

(introductory music)

DISCLAIMER: “*Well, Actually...*” is a podcast about reimagining the way we approach the entirety of the birthing year. Margo’s goal is to combine her radical imagination with her knack for strategizing to bolster the birth revolution and a larger global revolution of feminine consciousness. “*Well, Actually...*” is a production of the Indie Birth Association and indiebirth.org. No material on this podcast should be considered medical advice. Birth is not a medical event. Now here’s your host, midwife, and teacher, Margo Blackstone.

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MARGO: Hello, everybody, and welcome to the “*Well, Actually...*” podcast. Today we have a very special guest for a very special occasion. We have Alisha on to share her birth story with us of her little guy, Justice. Not so little guy.

ALISHA: Right.

MARGO: And in case you didn’t already know this, Alisha has been going to births with me for the last three years as my apprentice. And she is now moving into her own midwifery practice which is so exciting. So this birth was sort of like your final project.

ALISHA: It was my final project.

MARGO: So there’s a lot of really cool angles. Of course, that you were a student midwife in between your last birth and this one. It’s your third birth, your first home birth. There’s a lot of really cool stuff, so we’ll try to pack it all in. But just so you know, listeners, this is a birth story, and all birth stories are wonderful. But this has some extra cool elements, which is why I wanted to do one. I haven’t done a birth story podcast in a while.

ALISHA: Cool.

MARGO: Yeah. So where should we start?

ALISHA: Yeah. I don't know.

MARGO: Maybe with the pregnancy.

ALISHA: Yeah. Well, it was perfectly planned as a midwife plans. And I had graduated Indie Birth in April?

MARGO: Mm-hmm.

ALISHA: Of 2020. Although he was conceived March. So around the same time all that happened. And we were trying for a boy. And pretty sure I knew—I don't know. I think I knew seven days after conception. I'm pretty sure. I got a positive a couple days after. And I really wanted to dedicate the whole thing in a sacred way instead of a scientific way even though it started pretty scientific and, I think, continued to be pretty scientific as a final project.

MARGO: It's a blend.

ALISHA: Yeah.

MARGO: And this was—which number pregnancy for you? For people who don't know.

ALISHA: Right. This is number three. Yep. My oldest is five. And the next is—will be four in a month. So they're only 20 months apart. And first one was a kind of traumatic hospital birth. And then second one was at a birth center with Margo as the assistant.

MARGO: That's how we met.

ALISHA: Yes. With me naked and screaming. And yeah. That is what kicked off me wanting to become a midwife. And she was born in the water. Yep. Yeah. So this one—

MARGO: Posterior which I think is pretty interesting.

ALISHA: Oh yes. Completely sunny side up. And maybe with a veil. And yeah. Ouchies. So this one—I mean I haven't been pregnant in four years. So I knew that it would be all refresh. Restart. But we were excited about that. Yeah. Me and my husband.

MARGO: Yeah. So how—and I think we should do a whole other podcast one of these days on your apprenticeship and what got you interested and that whole tale because I think people have so many questions. So I'll try to refrain from asking those today.

ALISHA: I've been wanting to write a memoir. Yeah. Just because I have it all on spreadsheets anyways.

MARGO: Spreadsheets.

ALISHA: All the births. I'm like, "Oh, it would be pretty easy to write." Yeah. Fun memoir.

MARGO: Yeah. That would be cool.

ALISHA: I'd dedicate it to Margo.

MARGO: Oh, no. No. So I guess my question though not diving into that topic too much but a little bit is how do you feel like this pregnancy was different for you, I guess, in general and then also maybe because of all that you've learned over the last couple years?

ALISHA: Oh, so many things. So many things.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. Which maybe we could do a whole podcast on that too. But—

ALISHA: Yeah. I could do a whole nutrition one. I could do a whole—yeah. So many things.

MARGO: Yeah. But if you had to give a birds' eye view.

ALISHA: Well, even though you might know all the things, you don't know all things. Yeah. What was different? I mean there's so many tricks. And when—even just—I think the biggest one in my training with Margo and seeing 50 births and 50 moms—ish—pregnant, I think this one was fun to really connect with baby and try my best to follow my intuitions even though I disbelieved some of them. But yeah. I think connecting with baby was probably the biggest difference. Yeah.

MARGO: How did you do that?

ALISHA: I mean, honestly, just talking with him. Walking with him. I mean yeah. I have two littles. But there is still plenty of time. Yeah. To just tune in. So yeah.

