

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / Emergency Meeting: Jessie's Birth Story In Full

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Mamma Mia Out Loud!

Hello Out Louders, we have got a very special bonus episode for you and it is one that we recorded four and a half days after Jessie Stevens gave birth to her beautiful baby Luna.

So Jessie and her husband Luca welcomed the Luna to the world on a Sunday evening.

And on the Thursday we were so excited to talk to Jessie about her birth story that we just couldn't wait until we were in the studio together like we normally would Out Louders. So instead we jumped on a call all from our own home.

So this is recorded from three different places if it sounds a little different.

There are a few things I want to say before you listen to this brilliant episode.

People love birth stories.

In fact, Jessie made an entire podcast series about it.

Before she was pregnant with Luna, called The Delivery Room, which was exclusively women sharing their birth experiences and people loved that.

And so Jessie was very keen to share hers.

Now the reason that she wanted to do that is obviously Out Louders has been a big part of Jessie and Luca's whole journey from when they very first started dating to how that went when they were working together, to the proposal, to the wedding, to the baby. And so she wants to share this amazing experience with you all.

But I want to say, as somebody who obviously has had a couple of babies myself, I want everybody to know that Jessie is in an absolute love bubble in this episode and her story is so beautiful and so positive and so empowering.

But I don't want anyone in any way and certainly not as Jessie to feel less than or confronted if your own experience was not like this.

This is one woman's story.

Every birth is different.

Every baby is different.

Everybody's experiences are very different and we know that.

But I know that you're going to want to know how it all went down for Jessie and Luca and actually also Mia and Claire in the waiting room.

So here it is. It's Jessie Steedon's birth story. Enjoy.

I am the one who snuck into our group chat

and said I wanted to jump on and debrief on my birth story.

Like I have all these details and they were going to run out of my head and I just felt like I wanted to just talk to you both anyway and that the out louders have been there.

The listeners have been there for every step of the way.

Jessie, tell us exactly the moment that it started.

The exact moment was 1 a.m. Friday morning

and I start getting this backache like I hadn't felt before.

And Mia, it was actually your mother-in-law who said hers started with a backache and I went, oh, this is a little bit weird.

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And I'd been getting for maybe like a week.

Those weird kind of period, painy, crampy things.

But I knew that they weren't contractions because they weren't coming and going.

It was like a lingering kind of Braxton Hicksey.

I don't know. It was just, I could tell they weren't contractions.

I think I started feeling what was like a very light contraction

and then I drifted off and I woke up at 6 a.m. on Friday morning and went,

that's a contraction because it would kind of cramp and then let go.

And I realized at that point that something had started happening.

Can I ask a question to take us even a little bit further back than that?

I listened to the episode where Mia and Claire talked about it

and Claire was saying how in the lead-up to the birth,

you felt very prepared and you were quite sanguine about it.

Bit woo-woo were her words.

Did you have a plan, Ewan Luca, for exactly what was going to happen from this time?

So when the contraction started, did you like have a game plan in place?

Yes, we did. And because we'd done birth classes, I've listened to these YouTube calm birth things.

I didn't have time to go and do a calm birth class, which is kind of ironic.

But anyway, I listened to some things.

I listened to a book about hypnobirthing.

The thing that I took away was first birth, take your time.

Don't freak. Don't panic.

The whole thing in movies of racing to the hospital, not necessary unless something goes wrong and you've got a lot of blood or something, but none of that was happening.

And in fact, the other thing that alerted me that night to it was that I had a little bit of blood.

Like there was a little bit, nothing massive, but a little bit that I knew was normal

that was showing that the cervix was softening or whatever.

The show.

The show, exactly. And I went, oh, okay, things might be on here.

I do believe they call that a mucus plug.

A mucus plug.

It wasn't a full on thing. It was just a little bit in the podcast, Hello Bump.

We've been doing one of the midwives said if giving birth, if they portrayed it as it actually is in movies

and no one would buy a ticket because it's very boring and it's very slow.

I knew that this is kind of the beginning and I went, okay, so we're not rushing, but these are contractions.

And I was quite nervous, but excited because I knew that it meant something was happening.

So what did you do on Friday?

Good question.

Layed around a bit.

It's so funny because you lay around, but you want to stay mobile and you should be walking, but remember to rest because this could be going for a long time.

And I was like trying to do all the things I was told to do.

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So I think we went for a little bit of a walk, tried to eat a bit because I also went, okay, if this is going to be a long few days, I should, I should eat.

Were you timing the contractions?

Yes, yes, yes.

And how far apart from six in the morning, like when was the moment that you told Luca, did you wake him up at 1am or did you do wait till six?

Morning.

And I thought if you can sleep through it, if you can sleep through a few of them, then clearly they're not the kind that are saying you're about to have this baby now.

They were about 10, 12 minutes apart and they were lasting for about a minute.

And how strong were they?

Did they feel like period pain?

I have had period pains so much worse than that.

I was like, okay, quite mild.

Even during the day, it would stop you and you'd go, oh, but I knew I had some counting tricks.

I had some breathing techniques.

They didn't panic me.

They weren't overwhelming.

So calm, Jesse.

Very, very calm that day.

Then what happened?

I knew as well because my birthing class, her name's Sarah Took and she does private birthing classes.

And she said, melatonin, the way that it works is that when the sun goes down, your body will begin ramping these up because it is an evolutionary thing that your body is going.

When it's dark, you're like an animal in the wild who feels safer to give birth to their young because you're protected and because there's no predators about.

So then what happens is the sun starts going down and they intensify quite strong.

