

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts here on iTunes, *Taking Back Birth*. Hi, Maryn here as usual with a fun video/audio interview birth story with Christina this morning. Super excited for her to share her tale. And I guess we'll just get started. Christina is going to share the story of her second baby, but first, I don't know. You want to do a little intro and just talk a little bit about your first birth so people know where you're coming from.

CHRISTINA: Yes. So I am a VBAC. Or actually, I'm a home—what is it? Home birth after cesarean.

MARYN: Yeah. You are.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Five years ago—five and a half years ago. And I had the kind of cliché I wanted a natural birth. I saw *The Business of Being Born*, and I was very inspired. And then from that point on, I made a lot of wrong decisions and ended up in the hospital setting. I had a rotating door of midwives that were just nurse practitioners that worked in the hospital. I did not have a doula. I kind of just thought that I would be able to birth my son, and I wasn't really worried about who was going to be there or what my support was going to be, to tell you the truth. And I was just too busy with school and work to take the time to really dive into what birth was other than just, "I can do it. I'm a warrior. And I'm going to have this natural birth." I ended up at UCLA. I had 18 hours of unmedicated labor. I did three hours of pushing. Supposedly, my son was crowning, but he kept getting thrust back up into the birth canal. And after what seemed like too long for everybody else, they asked me if I—if it was time to go have a C-section.

Actually, they told me it was an emergency, of course. This seems to be the redundant story is that his heart rate was out of control and that it was more important that baby come safely into the world than continue to labor in the hospital. So I ended up in the OR. And thankfully, my son was healthy and is healthy. And I was just another cesarean. And after, when I asked the OB what was the issue, why I got so far during my labor and I couldn't push him out, what was the issue? It ended up that it was the—what is it called? It's the uterine tissue was inflamed. The bendy ring or something.

MARYN: Yeah. It's called Bandl's Ring. And that's a very specific kind of constriction. So I mean in all likelihood it was not. But I don't think you'll ever know if that's what they wrote down.

CHRISTINA: No. No. And that's the thing. And in the hospital, I knew—the whole labor was just—I was so not in my body at all. When the nurses were telling me to push, “You can feel it. You can feel it.” They were telling me what I could feel instead of asking me what I could feel. And I never once felt like it was time to push even though I wanted the labor to be done, so I was going to do whatever they were telling me. I started pushing, and I think that all of that pushing just inflamed my uterine tissue because I really—the baby really wasn't ready. And they had to open me a little, my cervix. I mean when I did the work with you for my next baby and stuff I actually had to go through all of that and realize how traumatic it was. At the time, I just kind of continued saying in my mind, “At least the baby is healthy.” And that wasn't actually what I thought honestly. It was just what everybody else kept saying. “At least the baby is healthy. At least the baby—that's all that counts.”

And so that stuck with me for the next five and a half years until I was pregnant again. And when I found out I was pregnant with my second son, Shasta, I was actually afraid. I wasn't—I was excited and happy. But more than anything, it was, “Oh my god. I'm new to the Verde Valley. What am I going to do? I don't know the medical climate here.” And I was so disappointed coming from Los Angeles and what I thought was—oh, organic, free love. Just more natural mindset to parenting, birth, everything that I just was so disillusioned by California that being new to Arizona and then being newly pregnant months after we settled I just wanted to crawl into a hole honestly. And I didn't really know what to do. And so being VBAC, I knew I wanted to really try for that natural birth because I knew that my first one should have been natural. I just felt that in my heart.

So I didn't know really what that meant when I would see websites that say, “VBAC friendly hospital,” and “VBAC friendly midwife.” I kind of took it with a grain of salt. The first midwife that I had seen at the very beginning of my pregnancy I only contacted because I thought I needed a referral for an ultrasound. And I just wanted to make sure baby wasn't duplicates because I had—I am a twin. And we have lots of twins in my family.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And my husband—that was the one thing. “Just make sure we don't have one on our hands,” because we just moved and he had a new job. Just so much at once.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: So I found the first midwife that would actually take me. And she claimed that she was VBAC friendly. And then after probably the second meeting with her, I said to my husband that I'm pretty sure that she's all business and that I just had this

sense that she was going to just see me for my prenatals. And then she was going to escort me to an OB because of just—I can't really explain why. But the way she would talk to me about it like it was no big deal. But it was a big deal because, to me, I knew the truth that a VBAC—it's—any friends that I have or even my sister who tried for a VBAC, they were not successful. And they had the doulas. And they had the midwives. And they had really great support teams set up, but they just were—it never ended up being successful. I actually did not know one successful VBAC story that was like—so when she would say, "It happens all the time. It's no big deal," I just—I don't know. I just felt like she was kind of stringing me a long.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: (cross talk) What's that?

