

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts here on iTunes, *Taking Back Birth*. Hi, Maryn here today with a really fun interview. I realized in 130 plus podcasts I haven't done an interview with somebody that just had a really great normal first birth that happened to be at home. So I want to welcome my friends here locally from Sedona. Joe and Julie and lovely little Gabriel, who is soon to be one. They have graciously agreed to appear on camera even as part of this podcast and tell their really awesome story to inspire people all over the world. So welcome, you guys. So good to see you even on camera.

JULIE: Thanks so much for having us. We're really excited to share our story because when we've talked to people one on one we've gotten so many different reactions. And most of them have been really surprised that—people not really knowing that home birth was an option. And so we're excited to talk about it today on the podcast.

MARYN: Yeah. Well, when did you guys realize it was an option? I was thinking about how we met this morning and kind of your journey. So when did it become a thing you realized?

JULIE: We moved to Sedona about two, three years ago. And when we moved here, we had no intention of having a child. But somehow I magically, I guess, became pregnant because we weren't trying. I guess we weren't not trying either. But it was shortly after November 11th. I actually remember. It was the last period I had. And it was kind of a the 11-11 day is known to be kind of a transition point. A walk through. A gate through—a gateway. And I had what turned out to be my last period right after that. It happened the morning of the 12th. And I started to feel a little different after that and realized by around mid December that I was pregnant.

And it was quite a surprise. And so I didn't have these preconceived notions of what I wanted for my birth or these long time dreams. It was all kind of a surprise and quite a shock. So we had first looked at going to a birth center. We knew that we didn't want to go to a hospital. And so we looked at some options, and we have gone to a birth center. And it was okay. And then a girlfriend that I had met in Sedona just randomly had said, "Look. There's this homebirth workshop. It's a free workshop going on in Sedona. It's on Saturday. Why don't you come? I'm gonna go."

And I decided to go with her. And I really—I had no interest in doing a home birth. And before I went to your seminar, Maryn, I was kind of—I was like, "Oh, I don't want to do that." That's what I thought in my mind. And so I went. And the room was packed with people from all over Sedona, the Verde Valley, Phoenix. There was even some—a few

women from Vegas, if I remember, so people really travelled far. And I was like, "Wow. I just had to come just down the street." And, Maryn, you put on just this really captivating presentation. It was really informative. It had video. It had testimonials. And then just your wealth of knowledge not only being a mother that's been through the experience but also helping so many different mothers. And after that, I decided I wanted to do a home birth. And I was really curious what Joe would think. So, maybe, you can jump in here. What did you think when I came home from that workshop? And I was like, "Let's do a home birth."

JOE: It was a little shocking. But like Julie said, just with all the horror stories and the chaos—and this is taking nothing away from people that want to go to the hospital and have their babies there and all of that stuff. But we really just wanted nothing to do with it. Just hearing all the horror stories. And I don't—

JULIE: I think it was a comfort thing too.

JOE: That too. And so I was like, "Okay." And was like, "This will be exciting." And then through the course of time as it starts getting closer and closer, you're like, "Okay. I kind of see what I'm in for here," because I really liked, Maryn, how you were hands off with the whole thing." It was just you guys. You're there for support and for, God forbid, any emergency or anything like that happens. But you really just kind of put it in our hands and said, "This is your baby. You guys are going to do it and make it happen." And it was just a pretty incredible experience.

JULIE: And I really appreciated that you were open minded and respected my decision because, obviously, it's a joint decision about the birth. It's a baby you have together. But it's really the woman who is actually giving birth and going through that experience. So the fact that you trusted my decision that that was—that really meant a lot to me. And that you're on board. And that we were both on the same page 100% for this experience. So that was really important.

JOE: And I learned that you don't argue with attorneys.

MARYN: Yeah. There is that.