But again, not anything I felt I couldn't handle.

And at that stage, we put on the TENS machine.

Holy shit, the TENS machine.

Have either of you read about those, but I've never used them.

It is the best thing that's ever happened.

I had it on when I look back for like 48 hours.

It is like, it's got like these pads on the back, like almost like a heart monitor, it kind of looks like.

And you stick it on your lower back and it sends like electric shock waves.

I'm going to call it that.

I don't know what it is, but it's like little currents, pretty currents through your lower back.

Now, the way that it works is that the brain can only process pain in certain parts of the body at once.

You know how sometimes people get into an accident and they're like, I didn't even realise my rib was broken because my leg was broken.

It's like that.

So it's a distraction technique more than anything.

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And you've got a little remote, really easy to use.

And you can turn them up and then you go boost and it just goes like right as the contraction is getting hard and it draws your focus to your back.

But that sounds like you're just getting pain in your back and your front.

That doesn't sound good.

That's what I thought.

And some women hate it and some women love it and I loved it.

It was like, and I wonder if this was because of my pain experience with the broken leg in the Northern Territory.

That you know how my thing was, there's nothing here to help.

No one understands that I'm in pain.

The actual feeling of pressing a button when pain comes on is really good because it's like.

Yeah, right.

It's like an action.

It's an action.

It was just this something that made me feel that felt really good.

So I was pressing that I had the app with the contractions.

And so every now and then the contractions would get closer eight, seven minutes.

So there's an app that you measure your contractions with is there.

What's it called?

Let's say contractions.

It's called something contractions contractions timer.

I've got it up.

How is that just different from like a stopwatch?

It's like a stopwatch.

But what it does is you go, okay, start because then you've got to time the contraction from the start of the last contraction, whatever it is.

It would start going seven, six minutes apart.

And I'd go, okay, when I get to five minutes apart, that's when I go to the hospital.

Like that's when I think that's my rule.

You go up a level in the app.

Yes.

But then, of course, you get to the six minutes and I'm like, yeah, come sooner, come sooner because the contractions are intensifying.

But it's all about the regularity.

So you are wishing for a contraction, like wishing for one going, come, come, come, come, come.

This is not something I relate to.

Really?

Then when it happens, you're like, ouch, ouch, ouch.

Yeah.

Well, this I was going, I want it now because that means that it's progressing.

Yeah.

I want to get this moving.

I want to get this moving.

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What length between contractions was the point where you knew you were allowed to go to the hospital?

I went to the hospital twice.

People who have long early labors often do that.

Yeah.

Very often do.

But with these, so it was getting to seven, six minutes.

Claire came over and we started watching a movie and we ordered some dinner and all that kind of stuff.

And they start going nine minutes apart, 10 minutes apart.

The next one is six minutes, 12 minutes, really irregular, right?

So it's been 12 hours by now?

Yes.

And you haven't been to the hospital yet?

I haven't.

It's still Friday.

But I've spoken to a midwife on the phone because when the bit of blood, bit of mucus was coming out,

I was also like, have my water started breaking and I thought I should let them know.

From what I was describing and they were saying was we don't think it's waters, just stay put and wait.

How far from your house is your hospital?

Like how many minutes drive?

Nine.

Oh, you haven't asked me how I felt at this point.

Oh, sorry.

I haven't got to me yet.

I've been waiting for you to ask me a question.

Mia was very restrained because she didn't tell me until Sunday lunchtime.

Because I'm so conscious that none of this is my news to tell.

So I've been terrified from the beginning of fucking this up, right?

So my first clue that something was going on was when I was in the group chats,

I get up quite early in the morning, have my meds, my meds kicks in and I'm on the text as you both know.

In the family group chat or wherever I was, Jesse never emerges, as you also know whole, until at least nine o'clock, just does not respond.

6.30 a.m. Jesse's responding.

I'm like, wait a minute, what's going on?

She'd had some insomnia and she just was like, yeah, yeah, insomnia, whatever.

And so I rang her on the way into work at about 8.30 or something, just to talk about something or other.

And then when I got into work, Claire was meant to be there for our out loud planning meeting and she wasn't there and I'm like, Claire, you know what?

You haven't been doing this for very long.

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I really would have expected more.

I mean, I didn't say it luckily, I just thought it.

She did come in for the episode, but she was also a bit late.

And then I was like, you know, that impressive.

I know you're a lazy girl.

It was secret.

I got a text from Luca.

Jason, I got a text saying, looks like it'll be before Monday.

Because Monday was the due date.

And this was on Friday, around Friday lunchtime, just after I'd done out loud.

And I was like, I said, has it started?

And he said, yes, but very mild.

And so then I was in the tent, but that's when I went and got a fringe because I didn't know what else to do.

I didn't know what else to do.

Claire knew, I then at this point knew, but I don't think he knew I knew.

I did because there was also like, we didn't know when we might need to go to the hospital and Chilly was there and all of that.

I cleverly gave myself the job of looking after the dog so that I would know early.

And you would know.

So all day, Saturday is just going on too, right?

Slow contractions, fast contractions, all over the place contractions.

Wasn't it Friday night that you went to the hospital?

Yes, on Friday night.

So what happened on Friday night was I knew, and this is actually the hardest bit of the whole thing, is that you can't sleep.

Like obviously, like it's one thing in Somnia.

It's another thing to have a contraction every 10 minutes and to be like, hang on a minute.

If early labor goes for days, then we're looking at three, four days without sleep and then potentially pushing this thing out.

And you're like, have I not suffered enough?

