Alizee Gaillard - Before Birth

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IN THIS EPISODE

Model and mom-to-be Alizee Gaillard joins Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC to share the winding road that led to this pregnancy — a shocking low AMH result, eggs frozen in Spain, and the baby who arrived before any of the plans did. As she awaits her daughter's birth, Alizee opens up about embracing her changing body, letting go of the numbers, and why having control over her birth matters more to her than fear of it.

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DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Welcome to the informed pregnancy and parenting podcast. I'm your host after Elliott Berlin My guest today has been around the world and back again And she found her way from a small town in Switzerland to the French edition of America's next top model where she won it all She's a Haitian Swiss model and actress who's here to share with us her unique fertility journey and her pregnancy journey She's literally seconds away from giving birth I'm not sure which one of us is gonna pop first Ali's egg. I are welcome to the podcast

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Hi, thank you so much for having me. It's such a pleasure and honor to be on your podcast

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, it's incredible for a whole entire month since I met you

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Yes, it's changed my life. Really, you know, I'm not used to being around such positive people outside of my family

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I have the greatest family, but you know, look, I'll be honest with you. It's right now We're recording this in 2020 I have no idea if you're listening to this five years down the road 2020 everything they said about it was true It was a crazy nutty year and you had to look for hope in different places you had to find something positive to hang on to and Alize came into my life just at the right time and Brought her I don't know where it's from if it's the Swiss part or the Haitian part or how they play together Or the French but it's not the French But whatever it is, it's a great

combination you're very very warm positive person You've been through a lot and you came here to share some of your

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Interestingness, so I will jump right in where you're from. I am originally from Switzerland and Haiti

ALIZEE GAILLARD: So I was born in Switzerland when I was about two months old my parents moved to Canada first My mom is Swiss and my dad is Haitian. My dad had a vacation home in Canada in Quebec We moved there because we couldn't go to Haiti right away because of the political issues with the dictatorship So we had to wait about a year before moving to Haiti in 86 and I grew up there Until 93 until I was eight years old when my parents separated. I have a younger brother George Henry Then I moved to Switzerland as I said at eight years old and my mom was a single mom for about five years and My mom was a single mom for about five years and when I was about 13 she

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Reconnected with her first teenage love and he also was getting out of relationship with five kids So they got married their madly in love again And so we're seven children up on the farm in the Swiss Alps and they had one daughter together Rachel Who's turning 22 today?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: December happy birthday Shout out to Rachel and also what you know, we're close enough that if you hurry you could also have your baby on this day

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Exactly. And yeah, we're very close She's like my daughter because we're 13 years apart and being the first of the big family You're you know, like a second mom. So yeah, I always say that the best day of my life was when she was born

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Someone might steal the show now Yeah, that's like honestly my podcast was the number one in foreign pregnancy podcast Was the number one podcast on Apple for five years in my mother's house in my mother's house. Oh my house too now. Well thank you very much. My daughter knows your voice, for real. For sure, the kids come in afterwards and they see our pediatric chiropractor and I just go talk to them in my regular voice and you know, they cry. Just look at your legs, I know you. Yeah, they remember me, they remember my voice. It's really cool, it's fun. Anyway, I've been replaced, even in my mother's house, I've been replaced with my songs podcast, Poodie the Poodie. Poodie, yeah, awesome. So now I'm a distant

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: number two, even in my own mother's home. So I can see what happens if you drop this kid today. Of course, she's out of luck. So many questions. Okay, what do you

ALIZEE GAILLARD: speak, language-wise? So I speak five languages. I grew up speaking French and Creole in Haiti with my parents and then when I moved to Switzerland, I learned German in school from the age of eight and my grandmother is German as well. She's gonna be a great-grandma, 79 years old. Yeah, that's awesome. We're very close. And um... Creole, French, German. See, I'm like getting lost in the languages. And then I learned English in high school and Spanish. So that helps because my boyfriend is from Ecuador, so Spanish is always a good language to have. Also in California, so yeah. Wow. Yeah, I always feel kind of stupid, like I'm happy I can name five languages. Europeans, I mean, you guys have a better

ALIZEE GAILLARD: chance of speaking different languages. But I think also Swiss people in general, they at least speak three languages because you have to in school learn three languages. It's mandatory, so. Yeah, it's cool.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Americans, we always assume everybody's gonna just talk English wherever we go. But you know, you go to France, even though they can talk English, they won't, just to make a point. Yeah, sometimes it can be a bit snobbish in Paris, that's true. Yeah, but good food, guys, so don't worry, we love you. Yeah, good fashion too. And good fashion, that's something I don't know anything about, but you do. You ended up on this TV show, America's Next Top Model, in France. How'd that come to be? So I was