MARYN: No. Sorry. We're over talking. I was going to say—

CHRISTINA: No. You (cross talk).

MARYN: Correct me if I'm wrong. But didn't this particular person get all upset about a low lying placenta or something at 16 weeks in your pregnancy?

CHRISTINA: Yes. So that's exactly. I had assumed this was what was going to happen. And then when I had—I don't know. The 18-week—she wanted me to go in for an 18-week ultrasound.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: Which I didn't really want to go for but she suggested it because I was VBAC. And then as soon as that happened, the results came in, and she said that she had some not so great news. That my placenta was a bit low. And she was being very cautious of how she worded things, and she had said that what—this is what we can do, if you want. And it was basically, "I could continue seeing you." It was exactly what I had assumed was going to happen. It was, "I'll see you for these prenatals. And then I'll end up transferring care over to an OB. And we'll do another scan just to make sure it is still low lying and blah, blah, blah." But by that time, I kind of tuned out. And I just—I was like, "Okay. So this is exactly what I thought was going to happen. I'm going to end up,"—so I had said to her, "You know what? If you're going to transfer me at all, then I'll do that now because I just prefer to know who is going to be dealing with me." And that is the mentality. Dealing with me. It wasn't like—that was—I had no high expectations for my pregnancy at all. It was who is going to deal with me? And so she referred me—can I say where?

MARYN: Yeah.

CHRISTINA: So she referred me up to North Country, which was supposed to be very VBAC friendly. When you call, their answering machine service it always is like, “VBACs,” and make it sound like it’s so accepting. And they have this whole protocol for even being able to see me. And they couldn’t even—they were so busy they couldn’t even fit me in. So my second trimester I didn’t see anyone. I went up there once, and I saw a midwife. And she said she still needed to okay my pregnancy with an OB before we could continue. And yet, they couldn’t fit me in. So I had an entire—almost an entire second trimester without any care at all, but it was a huge relief. And it was actually the best part of my pregnancy because I just—I dived into my new world here. We had horses and animals and gardening. And I just really reconnected with earth and just remembered what was really important to me. So that time was actually a real blessing. And then when I ended up finally being seen it was for an ultrasound. And then they had said that now my placenta is not in the way, but now the next reason to why I’m probably not going to have the birth I want is because the baby was breech. But now we’re talking—what is it at? Your third trimester. I mean 20-30 weeks.

MARYN: Right. Mm-hmm.

CHRISTINA: So then they gave me some time. And then the secondary issue was my baby was measuring small. And then this was the huge—once the baby measured small, it was now an emergency. And I definitely couldn’t see a midwife up there. And they quickly labeled my child as IUGR, which is intrauterine growth restricted. And that was really scary because when I started to look it up, I mean it would mean that the baby wasn’t getting his nutrients. Something might be wrong with my placenta or something is wrong with the baby.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And so from that point on, they wanted to do all of these testing every couple weeks. And then the next dialogue was not only, “No. You’re definitely not having a vaginal birth,” but it became about, “When are we going to take this baby out?” They wanted to take the baby out early because they figured that they could give the baby the nutrients that my body wasn’t giving the baby. And it was really scary. Yet, I still kind of knew there was another reason. Every step of the way it just seemed like these medical interventions were just being thrown at me constantly as a way to safely deliver the baby. And that was the whole thing was, again, I was going back to what was said to me when Bodie was born, my first son, which was, “At least he’s healthy.” And so in the back of my mind, I thought, “That’s all these doctors want. At least the baby is healthy.” But luckily, I ended up being referred to your website. And exactly everything you were saying was in my subconscious already. It was, “Yes. That is so important that my baby be healthy. And yes, that I’m healthy. And I’m going to go

continue to do these tests to make sure that my placenta is healthy which it was. And that the baby is growing which he was. But it isn't the only important thing."