How is this happening?

So it got to maybe like 4am and I'm just wandering around the house.

I'm reading a book.

It's been almost 24 hours by now.

Yep.

Yep.

Wandering around.

I've got some great book recommendations.

I listened to a podcast.

Anyway, I'm doing all of these things.

I was in the shower and I went, when was the last time I felt her move?

Because the contractions obviously make your stomach go really hard.

And my sensations of her had all changed.

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And then that was the only moment where I kind of started to panic a little bit and go, is she okay? I've been measuring these contractions and looking at my own pain, but I don't know when I felt her move.

And so I did all my tricks to get her to move.

Felt like she wasn't.

Immediately called the hospital, said to them, not sure when I last felt her move, but I'd really like to just check on her.

So we went into the hospital, just little cute moments.

Luca had in the study like a whole outfit laid out with like his shoes, jumper and his.

I thought you meant an outfit for the baby, but you meant an outfit for himself.

Yes.

Yes.

Because he knew he was probably going to have to jump up.

Confession.

I also had that outfit laid out on Friday night.

Oh my God.

What will I wear?

Even my bra.

So he had it all laid out.

He chucks it on.

We go to the hospital.

The midwife was a dream.

She was so lovely and she just put the thing on immediately and went, oh my God, she can't stop moving.

Because she had moved the places I was used to feeling her, she just wasn't there anymore.

She had moved in position.

So she was head down in the right position, ready to go.

Because I was like, what are my options here?

Because I kind of got four or five hours sleep the night before, but at this stage, you know, it's getting towards 6am the next day.

I'm going, if this goes on for three days, what's the game plan?

Did they check if you were dilated?

They actually didn't.

They just said, this is early labour.

This is normal.

This is great.

But she said, look, we can get things moving.

Probably best just to wait.

And I would predict that the contractions are going to go down a little bit as the sun comes up and they'll intensify again tonight.

And so try that.

She said, this is what your uterus is doing.

And she also said, but you are not a walking uterus.

You have a head and you have emotions and you have your own levels of what you can handle.

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So basically, if in three hours you think I'm about to lose my mind, come back in.

Like this is not.

She was just really, really good.

So that's good.

That's great.

She gave me some panoramic fought, which did nothing.

Apparently some people, it's amazing.

Didn't do anything for me.

Were they getting stronger?

Yeah.

Over that night, they were pretty, pretty intense, pretty like the worst period pain I've had probably, but again, every seven minutes by that stage.

And then sent me home, got home.

She gave me a bit of a routine to do.

She said, you're going to get in the bath.

You're going to get a warm washer and put it on your stomach.

I'm going to give you these and then you're going to put your TENS machine on and you're going to go to bed and see if you can get any sleep.

And so I laid there in bed for a few hours and then yeah, about every eight minutes, I'd like press the TENS machine and then my brain would kind of get a minute and a half sleep.

And then it would like wake up.

Oh my God.

Like it was torture.

It was so mental.

The second your brain went, okay, we're going to sleep.

It was just like, and the contractions back and I, and then I'd leave the TENS machine on and the contraction would go.

And I'd be going, I feel as though I got a few hours, maybe that morning of a little bit calmer.

And that, that midwife told me as well, actually, she said, this was the bit that our grandmothers would have put on a stew or mopped the floors.

Made a soup.

And the best advice she gave me actually was for the time being put that stupid contraction timer out of your hands, which was great because she was saying,

all you're focusing on is the pain and the time.

It is going to ramp up really significantly.

You're not going to miss it.

I've been a midwife for 30 years.

You're not going to give birth in the bathroom because all of a sudden your contractions were close.

Okay.

There's going to be a gear shift.

Stop timing.

And I was like, hmm, interesting.

That is a good idea.

That was great because it allowed me to kind of focus on other things.

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So I'd be, I did the weirdest jobs, like just, you know, watering the plants and then you'd stop for a minute and go.

And then keep going.

Could you still talk through your contractions?

Because they say that's how you know if it's.

I felt like I could, especially daylight.

Daylight.

I could talk through them.

Luca and I went for a little walk.

Watched utopia.

There's a new season of that.

That was good.

Was he calm?

Ridiculously calm.

Ridiculously calm.

And I just kept saying to him and later to Claire, this is from my calm birth stuff.

Everyone's job is to keep me in a really good mood because in door fence.

That's great.

And happiness and joy.

I kept going.

There's not enough jokes being told.

Like I need just lots of happiness.

So that's what we were trying to do.

Just keep the, the vibe light.

Back to the plan.

I did.

Did you think, right, when it gets to this point, that's when I know I'm getting my pain relief because I know in the lead up, you have been very specific with your obstetrician.

That I want the pain relief.

I want it at a certain time.

Do not fuck me around.

I say, no, it's too late.

Yes.

So you also had a plan of exactly when that was going to happen.

Yes.

And by that stage, I was going, the timing is one thing.

And if I do feel like they're closer, I might start timing them again.

But if they're not closer and I just can't tolerate this pain, I'm just going to go.

I feel like they understand it's been going for a while.

That's what I'm going to do.

And so during the day, it was okay.

And then into the evening, it was funny because in the middle of the contraction, you start saying, okay, hospital.

And then you come out of the contraction and you go, nah, I can do another one of those.

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I can do it.

Like it kept kind of going in these funny waves.

I did something called the miles circuit, which is, you know, it might be a bit woo woo, but it's like three half an hour yoga positions that are meant to be really, good for getting the baby in a position and moving things along.

So one sort of like downward dog, but like a something like that.

