Mandy Moore - Before Birth

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IN THIS EPISODE

Mandy Moore sits down with Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC just days — maybe even hours — away from giving birth to her first child, at 39 and a half weeks pregnant. She looks back on growing up in Orlando, Florida, being discovered singing the national anthem, signing a record deal at almost 15, and building a career that spans music, film and television, including her beloved role on This Is Us. She tells how she met her husband, Dawes musician Taylor Goldsmith, through Instagram, and how a relationship that crystallized over FaceTime and texting became the partnership she hoped to start a family with. She is candid about the year of trying that followed, the fertility consultation that revealed a uterine issue and a surgery plan — and the surprise of conceiving before the surgery ever happened. She recounts a miserable first trimester of all-day nausea, the technicolor relief of the second, and a third trimester she calls profoundly magical. And she shares her birth intentions: how watching The Business of Being Born led her and Taylor to plan a home birth with midwife Haley and doula Carson, how falling platelets forced a change of plan, and why she is leaning into surrender, trusting her body and her team, and picturing a mountain summit — one foot in front of the other — as she waits to meet her baby.

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DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: To me important pregnancy and parenting podcast. I'm your host dr. Elliott Berlin I'm recording this episode from a working animal farm where my family and I have escaped for a little bonding time with each Other and with nature so I have no idea what you might hear in the background from time to time But it's worthwhile because I'm super excited to welcome my guest today She's a true multi hyphenate whose entertainment career spans over 20 years singer songwriter actress and activist She's a wonderfully big-hearted person who spent her voice in spotlight generously helping others she's potentially days maybe even hours away from giving birth and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Adding another major hyphenate to her very accomplished list. We are going to talk about career relationship Fertility pregnancy and plans for birth and motherhood Mandy

Moore. Welcome to the podcast Wow, what an intro. Thank you so much. That's the truth. Your heart walks into the room about five minutes before you do

MANDY MOORE: Well, that is very kind of you. Thank you

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It's just the truth. Okay, so we have so much to pack into this episode here I want to know everything because I don't really know you that well and you know you're just like very you walk into the office and you're like girl make store and then all of a sudden you're like You can do anything you want to apparently a very very talented person So how did it all start where you're from? Where'd you grow up and how'd you get started in the business? Oh

MANDY MOORE: I grew up in Orlando, Florida just a random girl nothing to do with Disney or the Mickey Mouse Club or any of the like and I Got started just doing theater as a kid and kind of got quote-unquote discovered Singing the national anthem of all things. I sort of like became Known as the national anthem girl in Orlando and would literally sing for any event that you whether it was like the arena football team the rollers the hockey team a tennis tournament like anything and that's sort of what it took in terms of the right people hearing me and I signed a record deal when I was almost 15 and Started my music career I guess and one thing led to another and obviously like having some semblance of success

MANDY MOORE: With one side of the industry really opened doors to a lot of other opportunities and through the music I then got involved with the acting side of things which was something I always wanted to do as well and That led to films and television and yeah, no in the world 21 years later. I've managed to stick around somehow

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: There's a little girl in Orlando, Florida I mean you said you studied theater, right? So what brought your attraction to theater and were you also studying singing did you see your future in both places? I

MANDY MOORE: Mean studying is more of an aggressive word It's very generous. I I mean like I was just a theater kid I would literally look in the Orlando Sentinel the local paper. They had an audition hotline every Friday I think it was and before school I would call and see what like the upcoming auditions for the next week were for kids my age So I didn't really have any like formal training per se and my voice lessons really consisted of my mom had a friend who she played tennis with who taught piano and voice lessons at the music store in the mall and That's sort of like what I did but I just I remember I went to a school that had some semblance of an emphasis on the arts

MANDY MOORE: and like all the kids had to participate in music and drama and they did like a big school play every year like at the touring auditorium where all the you know touring Broadway shows came through and I remember seeing Oklahoma when I was six and just being mesmerized with the girl on stage you know Laurie singing oh what a beautiful morning and I was like I want to do that it was just this light bulb moment for me as a kid. Wow this is crazy because

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: that's how I learned chiropractic I was just in a mall and I walked by a little booth and that was it that was it and here I am that's just secret talent so I wasn't a theater kid but my whole family did theater my father was the president of the dramatic society my brother was in the dramatic society I went to the same school also heavily involved in the dramatic society always

planning to do health care but I don't know why I love acting because I love to be somebody else for a little while yeah and then that whole live theater interaction is just I don't know it's exciting to me I always loved it but in your case when you were growing up and you kind of hit success early on with the

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: anthem I have two questions we never won any stage fright at all because you never seem worried and also when your career starts to take off as like a teenager I mean it's obviously very different lifestyle than a typical teenager so what kind of impact does that have on your