JULIE: Yeah. I have a law office here in Sedona. And that kind of transitions well into what I was going to say next which is once we started working with you, Maryn, what was so awesome was the personalized attention. I mean you came to my office and met with me at times which was—I mean I felt like I was this VIP getting top notch celebrity treatment. I had somebody coming to me, talking to me, caring for me, meeting me at my house, getting to see what my life is like. That was so incredibly special. And I think that's also an experience you don't necessarily get if you're going in and out of a doctor's office.

MARYN: Yeah. Or a birth—

JULIE: I've heard that from some other friends of mine. Just, "Oh, I don't—my doctor didn't have that bedside manner. I don't feel like I'm really being heard." I never felt that way. I almost felt like there were times when I—I was like, "Oh, I feel like there's something I need to share, and there's nothing—I don't have anything right now." You open that space up to where you can really let out all of those different emotions that come out through pregnancy. And then also talk about the different questions. I mean as you're going through each stage and, especially, for the first time it's all new. And what's happening? And is this normal? And so that was also nice to have somebody to contact and get answers and get reassured and kind of talk through things. Yeah. That was kind of the pregnancy leading in and part of the pregnancy. But go ahead.

MARYN: Yeah. I was just going to compliment you and say you were willing to do all that hard work. People think there isn't maybe that involved somehow. Like the pregnancy is just happening. And that's true. It is happening physically. But we do need support. And I think especially with your first pregnancy. Like it takes a lot of guts and wisdom to connect with that. And I was always so impressed with you that you were able to do that, and you were able to open up and share when there was something to share. And you kind of worked through your stuff as it's great that people do because someone can't do that for you anyway.

But you guys are the ones that took that responsibility and realized that that work was involved. And that's different, I think, depending on where you go or who you see. Not everybody cares about those sorts of things. But it's so important to the birth process that we've done our inside work as much as we can. So I honor that in both of you for doing that. And it came through. I mean that's your beautiful birth story was a culmination of all that work you did alone and together to get him here. So beautiful.

JULIE: Yeah. We did. We really did. And during the pregnancy, since we did a home birth and we didn't see a traditional doctor, we never had an ultrasound. And that was kind of a controversial topic because family members wanted to know the gender. Joe wanted to know the gender. He doesn't like surprises. I love surprises, so I knew from the start that I wanted the birth experience to have that extra reveal of what the gender is. So I knew from the start that I was comfortable with not knowing the gender, but Joe—he wanted to know. My parents wanted to know. My sister wanted to know. Everybody was asking. But we didn't do it.

And it wasn't just knowing the gender. People also were like, "Oh, you got to make sure everything is okay. And you need to check on the baby." And there was a lot of fear that was brought up around the ultrasound. And I just—luckily, I had the support of Indie Birth moms. Maryn, you hosted some gatherings for the other Indie Birth mothers which was amazing to have that community. But I got to connect with other women, who also didn't do an ultrasound. And who had dealt with these same questions. And that was really empowering to be able to share that and know that you weren't alone and get some tips about how to communicate about it with family members or friends.

So that was really awesome. But because we didn't have the ultrasound, we thought it was a girl. I don't know—I had one dream while I was pregnant, and I gave birth to a boy. I just had that one dream, but then I just kind of ignored that. And we got on this girl kick. And we had picked out a girl name. We didn't even have a boy name. And we were kind of going down this whole girl path. And that did actually make the birth experience, I think, that much more amazing.

JOE: Yeah. When he came out—I mean you were there. He came out. I was like, "Babe, it's a boy." I didn't exactly say that, but I was like, "Babe, it's a boy." And you were like, "What?" Yeah. Exactly.

JULIE: But I thought, too—Joe, maybe you could talk about some of the reactions you got from your male friends. Before. While I was pregnant, explaining that this is what we were going to do and that—how involved you were going to be in the birth process.

JOE: When I would tell people especially in person that that's what we were doing, people's faces would just go blank.

JULIE: Really. Just drop.