And then one's laying on your side and then the other is all the stair side stepping.

So we have stairs in our place now.

So I was kind of going up and down the stairs.

Sideways.

Yeah.

To try and get the baby in that position.

So at least I felt like I was doing something a bit useful.

Were you making noise?

No.

Completely quiet the entire time.

I went completely internal, focused then by that night.

So Claire came over and I tried to send Luca to bed to get a little bit of sleep because he'd been up with me for all of this.

So this is now getting into Saturday night and we're getting to 10, 11, 12.

Claire and I are trying to watch something at that stage.

I think I actually was making some groaning.

It was getting very, very bad.

And I just thought you've just got to get through this night and then maybe they'll ease off in the morning again.

But did you not think to yourself, I've been going now for 40 hours.

Maybe I should go into the hospital or were you just like not thinking that?

Well, because I had listened to so many stories and I had read a lot about Calm Birth and all of that.

I knew that there are women who feel this for four or five days.

Oh God.

That it can just go for a really, really long time.

I was not against and I want to be really clear.

Any sort of induction, anything that needed to happen, I was not against it.

I just thought sometimes waiting is a decision.

And if my baby is okay, if I'm okay, if this is what my body is doing, then for the next hour, I'm all right.

I felt very empowered in terms of, you know, if I need to change that mind.

That's so great.

Meanwhile, I was texting Luca saying, I would feel so much better if you were in the hospital connected to a monitor.

And then he's like, you've got health anxiety.

And I'm like, that's got nothing to do with this.

And that's it, right?

I felt like as soon as I had reoriented her and knew that I could feel her, knew that I could breathe

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through, that was all fine.

And then as the night went on, Claire left, got to two, three, four.

The contraction started getting so intense that I would close my eyes and like see colors like I can't.

Wow.

It really, really intense.

And then I would go, okay, the next contraction, let's stand because we know that when I'm standing, it doesn't hurt as much.

And then I thought, if I'm getting contractions this bad in the bath, then that's when we go to hospital because the bath was the one thing that, and that's when it got really, really bad.

And in saying that, not so bad I was panicking, but just like, okay, this is the hospital contraction.

So I work, look her up, still had my tense machine on.

There's like a top boosting thing where I was just going like top of it going.

You've turned up to 11 and you're just like turbo boost.

And it wasn't like, I think this baby is coming.

It was just going, I'm going to need some additional pain relief.

It's time.

It's time.

And nine minutes to the hospital.

So I think I had one contraction in the car.

So it was okay.

Ooh, how is that?

That's okay.

Yep, timed it.

Not too hairy.

Speed bumps, not great.

The rest was okay.

I'd also read a lot about how women get to hospital.

Often the contractions slow down because your body is reacting to the lights, the beeps and it's going, are we safe?

Are we safe?

But that didn't really happen to me.

They were still strong.

And again, it was this weird thing of like, this is extremely painful, but good sign.

Every time I'd get one, it was this, I've never had that with pain before where you're really welcoming it because you're going, one more contraction I don't need to have.

That's exactly how I got through it was going like, that's one less.

That's one less.

Yes.

That's one less.

Exactly.

And going, this is a sign that things are moving along, got hooked up, all of that.

Baby was fine.

When someone examining you, when are they looking at your cervix?

This is another thing from my books that I read.

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They said, don't get too fixated on the dilation because a lot of women will think, if it has taken me two days to get to two centimetres.

Yes.

I can't do this anymore.

It's going to take me another three days to get to two.

Yes.

Which of course it doesn't.

So I'm not fussed about what the dilation is because I know that it's been softening.

I kept thinking, I actually reckon the hardest bit of all of this is actually behind me is the patients.

I got there, started going on the gas.

She hadn't checked me yet.

The gas, I don't think helped with the pain, but was just a something which was like an additional something to use.

Did you still have the TENS machine on?

Yep.

So I would.

You brought it with you.

I would, yeah, TENS machine still on.

Sucking gas, just getting through it.

And then I was going, okay, when I need the epidural, give me the exact time it's going to take me to get that epidural into my back.

Where is the anaesthetist this second?

How fast does he walk?

Like, I just needed to know what the vibe was.

And at that stage, she was like, okay, we're going to check.

I reckon that the most painful part of the whole thing was the first check of the how dilated.

Really?

What was painful about it?

So she did a stretch as well.

Stretch and sweep.

And I could barely even open my legs for her to check.

I was really nervous about it.

And she would like touch just to go in and I couldn't relax.

Like I was really scared.

And so I sucked on the gas.

I did the TENS as though it was a contraction.

And she went in and said that she had to pull the cervix forward.

My cervix was too far back.

So she actually almost had to go and like claw in the cervix, bring it forward.

And it was about, I think at that stage it was about two centimetres dilated and she did a sweep.

What is a sweep?

I wish people could see us all doing, we've got our two fingers and we're all just like doing a sweeping move.

It was going into the cervix and then stretching to see how far she could stretch to

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and then just stretch around to see if they can get the cervix happening and dilating more.
That was pretty bad.

And then in the next few hours was when things really, really ramped up.

And by 7 a.m. on Sunday, I was like, it's time for the epigerol.

By that stage, I couldn't lay on the bed anymore.

I had to stand, I had to walk around so far beyond being able to talk through them.

Can I ask you about the pain?

Because one of the things with your experience of your broken leg and that being so traumatic.

And I know that you were very worried about how you'd cope with the pain during labour

because the trauma that you had being in pain for hours and hours with your leg

and you were unable to get pain relief for many, many hours.

