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Client Birth Story

This is for any pregnant person who needs to know that truly straight forward, positive births happen to ordinary people. To anyone planning a homebirth or wanting to know that hands-off, unmedicated births are more than possible and safe.

But most of all, this is for you, Amira - If and when the time comes for you to give birth, know it can be straightforward, it can be empowering, it can be positive but most of all it can be kick ass incredible if you just surrender, trust and believe and keep yourself surrounded by your biggest fans. Always remember pain is truly subjective. No part of your bringing earthside was painful, it was truly life changing and majestic, exactly like we knew you would be. I could stay lost in those moments forever.

Throughout carrying you, I watched and read endless birth stories, they empower, inspire, warn, educate, erase stigma and change the way you view birth and society norms. This isn't your birth story. As I sit here, jotting this down one handed on my phone notes, I look at you sleeping, you're now 8 days old, what a ride it has been. You are so peaceful, so calm, so innocent and simply breathtaking. This is a story about love. The beautiful, natural, raw and emotional dance between us when we welcomed you earthside into our world, into our arms, hearts and our family. I want you to know how your entrance to this world didn't just spark a fire in you, its lit something majestic in me too, something I never knew I needed. I feel reborn, this very moment, is exactly where I needed and was destined to be and everything is and was simply perfect for us.

After losing our first unplanned pregnancy babe in September last year due to a missed miscarriage at 12 weeks, this pregnancy was full of all kinds of emotions from day one. When you've literally faced death and fear in the face head on, somehow managed to pick up the pieces of your broken hearts and make it through each day, you naturally end up hardened and weathered when it comes to all things TTC and then pregnancy after loss. Our harsh reality was we knew that a positive pregnancy test doesn't always equate to a living baby at the end of 9 months, if anything you spend the best part of those months holding your breath, praying, wishing and dreaming, overanalysing, freaking out and just trying to put one foot in front of the other, second by second, day by day, scan to scan, milestone to milestone. Willing the day to come when you have a healthy, safe bundle of loveliness being in your arms, but PAL defo hits different for sure. If anything I was more determined and confident than ever to make sure our birth experience was as earth shattering incredible and treasured as it should be, I wanted to feel and enjoy every moment, to lap it all up. Maybe this was because

we didn't get to experience this before or maybe this was more of a quest of finding my inner self and honouring my body in the way it truly deserves. Fully letting go and trusting my body to do what I always knew it could. A journey of self discovery somehow. Whatever it was, my mindset was fully committed to make all things birth my bitch.

It was a typical Wednesday in the life of a 41+2 pregnant woman (you know the usual 50 million messages asking if any signs, waddling around with a melon between your legs, wandering if today would be the day, you get the jist).

We decided to have a drive and popped over to St Austell, Dan was obsessed with a mobile karcher pressure washer we saw a few weeks before in Halfords. I was only too happy to oblige as a trip to St Austell also means a trip to Asda who have a create your own pizza counter! Winning. Armed with my medium double ham, pineapple and mozzarella pizza AND a medium 'banging bonfire night' pizza (think sausages, hot dogs and firecracker sauce) whilst waiting for said pizza to be made, I popped to the loo, I should add that I had had light style period cramps in lower abdominal for a few days on and off before this, nothing to really write home about but I knew my body was doing what it needed to and was gearing up for our big moment. I had started to have some blood streaked, pink tinge discharge too which I remember coming out of the upstairs loo and high-fiving Dan whilst I excitedly danced around the bedroom announcing that my uterine seal must be on its way out. One step closer to meeting her.

Anyway I've already digressed... Back to the loo in Asda, I felt a light style cramp in my sides and after weeing, when I wiped it was my biggest clump of bloody discharge to date (think stringy, red, thick, aka the good gloopy stuff) Buzzing. I so wanted to take my clumpy tissue paper to Dan to wave it under his nose again but in the middle of Asda didn't seem the time or the place, off I trot and exclaim to Dan in the middle of the bubble bath aisle 'I think my seal has gone it's the biggest clump yet!' We might get to meet her soon. Back home, we had planned a day full of my favourite oxytocin producing things. I watched 'The Meg', had a clary sage and lavender candlelit bath with chilled acoustic playlist for an hour, ate mince pies and drank decaf flat whites and then around 5pm my lower abdomen had some tightenings, my continuous period style cramps had gone, now I had some 30-40 seconds of my bump going harder and then releasing, like someone was gently squeezing my belly. Pretty cool sensation! I didn't time anything, I'm not a numbers girl, I still wasn't even sure it was anything to shout from rooftops about, labour felt like it was a few days off, we'd done our antenatal education we knew the stages. Or so we thought...