MARGO: Yeah. I think an interesting conversation is I'd be curious what you think about this. I feel like in some ways knowing more sometimes makes it harder to tune in and sometimes makes it easier because you don't have to do all that research or—you know what I mean? With my pregnancies, I was able to just be like, "I know exactly what I want. I don't have to research GBS. I don't have to research gestational diabetes." I got to go past the surface level stuff that even really cool clients that we work with we talk about. We spent time at prenatals on that. So it's like when you don't have to do all that, it's like what's left. All that's left is connecting with your baby. Yeah.

ALISHA: Connecting with baby. Yeah. That's true. That's very true.

MARGO: Yeah?

ALISHA: Yeah. And we didn't want any of it. So yeah.

MARGO: Right. I think that's an interesting thing too. So did you choose different things?

ALISHA: Yep. No ultrasounds. Maybe used the Doppler twice, but that was just for my girls.

MARGO: Early on?

ALISHA: Yeah. And no labs which was a little stressful for me. I wanted to know. But could also—wanted to connect physically too to that. So I knew—yeah. That I was doing really well even without the numbers. Yeah.

MARGO: Yeah. I don't know if you want to talk about your nausea since you get to kind of forget about it.

ALISHA: Yeah. That's for the nutrition podcast. Oh man. Yeah. I do get really sick. Sick meaning vomit at least once a day up until 16, 20 weeks with all my pregnancies. And so I wanted to avoid the whole Zofran thing. But I did get it just for births even though I (cross talk), didn't I? With you.

MARGO: At least one.

ALISHA: At least one.

MARGO: I have one very sad memory of you puking in the other room.

ALISHA: In the sink. Next to the cat litter box.

MARGO: Next to the cat litter box. I was going to puke too, and I wasn't pregnant. Cat litter. Just kidding.

ALISHA: But otherwise, I managed it way better though. Yeah. Yeah.

MARGO: Would you still say it was kind of a struggle? Or hard?

ALISHA: Still easier than before. Also just because the whole time what is emotional going on here. And just really trying to work really hard and eating totally different. So no sugar, no carbs, really stuck to the book on that which helped so much. And yeah. Eventually, I had to do half a dose of Unisom every night.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. And that helped.

ALISHA: Through the whole thing until the very end. Yeah.

MARGO: Yeah. So I think that's sometimes interesting for people to know is just—I think a lot of people think, “Oh, if you're a midwife, you must just have these perfect pregnancies and know how to manage everything.”

ALISHA: Nope.

MARGO: And it's like sometimes even with all the things, it could still be hard in your own unique way. But I'm glad it was better.

ALISHA: Yeah. I mean—

MARGO: Than the other times.

ALISHA: All summer long I ate steak and peaches.

MARGO: Steak and peaches.

ALISHA: Lots of steak.

MARGO: Nice. Cool. So let's see. What else do we want to talk about? Did you do anything different in terms of body work this pregnancy?

ALISHA: All of it. Yep. Yeah. The other two I didn't do anything really. I met our awesome chiropractor at the end of my second pregnancy. So really didn't do a lot there. This time from the get go. And in fact before getting pregnant. Yep. Just regular chiropractor, regular massage, and not just a relaxing massage but an actual bodywork uterine abdominal massage. I had pretty severe diastasis recti that was definitely together before I got pregnant, but it just—so that's a thing that I'm aware of. So I do a lot of stretching and spinning babies, and I did that pretty much every day. It was awesome. Yeah. And then right at the end, I tried acupuncture for the first time. Yeah. That was really cool.

MARGO: Yeah. You liked it.

ALISHA: Kind of.

MARGO: You kind of liked it. You felt like it was effective.

ALISHA: Yeah. I knew needles were involved, and I didn't realize how involved. They were all over my body. And the way she stimulates them is like “Aghh.” Yeah.

MARGO: Yeah. I know. I have mixed feelings about—I like it. But it makes me feel anxious.

ALISHA: Oh, so anxious. Yeah. Because you really have to relax when they leave you for ten minutes.

MARGO: Right. Yes. Cool. So I guess let's get into the birth.

ALISHA: Yeah.

MARGO: What happened?

ALISHA: I don't know.

MARGO: Tell us the tale. I don't know.

ALISHA: Yeah. Well, I think the cool thing to start with is the morning of—there was a meteor that fell. Did you hear about that?

MARGO: Maybe. Yeah. Briefly.

ALISHA: Everyone was like, “What was that big, bright light and boom?” Like a firework. And that happened around 6:50 a.m. So I was up at 3:30 a.m. kind of sick to my stomach and pooping and heartburn. But then it wasn't until that meteor that I got a really big, sharp contraction.