And that really did a number on you.

How did you separate that from this or were you not able to?

That leg is the biggest blessing.

The fact that that happened almost exactly one year before,

breaking my leg and not getting pain relief for eight hours was so much worse

and so much more painful than giving birth.

So much worse.

Because there was no relief.

The knowing that a contraction and the fear, the hormones,

because I guess I'm also getting hormones that are saying to me, calm down.

There's a natural sort of little pain relief that's happening during childbirth.

When you're at the top of a mountain with a snapped tibia,

the only hormones or the only anything you're getting is bad, bad, bad, panic, panic, panic.

You need help and no one's helping you.

Of course. That's so true.

There's a point to all this pain.

Like it doesn't necessarily feel like it when you're in it,

but it's a pain in a service of something positive.

And you know, it's weird when the anaesthetist eventually came in and when I called for the epidural,

I think I had about two or three contractions before he was in there with the needle in my back.

So very, very quick.

I remember the last contraction before he did it.

He'd be talking to me and then he'd look at the monitor and he'd go, deep breath.

And I would take a deep breath and he'd be like, and it's climbing.

It's climbing.

We've peaked because he could see on the thing.

The feeling of having someone see your pain on a screen is so beautiful.

Like with the leg thing, I felt like I had to keep describing that it hurt.

But this whole room of people knew and he was just going, OK,

and now it's going to ease off.

It's easing off.

And then he kind of got me into this position for the epidural.

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Did you have to sit up or were you lying down for the epidural?
And the position that you get into for an epidural is almost the worst for the contractions.
So that one contraction you get when you're waiting for the epidural is the worst.
Because you're hunched forward and that hurts.
Yeah, hunched forward on all of the things.
Because he can't give it to you during a contraction, can he?
And you've got to be super still.
Yes.
And so I was quite lucky in that my contraction still had time between them.
Whereas I know the woman next door who I could hear screaming her head off.
I said to the nurse, I don't know if this is appropriate,
but has that woman had an epidural yet?
Because I was like, imagine if that's with the epidural.
And the woman was like, well, she's actually waiting.
She's getting the one after you.
And I was like, oh, maybe she should be before me in the queue for that floor woman.
I still had a bit of time.
So he put in the local and then did the epidural.
Luca was holding my hands.
He decided not to look at the epidural, which I think was a good thing.
And relief was almost instant.
Really?
Does it just turn off like a tap?
Like a tap.
It is the single best invention of the jaw.
I couldn't stop.
I was like, that is madness.
That that is just the most beautiful thing.
And then I was going, is it going to wear off,
kind of preparing for something to go wrong?
And they get you to lay on one side so that it kind of goes to that side
and then lay on the other side so that it goes throughout your whole body or whatever.
I could still move my legs the whole time.
I thought I wouldn't be able to move my legs.
And what was really weird was that I could feel other things.
Like I could feel, I don't know if Luca pinched my toe,
I could feel that stuff, but I couldn't feel this.
I think by that stage they were going, okay, you're actually at three centimetres.
And if your waters haven't broken by 10 a.m., we're going to break them.
We reckon we might break them.
And what time was it?
Just speed things along.
What was it about?
Eight.

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And I was like, okay.

So it had been two days.

Yep.

And Jesse, there's a long tradition of labouring women proposing to their anaesthetist.

Did you ask him or her to marry you?

I've never loved a human.

I just kept saying to Luca, I love that man.

I love that man.

He was so friendly and he had a really nice cologne on.

And we were like, how nice did the man smell with the needle?

He was so lovely.

Hey, is Claire in the room with you at this point?

Or is it you and Luca only?

Just Luca and I and we're just hanging out by that point, loving the epidural.

I think I was eating, snacking at that point, just so happy.

First time in, you know, 50 hours without pain.

Like it was, it was fantastic.

And then so I'm waiting for 10 a.m. for them to come and break my waters.

And I go, I either just wet myself or my water's broke.

At 9.58 a.m., my water's just naturally break on the table.

Wow.

Which is again, weird that I could feel that, but I can't feel a contraction.

I don't understand how that works.

So that was great.

Luca and I were celebrating and then something that I'd been warned about started happening, which was great comic relief, which is that you can't control any of your muscles.

And therefore, with every contraction, you start farting because it's like your bowel or whatever it is is being pressed on.

And I just kept looking at Luca and going, I can't, I'm so sorry.

I can't control that.

I can't control that.

I was excusing myself when the poor midwife walked in.

I was like, I'm so sorry.

This is impolite.

What did Luca say?

Luca and I just kept saying, there are things that will occur in this room that we don't need to discuss at a later date.

I like it.

This is what happens.

Just don't look at me.

That was like when you weighed when you were pregnant and you didn't make it to the toilet.

Yes.

So we learned his lesson because he was like, I think we should discuss this.

And now he's like, we will not discuss this.

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We will not discuss this.

But this cannot be something that we do on a Sunday night at home.

So let's just try and keep some decorum.

And so the day went on, I think might have had something to eat.

Claire came and visited.

And then they kept coming and checking maybe four hourly.

And they would say, okay, you're four centimetres.

And what were you doing?

Were you just, you were texting a bit?

Were you like just dicking around on your phone?

Were you reading your book?

Reading my book.

Oh, trying to sleep, which was driving me mad because I would kind of be laying there listening to a podcast, but couldn't fall asleep, waiting for the checks.

And then they said to me, if you're not maybe five centimetres by this time, we might speed things along.

And I went, yes, that sounds like a good idea because at this point, my body is getting really fatigued.