And this whole birth experience is such a magical, magical thing, and I—and it's not only the delivery. It's my pregnancy. And I kept being ripped away from that and being able to carry him and connect to him. Instead I was just always thinking like, "Oh my gosh. Something is wrong with my body." I mean how from that mindset could I ever have a natural birth? And so luckily, I was referred to you. It took some time to get to you. But it took what? 38 weeks? And then I don't—36, 37 weeks. I mean—and as soon as I met you and you asked me about having a home birth, I mean I didn't even ever think that that was a possibility for me. I had just assumed I was defected because I had a C-section. And then, I'm being labeled, and I just assumed that was not an option. But the second you said that to me and I met with you and Valerie, when I got into my car, I called my twin sister. And she kept reminding me after the fact that that was the happiest I had been in my entire pregnancy. Just from that little seed of thought. Like, "Oh my god. Wait. I can have this natural birth. And I can have it in the comfort of my own home." That gift of even just that thought was—that was a game changer. And thank god it happened.

And I actually quickly within the couple weeks that we had—it was always one thing after the next. My water broke early. And I was a little bit scared about that. If I had been with any other practitioner, I would have ended up having a C-section. And the baby was breech and then not breech. And all along just the baby kept on bringing up these extra little hurdles that had to put me in a place of complete faith and trust. And in the end, I kept just reminding myself from listening to your podcast and speaking with Amber was so helpful. I didn't even know that I had all these—this luggage on my shoulder that was my mom's. All this extra baggage that belonged to my grandmother. I mean my ancestry that had been so removed from natural birth.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And yet, I still had this huge desire to get it. I just wanted that so bad. And the current mindset is that that is selfish, and that's wrong. Shouldn't you only care about the safety? And I don't know. I know for a fact no way. This is what it is. It's just a natural thing. It's a natural part of our beings. And women are such amazing creatures. And we are getting so removed from that. And it's just mind blowing being able to have this home birth experience because it reminded me of things that I actually knew in my heart but had forgotten. And I think every woman does and every female growing up. You just get so removed from that magic of who we are. And so—yeah. My water broke when I actually was on the phone with Amber.

MARYN: And how many—you were—you were pretty close to your due date, though, right? 39 weeks or something like that?

CHRISTINA: Yeah. No. I was actually—I was late. A couple days late because they had said I was—we kept on playing with the due date. I assumed that the baby was small because my—I thought my due date was wrong.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And that thing that none of the doctors—and I saw a lot of doctors because I kept on moving around to try to find somebody that would believe in me pretty much. And everybody just said, “No. The ultrasound is absolute. This is the due date.” And I knew that—with wanting a VBAC, I needed that little wiggle room. And no one was willing to give it to me. That was why they said he was small. But I kept saying, “You,”—I still kind of think that the baby came a little bit early because I did have a doctor in Phoenix who seemed the most open to being VBAC. And when I saw him right before seeing you or during—just for a NST, a non stress test or whatever, just to check on the baby’s heart and make sure he was growing—the doctor just decided to—what is it? Stimulate the membranes.

MARYN: That’s right.

CHRISTINA: And as he was doing that—and I said, “Oh, I don’t want you to do that.” He immediately stopped, and he apologized. But it was only two days later that my water started to leak.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And it continued to leak for days.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: But yeah. And so that (cross talk).

MARYN: Yeah. I like to say—

CHRISTINA: - scary.

MARYN: Sorry. We keep interrupting each other. I was going to say from this end too just so people understand that end. You had a stack of paperwork. I’ve never seen such a stack of paperwork from so many doctors. And I took many hours to go through them multiple times. And there just wasn’t anything in there that seemed actually concerning. It seemed like—and I told you this. It seemed like a bad game of telephone. Like someone got some idea whether he was small or whatever, and then that kind of took off. And no doctor was willing to refute that just because they don’t

want to be the ones to say that's wrong. But there was no evidence of him not growing. And all your testing, your NSTs, your biophysical profiles, your fluid, his movement, everything was fine. So it was, in one way, this weird mystery. But it was just a label. That's all you could really assume by the end is that someone put a label on, and nobody wanted to be the one to take it off. And no one ever talked to you, right? About eating or nutrition or diet or things to help him, if he was on the smaller side. Just common sense advice. They told you it didn't matter, right?