MARGO: That's cool.

ALISHA: Yeah. Minutes after. So yeah.

MARGO: Did you see it?

ALISHA: No.

MARGO: Oh, darn.

ALISHA: But it was cool to see what time it was and—yeah. What time I woke up with a sharp one and went, “Oh, that's exciting.”

MARGO: It is exciting.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. And then I continued probably 15, 30 minutes throughout the morning. And I told Margo and my husband since I had them pretty well. So Keith has no idea really when I'm in labor unless I'm like, “Dude, I'm in labor.” And I told him to go to work and Margo to go 3 hours away.

MARGO: I know. I was so far away. I was like, “Are you sure?”

ALISHA: Yeah. I was like, “No. No. We’re good.” In my mind, I was like, “I’m a third time mom. This could be prodromal.”

MARGO: Sure.

ALISHA: I could have this for three days was my perspective.

MARGO: Sure. Mm-hmm.

ALISHA: And just I needed to go about my day as normal. Mm-hmm.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. Which it sounds like you did.

ALISHA: Yep.

MARGO: You timed them though.

ALISHA: I did.

MARGO: Which is cool.

ALISHA: I did. Even the long ones, I was timing. I took a little bit of a break there to take a nap but then—

MARGO: It’s so fun though. I think it’s so fun.

ALISHA: Yeah. It is.

MARGO: To time them.

ALISHA: It is. Uh-huh. And it was tough with little kids to time.

MARGO: Yeah. What did you—right. What did you do with them all day? I don’t think I even know the answer to this.

ALISHA: I had bigger plans than what actually happened. I think we had to do school. I think we watched movies and just stuffed my face with food all day. So lots of snacks. And even they ate with me pretty much all day.

MARGO: Nice. I bet that was fun.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. That was pretty much it.

MARGO: What did your girls think of you being in early labor?

ALISHA: They were so good. We had been reading the book *My Mother is the Strongest*.

MARGO: I don't know that one.

ALISHA: Oh, really? Oh, it's so good. It's actually forwarded by Dr. Sarah Buckley. Yeah.

MARGO: Okay. Shout out to Sarah Buckley.

ALISHA: Yeah. It's really good. And so they knew to call them waves. And eventually later on in the morning, I had—every time I had one I had to go, “Sh, sh, sh.” And then they would go, “Oh, mommy. Big wave.”

MARGO: Big wave.

ALISHA: So yeah. They just called them big waves and let me be.

MARGO: That's great.

ALISHA: Mm-hmm.

MARGO: You have the best girls. They are so adorable.

ALISHA: They are calling themselves midwives at this point.

MARGO: They are. Yes. Mini midwives. That's so cute.

ALISHA: It is. Uh-huh. Yeah.

MARGO: I love it. And they wanted to be involved in the birth from the beginning, right?

ALISHA: They kept saying they wanted to catch the placenta. Not the baby. But they wanted to do the placenta part. Yeah.

MARGO: Yeah. That's what you get when your mom is a midwife.

ALISHA: Yep. And I encapsulate placentas. That's just their favorite thing to do with me.

MARGO: They think it's cool. Mm-hmm. Nice. So the day progressed. Then what happened?

ALISHA: I noticed when I was laying down they would be a lot longer and a lot stronger. So I would try to do that for as long as I could. And then I would get up, and they'd be so short. Like 3 to 4 minutes apart—close together I mean. But a little bit shorter but

still a minute. Every now and then I'd get a 30-second one. I'd be like, "No. You must be a minute long."

MARGO: When was that in the day?

ALISHA: 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Yeah. Really started to get intense during the Christmas light fight show on the couch sitting in the position that they usually come. Just I don't know 90 degree angle. They were really bad.

MARGO: Sitting down?

ALISHA: Yeah. Sitting down. And I called my husband around 4:00 like, "Maybe you should come home. They're getting kind of intense." And he was 10 minutes away. But then after 2, I was like, "Oh, never mind. They're far apart again." Like 6 minutes.

MARGO: Okay. So they were kind of going in and out of the timeframe we're looking for?

ALISHA: Yeah. The perfect time.

MARGO: The perfect timeframe. Right.

ALISHA: Right. Which I should never follow for me because with the posterior baby before, I mean it was all over the place. It's the intensity that I should follow, but I didn't.