MANDY MOORE: upbringing I definitely had some bit of stage fright and still do I remember very vividly singing the anthem and several times like adults coming up to me saying you better remember the words we just had one so in here the night before and I totally botched it and I am like a 12-year-old quivering going I have such a tremendous responsibility to remember these words but it's funny as I found like a career and started so young I initially started my goodness I signed a record deal I made my first album I flew out to Los Angeles filmed my very first music video and then flew all the way back across the country to Virginia Beach Virginia to start the instinct tour they're like summer amphitheater tour in

MANDY MOORE: 1999 and from in sync and spending the summer with them I immediately went on tour with the Backstreet Boys and their giant like arena tour for that album Millennium where they literally like flew in like the rafters it was a crazy crazy experience to go from literally watching these gentlemen on my television on MTV like in the morning as I was getting ready to go to my freshman year of high school to six months later opening up for them I mean it was beyond fantasy dream come true sort of stuff but I very vividly remember not being frightened I think just the you know part of being a young person when you don't know what you don't know like I didn't know to be nervous I just was so elated for that opportunity and

MANDY MOORE: like relished every second of being on stage and I just remember like the lights going down and 20 000 glow sticks and just really feeling like I was in my element now forget it I would like coop myself I was so terrified um but as a kid it was like yeah I just had all the confidence in the world it's funny how that happens but yeah and and to just quickly answer your other question it was a really bizarre transition to go from starting my high school career and leaving halfway through my freshman year and kind of having just started making friends and letting people know like actually I'm leaving because I signed a record deal like I didn't really want to tell people because I didn't want to come across as

MANDY MOORE: being conceited or full of myself and also I just didn't know what was going to happen like I could very well go like record music and then nothing sort of panned out and I would come back to school again so I didn't really know what to tell people but yeah very quickly the touring led to getting a job at MTV becoming an MTV BJ at 15 and then you know starting to tour the country in the world with my own music and you know then doing a couple of films and yeah and then fast forward to being 36 and boom just like that how old were you when you did the candy video I was 15 that's what I thought I was like she's

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: way too young to drive yeah they're actually telling me the secrets of yeah making videos and whatnot yeah yeah I was doing a little research I'm like I don't get it I'm doing the math it's not working out for me okay I have my learner's permit but not my license now Television, how do you like TV?

MANDY MOORE: I love TV. I have been enjoying this chapter of my life and career and I can't believe the good fortune I've had to, you know, really my first blast out of the cannon in the TV world to have found a show and a job like This Is Us has just been, it's the greatest job I've ever had beyond. I love it. I love the people I get to work with. I love the material that we're all lucky enough to get to work with. Like it truly is a dream come true and I'm grateful every day I get to go to work. I love it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Before we switch to more personal things, are there things in the entertainment realm that you still want to conquer that you're looking forward to reaching?

MANDY MOORE: I recently signed a deal to start my own production company. So I'm really interested in wearing that producorial hat and perhaps directing as well. And just continuing to sort of make music as well. I put out a record almost a year ago and it was my first record in about 11 years. So I'm happy to sort of like have the momentum of music back in my life again and want to continue that and not have such a long stretch of time between records. But yeah, from a professional capacity, I think like those three things I hope are going to factor into my life in a bigger way in the future.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You are a person who likes to give back. You're sensitive to other people's needs. What are the different causes that have called to you over the years?

MANDY MOORE: I'd say most recently, I found myself really interested in global health and have had the good fortune of traveling around the world. And it actually sort of factors into sort of the maternal side of things of traveling around the world, looking at child and maternal health with an organization called PSI and with United Nations and just beyond my wildest imagination in terms of the opportunities where I've been able to travel and what I've been able to see and such a profound perspective shift. So that's been something that's really near and dear to me. I'm a big animal lover. So anything having to do with animals and animal rescue is also really close to my heart. Lots of stuff over the years.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, all those things to me, they're big signs of a giant heart and I think also just very maternal oriented, like caring about others, taking care of others. And so I think that things are gonna climax in there and emotionally in the next couple of days is just my guess. All right, let's take a quick break. We'll come back and we'll dig deeper with Mandy Moore. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy Podcast. And in case you're wondering, Mandy hasn't given birth yet, but we're gonna move things right along just in case. I mean, you're very close.

MANDY MOORE: I am, I'm on the precipice. I'm like 39 and a half weeks, so.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh my goodness. It could happen at any moment. Yeah, I mean, it would be great. It's never happened on the podcast. I mean, that would really make me.

MANDY MOORE: I woke up thinking about that this morning. I'm like, what if I wanted to like early labor? Wouldn't that be kind of cool? Just like deep breathing through the podcast episode.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Because you can, you're an actor. You can just pretend like that's happening right now. We can both have a contraction. I can dig back into my theater days. Before we get to this pregnancy and relationship, how have relationships been for you? Just in general.