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Yeah. They told me that nothing—that none of my diet mattered. I was physically so active at the time that looking back now—my horses aren't here. And I said to Wayne recently, my husband—I was like, "Oh, it's so weird. I lost all my pregnancy weight, but I'm getting it back on." And the reason is because I don't have the horses. So just all the work I was doing with them, I was burning so much—so many calories every day that I definitely wasn't taking in enough. And then when you had me on a diet plan, it happened fast that he put on weight. And that was why I continued to do the testing just to kind of prove them wrong.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And then also for us to have that knowledge that my placenta is functioning and the baby is growing. He's not growing at their speed. And I was already very underweight, to tell you the truth, when I got pregnant. And no one asked me about my health prior or my eating habits. I mean literally none of the doctors. The first midwife kind of suggested certain supplements, but she was ready to back up any of these doctors that had anything to say my IUGR. I mean she really did back them up completely. And I was happy because she allowed me to do some of my testing down in the Verde Valley, so it was more convenient. Because up in Flagstaff, it was a mess. They could never fit me in. And then I (cross talk).

MARYN: That's so ironic.

CHRISTINA: - just so they could do these tests. Yeah. And then they—yeah. They would say it was an emergency, but then they'd be like, "Actually, we can't fit you in this week but next week." And I'm like, "But you're telling me my baby is so small that,"—they literally told me that he could be stillborn. I mean they put so much fear into me. But then when it came to scheduling, it wasn't an emergency that they would have to see me the next day they couldn't fit me in. It was like, "Well, you'll be fine for five more days, and then we'll see you for that." And then that was also where I was like, "Well, if it's not that crucial then I think this is all blown way out of proportion." But I still didn't want to—I am so closed off usually to medical advice honestly where I don't want it to hurt me in the long run. And so I really did try to do everything that they said just in case because I didn't want that weight on my shoulders of, "Oh, well, you should've.

You should've did that." So I did follow every step that they told me. But every step of the way, like you said, never once did it prove what they were saying. Like that whole IUGR diagnosis, it's really scary. And it's—and it is a real thing.

MARYN: Yeah.

CHRISTINA: And some people, their placenta for some reason isn't functioning. But it's not something that they should throw out loosely which I think they do in a way. It's all preventative. Everything is preventative. Prevent you from doing this or that. But in the end, that's going to get in the way of you actually having a healthy, normal birth. And that's what exactly I got to do

MARYN: If they had cut him out at 35 weeks, how would that have been healthy for him?

CHRISTINA: Oh my gosh. It started to feel like that Rosemary's baby. Like I kept—like there was one point at North Country where I was crying or something at the front. I mean it was really an emotional time. And the staff said, "Well, we just care about the safety of your baby." And then I started crying. And I was like, "Well, yeah. I mean if he—he's my baby too." It was like as though I shared my baby with them. And that was really—that was like—I drove home from Flag and was like, "This is really messed up." That's my baby. And never once did I own that. That this is my body. This is my baby. And these are my decisions. And until I finally was with you did I feel that empowerment of like you know what? No. It's up to me. And I had to quickly, within a very short period of time, try to trust myself and my baby and get rid of all of that dialogue that had been created. Not to mention the trauma of my previous birth. But—

MARYN: I don't know how you even did it. I mean I will never forget your whole story. I never will because I don't know how you did it in that amount of time with that amount of fear and that kind of crazy stuff put on you every time you walked in the door somewhere. Like that's so amazing.

CHRISTINA: It was honestly—it was you. And this move. The fact that I moved to the Verde Valley. I always—from California were like, "What were we thinking?" But it's meeting you and meeting some of the friends that I've made that I feel like my friend Lisa that introduced me to your—to Indie Birth. And I mean finding women that are really are—they're really independent and strong and knowing that I didn't have that where I was in California. It was really important to me anyway moving here for the freedom of parent—parental choice and choices. I mean it was really all about freedom really. And in getting pregnant with Shasta, I was constantly reminded of that. Like, "Wait. What am I doing?"