MARGO: Sure. Well, and that's what's so tricky when it's you and your body and you've seen all these other people have babies. It's like—even when you know sometimes people break the rules or often they break the rules, sometimes it's hard in your own body. Well, if people haven't listened to the story of Aero being born, I talk in that. We have a podcast where Maryn and I talk about it. And I have it written it too. I didn't call Alisha until I had my first urge to push because I was totally like, "Oh, this is manageable. I mean I'm in labor, but it's not time to call someone."

ALISHA: Right.

MARGO: So even when you know all the things, it can be really hard to interpret.

ALISHA: Yeah. I mean I even had leakage all day that I had never had before. And all—the girls would see me drip, drip, drip everywhere. But I denied it. Like, "Nah."

MARGO: I don't know. Maybe it's that. Maybe not.

ALISHA: Right.

MARGO: That's funny.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. I made the classic rookie mistake and texted Margo to come hang out.

MARGO: So yeah. So Keith came home at 5:00?

ALISHA: Yes. And I—

MARGO: He made his way home even though you had said, "Never mind."

ALISHA: Right. He did come home.

MARGO: He came. That's good.

ALISHA: I had made roast chicken and potatoes and broccoli and was sitting at the table scarfing it down.

MARGO: Like at 5:00?

ALISHA: 5:15.

MARGO: Uh-huh.

ALISHA: Yeah. And had some. But even Keith was like, "Oh, you're going to be doing this all night, babe." So that was my other perspective.

MARGO: Right. He thought it was going to be more time.

ALISHA: I mean I did too.

MARGO: Sure.

ALISHA: I just kept saying, "Yep. Yep."

MARGO: But you ate. You made dinner. You ate dinner. And I remember you texted me something like, "They're getting more intense." And then, "But I also just made dinner and ate dinner, if that gives you any clue," or something cute like that.

ALISHA: Yes. To where I'm at.

MARGO: Yeah. And so I didn't quite know what to make of that.

ALISHA: I was the worst client.

MARGO: No. You were great. You were so great. Well, and you had texted me some screenshots of the pattern, and I thought, "Oh, yeah. I think I'll be heading over there in

a little bit.” And then you sent me more and then said something like—what did you say?

ALISHA: I was just looking at it. Oh boy. Yeah. And I was making my own bath too. And around 6:00 because I went upstairs, and I was starting to make my own bath because my pelvic floor was feeling heavy. Oh, I said, “I don’t know how much I got to go but damn. It hurts. You guys are welcome to come hang.”

MARGO: Yeah. You guys are welcome to come hang. And I was like, “Hmm. Hmm.” “I don’t usually go to births to hang, but I totally would for Alisha,” was my thought.

ALISHA: Well, after I went it, I was like, “Midwives hate getting texts like that.” That’s like, “You’re not close at all.”

MARGO: Right. Right. Right. Little did we know.

ALISHA: Yeah. I mean I was pretty vocal even at that point. But just—I don’t know.

MARGO: So then I called you to get more information, and Keith answered which midwife mistake. I should have realized if Keith answered that meant you were busy working hard. But then I also heard you talking to him in the background, and you sounded pretty normal.

ALISHA: Yeah. I was like, “Just tell her I don’t know how much time I have left,” is what I was trying to say. Yeah. I don’t know. I was kind of a little out of it. Yeah.

MARGO: Yeah. Yeah. So if I had maybe talked to you, I might have been more like, “Oh, okay. I’m coming now.” That was at like 6:10 or something. 6:15. Keith definitely thought you had a ways.

ALISHA: “I’m not a professional, but we have a ways.”

MARGO: Have a little while or something. So I decided I was going to try and put Aero to bed because he was in a real mood. And it was early for him, but it was not. It was an hour early, but I was like, “I’ll try. And if I’m going to be gone all night, I’ll nurse him for awhile and then head out.” But I remember—that was at 6:30, by the time I laid down with him. I was watching my phone the whole time. And I said, “If he’s not asleep by 6:45 though, I’m just going to go.” So I was like, “He’s got 15 minutes to try and go to bed.”

ALISHA: And funny enough, I knew you were doing that.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. Somehow you knew.

ALISHA: I'm like, "She's putting Aero down."

MARGO: And it didn't work. And so 6:45, sure enough. I was like, "Hey, here's the kids, Russell. And I'm going to load up and get in the car."

ALISHA: Oh, good thing.

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MARGO: So I left my house at 7:02. And I said, "Hey, I'm on the way."

ALISHA: And I tried to text you twice, but 10 minutes in said, "Okay. It's happening fast now, I think."

MARGO: Yep.