ALIZEE GAILLARD: just living on my farm in Switzerland, in a tiny village with 300 people, and one day I got a call before my 21st day, and they were casting for that show. And first, I thought it was a joke, I didn't call. And then a week later, they call again, and I'm like, Oh, indeed, it's a French number. And I decided to call back, they were doing the casting between France, Switzerland, and Belgium, the three speaking countries in Europe, with 12,000 girls that went to the casting, and I made it to the final selection. And then I made it to the show, which was so unexpected. And I still don't know today who sent pictures of me to the casting, but I'm very grateful for it, because I ended up winning that show. And that kind of launched my career.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow, congratulations. A few things. So first of all, 12,000 people applied. Yes. And then how many start out on the show?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: I think it was 14.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, so that's already like, 100,000 essentially. And then you won. Do they have you do all sorts of crazy stuff?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Oh, yeah, things I never did actually after ever again, like shooting with the giant snake, completely naked, or being hung up from, you know, a cord up in the middle of a circus, like crazy things, you know,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: are scary? Are you like those some like,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: no, I love adventure. I love challenges. So I was like, Yay, let's go and do it. You know, I mean, there's not much I'm afraid of. So

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: yeah, I mean, I'm a little adventurous, but I at least like

ALIZEE GAILLARD: to wear my socks when I have a giant snake. Yeah, I didn't get that luxury. Unfortunately. Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's why I couldn't possibly be on that show. Is it all women?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: All women? Yes. It was the first French American next up model. So that was pretty cool. And I believe it was the first time that it was a Swiss person that won a French TV show. Very unexpected. Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You plowed through a barrier.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Yeah. So that's why it was like, you know, in Switzerland, it was a big hit. And still today I have visibility there thanks to that show. So it was really great.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's nice. You grew up in a town of 300 people. Like, are there stores in a town that size?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: There's a tiny little food store. And that's it. And back then, we did not have TV at home. My stepfather did not want us to have TV. So we had to, like, ask a neighbor every week for every episode, hey, can we come by and the whole family would just show up at a neighbor's house and we would just watch the episodes, you know. That's how it was. And I like that lifestyle because it was just like very healthy. We would grow our own vegetables and fruits, you know, our own meat and milk and cheese. It's a cheese farm.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: What kind of cheese did you make?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Raclette and fondue cheese. Very good. I miss it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: lot. Were you hands-on in the cheese-making process from raising the cows and milking them?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Having eight kids on the farm is basically free labor, you know? And being the oldest one is like being the second mom, so there was not much vacation, but it was fun because we would work out in the fields during the summer and we were more tanned than people who would go to take some vacation on the beach, you know? So that was fun. It gave me a good work ethic, for sure. Yeah. When did you come to the U.S.? So I moved to New York in 2010, so five years after I won the show, and I lived in Paris, Milan and different other markets around the world, and then I decided to move to New York 2010 because that was, you know, for a model, I think New York is really the place to be, and I did really well there. I was very happy,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: and then my father passed away, and I was like, oh, it was kind of a, you know, step in the face. I wasn't much in touch with him since I was eight years old until 21, and yeah, I went to see him when I was 21 years old in Haiti, but then not much contact, but he passed away when I was 25, and I was in New York working, and I was like, what am I doing away from my family? You know, what is important in life? So I decided to move back to Switzerland, so I went into political science, which I loved, and took like a two-year break of full-time modeling. I just modeled on the side, but I was still always every week in a plane working, you know? And in 2012, I was like, you know what, I want to try out