MANDY MOORE: Oh, I think I've had my fair share of homes and towns. But where I find myself right now is, you know, I'm very, very grateful for. I have an incredible husband and partner, and I knew pretty immediately meeting him that this was the one, this was the person I hoped to start a family with. And lo and behold, I lucked out.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How did you guys meet?

MANDY MOORE: We met kind of via Instagram, which feels super modern. We, he's a musician and I heard a song if he's on the radio. And I did like the, you know, modern thing of like getting back to my computer and looking up, like I missed the radio announcer, like coming back saying, that was so-and-so with such-and-such songs. I like had to dig deep on the website of the radio station to figure out like, who was that band? What was that song? And that sort of led me to checking them out on Instagram. And I saw they had music down. And so I kind of like wrote about it in not a veiled way, but I also am not the most tech savvy, as you realize. Very good at helping you download podcast episodes and look on Instagram and say, I don't know what I'm doing.

MANDY MOORE: And so it's not like I tagged him or did any of the things you're supposed to do if you want someone to like notice you or notice that you said something about them. And somehow he found that I had complimented him and found a way to sort of like, surreptitiously send me an email from his manager, my manager, it got to me and it was lovely. And we sort of corresponding that way. And one thing led to the next and we ended up going out to dinner and just really hitting it off. And then we had to go our separate ways. He was going on tour for like four months. So really our relationship started and kind of crystallized over FaceTime and texting and emailing and whatnot. And yeah, that was sort of it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: For anybody who doesn't know, who was the band and the guy and what was the song?

MANDY MOORE: Well, his name is Taylor Goldsmith. He's from Los Angeles and in a band called Dawes. And the song was called Most People. And I just, I loved it. It was like unlike anything I had really heard in a long time. And the lyrics were so soulful and feeling full. And I was like, who is this person? What is this music? Yeah, I was very, very struck by that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I'm so curious, have you ever sing together?

MANDY MOORE: We do. We sing together a lot. And we wrote my whole last record together and he's in my band. And yeah, and now with a baby on the way, like there's, I mean, music's a constant theme in our house. He sings to the baby, I sing to the baby. We sing together, like it's pretty sweet.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You said once you met, you realized this is the guy I want to start a family with. I mean, I know the relationship was virtual for a while, which is hard for a family starting, but how far into the relationship did you guys, I mean, did you talk about it together when we might do that?

MANDY MOORE: I think it sort of went unsaid for a long time. I mean, I was in a very different place than him. I met him when I was actually in the middle of a divorce. And so I was obviously like emotionally and psychologically like in a very different spot than a single 30 year old man who'd never really been in like a long-term relationship before. But I think we both were on the same page in terms of like, this is the person that I want to spend the rest of my life with. So I think it was, I'd say it was like within the first six months, we sort of started like daydreaming together about what life would look like, living together and eventually getting married and starting a family. It was like all those things

MANDY MOORE: that I never really necessarily felt in my. previous relationship were just on the surface from the start with Taylor.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean how did that relationship unfold? How long until you called it the relationship and then also

MANDY MOORE: kind of started out on your path to parenthood? Pretty immediately I'd say yeah within that first like six months it was apparent that we were both in it for the long haul. This is us. This is us. We want to hold together and yeah and everything sort of started to fall in line in a way that I had kind of dreamed about although I was never that girl that like dreamed about a wedding or like who the guy would be or what he would do. None of that really ever factored into me but it is sort of the way things did fall into line and I'd say it was tricky with the work schedule because although I do play a mother on this is us and play a mother at various different chapters and I was always like well we should I know this is

MANDY MOORE: not the way that pregnancy and fertility and whatnot works but I was like let's try and find the right window to do this so you know I can give birth at the right time and I'm not necessarily going to be like messing up this schedule at work. I was trying to be as conscientious about that as possible which now I just sort of chuckle about because it was a ridiculous notion and proposition and I'd say we tried for about a year before I think I realized it's probably time that we talk to a fertility specialist because I was 35 and I was like I just kind of want to get a lay of the land like what if there's something going on that I don't know about in terms of my body and I know that OBs and your kind of

MANDY MOORE: psychologists tend to tell you like you know give it the old college try for a year and then if things haven't sort of figured themselves out then that's when you go to address whatever issues may be underlying and that's kind of what we did and it oddly worked out during COVID of all times during this quarantine period which I know there's definitely been a bit of

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: quarantine baby boom and we're part of it. I've heard coroneels as a term. I've heard baby zoomers. Yeah and you're baby zooming right now. Yeah so even though it's the old college try in college it seems to happen pretty quickly by accident and so to go a year even though that's typically what you're told is normal it must be a little frustrating if you're