ALISHA: Which it was.

MARGO: Yeah. And I was on the phone with my mom when I got that text. And I was like, "Mom, I got to go. I think I need to go faster."

ALISHA: Yeah. It was 15 minutes later.

MARGO: Yep. So then what happened? You were in the tub. You got in the tub.

ALISHA: Yeah.

MARGO: Was that at 6:00?

ALISHA: Yep. Around 6:00. Keith was—he was shocked that I was making my own bath. But I was like, "No. I can do this." I drained the tub around 7:00, I think. Or maybe right after I texted you. I was like, "We need to drain the tub." And that was right around the time where we had left the house to go to the birth center.

MARGO: It felt like the same point in labor?

ALISHA: It felt like the same point. Yep. For sure.

MARGO: With your second birth?

ALISHA: With my second birth. Yeah.

MARGO: So it felt like the same kind of spot when you were like, “All right. Time to go to the birth center.”

ALISHA: Right. And so my family went back downstairs. And then I suddenly felt very really nasty. So I just started grabbing towels and putting them under me.

MARGO: In the tub.

ALISHA: Yeah. Because I was going to go back to the bedroom. I knew Keith had set the bedroom up, but I was like, “But I’ll just—I’ll be in the tub.” I’ll go—

MARGO: You’re so tidy.

ALISHA: Yep. It was a good spot.

MARGO: That’s so funny.

ALISHA: Yep. And then did not think the pushing urge would come as soon as it did, but it did and had to yell for Keith downstairs. And that’s when he called you. She’s pushing.

MARGO: He texted me, “She’s pushing in the tub upstairs.” And then I was like, “Oh boy. I’m not going to make it.” Yeah. And part of me was like, “Maybe I’ll make it.” And I was like, “Well, it’s probably best if I don’t.”

ALISHA: I mean I still thought you were going to make it. I really did.

MARGO: Yeah. Well, it’s such a weird time warp. Mm-hmm. Yep. So then what? Pushing urge happened. They came back up.

ALISHA: Yeah. It just—

MARGO: Him and the girls.

ALISHA: - was nonstop. Yeah. There was no break where with my second there were breaks. Nice, long rest and then push. Rest.

MARGO: The ejection reflex.

ALISHA: Yeah. This was just whoa.

MARGO: Yeah. Mm-hmm. He was in a different position too.

ALISHA: Yeah. The night before—yeah. A few days before, I'm pretty sure, his head was flexed. I could finally bobble it and really low. And the chiropractor had said my pelvis was big and open. So I had all things ready.

MARGO: And he went to the left or something.

ALISHA: I think so.

MARGO: You think so.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. I could feel his ribs over there. Yeah. So I kind of—yeah. That part I was feeling good about for sure. When it came to pushing.

MARGO: Yeah. So you felt like—I mean your body just pushed. And then what happened?

ALISHA: Well, I could feel—well, I pooped. And I could feel him enter the butt space. I could feel every single little textbook where he was in the canal.

MARGO: In your pelvis. Mm-hmm.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah.

MARGO: Was that different than the other two?

ALISHA: Yep. Extremely. Yeah. And I was upright this time too. So yeah. That was really cool.

MARGO: Do you think you were just more aware of your body and the anatomy? Or what do you think? What do you attribute that to?

ALISHA: All of it. I mean the pelvis class that we did. We had to measure our own pelvis. And I got huge space.

MARGO: Yeah. It's encouraging always.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It was really cool.

MARGO: That is cool.

ALISHA: I mean—yeah. I was like definitely screaming and all that but was so present with it and just ready for it. And yeah.

MARGO: So you felt him kind of make the curve through the pelvis.

ALISHA: Yeah. Which happened pretty quick. Yeah. At least the pubic bone part. It was like, “Whoa.” Like a roller coaster.

MARGO: Like a roller coaster. Yeah. That’s funny. Yeah. I know exactly what you mean.

ALISHA: Yep.

MARGO: You said it was just four pushes.

ALISHA: I think 4 to 5ish. Yeah. Yep.

MARGO: And his head was out.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. His head came out. Oh, the whole time there was video. Yeah. That was good. So I felt crowning maybe, but I didn’t actually have my hands down there yet until the jerk of a head popping out. And then I put my hands there and cradled his head and kind of moved my fingers around. And I could feel cord. So I was like, “Oh gosh.” It wasn’t around his neck. It was hanging by his ear. Yeah. I don’t know if I told you that yet.

MARGO: No.