And what can happen as well is that your body can get so fatigued that the contractions actually stop or stall or whatever.

And then it can get a bit hairy.

So I was like, okay, felt very much.

And again, I think Hello Bump has a lot to answer for this.

Felt very knowledgeable.

And I knew what I was saying yes to and what I should and could say no to.

From then, the cervical checks obviously were fabulous because I couldn't feel them.

The advice of my physio who said, you've got this vaginismus type pelvic floor stuff and an epidural will let all of that go.

It will relax you and it might actually speed up your labour because there are particular muscles otherwise that will just hold.

And then they said to me, six centimetres and they wanted me to be closer to eight.

And they said, all right, what we're going to do is keep you on this drip for another four hours.

So let's say this was 6pm.

So until 10pm.

And if this hasn't progressed, we're probably going to have to talk about other options because your body's not letting up.

And how did you feel about that other options being a C-section?

Probably a C-section completely didn't really have a feeling about it.

I thought the recovery is going to be intense.

But I expected to be a bit pissed off that I'd spent all this time labouring only to have a C-section.

I didn't feel like that.

I thought whatever happens, happens, get her out safely.

It'll be totally fine.

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I hoped though that I could push her out, but I also think I said to the midwife any longer than that.

And I don't know if I'll have the energy.

Like I don't know if I can still be awake in four hours to push this baby out.

I'm feeling really tired and losing my mind obviously because I hadn't slept now in days.

And then before that for weeks and then before that.

Yes.

Heading into day three.

Yes.

So then Claire and your parents came to visit briefly.

It was about six o'clock at night on Sunday.

We had had a whole plan and Claire was allowed in and Claire had come in and we'd had a good chat.

And then my mum messaged and just went, I don't know why, but I'm at the hospital.

I couldn't.

I don't know why.

I don't know why I just couldn't not be here.

And so she came in, her and dad came in.

Dad was clearly like, he didn't know what to do.

So he kept playing with lights that would turn on in my face and then start tapping on machines and be like, does this TV work?

The ashes on tonight.

And I was like, mate, he was just a lot.

And I think I could see that not the mum was nervous, but that it was a really intense scene for people that love you because you're in hospital and connected up to a lot of machines.

Yeah.

And at that stage as well, I could start feeling the contractions again.

Not pain, but pressure.

But every time there was something, I kind of started to panic a bit because I was going, oh, does this mean

I'm going to feel them again.

It's going to be a breakthrough and you've got to get on top of it really fast.

So there was a, it would naturally kind of top up, but I also had a little button that I could press that would give an additional thing.

And when mum and dad and Claire came in, I think we all thought this is probably going to end in a C-section.

So they probably left at 7.30 and they were going around the corner to get some dinner.

And they left and then I started having this really weird sensation, which wasn't unpleasant.

It was actually quite a good sensation, which was pressure or pushing like it was a weird thing.

Was it like you had to do a poo?

Yeah, it was.

And I said to the midwife, I'm having a weird feeling.

And she was like, oh, well, I meant to check you at 10.

And I was like, hmm, yeah, just feeling something weird.

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And the contractions are intensifying.
And then she came and looked between my legs and she was like, that's the baby said like.
So I'd gotten to 10 in, you know, a minute.
And she was like, you'll be pushing for an hour and you'll have this baby.
I was so excited to push.
Why were you just because you wanted it to be over or because it was something you could do?
Something I could do with the pain.
And also I had practiced.
So with my physio, who I'd been seeing, they teach you to push.
I had been practicing.
I had done all these exercise.
I felt like you could do that when the baby was still in you.
Oh, they teach you to kind of there's like a breathe in, breathe out a little bit.
And then this bearing down, I had done so many of them every night.
I'd been doing them.
I was so excited to do it, like so excited.
And there's a picture of me just before where I am like the happiest I'd been in days just so stoked to start pushing.
And she was like, I better let your obstetrician know and he'll be on his way.
And then she sits on the end of the bed and it is the lights are really low.
It's eight o'clock.
The TV's on.
It was the most calm.
It was like being at a sleepover with your girlfriends, with a friend sitting on the end of the bed, having a chat to you about who you have a crush on.
That was the vibe of the room.
And she's going, yep, get your legs like this and push.
I could feel they were strong pushes and I could feel that this thing was coming out.
So the obstetrician wasn't there yet.
The obstetrician wasn't there yet.
Where's Luca?
Luca is holding my hand.
Luca is so excited because I reckon that he was probably feeling impatient too.
Like, when is this going to happen?
But the funniest moment of the whole thing was when she was like, okay, because I'd been on my side and she said, all right, get onto your back.
And I went, okay, I'll get on to my back.
Like, I'm feeling like I'm the most prepared.
I'm thinking I've nailed this labor.
I have, can't wait.
Oh my God.
10 out of 10.
Best labor ever.
And I knock something out of my shoulder and I was like, that's weird.