ALIZEE GAILLARD: acting just to get into commercials first, not really to go into acting. So I came to L.A. for three months just to try out, and I loved it, and I just fell in love with acting, and I was like, that's it, I'm moving here. I didn't finish my studies, and I've been here since. So you're just political, no Psy? Yeah. Just Polly? Yeah, just Polly.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: No Psy. You never got to the Psy. Ugh, that's another subject. Polly's just here. Oh, politics. Oh, you noticed. You caught right on. Yeah, crazy. Well, this is why I'm so excited that you're here. I mean, like I said, 2020 was an awful, awful year. Everything you hear about it was absolutely true. It was a weird year, but for me it was, I mean,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: I am having a family, so it's been an amazing year, you know, for me at least. I mean, the world, it's collapsing, and everything is such a weird time, but I'm very grateful of this pregnancy and what's happening right now, so I can be mad at 2020, personally.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: No, you can't. But I think no matter what happens, like even in a 2020 year, you're just the positive kind of person that you have to find and attach yourself to, to stay sane. So you certainly bring a breath of fresh air to our office when you stop by. From the Swiss Alps. From the Swiss Alps. All right. You had a very interesting fertility journey. It wasn't easy, and it was all sorts of things, and a lot of people have them and don't talk about them, but you're European, so nothing's off limits. We're going to take a quick break, and when we come back, we will talk about fertility with Alize brand C, four times and brand D, four times. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy Podcast.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: We're talking to Alize Geyart and then we're talking about fertility. Well, right now, you're super pregnant and you're, I mean, literally about to pop. We've never had a baby on the podcast, but I'm hoping tonight that that could change. I'm sending like vibes through the internet. web there. Just my little induction vibes. But it wasn't the easiest journey for you. When did your fertility and how did it start?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: So when I was 33, I was just getting out of a long-term relationship and I decided to have my fertility checked because I wanted to freeze my eggs. Because I'm like, you know, I don't want to rush into finding someone and blah, blah, blah. I find myself being 40 and not finding the person. So I just want to have a little security so I want to freeze my eggs. So I went to Switzerland. Usually I like to do my checkups there because it's such a different health system, you know, which I prefer. And I go to the doctor and I said, yeah, I'd like to just check my fertility, my hormones level. And he's like, oh, don't worry. You're young. You don't need to freeze your eggs. And I'm like, no,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: no, really. I would like to see where I'm at. And I really want to do that for myself. And he's like, all right, we'll check everything. And he gave me a call like a day later, which is usually not a good news when the doctor calls you. And he says, well, everything is fine, but there's that one hormone called AMH hormone, entymolurin hormone, that's really low. And I'm glad you insisted into checking your hormone level. And actually, it would be a good idea to freeze your eggs because your AMH level is very low. And I'm like, what does it mean? Because I've never heard of that before. And he said, um, basically your ovarian reserve is declining. And I'm like,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: what? Like I'm 33. What do you mean? It's declining. He's like, yeah, you don't have many eggs left, you know, for someone your age. And he said that my egg count was about the same as someone who was 40, 45 year old. So for me, it was such a shock because coming from a big family, I never envisioned or imagined that I could have a fertility issue, you know, and also credit. My mom was really young when she had me, she was 18. And then my brother 20. And then she had my sister at 32. So for her, it was, you know, she was never consuming any of these issues. And my aunts either had kids younger, so it was not a problem. So basically with that blood test, it gives you an estimation of the number of

ALIZEE GAILLARD: follicles that you have inside your ovaries. And for people who don't know exactly, because I have no clue before. And every month, only one of these follicles turns into an egg

to then be fertilized potentially. And for me, I only had five follicles in my ovaries. It's very, very low, which was 0.8 was the number. So the normal number is between one and four for like, someone has a normal fertility and mine was like below one, which is really low. And I was like, okay, well, I need to freeze my eggs. And then the doctor was like, yeah, I think it's a good idea. So I went to Spain and did it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And I love a good Spanish omelet. I did a bit of my research and the laws were more flexible

ALIZEE GAILLARD: over there. You can have your eggs frozen for a longer time. It was also a better cost than other countries. And it's kind of like the place to go in Europe. One of the main places to go. You were living here in the U.S. at that time, no? Yes, but like I looked at the prices in Spain to the whole process. Egg freezing, like medications and everything was $3,000. To do it in the U.S. was $16,000. And that doesn't include parking in Beverly Hills. Exactly. Another $16,000. Yeah. Wow, that's a great deal. That makes me want to go freeze my eggs in Spain. Just go to Europe and freeze eggs there. Thank you. Thank you for that tip. But it's true because, yeah, it's so insanely expensive in the U.S. So I was like, you know

ALIZEE GAILLARD: what, I'll just do it in Spain. And the process was so easy and smooth and, you know, it was wonderful. So I had a great experience with it. I flew with my sister to Spain. My younger sister Rachel came with me and accompanied me through the whole process. And they tell you, you know, they're like, oh, you need to rest the off after the intervention and everything. I'm such a like go getter. I'm like, go, go, go, go. So I was like, okay, I woke up. I'm like, what time is it? Okay, we're going to catch an excite to Switzerland. Let's go home. You know, I was just like, this is what I got to do. I did it. And then so I stayed a little bit longer in Europe for that because I was just supposed to be there

ALIZEE GAILLARD: two weeks. And I stayed for two good months. And when I came back to LA, it really hit me what happened basically. And I think I could tell, I could say that I got into kind of a depression for like two, three months. I was not doing well. Yeah. For the first time in my life, I'm like, Oh, not doing so well. But it was an interesting thing to go through because also then my grandfather passed in December, actually two years ago yesterday. And I was like, you know what? He wouldn't want me to be so sad, he wanted me to be down. And it was kind of stopping my face, you know, woke me up and I can't let myself be so sad and give so much power into numbers in a way, you know, life