JOE: They couldn't comprehend. Because all of my friends know me pretty well and, as you can probably hear while I'm talking, I'm a crazy Irish guy from Boston. And all of my friends who know me really well know what kind of a crazy person I am. And not saying that in a bad way. I just live life to its fullest and go crazy, and it's full blown. You could literally just see their brains shut down. Like, "No. Me and Julie are doing it at home. When the baby comes out, I'm going to be there. I'm going to be the one catching him." And they're just like—

JULIE: What? Silence.

JOE: It was just frozen. So I thought it was really funny. But I just stayed positive about the whole thing which, obviously, you have to do.

JULIE: Did that add any anxiety for you? The (inaudible).

JOE: No. It actually—you know me. It actually made me want to do it more. I was just going to be like, "We're going to do this. And I'm going to show these people. And we can get this done and blah, blah, blah." And it was just pretty cool. And then the stories after Gabe was born, and we did it. And I saw them, and they saw the pictures. And they were like, "Oh my god. What happened? Tell me everything." And they were just really curious about it, and I gave them some pretty gory details. And some of them went a little pale.

JULIE: What were you most surprised about? Like what you thought it was going to be and then what it was?

JOE: You wanted me to watch some of those videos—some of your other videos, Maryn. And Julie would tell me some of the things that were on there, and that some of the guys—

JULIE: Some of the birth videos.

JOE: That some of the guys—and I would just—I'm like I don't want to see them.

JULIE: He didn't want to watch them.

JOE: I'm like I don't want to see it. I was like I have a vision in my head of what it's going to look like. And I really just had no expectations. I honestly thought it was going to go a lot faster. And I don't want to say a lot smoother because it's not that it didn't go smooth. It's Julie had a long labor. So yeah. I just walked into it with no expectations and just had a completely open mind of—it's like the typical saying. It's like okay. Whatever you're ready for, that's the exact opposite of what's going to happen. So you got to be prepared for everything.

JULIE: Right.

JOE: So that's pretty much how it was. And once it started, I just really tried to—how do you say it? Like just open myself up and get on Julie's vibe and give her the support that she needed and get her whatever she needed. And if she needed space, I just—I mean you were here. I sat out in the living room for a couple of hours while you guys might have been in the bedroom with her, and she just needed some space to start opening up to it and getting herself ready. And you or Annika would come out and say, "Joe, Julie might need some food. How about some peanut butter and jelly? How about whatever it is?" And I was like, "Okay. No problem. Sure. I'm on it." And so I just really tried to stay in tune with what Julie really—because I mean it's—I mean for the people that are watching this video they'll attest to it. But I mean it's—if people are watching that haven't done it before, it is the most intense thing you will ever do in your life. And I've done some pretty intense things in my life. And this took the cake. This blew everything else out of the water. And—

JULIE: And maybe we should back up and tell the story.

JOE: Well, go ahead. If you want.

JULIE: Yeah. We're about a year out from his actual birth date, so I have been reflecting back and thinking what it was like a year ago. When you're in the final weeks of pregnancy, you don't know exactly when the baby is going to come. And you kind of feel like a ticking time bomb. You're just, "When is this going to happen?"

JOE: And we didn't realize—just to interject—that in the last week or two, two and a half weeks, Julie like doubled in size.

JULIE: Oh, you get so big.

JOE: It was—I couldn't believe it. Like we—I woke up one day, and it was Julie and Volkswagen bus. And I just couldn't believe how big you actually got.

JULIE: Yeah. Every day you're just expanding. And you're trying to get everything done because once the baby comes life kind of pauses for awhile. So I'm trying to get everything wrapped up with my law practice. I had a series of hearings the week he—of his due date. Just to try to get everything done. And I had these fears that my water would break in the courtroom or something like that. I made it through the two hearings I needed to make it through. That was on Monday and Tuesday.

JOE: And everyone in the courtroom was on their hands and knees praying—praising God that it happened.

