

# **Welcome**

# **Audrey Nieva**

October 21, 2013

9:21 a.m.

7 lbs. 13 ounces

20 inches

Bright and early Tuesday morning, you let me know that things were different than what they had been for the past few days. It was 3:12 a.m. and you let me know that contractions had been coming and increasing in intensity since midnight. They were now 3-5 minutes apart. You had called Anna, your midwife, and she came over to assess whether this was “the day”. Anna wanted you to get some more rest, as it was still early, and also to think about some ways you could increase your hormones in order to make contractions more effective.

At 7:13 a.m. I arrived at your house, clear by the many cars parked out front, and was greeted by Nathan’s warm smile. He then went to check on you since you had just gotten out of the bath, while I said hello to Anna who was at the kitchen table typing notes. Anna let me know that the bath was very relaxing for you, and things had slowed a bit as a result. We discussed positions that could help bring your baby lower, and went hunting for an exercise ball; we found a substitute bouncy ball in the backyard that we could use and brought it to you.

When we walked into your room, you were so relaxed and confident. It was great to see that you were excited about welcoming your baby, and willing to do different techniques to move your birth along; you were ready! Anna recommended that you continue the belly lifts to get your baby in the optimum position; moving down your pelvis and apply more pressure to your cervix. She did one while you were standing and another while you were on the children’s little inflatable ball; you preferred the ball. She also recommended that you continue using the breast pump. When Anna left the room, we continued doing belly lifts and you would lean back on me for support.

Once it was just the two of us, I talked to you about how it was a beautiful Tuesday morning and your birth was going wonderfully. You replied that you had never had a baby on a Tuesday, and expressed concern that this wasn’t the “real thing”. I assured you that your body knew what to do to bring your baby into the world, and we continued following Anna’s advice of using the belly lifts to bring your baby down.

The morning was calm, and your family was there to help with your children. Before your mom and sister took Dominic to school, he wanted to say goodbye. It was obvious he didn’t want to leave, but you assured him that you would send someone to pick him up when the baby arrived. Your mom also wanted to make sure you wouldn’t have a baby while she was gone, and asked how everything was going. You let her know things were going well, and reassured her things would not progress that quickly while she was gone.

A little later, Nathan came back in the room with a very sleepy Camille. After spending a few minutes with Camille, Nathan took her to your mom, so that he could come back and support you. He continued with the belly lifts, while I got you water and gave both of you time alone.

When I came back into the room, you had gotten up to go to the restroom, and were letting Nathan know that you HATED the toilet, as you had another contraction while sitting down. Nathan declared that you were doing great, and you were a bad-ass and could do anything. It was wonderful to see how his words gave you more strength and inspiration.

We talked about things you could do to change things up, and I said the shower might be nice since you didn't want to get in the tub and slow things down. We wanted to know if that was okay with Anna, and we wondering where she was. Suddenly we realized that Anna had been sleeping beside your bed, on the floor because she chimed in that a shower would be fine.

She came in the bathroom and asked you how things were feeling. She said a shower would be a great idea, but she really wanted you to go for a walk first. Anna suggested a walk around the neighborhood, but that if you wanted to walk in the backyard that would be fine as well. You were slightly nervous about meeting your new neighbors during your birth, but decided most people would have left for work already and it was such a beautiful day you couldn't pass on it.

At 8:42 a.m., we all decided that a walk was a good idea for getting things moving along. Nathan got your pants, and a shirt together for you. You said you'd go without undies, and Anna and I both suggested you wear Depends in case your water broke. Anna also recommended that you go to the bathroom again before we left, and you joked that you could just go in the Depends; you chose not to however.

As we were leaving the house and started down the street to the left, your next door neighbor was leaving and wished you good luck with your birth. He said he figured based on all the cars parked out front that today was the day.

As we continued down the hill, you wanted a lot of support on your lower back, and Anna and I worked together to do hip squeezes. The further we got from the house, the intensity picked up and Anna demonstrated a way that Nathan could bend his knees and you could be supported while leaning against him during contractions.

As we passed a house that had a pear tree out front you commented that pears sounded really nice, and you would need to remember that house for later. After a few more minutes, as we were walking back up the street the owner of the house with the pear tree was leaving for the day and asked if everything was okay; you assured her you were just having a baby, which may have startled her but you were confident.

On the way back up, you thought you had wet yourself; in hindsight this was most likely your waters releasing.

You asked Anna if she wanted some "Kol..." and then paused midway through the word, so I assumed you were commenting about your colostrum production. You had actually been asking her whether she wanted a kolache. It was at that moment that Nathan noticed just how much colostrum you were making just during the walk; Anna assured him this was just hormone production at its finest.

We all passed the house again, this time going right. Once we got to the end of the street it was clear you needed to get back home since the intensity was stronger, and your sounds had changed from moaning to slight grunting. Nathan was working hard as well supporting you during each contraction,

and I began to support him as well so that he could relax more as well. It was very special to witness the devotion between both of you as you leaned on him for support and he trusted in you.

On the way back another neighbor peeked out her door, and asked if you were okay. You let her know you were just having a baby. She asked whether you needed anything, and exclaimed "Are these your midwives?" You made a joke about how we were holding you hostage, and once she was assured that you were joking, she said she hoped everything went well. Anna found this amusing, since we knew you were doing wonderfully and would have an amazing birth.

Your next door neighbor passed us again as he began his morning walk, and let you both know that if you needed anything to just ask, though he assumed with all the visitors that you were taken care of.