MANDY MOORE: actively trying and ready to do this thing. Yeah very much so. I mean it was curious and you know I think like most people I was under the false illusion that like my whole life I've tried not to get pregnant and when I decide to like you know get that IUD removed like it's just gonna bing bang boom like everything's gonna fall into place and happen the way it's supposed to and it'll be easy and seamless and that wasn't the case and it took actually a friend suggesting a fertility doctor here in Los Angeles like you should just go get checked out because I thought everything was okay too and I found that I had x y and z going on and we were able to sort of remedy things and lo and behold now

MANDY MOORE: I'm pregnant so that's what we did. We sort of had a zoom consultation with a fertility doctor here in Los Angeles and then went in for like my first appointment and she sent me to have a uterine x-ray which sort of confirmed that I indeed had cartilage at the top of my uterus where implantation I guess occurs 80% of the time and she kind of also deduced that I probably had endometriosis and she's like you know I think the next step would be to have surgery for both things and then we can sort of reassess things afterwards and figure out like you know do you need to do an egg retrieval do we you know we were sort of like taking it one step at a time but I felt really like buoyed by the fact that like okay great I

MANDY MOORE: know what's going on with my body now there's a plan in place and this is sort of the answer as to why I wasn't getting pregnant so I was very excited and I remember after this appointment or at the end of our appointment she's like and by the way you're ovulating tomorrow which was also sort of a revelation to me because I was like oh I thought that I ovulated like five days from now like I completely had my ovulation schedule off which I've come to realize was also a big factor and she's like so you know if you want to do something tonight and maybe the day after because you can but like no you know obviously like we're going ahead full steam with this surgery plan but you know it couldn't hurt

MANDY MOORE: if you want to and I was like okay and that was it literally that was it and pre-surgery pre-surgery yeah

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, so you haven't had it yet?

MANDY MOORE: I have not had the surgery, no.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, wow. That's so crazy. Whoever would have imagined that a reproductive endocrinologist could just meet with you one time and tell you what's going on in there, and then you get pregnant after a year plus of trying?

MANDY MOORE: Yeah. Well, I guess it was meant to be. I guess so. Although, we were incredibly nervous. I remember finding out and thinking, is this OK? Because the doctor told us 80% of the time, it's supposed to implant at the top of the uterus, and I have no blood supply there because there's cartilage. It also means that a topic pregnancy could factor in. So I was very hesitant to really believe and completely celebrate. I was terrified. And it took just those baby steps, and I'm sure every pregnant person feels like each step of the way as the weeks go on, and you hear the heartbeat, and then you make it to the 12-week mark, and then you make it to that first periodontologist appointment. All of those kind of lead you

MANDY MOORE: to having a little bit more belief in the pregnancy, having confidence about it, and that's what it took for us as well. It felt so wholly unbelievable that this was happening after what we were sort of told, that, yeah, it took a while to really believe it, I guess.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, and also you're just like hoping and waiting and checking and not being pregnant. I think anybody, generally, it's hard to connect to the fact that there's a baby in there at the beginning. And everybody has a little time where it becomes real for them. But when you struggle or when you have that news that something's up in there, that would really inhibit pregnancy. I'm sure it takes longer. I think for me, our first pregnancy didn't seem real to me until this is like before Instacart and Postmates. My wife sent me to the market to get a list of things. And I remember distinctly buying the eggs and buying the milk, and both of them, I checked the expiration date. They were both after our due date.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And I was like, holy cow, this is getting real. Like, this could be breakfast once he's already here. And I told my wife, and she's like, oh, it's about time it got real for you.

MANDY MOORE: That's so funny. I love that. I do.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Right before we go to break and come back and talk about your pregnancy and birth plans, how did you find out? What was that month? Did you do a test?

MANDY MOORE: We did a test. My period was late. We did a test, like the millions of tests that you've done throughout your life. And I just remember doing it, putting it on the window cell, like in the bathroom. And she was in the bathroom and saw it before I did. And was like, hey! I'd come running into the bathroom and he was holding it. And both of us were like, just started laughing and didn't know what to think. And immediately afterwards, we were going to meet his parents and my parents, because everybody was in town. We were going to go outside. It was in the midst of COVID. So we had to keep this gigantic secret that we had just found out from our parents. It was such a bizarre moment, because we were running late to go to the bathroom.