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And then I go, I reckon that's the epidural that I've knocked out.
And I go, it's okay.
It must happen all the time.
And I say to the midwife, I've just knocked this thing out of my shoulder.
And the sound she made was like, ah, oh no.
And then I hear her mutter to herself, I've never seen that before.
And I was like, okay.
So I think that I've just labored for 62 and a half hours to knock my epidural out
as I push and feel this 100%.
So I was like, what does this mean?
What does this mean?
And she was like, look, you've got some of the epidural in you.
And by the time it wears off, the baby will be out.
And I was like, looking back, I don't think she was sure of that.
I think that that's all you can say.
That's what she knew she had to tell you.
She was like, I'll just call the anaesthetist.
Look, as someone who knows the anaesthetist hours because I studied them very closely this
morning,
he is now off duty.
And I don't think we are getting this back in.
Did you feel it straight away?
Did you feel the pain straight away?
I would not call it pain.
And I don't know if this is a mixture between epidural and also because some women do say that the
pushing is just a different.
It's pressure.
I could definitely feel, especially when the baby's head started crowning the skin.
I could feel everything there.
So I could feel the real stretch, the pressure.
And where I felt it most was not perineum, but up.
I almost felt it like near where I were.
Like that was kind of more where I was feeling it.
So anyway, she's going push.
And then she was like, this baby is not going to be here in an hour.
This baby is going to be here very, very soon.
And I hear her be like, call the obstetrician, tell him to hurry, tell him to hurry.
And Mia, do you want to share this moment from your perspective?
Yes.
So I was in the car on the way there just because by that stage, you were only a few centimetres as
far as I knew when I was leaving home.
But I felt like your mum.
I just was also, and Anne and I had been talking a lot during the day and I just had this need.
I just needed to be at the hospital.

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So I was on my way there and then Luca called me or texted and just said, it's a 10 centimetres.
And I was like, Oh my God.
Oh my God.
And so I was there.
Coco was at a party and so I pulled over and texted her and said, it's on.
So she got an Uber from the party, met me at the hospital.
And then your parents were still getting something to eat.
And then as we sat there waiting for news, the obstetrician who I know because he delivered Coco came past at a light jog.
And he's like, Hi, man.
Hi, Steven.
And obviously he couldn't stop and chat.
But then Coco and I spent the next 20 minutes like dissecting.
Did he seem panicked?
Did he seem worried?
He already had his mask on.
So that's all I've got to contribute.
So then were you like anxious that he'd be there or did you just not care?
Didn't care.
But I got a sense that it was almost like she was waiting for him to get there because she'd say, Okay, on this one, when you get the pressure to push them with another one, she'd go and just breathe.
Well, the breathing practice I'd done all the calm birth stuff was amazing.
It just kept me so, so calm.
And like I was thinking about breathing down and all that.
And then he got there and he's so weird.
He's in like clothes like he'd been at dinner.
Like you expect them to be in scrubs, but they're both sitting on the end of the bed kind of with one of my legs each.
I reckon he sat on the end of that bed for four pushes.
And at one stage he said, reach down and you can feel her head.
And I was like, can I?
And he said, it's your baby.
You're allowed to.
And I was like, I just feel like that's not allowed.
And it felt like a deflated balloon.
It was so soft.
Like was it the whole head out of your vagina or just like halfway out?
Halfway out.
I reckon.
Where was Luca?
Where was Luca?
He was on my left side and they kept saying to him, do you want to see your baby's head?
And he was going, I just don't think I want to.

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I just don't think I want to.
Oh darling.
He was panicked.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Yes.
And I could feel again pressure, but not pain, nothing.
It wasn't bad.
It was just exciting.
And then they were like, I think they said sort of one more push.
I pushed and felt this incredible relief.
And then he said, look down and you'll see your baby.
And I looked down and it was the most transformative, unbelievable glitch in the matrix.
It felt as though the universe opened up for a second and I got access to this feeling
that I didn't know was humanly possible for anyone to feel.
I said later it was like I'd been living at 20%.
The universe let me feel a hundred.
I just wanted to scream, this is fucked.
Like this is fucked.
That this is allowed to happen.
This can happen.
In the best way she was looking up, they must have sort of turned her at that point.
And I looked at her face and the thing I was struck by was the detail of like her nose
and her massive eyes.
It was like looking into the galaxy.
There's this photo of me.
I've covered my mouth because I'm like, what is that?
And Luca was crying and I was crying and it was shock and joy.
But there's not a word in the English language to describe that moment.
Like that's, I almost understand people who, it's like a moment of complete madness of just,
I cannot believe that that's possible and that that can happen.
I think I helped pull her out kind of from under the arms and they put her straight onto my chest
and she was doing her little latching like a little turtle.
Straight away.
Like trying, the midwife was helping her.
Luca and I were just staring at her going, hello, hello.
Like I can't believe that was you the whole time.
I had a lot of anxiety about hemorrhaging because that was something I'd read about.
No, if they had to give me an injection, I'm, I think I was absolutely fine.
The placenta just like blah, blah, blah, blah.
Oh, that's good.
That just all came out.
Luca was like, that was not something we were interested in keeping.
He said, didn't need to examine that.

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He cut the umbilical cord and then we kind of laid there for a bit with her staring at her just in absolute shock.

And one of my first questions, because I knew that the physio would want to know, I was like, how badly did I tear?

Are we a second degree?

Are we a third degree?

Like, and they said, you've had no perineum perineal tear.

Wow.

Good work.

You've had a little labia tear that we're going to have to sew up.

So I was kind of in stirrups, could have forgotten that whole bit that that even happened and was just holding her

and examining this ridiculous little person.

People see like in movies or what they used to do is like, as soon as the baby came out, they'd take it away and they'd weigh it

and they'd whatever and make it cry.

And when I had, I know when I had Rami and when you had Luna, they, and probably when you had your kids whole, they just leave the baby on you.

Like if everything's okay.

Yeah.

As long as they're okay.

Of course.

The skin to skin thing.

Cause they, I'd been wearing a gown and as soon as she came out, they took my gown off immediately and like put her on my chest.

And it was nighttime and it was so calm and it sounded like it had started to rain, but it was actually just the sprinklers.