JULIE: And then I went into the office on Wednesday, and I was leaving the office around 6:00 p.m. Wednesday evening. And I was walking to my car, and I felt different. I was like, "Oh." And it was the first kind of early contraction starting. So that it—so I let you know what was going on. I think we texted, maybe touch base by phone. You can hear Gabe laughing. And you said, "Hey, get a good night's rest. You've got a lot of work coming up for your body and physically. So eat, drink. Just rest. Everything is good." So I did that.

Thursday was that kind of putsing around day that you read about. I went into the office but really wasn't able to focus on getting any real work done. Was more just kind of tying up some loose ends, just kind of moving around touching base with some people. And just kind of letting some time pass. And there were times when I had to stop and breathe and really feel through what was happening. That was all day Thursday. Got another good night's rest on Thursday night. And then come Friday, things started to progress further. But really not a ton further.

I mean it was getting more intense. The contractions were getting closer. Maryn, you and Annika had come over, and you guys were there. You had Deva. You had your daughter with you at that time which was awesome. I mean to see another baby while I'm getting ready to give birth was so motivating and so uplifting to see her smile and know that that was the reward coming. I mean that was just awesome. It carried me through so many difficult moments.

But Friday was tough. I was starting to get tired. It had been a couple of days where you're ramping up, and the contractions are getting more intense. I got in and out of the tub quite a bit. The tub was a nice pain relief. I knew I wasn't going to give birth in the

tub. I was too relaxed while I was in there, but it was really nice to have that option to get in and out. Started making noises I didn't even know I was capable of making and was kind of in and out of the bathroom. And then I was on the—I had been on the toilet. I got up, and I was like, "Oh my gosh. I need to sit back down on the toilet." This was probably around 9:00 at night on Friday, and my water broke.

JOE: It might have been later than that.

JULIE: And it was like an explosion went off. And I was like, "Whoa. Whoa." And so that happened and just a ton of liquid came out. And I remember you coming in, and you were like, "Okay. I think you're going to have this baby tonight." And it was really invigorating because things had been moving really slowly. And it was like, "Oh yes. We're making progress here."

JOE: Like finally.

JULIE: But it didn't happen Friday night.

JOE: No.

JULIE: And that was kind of frustrating for the entire birth team, to be honest with you, because I think everybody had gotten excited. Everybody was wanting this marathon to finally come to an end. And I think it was around 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, Maryn, you came in and said, "Julie, I'm going to go lay down in the back bedroom. We need to get some rest. I want you to rest, and we'll do—we will get this baby out once you're ready." Now keep in mind the baby's—his head was nearly out. I could feel his head with my fingers. I wasn't—that area wasn't being touched a lot, but he was right there. And that was quite uncomfortable. I mean his head is in between—in my pelvis essentially.

A lot of pressure. And it was like that for quite some time. That night I'd laid in bed, and I slept on and off. But I kept having contractions. The next morning we all got up pretty early, and I was starting to give up. Not that I was giving up on the birth process. But I was just so exhausted. And I was having trouble eating at that point. Just nothing tasted good. I was just—I was tired. And I was having trouble focusing. So we had a chiropractor that I had worked with. He came over that morning. He gave me an adjustment. We kind of connected kind of in a spiritual way to reinvigorate me. I sat in the bath tub for probably a good half hour and just—that was so relaxing. My body actually stopped contracting for a little bit, and I got to rest. And then at some point in that process, Joe gave me like a serious talking to. So I'll let you tell that part of the story.

JOE: Well, it was just at that point we were going on day three, day two, whatever it was. And everybody was exhausted. And well it's like you said. You kind of started losing faith. And you were like, "I think I might need to go to the hospital. We might

need to go to the hospital to get this done." And I was like—I was like, "That is not happening." I'm like, "We have made it this far. We were on the brink. And all that's left to do is jump and do it." And I was not going to sit here and have Gabe be born in an ambulance or get to the hospital and have the hospital people say, "You've been in labor for how long? C-section. We're cutting you open." And it just wasn't going to happen. So—

JULIE: I remember you said to me, "This is what you wanted."