MANDY MOORE: And I was like, oh, I'm going to go to the bathroom. Go meet them anyway. And it was like, what do we do? Do we tell them we're running late? Do we tell them the news? It was pretty hilarious, but also just very special. And special that he found out first.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, my goodness. Take it this way. That is so sweet and surprising. It's not what I was expecting you to say. I don't know if you can hear, but the roosters woke up and they are making themselves heard. And there's literally an 800-pound pig walking by my window right now. So it's an amazing farm. We're up in Gilroy, California. And this ranch, she's got like 50, 60 animals here. And it's just a private ranch. She just walked around. The animals are mostly walking around free. There's a donkey, a zonkey, a bunch of horses, cows, a camel, a baby camel, a little baby pig, Wilbur, who just kind of nuzzles up to you. He wants you to lay down and snuggle with him. Yeah, I'm roughly vegetarian for at least the next week,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: because you can't eat any meat around here. Just doesn't feel right. All right, we're going to take a quick break. And we'll be right back with Mandy Moore. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy podcast. We're talking to Mandy Moore. Due very soon, let's talk about pregnancy. So I know it didn't feel super real to you at the very beginning, sort of surreal. In the first

trimester, did you have first trimester-y type symptoms?

MANDY MOORE: Oh, yeah, it was pretty abysmal for like four months, actually. Just nausea from the second I woke up to the second I went to sleep. And I got sick at least once a day. I had crazy food- versions, all the things you hear about, but I guess I wasn't necessarily expecting. But I love how people tell you, no, no, it's a good sign. Being sick is a good sign. I remember thinking like, is that just what they tell you to make you feel better because you feel so terrible? But so I tried to take solace in the fact that it was like, oh, this means it's a healthy baby. There's lots of like hormones coursing through me. But yeah, I lost a lot of weight the first trimester.

MANDY MOORE: I literally could not eat, but my sweet husband took very good care of me and we binged a lot of stuff and I just stayed in bed all day and it was great because I didn't feel lucky that I didn't have a job that I had to show up to, especially in this day and age of quarantining and COVID. I really didn't even have any obligations like this via Zoom. So it was fantastic just to sort of like pull up at home and sort of power through that trimester. Yeah, I felt so, I found the light at the end of the tunnel, you know, like midway through my second trimester and just the world opened back up again. And you have all that energy and you can eat. And it's been smooth sailing ever since, actually.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, that's great. Yeah. When you say sick, is that nauseous? Is that vomiting or both once a day? Oh, did you end up finding anything that helped you feel better?

MANDY MOORE: Nothing. I mean, it it sort of fluctuated. It would freezing out the nausea help sometimes in having, you know, like ice cold lemon water, sometimes like drinking, you know, like a recharge, like a sports drink, like was helpful. Sometimes rice cakes were good, but then the next day it was like I couldn't even stomach the look at them. I remember like asking Taylor to eat outside sometimes because I just couldn't smell food. Like I love coffee. And that was the very first thing that I realized, like, oh, I can't have coffee. Like I can't even smell coffee. I can't hear the grounds. Like I can't hear the binder go off. Like, which was strange and very sad to me. I thought like, at some point during my second trimester, if I feel better,

MANDY MOORE: like I will eventually welcome a cup of coffee back into my life. No, it's that hopefully we'll come back when he's here because I'm sure I'm going to need it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I don't know. After nine months of not having it, it may feel strange to drink it again. But my wife had a version she had very bad nausea and vomiting in the first trimester always. And certain things like orange juice and other things that didn't appeal to her, which is a soft way of saying it, still don't even like there are certain songs that the kids maybe on our third pregnancy, the kids were watching like Wonder Pets and things on TV.

MANDY MOORE: Great show.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: But if you even hum three bars from that song, she will get green and make you leave the house immediately. The sounds, the smells, the taste, they still trigger her.

MANDY MOORE: I can believe it. There's definitely a certain sense. And like, yeah, like I think about like what we were watching during that time. All of it is like, wow, it was the real time capsule that you're like, I don't need to revisit that anytime soon.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Second trimester better, which is great. And just to put this in perspective, the entire time is pandemic, right?

MANDY MOORE: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So what month did you find that, or did Taylor find that positive pregnancy test?

MANDY MOORE: Uh, it was May, the end of May.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: May. So like really spiking here in Los Angeles with the pandemic March, April, May. And so typically I assume you'd love to go out and do things, but really were you stuck in like almost a total quarantine?

MANDY MOORE: I'm definitely more of a homebody. I mean, it's been hard not having the friends and family like over inside our home, we really limited all interactions to outside and, and because I was so unwell for those first few months, it did definitely make it easier to just pull up the two of us at home without feeling like we were missing out or we had to sort of make any excuses or, you know, we were missing obligations or something. So yeah, that definitely made it easier. I've actually really enjoyed being pregnant during this time. I think simply for that fact, not feeling bad, like not feeling well enough or, you know, not feeling like myself to want to like attend, you know, dinner parties or whatever the heck.