Anna had you take a shortcut through the grass knowing from your sounds, that we needed to get inside the house. You asked about the tub, and she said you could definitely get in the tub if that's what you wanted; the water would probably still be warm. As we were walking onto the porch, you apologized to Nathan because he supported you through all the contractions during the walk, and he exclaimed that it was nothing compared to the work you were doing.

After we got in the door, we all quickly took our shoes off and walked down to your room where you had a contraction as soon as we walked in the bathroom that was different than all the previous ones. It was as though you could finally release since you were in your own setting, and it was clear that there wouldn't be time for a leisurely bath before your birth. Anna shimmied your pants down, and let you know that your baby's head was moving down.

We asked whether you wanted to move to another area in the bathroom, or into the bedroom, and you said you didn't know what you wanted. Nathan was supporting you as you leaned back on him, and we placed towels under your bottom to add cushion from the bathroom floor. With the first contraction, now that you were lying on the floor you launched into a string of expletives. Anna let you know that you could push if you felt like it, and that you could scream if you wanted, but that the energy would be better directed towards pushing. After one more contraction with another string of expletives, you felt the urge to push and began really pushing in earnest to birth your daughter. Her head was beginning to emerge and your sister was capturing the birth from the doorway of the bathroom.

You had really surprised us all with how quickly things were moving along and Anna didn't even have time to get everything in place. Anna realized her assistant would not make it in time, and had Sheila and I getting supplies for her and answering the phone when necessary. She even made use of Eucerin lotion to help get fetal tones with the doppler. As your daughter was about to be born, I could see Anna doing her best to get the cord over Audrey's neck before her body was delivered, and there wasn't a lot of slack to loop it over her head. You continued pushing through, and soon your healthy baby was born. Nathan was able to see as Anna lifted your baby that you had a daughter and he exclaimed "A girl! Oh Audrey!"

You lifted her to your chest, and we got warm towels from under the heating pad. You were able to just enjoy having her skin to skin once Nathan was able to get your shirt out of the way. Anna

encouraged you to stimulate Audrey with gentle massaging and rubbing of her back. She then waited until Audrey's cord had stopped pulsing before clamping, in order to give Audrey all the blood from the placenta and to help with her oxygen levels as she adjusted to the world.

Nathan was given the scissors to cut the cord, and was at first hesitant to cut because he was concerned about cutting in the wrong spot. You expressed concern about whether it would hurt Audrey. Anna assured you it did not hurt Audrey, and directed Nathan about where to cut. Once Nathan had cut the cord, Anna asked you if you wanted Nathan to hold Audrey while you delivered the placenta. You handed Audrey to Nathan, and he immediately cuddled her to his chest and gazed adoringly at his newest daughter.

Once you were focused on the last part of your birth, you easily delivered the placenta. While Anna was tending to you, Nathan was holding Audrey in his arms on the bed. He was telling her how he wished all the other children's birth were like hers, because he was so glad that he could hold her all he wanted and didn't have to give her to anyone.

Anna's assistant had called during your birth, and I returned her call immediately after. I discovered she had gone to the wrong house, and proceeded to give her directions to guide her to your home. I met her out front, and when we walked into your room we quickly set up the bed, so that you could get into a more comfortable location than the bathroom floor.

Nathan was excited about the kids meeting Audrey, and once he felt confident that they could handle coming in, he sat on the floor by the door so they could see Audrey when they walked in. Sheila captured photos of Zach and Camille meeting Audrey for the first time. The first thing Zach said to you was, "Your belly isn't big anymore." He also said to Sheila, "You can stay here for a lot of days" and when she asked where she would sleep he said he would move the beds for her "because I'm very strong".

While Anna was checking on you, I brought you some peanut butter and apples to eat since you hadn't eaten anything more than cereal that morning. In addition to wanting you to eat, Anna also wanted you to empty your bladder so that your uterus could contract, so everyone helped you down off the bed and back into the restroom. I put peppermint oil drops in the toilet, because it's supposed to stimulate the urge to urinate. However, you felt like you just couldn't go, so we cleared out and gave you some privacy, thinking that may help.

While your family was getting acquainted, I went to get you something more substantial to eat. While I was in the kitchen making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, your mom came in. I helped her clear a space in the fridge to put the placenta, and we discussed the benefits of encapsulation.

When I came back with your sandwich and water, you were now in the tub; I believe to help encourage you and your bladder to relax.

After you got out of the tub, and went to sit on the toilet again, I asked whether you wanted Audrey brought to you to nurse. She latched beautifully and you were so happy that she took to it

immediately, but not surprised at all. Dominic was surprised and you proudly commented that it was so natural and came so easily.

Zach was playing in his room, and I asked for his help taking you some pillows to help support Audrey while you nursed. He brought his pillows to you, and proudly offered them to you. After you had time to nurse and get comfortable in bed again, Anna took Audrey's measurements. We let Sheila know that Nathan would be finding out your weight, and she came to take photos. Based on Audrey's size and lack of vernix, Anna surmised that she was most likely 40 weeks and you were delighted that her weight was so similar to your other children's weights at birth.

It had been an eventful and beautiful morning. Your family was very proud and impressed by the journey you took to bring Audrey into your arms, and acknowledged that you needed some well deserved rest. Anna went over her notes for postpartum, and when to give her a call if you needed anything before her next visit. She said to call if you had any questions about Audrey's health, and you replied proudly, "She's gonna be perfect!" as we all knew she would be.

Sincerely,

Taylor Rhodes-Estrada

The doula :)