JOE: Yeah.

JULIE: "You started this, and you're going to finish it."

JOE: Yeah. This was your decision, and I'm here. I'm here for you the whole way. And—

JULIE: And some people might think that's harsh. But honestly, it really empowered me. I'm getting kind of emotional thinking about it. It was what I needed. I needed somebody to come in and say, "Look. You can do this." And that's what he said. He said, "You've got this." And so, Maryn, you said, "Julie, Margo," who you work with, "Margo had a long labor. And she ended up just pushing. And let's give it a try." So I had had that rest. I'd had that time in the tub. I had my invigorating talk. And I stood up on the side of the bed. And I pushed with everything I had.

JOE: You went for it.

JULIE: And it worked. He started coming out. And Joe was right there behind me. I was standing up. He was right behind me. Right there. With a towel. And Maryn, you were kind of in the back of the room. Still right there but you gave us our space. And you were coaching me through it saying, "Look, Julie. Move your leg this way. Now push again. Here he comes. You've got this. Wow." And he came out. And you had said after the fact that him—once he came out it was one of the fastest exits that you had seen. So I really did just bear down, pushed with everything I had, and it worked. Oh, let me go grab him. Just one second. Come here, sweetheart.

JOE: Yeah. It was pretty amazing. I just was like, "Oh my god. There's—his head is out, baby. His head is out." And she's trying to look and couldn't really see anything. I was like, "Just keep going. Keep going." And the next thing you knew he just came out. For the dads that are watching this, or new dads to be, it is the most incredible thing that you will ever experience in your life. Having your child come out of your partner. And you catch him.

JULIE: It's a bond from the very beginning.

JOE: And it's every—I can go into the fluids, the everything—

JULIE: The smells.

JOE: d—everything that comes with this. But it all takes a backseat. And you kind of just—you just disassociate from all of that. And you're just focusing on this little person that just came out of your partner. And you're sitting there holding this little person with the umbilical cord still attached and covered in whatever they are covered in. When I tell my friends about it, I mean they're—they can—they get my emotion that comes with it of how incredible it actually was. But still, at the same time, they're just like, "Joe, if we knew one person that was ever going to do anything that crazy that—like that, it would be you." And I have no problem telling them about it. And it's kind of—it's almost empowering where—and like Julie just said. The bond that you have where it's not you're looking over the doctor's shoulder. You're fighting to get around the nurse.

JULIE: An hour later you get to touch the baby.

JOE: Yeah. To get a look at your kid. It's like I had him. We immediately started cleaning him off. And Julie's umbilical cord was a little shorter than normal, so we couldn't get him—

JULIE: To the breast.

JOE: — to the breast. So I was holding him. And, Maryn, you and Annika came over. And you clamped off Julie's umbilical cord, and she was cutting that thing within—what? A minute.

JULIE: Which I had requested at that point because I did want to bring him to the breast. And for some reason, the cord was just short. And it wasn't working. So I couldn't get him there. So we decided to cut the cord pretty quickly. And that's how it worked in our situation.

JOE: Yeah. And I've never seen Julie with the glow that—she was like ten feet tall. It was—you'll never see that side of your wife, your significant other, whoever—you'll never see that side of them with—unless you do something like that. And I had never seen the glow that was coming off Julie. And like I said, she was like ten feet tall. And it was—I'm sitting here looking at Gabe. And then I'm looking at Julie. And I'm just like, "Oh my god. That is—she is so beautiful." And then I'm looking at Gabe. I'm like, "Oh my god." It was just back and forth. And your brain is just—synapses in your brain that you never knew you had are just firing a million times a second. And all of a sudden you're part of it, and you feel like you're ten feet tall. And it's just a really amazing incredible experience. And knock on wood, thank God, there were no complications. It was—other than the duration of time, everything just went amazingly.