This is obviously a very significant synchronistic things that's going on in my life. I'm bringing this child into this world here. We hadn't gotten pregnant for five years. I mean we—I mean that's—this baby wanted to be born here. And he didn't want to be born in a hospital, and he didn't want his mother to be cut open so he could come out in the world. This is a whole different thing. And meeting you and some other strong women, that was the reminder of like no. This is what I—this is why I moved. It was because I wanted to be closer to my spirituality. And there is nothing more spiritual than having a baby definitely. I mean it's amazing. And yeah. So it was all thanks to you and this destination, this really weird place that I live.

MARYN: Right. Right.

CHRISTINA: But yeah. That was why I had to. But then so my water broke, and I was a little bit afraid because of everything you read online and thinking, “Oh my gosh. If I was in a hospital, I would have 12 hours to deliver this baby.” And I had no contractions. Not one. And I wasn't sure what was going to happen. But you came to the house. You talked me through some of my little issues that I was having of not being sure and reminding me that it's okay. Whatever choice I made. And that was the great thing with you is that it was like you were just really reminding me constantly. It was like that we all have the knowledge. It's just you need to be reminded. And I knew the fact is is that with my water broken that I—if I went to the hospital, I was going to have a C-section. I just knew that. I never once in my mind did I know that if I don't go to the hospital my child is going to be in danger. And that's always like, “Oh, what if?” But there was a greater chance that the baby is going to be fine.

And then I went up to see you without any contractions. Like was it 36 hours, maybe? I think of my water being broken. And then while we were in your office, I started to get a couple little contractions, but they were not much. And then you recommended we take a bumpy ride home. He was going to take the bumpy ride home. And for some reason, I wanted a burger on the way home. I had—and I was vegetarian before you put me on the diet to thicken up my baby. And we went and bought burger patties, so he could cook them at home. And once he started those on the grill at the house, it was not even an hour later that I was having very intense contractions. And it happened. It progressed very fast. So I think within three hours of leaving your office you got the call from Wayne that I was probably in labor. And then two hours after that, you were reminding me that I had filled up a big—the birthing—I could have him in the pool.

And I went in there and had the baby. And it was incredible because I—I didn't know what I wanted with the whole—with the birth. I didn't know if I would want you to check me, if I'd want you to touch me. I mean Wayne was constantly coming in and giving me water and asking, “Do you want them to come in?” And the whole time, I really didn't. And no offense. I just wanted to be by myself and labored. But it was amazing that the

little—the tiny, little things like you said. Reminding me, “Oh yeah. Oh no. I’m going in there. I’m going to go in that pool right now and have the baby.” Even just that’s what I’m going to go do. Just the reminder again. Getting in. And then pushing him and then you saying—when you—the second—I pushed him out in three pushes. The first one he descended. And then the second one, I could feel his—it was four pushes. I could feel his head. And then the third push, he kind of went back up, and all of those fears came back where I was like, “Oh no. It’s going to happen again what happened to Bodie. I’m not going to be able to push him out.” And then I said something to you. And you’re like, “No. No. No. The baby is on its way. It’s just baby. The baby is going to come.” And then the second push, I felt his whole head came out, and I felt his little face. And then you came over, and you said, “The next push—one give a great, big push, and the,”—you knew who it was—exactly how it was going to happen. And you told me, “The baby is going to come right out and up in the water. And you’re going to catch him.” And that’s exactly what happened. And I did. And it was right here.

MARYN: That’s true. It was right there in that spot. It’s like giving me the chills. It was so beautiful. And it didn’t need to be fast to be beautiful. But it was just this wonderful end to the story. Having it be so smooth and so—I mean I don’t know if it felt easy for you, but you made it look really like no big deal. You had birthed a million times before.