ALISHA: Yeah. And my girls the whole time were like, “Oh, the baby is going to be born. His head.” I could hear them for sure, but I was more like—

MARGO: Yeah. They were not quiet midwives.

ALISHA: No. No.

MARGO: They are still working on that part.

ALISHA: And so I knew okay. He’s got to come out right now. And that was the hardest part. I think it was the first thing I told you when you walked in the door was, “The hardest part is not being able to see.” I wanted to be able to see so bad.

MARGO: Yeah. Because we usually get to see. Yeah.

ALISHA: But you can’t totally see your own baby unless in a mirror.

MARGO: Yeah. It’s weird. That’s a good point.

ALISHA: And then I felt like—it felt like my husband touching him. But I think he moved an arm down to the side. I could feel him wiggle. Move his arm down and then rotate. And when I felt the size of his head, I was like, “Oh gosh.”

MARGO: Like, “Oh, this is going to be big.”

ALISHA: Big shoulders.

MARGO: Yeah.

ALISHA: So I did kind of push backwards towards my husband. I said, “You got it,” because he was just sliding out perfectly. Yeah. So it was a hand and a cord. It was kind of like wrapped around his hand. Yeah.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. And then Keith caught him.

ALISHA: We both did.

MARGO: Yeah. A joint effort.

ALISHA: Yep. Yep. Sploosh. My husband. His mouth is open.

MARGO: Yes. You have a video because you yelled, “Take a video,” or something, right?

ALISHA: Yep.

MARGO: Maybe I can link to the video here on the page for people to check out. Or if you’re listening on Spotify or iTunes, you can go over to the Indie Birth site and find this episode’s page, and it’ll be there.

ALISHA: Yeah. It’ll be there. My dad has already seen it.

MARGO: Yeah. So everyone can watch it. Because he knew that was important to you.

ALISHA: He did.

MARGO: Especially since I missed it completely and didn’t get any photos.

ALISHA: It’s really okay. Yeah. Yeah. So he caught baby and had the phone at a great angle.

MARGO: Which is pretty heroic. He should get a medal.

ALISHA: Yep. Let’s of medals.

MARGO: That’s really funny.

ALISHA: He did great.

MARGO: And then one of your daughters—

ALISHA: Yep. And then my five year old held the camera.

MARGO: Took over the camera work which is really cute.

ALISHA: Yep. And then the three year old fell off the toilet and bonked her head.

MARGO: Oh, is that what happened?

ALISHA: Yep.

MARGO: I was wondering what made her upset.

ALISHA: Yep.

MARGO: That's funny.

ALISHA: And then she had great commentary there that—how baby was doing, and, “Mommy pushed baby without the midwives,” she says.

MARGO: So cute.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. It was really cool. And boy is pretty shocking to me. I have no idea how a female body can grow balls. That is just so shocking.

MARGO: It is shocking. And I think you guys both are really cute about it when he comes out.

ALISHA: Yeah. Especially my husband.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

ALISHA: I didn't really care the whole pregnancy. But yeah.

MARGO: I think you said, “What are we going to do,” or something really cute.

ALISHA: Well, we have all pink clothes.

MARGO: Right. Right. So then what happened next?

ALISHA: Yeah. I was wanting to know how far away you were because I, as midwives do, wanted to see if I had blood down there and could already feel the placenta ready. Like 5 minutes afterwards. Just hanging out in my butt.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. So I think Keith called me then and said, “Alisha,”—

ALISHA: I said, “Call Margo. Get me a hemostat.” My instruments. He’s like—has no idea how to do that. And the bowl. So he’s running around getting the stuff. And I was still trying to gently get it out even—because it can blop on a towel.

MARGO: Sure.

ALISHA: Yeah.

MARGO: And I was still 15 minutes away.

ALISHA: Yeah. 10, 15 minutes. And I was like, “I’m not waiting that long.” Wow, sir.

MARGO: Excuse you. I hope everyone can hear that impressive poop noise.

ALISHA: It’s already a full diaper. Oh gosh.

MARGO: He wanted to be part of the telling of his tale.

ALISHA: Good job. Yeah. So I just—it just kind of plopped out.

MARGO: Plopped out.

ALISHA: Yeah. And felt so great. And then I turned around and sat down. I passed the baby and the bowl to my husband, who turned white as a ghost. And then the assistant, Maria, shows up right at the right time because he was about to fall over.

MARGO: Oh good. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Just so you could get comfy in the tub you handed him the—yeah.

ALISHA: Yep. Yep.

MARGO: Poor Keith. Yep.