JULIE: Yeah. And as it turned out, he was born at 8:00 a.m. sharp on his due date. So I guess that's just when he wanted to arrive. I think that this podcast could potentially

be controversial in that when is it safe? When is it not safe? How long do you wait? What's good? What's bad? What's too long? I'm not in a position to advise anybody else on what's right for them. This is our story. And this worked for us. Was there fear at times? Yeah. Did I question what's right to do in this moment? Maryn, you had your monitor. We monitored his heart. His heartbeat was consistent. I was dilating. I was fully dilated. All of these markers of the natural progression of birth we had. And so it took patience. It took faith. Is that right for everybody in every situation? No. And we're not saying that. But this is our story. And this is what worked for us. And I'm really glad that we did persevere and stick through it because it's one of the most beautiful moments of our lives. And it would have been much different had we decided to abort the plan. Change the plan.

JOE: Go to the hospital. I would have lost my mind. Yeah. It would.

JULIE: Go the hospital. Yeah. It would have been a completely different experience.

MARYN: Right.

JOE: And just to interject, I did not hyperventilate or pass out or anything once.

MARYN: You did awesome. You did so awesome. I mean you guys were the most incredible team. I don't remember every detail, of course, of everyone's birth. But I do remember you two being this incredible team. And you taking care of her the entire labor in such a special way. And yeah. That moment where—I remember tearing up just knowing that you two were connecting over this baby, and that it was going to be a choice. Like you were either going to do it or you weren't. And knowing that Joe and you were connecting over that and walking into the bedroom and seeing Gabe—seeing his head. Like I'll never forget that because it really was that connection between the two of you that you had the whole pregnancy.

And it's so important I think for partners to understand how valuable they are. Like when we're the women birthing, we're the only ones that can do it. But support like that is invaluable. And if you had doubted her or been afraid or there's so many ways she was vulnerable. I mean I'm imagining you felt that way just because I think that's a pretty common way to feel. Where you were so vulnerable that if he had not had that faith in you then you might have come up with another way.

Also just clinically, not to bore anyone, but it's usually not boring people on this podcast. Birth takes the time it takes which I think your story is just a great illustration of. And we don't know why, right? Like it's a spiritual, emotional, all those things combined along with the baby. So why does it take the time it takes? But in your case, like you said, labor really did progress. It just was at maybe a slower speed than you expected or whatever. And you were fully open for quite awhile. So I think that's a cool point for other moms to know. I mean, honestly, sometimes other birth workers, doulas,

midwives because we're taught when someone is ten then they're done. They push, and they have a baby. But you weren't ready to do that.

And I think that time had to be honored even though it took patience, and it took trust that Gabe and you weren't ready at that moment when you were complete, as they say, which was probably early that morning, right? Probably around midnight or 1:00 a.m., I think, before he was born around 8:00, right?

JULIE: Yep.

MARYN: So you were complete for quite awhile. But you didn't have an urge to push. And there was no rush. And you were able to rest. So that's not right for everybody either. And there are some situation and some births where everybody wants to move it ahead. And it's like, "Well, just push anyway." But anyway, just to say, that a woman's body can be open for quite a number of hours with—and everybody is fine. It's just a matter of patience and time. And then secondly, on the clinical side, I think it's so interesting to note that he did have a short cord. So people should file that away too. Again, whether they're parents or birth workers. That we have to respect the timing of the baby and how the baby comes down. And that's exactly what you did by honoring that.

So yeah. Maybe you had things to work out. You'll know the answer to that. But he physically—the cord was stretching. And that's—when labors are a little stop start and super long, that's not always the reason why. But that—I think that was more than half of his reason. Probably 80% of him taking the time it took. And had you rushed it, had you been in the hospital and had pitocin, or even some other scenario birth center, home—break the water. Let's do this. Let's hurry it along. That could have really endangered him. And he sounded great the whole time. I remember asking you when your water is open. And I believe there was light meconium and asking you, "Julie, is everything okay? Is he okay?" Because he sounds fine, but like I want to hear it—I want to hear it from you. And you said, "He's fine." And we didn't listen again, I don't think, after that because you were just, "He's fine." Or baby's fine or whatever you said.