MANDY MOORE: So I I'm really happy that I've been able to sort of just have this time and have this time with my husband, who is typically a touring musician and his job takes them away from home often most of the year, more or less. And we've had this beautiful time together. Like we've had this experience the entire pregnancy, like to be able to walk through it hand in hand has just been magical and we would not have had it had it not been for this pandemic and sort of shutting the world down.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, the pandemic is so tragic in so many ways, but I think all tragedy also opens the door for, you know, innovation and also for. opportunities that didn't exist that maybe you never could have pictured yourself being able to do that way. So we mourn the losses that many people have experienced is the sickness, the death, and the financial destruction. But at the same time, it's the entire world. It's not a city, it's not a town, it's not a country. So the entire world is sort of having to scratch their heads and figure out how to do things differently. I know in our house, I'm home for dinner every night at 6.30, which is super rare. I didn't do that for the first 15 years the kids were home. I tried, I thought I was doing a good job

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: the best I could, but the pandemic really made us realize you can do better and pushed us to really spend family quality time together. Hence this farm with all these animals running by. So-

MANDY MOORE: You gotta find a silver lining when you can, right?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Absolutely. And with pregnancy, many of my patients are like, we weren't sure about having a baby during pandemic, but there's so much alone time and quality time, people working from home and spending time at home together. And in your case in particular with the two

very busy lifestyles and entertainment, this is, you know, in a way there's a blessing side to it all. Your second trimester, you felt better. Did you feel like even better than not pregnant or just better?

MANDY MOORE: I think after going through those first few months, I felt like I was on cloud nine. I mean, it definitely felt akin to how I felt pre-pregnancy. It was just like everything was in black and white and suddenly like tech and color was back. And yeah, I could eat again. I didn't have like the same kinds of food aversions. I had energy. Yeah, I definitely felt like I was back to my old self and I wasn't necessarily like uncomfortable. I wasn't super pregnant. Like I wasn't showing. It was definitely, yeah, I feel like you're back into sort of pre-pregnancy land in a way.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Any cravings?

MANDY MOORE: No, no cravings.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Man, I even get cravings when my wife's pregnant.

MANDY MOORE: That's insane. I don't have cravings.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: When you did pop, when you did start to show, how was that for you? Just seeing yourself grow in different ways.

MANDY MOORE: I have loved it. I've loved it. I have such a deeper appreciation of my body and the fact that, you know, us pregnant folks have the capability to do this. It's the coolest thing. I mean, I know that I joke with my husband already. We're not at the end of the like roller coaster ride. Like, I'll do this again. I'm sorry. Even if I was as sick as I was during the first trimester, there is something I think in the third trimester that is so profoundly magical and beautiful. Like I get to carry around this. You know, people say like, oh, aren't you excited to meet your baby? I'm like, I am with him all day. Like we're together. Like, yes, I can't wait to meet him. Earth side is this way, but like I feel him all day. I talk to him.

MANDY MOORE: Like I already feel this very profound connection and it's just unlike anything I ever could have imagined. So yeah, I love this. And I love how my body has changed and I really sort of have leaned into it and it's remarkable. It's remarkable what we're capable of.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And with all the singing you guys do to him, I'd be surprised if he doesn't come out crying in perfect pitch.

MANDY MOORE: Yeah. You're so right.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, birth. That's the next thing on the docket. When do you start thinking about birth? Is it something you thought about before you were even pregnant or researched while you're pregnant? What's your background with birth?

MANDY MOORE: Oh, well, we sort of were indoctrinated into the cult of the business of being born.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Ah, the bomb.

MANDY MOORE: Ricky got us. We watched it before we were pregnant and you know, both wholeheartedly sort of took away from that experience the fact that we wanted to have a home birth.

And that's sort of what we, when we did find out that we were pregnant, you know, started the sort of search for a midwife and doula and we're just really excited about the fact that we were hoping, I know they say not to make a plan quote unquote, because plans can change as they have in our case. So it was like our intention. We were very intentional and excited about this prospect of being at home for the birth. And you know, it was like, I was like, Taylor, I want you to do a playlist, but also like, I want you to have the guitar on stage. But you're like, let's play.

MANDY MOORE: You know, it was just like, we were really excited about like what the whole experience was gonna be. And it's funny, we have ended up finding our midwife because she sort of was kind of in the same circle of friends. Her husband is also a musician and we had sort of met a couple of times just on the periphery, I guess, like socially and just had heard the most incredible things about her. And we met with a few people and I remember just speaking with her on the phone and Taylor and I were both like, this is it. Like, we have to work with Haley. She just has the most incredible. energy and knowledge and just like a deeply soulful, special human. And I knew right out

MANDY MOORE: of the gate that this, this was the person that I wanted to sort of go through this experience with. And I remember asking her, you know, we were really passionate about having a doula as well. And was there anybody that she loved and worked with? And immediately she was like, do you know Carson Meyer? I was like, yes, we were friends with Carson. Like Carson was the one that told us to watch the business of being born. And we were friends with her and her boyfriend. So it was just like this remarkable full circle moment of like, I mean, I would have loved to have worked with Carson, but I also wanted to defer to Hayley and who she perhaps felt the most comfortable with. So it was

MANDY MOORE: fantastic. I felt so immediately sold on this team that we had assembled and, you know, from very early on in pregnancy, like had them both on this journey with us.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Are you both more natural in your approach to health in general, you and Taylor?