ALISHA: It’s kind of a skinny tub. Yeah. It’s a workout.

MARGO: It’s a workout. And then I got there shortly after. And you were just lounging in the tub with your baby.

ALISHA: He was latched.

MARGO: Placenta was out, and he was latched. Yep.

ALISHA: Pretty normal.

MARGO: Pretty normal. Took a bunch of pictures.

ALISHA: Yeah. It was so awesome. Mm-hmm. I was very excited and very, again, present. Yeah. Just like I was at any other person's birth almost. Yeah.

MARGO: Tell me more what you mean by that.

ALISHA: Well, even just making my bath, it's just what we do in all states of consciousness.

MARGO: Sure.

ALISHA: I guess it's just—

MARGO: Taking care of yourself kind of.

ALISHA: Right.

MARGO: Yeah.

ALISHA: Yeah. Which I did the whole time. Yeah.

MARGO: Yeah. Totally. Yeah. What do you think in retrospect? I feel like the other day you said, "I was fully prepared to have the baby on my own." And you even said that to me that other—or that day when I was like, "Hey, I'm going to be 3 hours from you for a little bit, if I go see this mom. Is that okay?" And you said something like, "Oh, yeah. I'm fully prepared to rock it, if need be." But then it actually happened.

ALISHA: It did.

MARGO: So how do you feel about that?

ALISHA: Like a badass.

MARGO: You are a badass.

ALISHA: Yeah. Even with the placenta, in my mind, was like, "I don't know if I want to do this without Margo. But this is cool." Yeah. I think I was just excited about it all. And rounding back to when we started, it was my final project too. So just like I know all of this and now it's my turn. And just going to do it.

MARGO: Yeah. It's really cool. Yep. And if something had come up, obviously, I was on the way.

ALISHA: You were on the way. But—

MARGO: But that's not how it usually goes.

ALISHA: No.

MARGO: Usually, we aren't needed.

ALISHA: Right.

MARGO: Which I guess is a whole other really cool conversation, which I don't know how much we'll get into right this second. But maybe. Isn't it strange to be a midwife and have people hire us to be there but then ourselves experience birth and be like, "We didn't actually need anybody"?

ALISHA: Yeah. For sure. We don't.

MARGO: Most of the time.

ALISHA: Right.

MARGO: Sometimes it's nice.

ALISHA: It's nice for the partners.

MARGO: Nice for partners. It's nice if there is stuff that's confusing. But yeah. Much of the time—

ALISHA: If you're really in tune, I feel like—and even visioned it. And I mean—and in my case have the training, so I can imagine—

MARGO: If you knew nothing.

ALISHA: Right. When my mom watched the video, it's a totally different perspective—

MARGO: Right.

ALISHA: - than what I have. She's kind of like (gasp).

MARGO: Was it scary or—yeah.

ALISHA: Yeah. Where for me, it's like, "Oh, that is what birth is."

MARGO: Yeah. Totally. Yeah. It always raises the question for me which maybe is for another day. But how much would be the right amount for our clients to know then? And I've talked about it other places where when I've gone to Maryn's births it feels so different. Not that I'm not still responsible for the same things or if something came up like an emergency I'm there for that too, if it really is needed. But it feels a lot less—what's the word? I don't know. I feel less anxious or something knowing whether

it's her or you that you also just know all the things and can do a lot of it yourself or have conversations from a place of knowing if something were to come up.

ALISHA: Right.

MARGO: Does that make any sense?

ALISHA: Right. Yeah.

MARGO: What was it? Yeah. What are your thoughts?

ALISHA: And it's not like that's the main thing that you're leaning on, but you can tune into it when you need it. I don't know if that makes sense.

MARGO: Mm-hmm.

ALISHA: Like I said, I wanted to dedicate this, not necessarily, to science. But yet, when I want to tune in to it, I have that option.

MARGO: It's a tool.

ALISHA: Yeah.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. Totally. Well, and like you said, the pelvis thing even, it's like how do we—and, again, for another day when you're not 4 days postpartum in your bed with your baby maybe. But how do we help clients who aren't midwives tune into that more clearly?

ALISHA: Right.

MARGO: Because I think it does really help.

ALISHA: A lot.

MARGO: A lot. I wish for all women to know their own bodies so well, I guess, is the more succinct thing that I'm trying to say.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. For sure.

MARGO: That's amazing. Mm-hmm.

ALISHA: Or find people to help you get to know it.

MARGO: Yep.

ALISHA: Like my massage therapist and my chiropractor. I wouldn't know it so well if it weren't for other people helping me.