JULIE: Yeah. I didn't feel bad at any time. Or I mean, of course, you—there's a lot of pain in birth, but I didn't feel like something was wrong. It was taking a long time which was unexpected. And then you start to doubt yourself a little bit. But in general, I never had unnatural pain, unnatural bleeding, or anything that was concerning in that regard. So that was good.

MARYN: Yeah. I remember that. I do remember that specially. That you handled it really amazingly well. Which I guess when it goes on for awhile you either you do or you don't, right? I mean if you weren't willing to you would have quit.

JULIE: And it really is—you really have to surrender because nothing went like we thought it would. We thought we were having a girl. We thought it was going to be a short birth. We thought—gosh. I don't know what else. But—

JOE: Yeah. There was all kinds of stuff.

JULIE: Yeah. And it wasn't what we thought. But it was what it was. And I agree. I think that I did have some resistance to becoming a mother. And I think that that played out in the long birth as well. I think there was a psychological element. And almost had to break through that barrier to cross over into motherhood and the birth was that moment, but I resisted it. And yeah. Once he was born, that's when the work was over. All of the joy hormones set in, and, again, I felt like this ultra pampered like queen. You and Annika drew me this herb bath that was just so wonderful. Everybody was making food and seeing that I finally sat down and ate because I really hadn't been able to eat towards the end of the labor. I just did—nothing tasted good so replenishing that.

You guys preparing the placenta. That's the other thing we could talk about. So after he was born, you're on such this high. I mean it's just you're on cloud nine. And you're kind of—it's hard to think clearly because you're just so disoriented with everything that you've just been through and the physical release. And I remember you saying, "Okay. Julie, you're not done yet." There was the birth of the placenta. It was—I'd say around half hour after he was born. But it's hard to say. No?

JOE: It wasn't that long.

JULIE: Was it faster than that?

MARYN: I can look at what I have. I know. I mean time just has this crazy quality during the whole process.

JOE: It was pretty quick because I was holding him while you guys were doing that.

JULIE: Wasn't it kind of stuck or something? I'm trying to remember. It came out in one piece. I remember that.

MARYN: No. I don't remember—

JOE: This is all the exciting stuff, guys, you don't really get to hear about.

JULIE: But yeah. You guys prepared it. I had a smoothie or two with the placenta in it.

JOE: Pieces.

JULIE: I did not finish the entire placenta. Each time I ate it, as time went on, it made me really emotional. I would get just super weepy. And it was kind of an overwhelming

experience, so I did have some of it. But I did not finish it. But I think it did what it needed to do.

JOE: Yeah.

JULIE: And then just one other special moment. I just—I remember you had come up with this little guitar riff that you played throughout the birth experience. And that became kind of a special little soundtrack almost that I'll always remember. So that was kind of a nice part of being at home too is be able to kind of be in your environment and be artistic in a way that you might not be able to be at the hospital.

JOE: Yeah. Because when she needed her space and was doing her thing, you see the—all the cliché of the dad is in the waiting room just pacing back and forth, pacing back and forth. Well, I wasn't going to start walking in circles around the house, so I just sat down and picked up my acoustic and just started strumming it and playing it and threw some of that energy into the guitar, into the wood. And all of a sudden, this little diddy kind of came out. And every time I play it, Julie just starts tearing up and choking up.

JULIE: Yeah. It gets me really emotional.

JOE: And yeah. I just thought it was funny. And I just got to walk around and—I mean did I want to sit down and have a couple of beers and whiskey and wait for it to be done? Sure. But no. You got to hunker down.

JULIE: But one other thing, Maryn, that I just really loved about Indie Birth and that I can't say enough is the community. There were a couple other women who had babies within days of me. So, Maryn, you were on a marathon at that point.