MANDY MOORE: I think if anything, sure, we maybe lean more towards that, but I'm not opposed to Western medicine at all. But I definitely like, you know, to consider a more holistic approach, probably first and foremost. But I wouldn't say that we're like super crunchy granola. I didn't know anything about home birth before I had seen the business of being born. No, I didn't. I just assumed like, I hadn't really thought about a birth plan or I dreamed about being a mother for practically my whole life. But I just I guess in a way thought, oh, yeah, when that day comes, like I'll go to the hospital. You know, things will sort of unfold that way. I had never really taken into consideration or knew anybody, quite frankly, who had a home

MANDY MOORE: birth. And it's funny, once I saw the film, it was like, that world opened up to me. And it was like, I started sort of like, discovering that there are more people in our orbit that had chosen that path or a birth center or that kind of approach, I guess, to birth, then I guess I had realized.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, you know, I see the crunchy granola people, they know they're doing home birth from day one oftentimes, or very medicated birth. It's interesting to see a chewy

granola like you sort of like a Quaker chewy, just see the business of being born and totally fall in love with the idea since, you know, 97 or so percent of people give birth in the hospital. Okay, as it turns out, so Haley Oaks and Carson Meyer, who I've both also known for a long time and work with and soulful, spiritual, just so like sweet and smart and just like, they always make you feel like, no matter what's happening, it's gonna be okay. And they just have that mix of book smart street smart and just

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: pure soul just like they can read what's going on just by being in the same room as you to like spooky after try to hide my feelings. So that would have been the dream team. But in the end, you're not going that direction.

MANDY MOORE: In the end, I unfortunately can't go in that direction. The plan is still to labor at home with both of those wonderful ladies, the very apt description that you just unfurled there they are they truly feel like in the best hands, my platelets, you know, it sort of clots your blood, my platelets have been dropping throughout pregnancy. And it's something I never thought about until I got I'd say like early to midway through my third trimester, they sort of started dropping pretty precipitously and fell below the threshold that would make it possible for me to do a home birth. And so unfortunately, my plans have had to change. I initially was like, I got it. Absolutely. Like I am malleable. I'm going to do

MANDY MOORE: whatever it takes for this baby. And that is absolutely how I still feel. But the grieving process about my plan not unfolding the way that I had hoped, actually, like, I felt this like sort of delayed reaction. It was like a couple weeks afterwards that it really sort of sunk in like, oh, just hearing that other people that were planning to do home births and like feeling this weird tinge of jealousy. I know that sounds ridiculous. But I'm like, oh, man, like I'm happy for them. I'm also kind of sad that I don't get to have that experience that I was hoping for. But the plan now is to labor at home and then at a certain point in early active labor to go to the hospital and actually have the

MANDY MOORE: wonderful opportunity to deliver with a midwife at a hospital, which I know is not the normal experience. So I feel like at the end of the day, I'm kind of getting the best of both worlds. And I'm very, very grateful to still have the midwifery components to to my delivery.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I think that, you know, the universe has pushed you in a lot of different ways. You didn't get pregnant right when you thought you wanted to get pregnant and other things like that. And you know, so far, it's worked out well for you. So the fact that you get to sort of still be surrounded by those women you know probably for the bulk of your labor and then go to the hospital and still have midwiffic care there and you know now the numbers COVID numbers are coming down a lot of people are getting vaccinated a lot of people got sick and then recovered and have some natural immunity so our numbers are going down substantially and things are kind of slowly opening back up almost just in the time for you to open up

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and that makes things more available and accessible than they were even just a couple of weeks ago so I don't know the universe seems to have your back I mean I have your back but the universe also

MANDY MOORE: I do feel that no I'm I'm incredibly grateful and yes things didn't unfold the way that I wanted but I feel like that is the ultimate lesson of life and parenthood in this next chapter that we're

about to venture into so I'm really leaning into that and leaning into the idea of surrender and things are going to unfold exactly the way that they are supposed to and I trust that and I trust my body and I trust my team and I'm more or less just like excited you know I'm at that point where I'm like okay sir I am ready to meet you let's do this like oh I can't wait like I'm ready to embrace it's funny I think because I've done the hypnoborthing and I've done all these other like classes and stuff I feel as

MANDY MOORE: quote unquote prepared I know that I'm probably not remotely prepared at all but I feel confident going into this experience of you know that I can handle anything and again that like I really do trust my body to do what it's supposed to do and I'm just excited to see how it can unfold