CHRISTINA: It was—and that is—that’s something you said the first time I met you. And that is true. Because I do believe in reincarnation and I do believe my soul evolved many times. And that is something that I never thought of until you said that. And I have birthed before. And I think a lot of us have. And even though I wasn’t able to complete that with Bodie, I made it all the way—all of the crappy laboring, but I couldn’t get that—get him out. To be able to finally do that with my second was so healing. And I mean—and I literally did say, “I want to do that again.” I mean it’s addicting because it’s like, “Oh my god. That’s why we’re here.” Every day I’d wake up, and I’d pray. And I want to find my divine purpose. And I think it’s this great big thing. And I always have thought, “I’m going to do this or that.” And it’s amazing ideas. But actually, this is amazing. I don’t have to think of anything great to do. My body is made to birth life. And to be able to successfully do that is such a gift that we all have and should experience as women. I mean it’s amazing. But yeah.

And then Shasta drove him into the world at 7:15 p.m. I mean it was a quick labor. It was very painful. But my—I mean it was exactly what I would have wanted but was too afraid to say out loud. I wanted a birth that was going to be fast but not too fast. Like I didn’t want to be walking down the street like, “Oh, okay. Baby is out,” and not be able to experience all of the pain and stuff. It is—it sucks. But it’s like when you get through it, that’s what it’s all about. That’s the death and rebirth that our body goes through. And it’s so important and major with the trees and plants and food. And it’s so important for our bodies. And so thank god that I had—but I only did have those five hours. And

I'm like it made up for all the 18 hours of being in a hospital setting because that's really why. I believe with Bodie too I labored fast at first. And it all slowed down once I got to the hospital. I mean I really did slow down with that birth. And I think when you're home it is so true. You're not—you don't get distracted. I mean I—for me, once I was in the zone, I was in it. And it went what? Five—I think five hours. And he was here.

MARYN: Yeah. If that. I mean you were sitting at two or something. So I can't believe it. That was so awesome. Well, I—

CHRISTINA: Yeah. It was really incredible.

MARYN: You are so beautiful and inspiring, and that's something I loved about you since the moment we met. And with Shasta too, feeling that you knew that he knew and also I think I was able to feel that from him too. This kid knew what he wanted. And he kept trying to lead you, and you had to listen. It was just such a beautiful dance between the two of you and in your family. This deep confidence. So even though you had all this other stuff going on in your head, I'm sure, and fears like a very deep confidence came through with you and through him. I think that's just so beautiful. My favorite part.

CHRISTINA: I know. And his bed time song is that Tom Petty, *I Won't Back Down*. That's all that always go in my mind. And there is no easy way out. A vaginal birth is so much better than a C-section, but you still have to heal. You still go through the birth trauma and all that. So I mean that song I—it just still reminds me all the time of Shasta. That's his little—our little song. But yeah. It was amazing. But I really do owe it all to you. And now that he's four months and getting bigger and I'm going out into the world I want to get more involved in what you do. And it's so important. It is so important. I'm so inspired by you.

MARYN: Wow. Well, you definitely don't owe it to me, but I was happy to support you. It was just the right energies meeting at the right time. You called that in. You called in somebody that could support you because you were ready to do it. There is nothing anyone can do for anyone else to make it happen. And I think that's the mistake a lot of people make. Like you were saying in the beginning, "Oh VBAC-friendly doctor. Whatever." You can have all of these things. But do you really believe in yourself? And when you do, then I think yeah. Other people show up that really believe in you. But you have to be the first one. It's just not that easy or more women would do it. But I think if there is a formula, that's what it is. You were ready to do it. And so great support showed up for you. But yeah. I'm so excited to see what this means for you. I mean he's still so young. In a way, it seems like it was ages ago. In some ways, it seems like it was yesterday. He's so young. But you have [cross talk].

CHRISTINA: Yeah. It's—yeah. I know. And I'm like I get it. I know I want to have more. But he—I just feel he just needs a little bit more time. I mean obviously he's only four months. I want to give him that time. But then at the same—I'm like, "Oh my god. I never before thought I would ever really want more to tell you the truth." I love—Bodie was an only child for so long. I kind of just thought that was going to be it. And then, so now, I'm like, "Oh no. I can do this again. And I can actually have a bunch more." That thought just never even was in my mind. And so now that it is I have to quiet it a little bit so that I can make sure to give Shasta his time. But yeah.

