ourselves.





WHAT IT'S LIKE TO ...

argue a case at the Supreme Court

ANDREW WOOD, '64 AND L'67, IS AN ATTORNEY WHO HAS BEEN IN PRIVATE PRACTICE IN RICHMOND SINCE 1968.

Andrew Wood was “shaking like a leaf” when he stepped into the Supreme Court in January 1980.

He was there to argue on behalf of his client George “Junior” Lewis Jr., who had been convicted under the Federal Firearms Act for being in possession of a handgun after being convicted of a felony.

The felony conviction occurred in the early 1960s in Florida — a detail that caught Wood’s eye. Around that same time, the Supreme Court had decided in the landmark case *Gideon v. Wainwright* that courts are required to provide an attorney to felony defendants who cannot afford one.

“It occurred to me that Junior was convicted in the same state as Earl Gideon, and it seemed possible that Junior didn’t have a lawyer as well,” Wood says. “It turns out that he did not.”

Wood argued in the district court and then on appeal that because Lewis didn’t have a lawyer, the prior conviction was void and could not be the basis for a conviction under the Federal Firearms Act. He lost at both levels, but similar cases were making their way through other courts, and the decisions were divided. It was a prime target for the Supreme Court to step in.

Despite advice he got from colleagues ahead of time, Wood says oral arguments were still a frightening experience. He was shaking when the justices walked in until Chief Justice Warren Burger smiled and said, “Settle down, son.”

“That’s all it took,” Wood says. “Thankfully, the nerves settled, and I felt a whole lot better and proceeded with my argument. The man didn’t have a lawyer — what’s the worth of a conviction like that? The law was pretty settled that you couldn’t use a void conviction. It was a pretty simple argument, I thought.”

The Supreme Court justices disagreed with Wood’s position, although justices William Brennan Jr., Lewis Powell Jr., and Thurgood Marshall offered a dissent.

“I lost all the way,” he says, “but as somebody said to me recently, even if you lose, you still went to the Super Bowl.”

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO ...

make a Broadway debut

CHAUNTEE' SCHULER IRVING, '03, IS A PROFESSIONAL ACTOR, SINGER, AND DANCER.

On the day Chauntee' Schuler Irving auditioned for a role on Broadway, she thought about quitting acting for good.

It had taken her years to get to that point. She had studied theater at Richmond and gone to graduate school in New York City. She had booked roles with Broadway national tours and worked in television.

Then, in the middle of an audition that would put her in the Broadway production of *The Lion King*, she fumbled.

"I went to hit a high note, and I didn't reach it because I was so nervous," she says. "I remember thinking, 'Wow, I just messed up in front of [director] Julie Taymor, and now I'm not going to work again.'

"I went home and ate

this big bowl of ice cream and said, 'Tomorrow, I'll be done with acting.'"

Irving had, in fact, landed the part of the musical's most significant female character, Nala.

Preparing for a Broadway performance is like training for the Olympics, Irving says. High-impact, intense rehearsals to get you ready to perform eight shows a week. Your body is put through the wringer, and you need physical therapy to stay in shape. You have to be mentally tough.

And then one day, you step onto that stage for the first time.

"It was exhilarating; it was terrifying," she says. "It was everything you imagine."

The intense preparation helped when Irving had to go off script in her debut performance. *The Lion King* costumes are stunning but incredibly intricate. In the middle of Irving's big number, "Shadowland," her collar detached, and her beautiful neck band dangled from her costume — a major distraction.

"I just ripped it off and threw it somewhere," she says. "Afterward, they told me, 'We love that you did that. It was so memorable and in character, and you know how to handle yourself on stage.'"

After *The Lion King*, Irving had another Broadway role in the musical *Murder Ballad* before returning to gradu-

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO ...

treat ER patients

HERBERTH BALSELLS, '06, IS A PHYSICIAN WHO SPECIALIZES IN EMERGENCY MEDICINE.

On a Thursday night in July, Herberth Balsells arrived at Northern Westchester Hospital in New York for the start of his overnight shift. Two patients followed shortly behind him. Then, four ambulances raced in, and five more patients arrived.

"In a matter of two hours, there were 15 patients, and I'm the only doctor," he says. "It's like working at the airport, and you have a lot of airplanes flying, and they're running out of gas. You have to figure out which one you let land first."

Surprisingly, the trauma cases — like gunshot wounds, stabbings, car accidents, and even a bad fall — aren't the most challenging. There's a standard procedure to follow, and everyone knows their role. Someone watches, some-

one records, someone examines the patient. A nurse is in charge of medications, and the doctor is at the head of the bed holding the patient.

They also follow a series of steps, like a recipe, that prioritize life-threatening injuries and leave the rest for later. If the patient can't breathe, you don't move on to the next step until they can or have been intubated. If there's a puncture wound, you control the bleeding. A broken ankle can wait.