But in my head, it was raining.

A bit of time passed.

They did all the stitching.

And so she was born at 840, I think, which is about three hours before her due date, which was same with Luka.

Is that right?

Even listening to you talk about it.

It's like when we've talked about it in the past and Mia and I have both said that if we could relive a night of our lives, it would be that one, particularly the first time.

And I just think there are some experiences in life that you can't possibly understand till you have them.

And you are such an analytical, preparing person.

And obviously all the preparation you did stood you in amazing stead for this.

But just listening to you describe that moment, it just puts me right back there too of like there is nothing else in life that is like that moment.

Nothing else.

And I think it's why we want to ask questions and why there is this, you feel so compelled to tell the

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story so quickly because you want to explain this unexplainable thing.

That's like, maybe I'll go some way in explaining it to the person that Jesse was a week ago who couldn't get her head around it.

I want to tell her that you didn't need to be scared and that it was magic and that it was the most amazing thing.

And Jackie Lund, who used to work at Mama Mia, I've been messaging her a bit and she said that she turned to her husband straight after and said that was nothing like I expected.

And that's exactly it.

I just, I couldn't have been more prepared, couldn't have read more things, couldn't have asked more questions.

And it was nothing at all like I thought it would be.

In what way?

Bigger.

Just like so much bigger.

There is a whole dimension that you just feel like your head just cracked through and you're almost like, what is that?

Like it's utter shock, I think, but in the most beautiful way.

I had a cry when we got in the car on the way home.

I got into the car and I thought, the person I was in the car on the way here, like I'm a completely different person.

And I've had this experience and I just, I was so scared and I just wish that I could go back and go, don't be scared.

Like I would go through those hours every day of the week, best moment of my life, best night of my life to just see that.

That's just as good to me as life can possibly get.

I think that's absolutely true.

Obviously this show is about the birth, but give us a very quick couple of minutes about the first few days as Luna's mum.

I would say overall, I cannot believe the instincts that kick in.

You know more than you think you do and not because you read the book.

No books can prepare you or kind of get you ready for those instincts.

First day was my baby blues, I think.

I think my baby blues came early and I don't think they should be called baby blues because it has nothing to do with the baby.

I just kept saying it's everything else.

The baby's easy, baby easy, simple, love it.

I am currently passing a blood clot and it's really confronting.

Why is there so much blood?

And I'm in a hospital and I'm overwhelmed.

And the hardest thing was the utter exhaustion and the adrenaline which still 24 hours later was going through my body.

And I could not sleep and I lost it to a midwife and just kind of went, I just need someone to knock me out.

I've got to get a little bit of sleep so that I can take in where I am because I was really that level of

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exhaustion sickening.

You're like, I've got 18 years to get through.

I really need a night's sleep before I can go to bed.

I just couldn't.

But since then, best sleeps I have had in four or five months, even if they are in three hour intervals.

And breastfeeding, I spoke to the lactation consultant about it and I didn't know.

I thought I might try it and hate it.

It's a really good drug, breastfeeding.

It makes me feel really good.

I'm like, there is something in this that's making me calm and drowsy and happy.

And just like a content, right?

I've forgotten about that.

It makes me feel really good.

If it's working, it's the best, one of the best feelings in the world.

I've been so lucky because some babies can't latch and some women just go through hell or it takes them weeks or months.

And you know, I'm four days in and so I don't know what it'll look like.

But right now, I was prepared for that to be almost harder than the labor and I'm happy with how that's going.

And I'm finding the nights like last night was a cluster feeding night that went from 8.30pm till 5am, pretty much feeding all night.

And I didn't feel panicked or worried because I knew that once she did go to sleep, I could go to sleep.

That was actually harder on Luca because he's not getting the hormones and he's not getting the satisfaction of feeding the crying baby.

So it's a funny thing to navigate, but we're both just in heaven.

In your love bubble.

In our love bubble.

And the family, you've all been to see Luna, obviously, Mia.

Yes.

What do you think of Luna, Mia? Like what's your vibe?

She's okay.

She's just so tiny and I, you know, it's, I felt obviously incredibly emotional, the adrenaline and then, you know, Tiri, your right hole in that it takes you,

I was talking to Jason about it, it takes you right back, back to all the emotions of when it happened to you.

And for me, it's, you know, my baby's had a baby and it's like, that's just really hard and beautiful to get your head around.

And it's also like just loving a baby so much that isn't yours.

Beautiful.

Like I can't wait to hang with her more.

And you can just see when people love your baby as much as you do.

Claire can't put her down, Coco can't put her down.

Babies make people, all the people around you so happy.

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That's one of the wonderful things about them.

Can't wait to meet Luna.

It's bringing me so much joy just seeing your face and the look on your face and listening to you tell that story.

I've never seen Jessie look more confident and capable and proud.

I've never seen you look proud before, Jesse, of all the, and I've seen you do a lot of things that you have every reason to feel very proud of.

But not until I walked into that delivery suite, you know, a few minutes after you'd given birth and you were holding her,

you just seemed assured and confident and proud and capable and like a woman.

Like it was like you were a woman and before you were a girl.

And I don't mean that in a patronising way, but it was like you just seemed older and wiser.

Thank you, Jesse, for sharing your story with us and all the out louders.

We know every birth story is different and this one is just Jesse's.

Might not be the same as yours, might not be the same as your friends or your mums or your sisters.

But Jesse, thank you for sharing your story with us.

I can't wait for you to meet her, Holly.

You are going to love her. She's the best.