MARYN: Right. Right. Well, like you said, I mean there's so many other ways to get involved even like this. Just telling your story. I mean hundreds of women will listen to this. It'll be in the podcast archives forever. And you have no idea how influential your story will be to someone else. And many women. Whatever aspect it is. The VBAC or the IUGR or just following your own voice. Like you've already started this work, whatever it is for you, just by showing up. So I'm excited to see what it means.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Because that's the thing too with VBAC is everybody around you—when you've had to have a C-section because of emergency or whatever, and you've tried for that natural birth, it feels like a very common thing that your family and friends will be like, "Well, don't bother trying this time. You learned from your past." They make it like that was a mistake because you still ended up with the C-section after you labored for all that time. And blah, blah, blah.

MARYN: Right. (cross talk)

CHRISTINA: That thought just (inaudible) because I mean I literally have people say, "Don't forget what happened last time." And that just makes me so angry when I look back at that because I'm like, "Geesh." I had people actually saying, "Don't believe in yourself. Don't believe in your body." But in fact, it wasn't—I labored—that whole entire 18 hours with Bodie is partly why I was successful laboring with Shasta. That's why. It was all familiar. And the waves and actually going through it was not wasted at all. It only helped me. Something to help with those VBAC moms.

MARYN: Yeah. Yeah. No. That's a beautiful way of putting it. I think even just life path, right? Like our life gives us what we need whether we like it or not. At least, that's what I believe. And we work our way through that. But yeah. It's never lost. It's never the wrong experience. But it gives us power to make choices in the future. So yeah. Without Bodie's birth, this one wouldn't be a story.

CHRISTINA: Right. Right.

MARYN: They work together.

CHRISTINA: And that is just one—yeah. That’s the thing with the—whether it’s VBAC, IUGR, I had breech. He kept turning breech. My water breaking for like days—almost two days. Those are all reasons for some women to be just like, “All right. Okay.” I mean it’s like it just—“It’ll be easier if I just listen to the doctor now for that.” Those were all the little obstacles. Yep.

MARYN: Yeah. But I mean one more thing to add in that I remember about your story is that you were always listening. And I think that’s the difference because people—like you said, IUGR is a thing, right? Sometimes that’s something that someone should consider when making a choice to have a surgical birth or whatever it is. But you were always listening. You weren’t ignoring. You weren’t saying like, “Oh, that’s not possible for me.” You just listened to what your baby was saying. So I remember coming over to your house when your waters were open like 24 plus hours, right? And you were feeling a little nervous. So we listened to the baby. And I feel like that was a very defining moment, at least in me understanding you, because maybe you had already decided. But it was like this pinnacle moment of like, “Okay. All these things are happening. Is it a problem? And do you want to switch the plan? Is he okay?” Dig deeper and hear what he’s saying. And you did. And that’s the only way that we can get answers. So you never want anyone to think—I don’t know. That nothing is a problem, or you could go a hundred days with waters open. It’s not that. It’s that if we don’t each listen we don’t know the answer. And I watched you do that. In that moment of feeling, I’m sure, so scared and, “Oh shit. This wasn’t part of the plan,” listening to him and coming out and saying to me, “No. He’s fine.” You knew.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Yeah. That’s the thing. It is. It’s like I had to question, “Are all these things happening because he does need to be taken out and he needs to be delivered this way? Is that what he’s telling me?” Or is it this constant—the test of faith. And for me and my life situation, that was how I connected to him is he came now at this time in my life where all I kept praying for and what I wanted in my life right now was deeper connection to spirit. That was the primary reason for leaving our life behind was that was what I—that was it. So there was no way. That was what solidified the fact that no. He wants this. And these little things that keep coming up are not, “Go get me delivered in a hospital.” It was, “Keep the faith. Keep the faith.” And thankfully, I did. And now Bodie may have a whole army of brothers and sisters in the future because of—we’ll see.