"And you do the same thing every time," he says, "so that nobody misses anything."

The tough patients are the ones that break the algorithm. Maybe they can't speak or won't tell him what happened. Bit by bit, Balsells has to piece together what's

ate school. Today, she auditions for television and film roles and teaches and coaches acting students. She is particularly focused on encouraging actors of color to find their worth and continue pushing boundaries in the business and in academia.

“That was very much a part of the journey, the struggle, and a lot of the success of *The Lion King*,” she says. “It was the first show on Broadway that Julie Taymor said, ‘This percentage of the cast needs to be a cast of color, and that cannot be changed.’

“Being a part of that show was vital to me really, truly understanding and discovering how important it is [to show] culture, heritage, and ethnicity. It’s impossible to talk about *The Lion King* without talking about the impact on the industry, for the actors, and for people to see that representation onstage.”

wrong and how to proceed with treatment. It requires knowing a little bit about every field of medicine, training for procedures he’ll never perform, and being comfortable with the unknown.

“If you haven’t seen it before, you haven’t read about it, you’re not going to think about that diagnosis,” he says. “But once you see a few cases that are very shocking, they stay in your mind, and then you may someday see something like it.”

WHAT IT’S LIKE TO ...

endure a bombardment

ADAM EVERLEIGH, '03, IS A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER CURRENTLY STATIONED IN TEL AVIV, ISRAEL.

I’m a political officer with the foreign service, and it’s our job to help the policymakers at the Department of State and in the White House understand the political situation and the dynamics here in Israel.

The quality of life here is really nice. We live right on the beach. But, obviously, Tel Aviv and Israel came under a rocket fire [in May] from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which is a Hamas-aligned terrorist organization.

I was in our nursery, rocking our 6-week-old when I could hear some loud explosions outside. I didn’t think much of it because we had white noise playing for my kid to sleep, and it drowned it out.

I had just put him down in his bassinet when my wife, Tiffany, came in and said she could hear the sirens going off outside. We went out on our balcony and could see Israel’s Iron Dome intercepting the rockets from Gaza.

It got to the point where the rockets were literally being intercepted right above our apartment complex. That’s when we woke the kids up and ran. There is a bomb shelter within our building — it’s Israeli code that all buildings have bomb shelters for this exact scenario — but from the time that you receive an alert on your phone or you hear the sirens, you only have 60 seconds to get to a place of cover. For us, the bomb shelter is about 13 floors down, and we’d have to run carrying a 6-week-old and a 2-year-old.

The rockets were coming from the south, so we hunkered in the north-facing stairwell and rode out the barrage of rockets that was almost unprecedented in Israeli history. In previous assignments, I’ve been in situations that were a little bit dangerous. But it’s a completely different and unique experience to be clutching a 6-week-old.

All our 2-year-old understood was that he was being woken up in the middle of the night and very quickly shuffled to a stairwell. He could hear the explosions. There were shaking windows, and it’s an intense experience.

My wife, being the wonderful mother that she is, tried to make it into the least traumatizing experience as possible by asking him to pack his backpack and pick the toys that he wanted to bring into the stairwell. And then she tried to help him cope with it the next day. The morning after the first night, he was very withdrawn, but my wife helped him come to terms with what was going on.

This went on for about a week or so. You’ve got to live with this very intense level of anxiety for the duration. Even now, my wife will hear some noise outside, and it’ll sound similar to one of the sirens going off. It immediately elevates your blood pressure, and your anxiety goes up.



WHAT IT'S LIKE TO ...

help people through their biggest struggles

CARLISLE GREAVES, '05, IS A LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER.

Carlisle Greaves has seen difficult cases, from patients dealing with anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and pica to schizophrenia, narcissism, and antisocial personality disorder.

"I had one case where a guy was a psychopath," Greaves says. "He was 21, 22 years old. He could be violent. He was in the drug game pretty big. He had no hygiene. He was extremely intelligent and highly manipulative. He was living with his grandmother, and he had completely manipulated her to the point where he refused to work."

But the patient was also a talented rapper, which gave Greaves an inroad. Greaves is a musician — he was a member of the Octaves and even landed a record deal a year after graduation — so he often uses music therapy to connect with patients.

In this case, a producer sent hip-hop beats for Greaves to take to his patient's house. In the basement, the two wrote and recorded tracks. His patient was eventually offered a record deal from a well-known rap label for some of the work they produced.

Greaves says his job isn't to fix people. He's a partner

to patients who need to learn to assert their own power in a situation.

"I always tell people I'm here to work together to come to a solution," he says. "I'm here to help you think differently about what you're dealing with and see it from a different perspective, that you're going to fix yourself once you understand."