Once I sat down with pizza, in between mouthfuls of food, probably every 10 mins or so I felt the tightening, not painful in the slightest, enough to make me stop, practise using my surge breathing as I figured it would come in handy at some point soon (I'm am an in for 10 and out for 10 girl) I messaged Terri and said I thought I was having surges, but still wasn't sure they would brew to much. We chatted and she told me she was going to dump her child so she could be on call whenever we needed her, I tried to convince her not to change her plans for us, I was okay, not going anywhere and still not even sure I was in any stage of real labour. Luckily for us, she made the call. Good job really. 7pm comes and finally I have the sh!ts! Making some room to bring her out. Yes! Obviously I messaged Terri super stoked and told her I was having real surges! They were no longer braxton hicks type feelings and they didn't go or stop when I moved around. I spent an hour or so on all fours draped over ball whilst we

watched the football. Again, I was sniffing clary sage out the bottle like there was no tomorrow, I didn't want these surges to end or go to waste. Keep em coming! Come on body! 9pm comes, mid surge I had the urge to squeeze, like when you need a poo, I checked the toilet and a little more blood and upon wiping we had the jelly snotty texture lined with fresh red blood. I asked Terri if this was normal (with a WhatsApp pic obvs) and she assured me it was probably the remains of my uterine seal. Terri checked in on how my surges were, by this point we were estimating them to be around 40 seconds ish, about 4/5 per hour so I assured her still a way off, I told her we were just chilling and debating popping pool up so it would be ready if we needed it over next few days. By this time I was happy and chatting but during each surge, I would close my eyes and focus on my breathing. It was like someone had put me in a zone, away from my conscious mind, I went to places inside myself in those surges I've never been or knew existed. Ecstasy I'm pretty sure. I felt so confident, content, able and strong. I was also still buzzing about how we would be bringing our little bomb into our life shortly. Nothing was painful, these surges felt like someone was clenching a fist in my lower belly from inside. By the time I'd got stuck into my breathing they would pass as quickly as they came. I can do anything for 60 seconds.

I asked Terri when I should call her, she said when I felt the time was right, or as a guide when I was unable to talk or walk through them, needed to concentrate and when they were lasting around 60 seconds and nice and strong. Turns out numbers (as noted earlier) are clearly not my strong point, as I actually thought to myself when she sent this message 'blimey, I'm gonna need to sort my shit out as I can't walk or talk through them now so I'm going to have to up my breathing tekkers game'. Game face was well and truly on! 10pm Dan inflated pool and we wrestled (quite literally) the pool liner into the pool, I was on all fours getting the air out from underneath the liner, having to stop and breathe every few mins now, but again straight in zone, then back out into conscious mind. 30 mins or so later, we then popped off to bed, I told Dan I wasn't sure I could sleep much due to how often the surges kept coming but we threw on horror channel, cuddled the cat and chatted in between my surges. At this point, I was so well practised the breathing tekkers became second nature, I remember saying to Dan how thankful I was that I could finally use all the stuff we had learnt and been practising.

Around 1pm, Dan encouraged me to go and take a bath, I was still chilling in bed and often heading to the loo needing a poo so he could see I was a bit restless. He ran me a bath, lit my oil burner and some candles and helped me in. He used warm flannels to drape over my shoulders and back, until I settled into the bath, he shut the door and left me in peace, reassured me he was only next door and to call out if I needed him. I lounged in the bath for around 45 mins, I had so many surges in the bath but I was in such a deep zone, I was super relaxed and think I fell asleep in between surges as time seemed to fly. Something about these surges began to change, they hit different, they were more intense with less time in between, at the top of each surge I felt a gentle natural need to squeeze. I just let my body roll, it clearly knew what it was doing, Dan said during the bath he could hear my breathing getting deeper and louder, and heard a gentle whine mid each surge. I got out, dried myself off, popped on a clean bralette and headed back to bed, I got in bed which I lined with puppy pads and told Dan I didn't want to wear pants anymore as my discharge had stopped and I was still feeling the urge to need a poo so my pants spent more time down than up.

I was in bed 10 mins or so and I must have had about 4/5 surges during this time, in which Dan held my hand, stroked my arm, and lovingly told me he was excited and we chatted about how now it was finally happening and trying to guess who and what she would look like. I stroked the cat, we laughed about how she would stop, stare and look concerned every time I had a surge. Dan asked if and when we should call Terri out. I was adamant I was all good and that I was enjoying being in our little bubble and I didn't want her to have nothing to do. I was calm, in control and didn't feel like I needed any support yet, I was saving her and her magical powers for when shit got real (or what I thought would happen as my labour intensified over coming hours).