MARYN: Yeah. August was a good month.

JULIE: A mom two—a couple days before me. And then me. And then there was another baby that was born a couple days after me. And so that's been really cool to have that experience with the other mothers. And then I had some trouble breastfeeding the first week. It just—it took like a week for my milk to come in. And we were having some trouble. And Maryn, you provided me with some breast milk that you had. And then there was another mother, who lived right down the street, who came over and helped us with some breast milk. So that was like so incredible during a really stressful time to have that support just right here in the local community. I mean it was amazing.

MARYN: Yeah. That's so cool. I'm glad you got to take advantage of that because it's not something I think everybody has. I mean even at just different months of people having babies. Sometimes there's not that support around, and sometimes there is. So you got lucky. And yeah. I think were totally blessed with having people like in you

neighborhood that had new babies and feeling supported. And that's so wonderful. Such a great part of the story. Just support.

JULIE: Yeah. And, Maryn, you just did a lot of nice, little, personal touches that really made me feel special. After he was born, you had this little gift basket. And it was little, but it was special. It had a little bar of soap for baby. And it had the little Indie Birth onesie he's wearing. It's just all those—

JOE: There was some candy in there with it. Some candy.

JULIE: Yeah. It's just all the little things that you did. And some of them not so little. Just made me feel so special and loved at a time when that attention means the world. So that was just incredible.

MARYN: That's so sweet. Well, you are special and loved. And that's the honor I have, I think, of just meeting the most incredible people. I was reflecting on that last night. I mean I reflect on it all the time because I'm just beyond blessed to meet people like you. They're not the everyday people walking down the street. I mean they're not. You guys aren't just like the status quo of people that aren't really thinking and just kind of doing what everybody else is doing. And so there is such value in that on our side of things. It makes this work just sacred work really. Like it's not a job. It's getting to be a part of people's lives that want to open up to that and want to explore that and want the best for themselves and this baby. And so the privilege is totally mine to have that with people like you and to be able to even keep in touch like this even though we're on video from across town. We'll see each other soon. It's just a lifeline connection, I think. That's how it feels to me. It's not just like, "Oh, who is that person that had a baby last August?" It's a visceral memory for me too of being there. In fact, I was going to ask you. Do you guys have the video of his birth? Because I think that Annika had that.

JULIE: Yeah. Annika shared it with me, and I can share them with you.

MARYN: Oh good. Yeah. I just wanted to make sure you had it because I don't—yeah. I didn't know if it ever made it to you, but that's awesome too that you have that. For you. And to show him maybe one day.

JULIE: Mm-hmm.

MARYN: That's awesome.

JULIE: Yeah. Definitely.

MARYN: Cool.

JOE: That's your dad (inaudible) right there, Gabe.

MARYN: Yeah. He's been like really, really pleasant and easy. Most babies don't make it through an interview.

JULIE: He's asleep right now, so that helps.

MARYN: Yeah. Well good timing. He wanted his story to be told I think.

JOE: He wanted to make sure we were telling it right. And once he was like, "All right. They got it right. I can nod off now." It's a rough life right now, buddy.

MARYN: Yeah. He's got it pretty good. I know. I mean I always say that about home birthed babies too. Just think how lucky they are. Just think how lucky they are to never have experienced the typical violence and never have left home unless you wanted it that way. And so it's a gift to the world that you guys have made the choices you have. It's a gift to him. But really it's an energetic gift to the world that that imprint is there. That babies can be born in peace and love and without rushing and with lots of trust. So thanks for sharing your honest beautiful story and happy almost birthday.

JULIE: Thank you, Maryn.

JOE: Yes. Thanks.

MARYN: Yeah. Thanks, you guys. Thanks for listening, everybody. Check out the indiebirth.org site for new information and the indiebirthconference.org site for new information on our 2019 retreat.

(closing music)