Many of Greaves' patients are from lower-income communities in the Maryland and Washington, D.C., areas, and patients' needs can be wide and varied. He often finds that family members need support as well. If he goes to a household to see one child, he might end up also working with a sibling. Or he might begin working with a man who struggles with anger only to find his wife wants to sit in, so he's soon doing couples counseling.

"If you're good at this job, people get better — and that's a process," Greaves says. "Most of the time I'm working with a client, I'm hearing about how they're improving, how they're overcoming challenges. I see them gain insight, have an 'aha!' moment, and then see how they applied it. ... Even if there are horror stories, you see people turn those into triumph."

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO ...

fall in love again at 70

BOB STOKES, '72, AND SALLIE STONE COOK, '72, ARE ENGAGED AND PLANNING A DESTINATION WEDDING WITH THEIR FIVE DAUGHTERS AND 12 GRANDCHILDREN.

BOB: We reconnected through LinkedIn, but we had a lot of connections. Sallie had my aunt for math [at Richmond]. Her late husband and I were RAs together. And we actually double-dated.

SALLIE: Bob was dating my suitemate — her name was Lucy — and they dated for quite a while. So I knew Bob just because he was dating my good friend.

He contacted me about three and a half years ago. I had no idea that Bob had spent 34 years at Villanova, and I don't think he knew exactly what I was doing. But he knew about my late husband Marshall's passing because people were expressing condolences to me on Facebook and LinkedIn. He sent me a message expressing his condolences, and

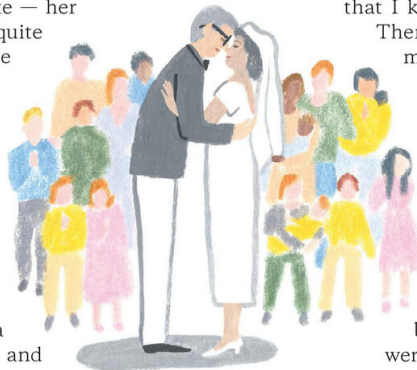
from there, we just continued communicating.

BOB: This was around Christmas, and I thought, the first Christmas after a spouse passed away, I'm sure it was difficult. So, I sent her a note that I had known Marshall, that I knew how fine of a person he was.

Then, in 2018, I came down [to Richmond] to visit my aunt because she was going into assisted living, and we reconnected.

SALLIE: We went out to dinner. We ended up going to one of my grandchildren's basketball games. We watched a football game on campus. It was the beginning of a very nice relationship.

BOB: I proposed to Sally in September of last year on the campus. We weren't right in front of Cannon Chapel,





WHAT IT'S LIKE TO ...

hit a home run in the World Series

SEAN CASEY, '96, HIT TWO HOME RUNS FOR THE DETROIT TIGERS IN THE 2006 WORLD SERIES. HE IS NOW A NETWORK ANALYST FOR MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL.

You're so locked in during a World Series. Your brain goes almost into a hypnotic state. That's what I felt. I was in it before I homered and when I homered. You get in that zone. I remember when it left my bat and I was running to first, I was like, "That's gone." I can see the center fielder and the right fielder converging into the gap, and I'm like, "Oh, my god — I hit it well enough." Fifteen years later, it's still a surreal moment.

When I was rounding the bases, I remember thinking I felt like a 12-year-old kid in my backyard. How many times are you in your backyard playing whiffle ball and it's, "Oh, Sean Casey homers in the World Series!" I used to say that out loud. I was thinking that while rounding the bases, that this is my 12-year-old dream.

It was almost like a dream within a dream, like I can't believe this is happening. It was my ninth year in the big leagues, so to have that moment at that point was really cool.

Imagination is a wonderful thing. A lot of things have happened in my life that I've imagined, which is crazy. What I didn't imagine is that it almost felt like time stood still for a second. There were 55,000 fans at the game, millions of people watching around the world, but I felt like the only person in the arena when I was rounding the bases. It's tough to explain. When the ball went out, it felt like I was just floating around the bases. I don't know if in my imagination I'd ever thought of that.

Now when I go to games with my kids, I'm like, "Man, it looks hard to hit a baseball." I'm looking at these guys thinking, "I don't even know if I can hit in the gap right now." I mean, how did I do that? It's almost like you're living another life. —*Matthew Dewald*

but in the sitting area below. I asked her, and luckily she said yes. I think we both felt like Richmond was the connecting point between us, and it was the perfect place to make that commitment.

SALLIE: Falling in love, there's been an element of surprise. When my husband passed away, I really never imagined that I would be in this situation again. And when Bob reached out to me, I didn't have any idea that we would have this kind of a connection. But it has been just wonderful. You realize that there are so many good things that can happen to you, no matter what the circumstances are —
BOB: — or what stage of life.

If you're got a remarkable experience to share, let us know at magazine@richmond.edu.