MARGO: Teachers. Guides. Mentors. Totally. We all need them.

ALISHA: Yeah. For sure. Yeah.

MARGO: So this guy was not so small, I guess, as I said.

ALISHA: Oh my goodness. Yeah. I'm used to 7, little 8 pounders. He's 9, 6. Bigger than my brother apparently. So yeah. But I got asked yesterday how that was for me. I mean a lot of people are asking, I suppose, "Did you tear," and all the things.

MARGO: Sure.

ALISHA: And my response is, "Actually, he was the best." I think my body actually does better with bigger babies, if that makes sense.

MARGO: Mm-hmm.

ALISHA: His head applied the right amount and I don't know. It just felt better, and I don't think I hardly have a tear at all. So yeah. Next time I'd like to grow another 9 pounder.

MARGO: Next time. All right.

ALISHA: Yeah. I just—it felt the best.

MARGO: Yeah. Was it your—would you say it was your easiest birth?

ALISHA: Yeah.

MARGO: Yeah. Isn't that amazing? Yeah. Our culture is so like, "Oh, I don't want to grow too big of a baby." So if you're one of those people who believes that, heed Alisha's advice.

ALISHA: Bigger can be better.

MARGO: Bigger can—that's funny. That's awesome.

ALISHA: Yeah. I think so too.

MARGO: Do you want to say his big name?

ALISHA: Yes. So he is Justice Darien Craig, which has lots of meanings. And I was told big boys deserve big names.

MARGO: Which is very cute.

ALISHA: And Darien is like King Darius. Like the king. And Justice is—well, speaks for itself. Yeah. Where justice and truth is important.

MARGO: It's a very cool name.

ALISHA: 2020.

MARGO: 2020. And he's very cute.

ALISHA: Oh goodness. Yeah.

MARGO: How are you guys doing 4 days after birth?

ALISHA: Really good. Really good. I think we had one bad 3 hours out of the 4 days.

MARGO: Great.

ALISHA: So it really has been bliss this time.

MARGO: Which, again, the birth has so much to do with and how you took such awesome care of yourself before the birth helps so much.

ALISHA: So much.

MARGO: Mm-hmm.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yeah. And even just I think because I connected with him so well in pregnancy it's also just like I can tell what he's feeling. He's not necessarily got a stinker yet, but it's like you connect with babies. The more babies you have you connect with them almost better. I don't know.

MARGO: Sure. Practice speaking baby language. Yeah. You guys do seem like a very excellent pair. Like you know each other well.

ALISHA: Yeah. Yep. Both in tune with each other's bodies for sure. It's really cool.

MARGO: That's awesome. Any advice from this 4 days out postpartum place for anyone who has never been through it or wants to have a blissful postpartum too?

ALISHA: Stay in bed.

MARGO: Stay in bed. We are in your bed right now.

ALISHA: Yep. We're in bed.

MARGO: I should say that. We're not at some fancy studio or something recording this.

ALISHA: Nope. Stay in bed. Friends deliver groceries. Yeah. Lots of fluids.

MARGO: Food.

ALISHA: Food. Yep. It'll be good.

MARGO: It'll be good.

ALISHA: Buy the 3XL underwear.

MARGO: 3XL underwear. That's right.

ALISHA: It's comforts best.

MARGO: I feel like the thing that's hardest to tell people about is just—just having the support of partner and friends and family who get it.

ALISHA: Mm-hmm. Well, even clients.

MARGO: And clients.

ALISHA: I mean as a midwife it's like we got 50 people to—who know.

MARGO: Yeah. And they're excited to support you.

ALISHA: Fresh. Yeah. Freshly know what to say, what to give. Yeah. What to ask. It's pretty cool.

MARGO: It is pretty cool.

ALISHA: Mm-hmm.

MARGO: It's so nice. A little community.

ALISHA: Yeah. For sure.

MARGO: Well, any other concluding thoughts or things you want the world to know about your really awesome birth?

ALISHA: I think that's it. I just—yeah. You're totally capable and designed to do it. And yeah. You just got to trust it. And want it. And learn it. Yeah.

MARGO: Mm-hmm. Yeah. And we have tons of really cool resources if you are someone who wants to explore all of these things. So check out all of our podcasts and blog posts, and we also have some really cool courses like *13 Moons* for parents. And

if you have questions for me or Alisha, feel free to reach out. You can reach me at margo@indiebirth.org. All right. Thanks for listening and until next time.

ALISHA: Until next time.

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(closing music)