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: yeah you do have this clear in touchness with your trust of your body the ability to surrender into something intense if you know that you're safe even if it's something you haven't felt before and I think you are fairly well prepared it's something you can never do a test run on and something nobody can ever explain to you what it's going to be like until you get there and something that's not even the same twice so you know you have different births each one's its own experience so you know your ability to sit down in a roller coaster you've never ridden before and be all excited for the ride is kind of exciting to watch and be a part of in general when you feel intensity you have visions on what's going to help you

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: surrender into intensity I call it intensity but also pain and physical things that you haven't

MANDY MOORE: felt before yeah I mean in theory I definitely have like breathing techniques that I'm going to employ mantras I think the idea of like I can do anything for a minute is something that really resonates with me like I can do anything for a minute also I'm a big hiker I love hiking I've climbed Mount Kilimanjaro I've done Everest Base Camp like I love I love a challenge of something that I've never done and maybe like don't necessarily have the expectation that I'm like I don't know what to expect I don't know if I have the strength to make it like all of those things and those quiet moments when you're climbing a peak and you're on a multi-day hike or something I imagine birth is for me like I know that people have lots of different

MANDY MOORE: intentions and visions on like a vision board and a flower opening and all those things are beautiful but for me I remember like going through these classes and like immediately was just struck by the analogy of like getting to the summit so it's like I feel like I'm going to envision a lot of like those moments of being on a mountain and just not knowing what was ahead of me but knowing that I had the ability to just keep putting one foot in front of the other and slowly sort of just like walking uphill like I can do that so that's what I think I'm going to sort of lean on in those moments I think I don't know I don't know what's

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: going to help quite frankly it's so powerful to be able to do it's a similar thing right it's intensity for a good cause it's a psychological battle and a physical battle at the same time battle is probably not the right word for it but a challenge where you need to tell your body keep going keep going and you know your body can do it it's just your mind has to like push you through all right the last couple of questions here one is the world the state of the world is aside from the pandemic the world's had to like such an interesting crossroads how do you feel about bringing a baby into the world as it stands today and

MANDY MOORE: how would you like to see it change I have to say it's been an interesting experience that like I'm someone who is kind of quasi obsessed with politics and to have to go through this political season without like the ability to have a glass of wine was trying at times but I made it I am really hopeful I feel like there is a lot to sort of tix talk of I feel like not necessarily that we've well in a way I feel like we've definitely turned a corner we're headed in the right direction and these things are not going to sort of dramatically improve overnight I think things will take a while to sort of steady themselves but I am confident in the direction we're holding. I'm excited to bring a child into this world

MANDY MOORE: and feel like there's conscientious, compassionate people at the helm kind of pointing us in the right direction now. And yeah, I'm way more excited about bringing a child into this world now than maybe I would have felt a couple of months ago. There's so much work to be done. But yes, overwhelmingly I think I feel confident and excited.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: One of the things that's helped me through 2020 is spending my time with really nice people who are very pregnant and about to make more nice people. And the truth is, I go into the office and I see people who are fairly conservative. I see people who are fairly liberal. Just really nice people on both sides of that aisle. And people who would really get along with the other people who I'm seeing if they focused even a half of a percent on what we have in common instead of our differences.

MANDY MOORE: What unites us and brings us together for sure. Totally.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And so my hope is that all these little corona babies are going to shed the purple light. You don't have to be pure this or pure that. You can mix a little red and blue. Don't bridge the gap, right? That's my hope.

MANDY MOORE: Totally, yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And bring back respectful conversation where pendulum swings back and forth and ultimately sometimes picks up momentum and going more extreme to one side or the other. But if we can kind of slow it down towards the middle would be quite wonderful. Did you guys pick a name?

MANDY MOORE: We did. You haven't shared it yet? We haven't shared it yet.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, you don't know. You don't have to share it here. I'm just curious.

MANDY MOORE: We shared it with our families. But yeah, we picked a name pretty early on and sort of stuck with it. Stay tuned.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Thank you. All right. And you know what? Thank you so much for it's so fun to talk to you. You're just a breath of fresh air and especially at 39 and a half weeks. I feel like I'm less comfortable than you are.

MANDY MOORE: That's very kind of you. I'm feeling good. I'm excited. And yeah, you're so much fun to talk to as well.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And then hopefully you'll come back after this baby comes out and have lots of new stories. My goodness, there'll be a fly in the wall while you bring this baby into the world. Mandy, where can we find you online?

MANDY MOORE: You can find me, I guess, on Instagram. I'm at Mandy Moore MN.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And you know, you guys know a lot happens on Instagram with Mandy's account. I've seen it. Yeah, you can find the love of your life on Instagram. Who knows? Exactly. That's where this whole story began. Thanks again for being here and at home. Thanks for listening to the Informed Pregnancy podcast. If you would like more pregnancy and parenting information, visit us online at informedpregnancy.com.

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