By 2:30am Dan took charge and told me to make the call to Terri as it was time, I compromised and told him it wouldn't hurt as at least he might be able to tag her in and get some kip before the big scene. I'd have someone to chat too and at least we would be prepared and ready to go when the time was right. I felt the need to get out of bed and knelt down next to it whilst leaning my top body on it, I pressed call on my phone, sent a quick text and then Terri called back instantly, by this point I had passed the phone over to Dan as I was having a surge and needed to go back into my zone. But something felt different, I didn't need my zone. I was breathing as usual but I was in my conscious mind, aware of my surroundings, aware of the phone conversation, able to let out some short phrases to Dan, my body was bearing down, trying to squeeze, again the only thing I can compare it too is the sensation of having a poo when you have a bellyache after too much food. I felt and heard a pop, my membranes released, all over the carpet, cliche maybe but I felt like someone had turned a tap on and it just kept pissing out of me throughout this one intense surge, it was continual for the full minute, my body contracting.

Once I'd finished, I heard Terri tell Dan this was a great sign and things would now start to intensify and she would be over shortly. Dan helped me off the floor, we laughed at the carpet and waters, usually it's the cat pissing or being sick on our beige carpet now it was my babies juices she'd been happily floating in moments before. Lovely. Next surge came and I asked Dan to drop me off in the loo next door as I couldn't decide whether I was gonna puke or poo. A few wretches and no sick, so I sat on toilet, found a super comfy position with my legs spread wide, asked Dan to grab a bucket so I could puke without moving from toilet if I needed too, he turned main light off and used our mirror light so it remained peaceful and dimly lit. I'm not sure on how many surges or their intensity, they weren't the same as the ones I'd had before, these were an all together different sensation and feeling. I didn't really need to do much, they came and went over me like waves, I closed my eyes and breathed, my breathing was definitely different to before, like I couldn't catch my breath at the peak so my body let out a little whine. There wasn't much time in between, but I figured this was when it would start to get spicier over coming hours. I remember thinking I could happily stay in this stage for a decent stretch of time so I felt all empowered and my confidence was yet again growing, next time I opened my eyes, Terri was knelt outside bathroom door, softly and calmly she asked how I was, we chatted and I told her I think we had called too early and that I felt good, I just decided to stay on loo as I was comfy and needing to poo. Last thing we needed was my sh!t on the bathroom floor too! Dan was downstairs filling the pool.

Next time I reopened my eyes, Terri was calmly by my side and asking me to try and move from the toilet, I wasn't keen, I was so comfy. Dan had come back upstairs and after some

negotiating on their part to try and persuade me to move, they both helped me to the floor in which I went to all fours, Dan was in the bathroom doorway holding my arms, rubbing my shoulders and telling me how badass I was and reminding me to keep breathing deep and controlled, Terri was knelt down beside my loo behind me as she asked if she could take a quick look and see what was happening.

The surges were now frequent and I could feel my girl travelling down my birthing canal. Epic moments! I wanted to get in the pool, I asked and remember Terri saying it might be best to stay here for a little while longer (her knowing there wasn't time but not wanting to panic me!), so I asked her to run a bath for me instead considering I was on all fours next to it. Every surge my animal instincts did all the work, there was no pushing, I breathed in deeply and let out some animalistic grunts and deep from my soul growls all the way through the out breath of each surge, there was a short let up in between surges, enough for me to ask Terri for a warm flannel as I felt the need to hold it over my perineum and top of my triangle. 4 or 5 flannel dips later and Terri announced she could see her face, in as many words I felt her body slide out from me and then softly hit the floor underneath me in which Terri had managed to soften with towels. Terri asked Dan to scoop down and get his daughter as she was here, we both reached down, with some slipping and sliding and brought her up to my chest together, where she let out the cutest little noise, she was alive, safe and finally in our arms. Fuck! Dan and I were elated, shocked and in utter awe.

I felt every single tingle, sensation, her moving down and my body urging her earthside, I felt each pressure and it's incredible intensity and power and I felt invincible. I was doing it, my body was doing it, so natural, so primal, effortless. I wasn't doing it anymore, I'd only gone and fucking done it! I remember in these moments not quite believing it was over, I'd birthed our baby and didn't need anyone, no midwives, no medical professionals, other than my chosen support network bubble of Terri and Dan. I was safe, happy and content and so was my primal birthing body. The bath only ever got to under a half full I and I used this once she was born to freshen up instead.

Amira Jones was born at 3am on Thursday 4th November 2021, at our rented home, on our bathroom floor. It was absolutely sensational and perfect in ways I'd never imagined. This wasn't just Amiras birth; this was mine. *Extra rambles - I've never told anyone this until Terri and I debriefed recently. I manifested and visualised bringing my daughter earthside alone, with no medical professionals, I strongly believe that my subconscious was so aware of my internal desire for a free birth it's exactly what we had.

For anyone who is looking into all birth options, be bold, say what you deeply desire, what you crave, want and need. Say it out loud, shout it from the rooftops