MARYN: That’s awesome. Really. That’s just such amazing inspiration. I hope you know that because it’s so hard to get out from under the fear especially when women have as many layers as you had. And so we can’t say for other people what’s wrong or right if they’re making a choice out of fear or intuition. It’s not our job. But to watch someone really tune in and hear that for themselves especially when it goes against the grain, right? I mean everyone else, I’m sure, in your life would have been happy for you

to—well, not your husband. But yeah. Would have been for you to do the status quo. But you guys were different.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Yeah. No. Thankfully, he supported whatever basically I wanted. And there were times where I was like, “Just tell me what to do.” But it doesn’t work like that. And I definitely was lucky to not have certain family members close because they wouldn’t have been supportive. And I really did hush up. I didn’t really speak to anybody that I thought wouldn’t be supportive of it because I just didn’t want it—have any of that static from the outside world coming in. And it wasn’t until after the baby was born that I would—I let everybody know I had a home birth. And I’m sure everybody was, “Oh my god. What?” But no one really talked about it because I just was like, “I had the most amazing, healing birth. And I feel it changed me. It definitely did.” And so there is nothing that—I didn’t leave any room open for anybody to say, “You shouldn’t have done that,” or give any opinion other than, “Oh, how beautiful,” and, “Oh, you’re a warrior.” And that was all that came in. And that is how I felt. And yeah. I mean it’s amazing.

MARYN: Yeah. Yep. It is all those things. I agree. You are amazing. And that was a complete warrior birth led by your connection to yourself and spirit and your baby. So, so beautiful. So I can’t wait for you to have more, but I’ll be patient too.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. (inaudible) first and give it time, right?

MARYN: Yeah. Totally.

CHRISTINA: Because you’re on nine. Yeah.

MARYN: Yes. Yes. Wanting to come soon. So well thanks for sharing. Anything else you want to wrap up with? Or any words of wisdom for women that are walking this path? The VBAC path is pretty high percentage of women nowadays as you know, right? It’s so many.

CHRISTINA: I would honestly—I really don’t think that I would have been successful had I not been at home. And that’s, for me, whatever makes you most comfortable. If you think a hospital setting is most comfortable—like my husband would say he’s more comfortable in a hospital than at home—if it were him. He talks about how the hospital, for some reason, feels safe to him. And I feel the exact opposite. So just find where you feel most comfortable and make sure that you’re there.

MARYN: Yeah. That’s great advice. Awesome. Well, thanks for sharing. I know it’s taken us a couple months, so I really appreciate you taking this little bit of time away from Shasta to share with us. I was hoping to get a glimpse of him but maybe later I will.

CHRISTINA: Wayne, I'm wrapping up, so we can bring the baby in.

MARYN: Yeah.

CHRISTINA: He's napping.

MARYN: He was trying to keep him away. Well—

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, they were both napping. Shasta.

WAYNE: Hey, Maryn.

MARYN: Hey. Good to see. Oh my gosh. He's a little blondie.

CHRISTINA: Yes.

MARYN: He's big. That's awesome. Look how healthy he is. Oh, you forgot to say—

CHRISTINA: He is—what's that?

MARYN: You forgot to say in wrapping up the story, right? That he was not much different weight than his brother. So much for the IUGR, huh?

CHRISTINA: Yeah. No. He was exactly. He was—say hello.

MARYN: Hi, Shasta.

CHRISTINA: Hello. He looks grumpy. He's like, "Wait. I was so comfy in that sling. And now,"—what are you doing? Yeah. No. He was only a few ounces, right? Less than Bodie. Bodie was exact—he was 6, 8, right? 11?

WAYNE: Yeah.

CHRISTINA: 6, 8 or 6, 4? See? That's the thing. The whole pregnancy all I was concerned with was measurements and all this—just constant assessments that once he was in my arms I just was like, "No. I don't want to do any of that." We had to make sure he was healthy obviously when he was born. But I just wanted no more poking and prodding.

MARYN: Yeah.

CHRISTINA: But he was still a healthy weight.

MARYN: Yeah. That's awesome. Well, thanks for being here, you guys. And I'm so glad I got to see him too.

CHRISTINA: I know. We'll see you soon.

WAYNE: Yep

MARYN: Yeah. Awesome. Well, thanks for listening everyone. You can check the Indie Birth site for new information and indiebirthmidwiferyschool.org, if you're thinking about going down this path and serving women. And other than that, I will talk to you soon.

(closing music)