ALIZEE GAILLARD: is so much more mysterious than that. So I can't just let the doctor tell me well, he was like, Oh, you basically have to have kids like right now. And I was like, what? Okay, single. I'm not really ready yet for that. And I mean, I was, I just hadn't found my person. And then I snapped out of it and positive person came back and everything was fine again. And, and then I met my now partner, Jorge, who's wonderful. I mean, I had met him that summer 2018, but I was traveling and this and that. And I said, you know, let's reconnect when I get back, which we did. And we reconnected in March. And since April 2019, last year, we've been together. And it's been a wonderful journey. And I told him right away what was

ALIZEE GAILLARD: happening, maybe after a month. And I said, Well, you know, I don't know if that's in your plans. He's like the most family person I have ever met. He's so incredible, you know, like, the Latin in him is very, you know, super close to his family. But that wasn't his plan, but not right now. He was like, Oh, not yet, you know, maybe four or five years. And I said, Well, I don't have four or five years. And can you lower down the number maybe? And we talked about it. And I said, Well, I'm willing to wait. And he was willing to go to be down his numbers of years, you know, compromise, exactly. And you can't just jump into a relationship and well, let's have babies. You know, so we just we

ALIZEE GAILLARD: dated for about a year. And he was very reassuring. He's like, you know, don't let the doctor scare you into into that and things will work out. Things will be fine, you know, because 95% of the time, I was always like, Yeah, of course, anything will be fine. But then that 5% was freaking out like, Oh, my God, oh, my God, my God, what if I went out of time? What if I went out of eggs? And, and the thing with the image level two is, it doesn't tell you your capability of getting pregnant. Because you can have sex once and get pregnant right away. It just tells you the window of time you have left to get pregnant, you know. So then the quarantine hit. And we're both of us in my place. And what happened is, I wasn't on birth

ALIZEE GAILLARD: control for the last two years. You say no birth control or low birth control? No birth control, birth control. We're just counting the days like very precisely to avoid getting pregnant. That was in the plan of 2021 22. 2020 yet, you know, and still building our life together. So we had been together for almost a year then. And then I was sick in February, I got it took antibiotics. And then he put my cycle a bit off track. So in March came, and I was late, I was 35 days and I was like, Wow, I don't have a period that's so strange. I called the OB and he's like, Don't worry, did you take any antibiotics? And I said, Yes, indeed. He's like, Oh, that's probably it. Don't worry. I'm like,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: okay, then April comes and again, I'm late 37 days and usually every 27 28 days, I have a period. And then I started having weird symptoms. And he was like, your boobs are bigger. That's weird. And, you know, I had hot flashes and, and I was just being very sensitive to smell. And then we were like, okay, 37 days without period. That's strange. And in my mind, I'm like, okay, that's it. I have low ovarian reserve. I'm going into menopause. And he's like, Come on, that's, you know, you're too young to go into menopause. We're joking about it. And we did a test. And we did a first cute little video kind of recording us finding out. And we read it negative. And we were like, Oh, okay. And I'm like, Okay, well,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: I know something's wrong with me and we do it the next morning. Not with the video. I was just in bed, like, just woke up. I did it put the alarm with the stick next to me. And then the alarm rang. I looked on the stick and I was like, it said yes. And I was like, Oh my god, it was such a shock. And I was like, babe, oh my god, look, he was like, what? And I'm like, I'm pregnant. He's like, what? We couldn't believe it. You know, it was so surreal. And we did a third one to make sure. And realize the one Yeah, but because it was just so unexpected. And we realized the one from the night before was actually positive. But we misread it. Oh, we're positive. Yeah, we just were big rookies and read properly. Yeah. So yeah. And then

ALIZEE GAILLARD: when I went to see my and that was I found that on birthday, which was 22nd of April, I think, approximately nine months ago. Yeah, right before my birthday, my 35th birthday. And I went to see my OB. And he said, Oh, so went to do IVF because I had asked him for recommendations in town to maybe do a second round and he said no and I said no and it was natural he was like what and then I said yeah we're not even trying he's like what that's like a miracle yeah you're trying not to yeah he's like you're your man has

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: stiffness for me you're actually really fertile so yeah so here we go so

ALIZEE GAILLARD: okay so you still have eggs in Spain yeah but you know what my number was so

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: low I only have two eggs oh you have two eggs yeah yeah but apparently you still have eggs in you so exactly so we got exactly number two yeah okay good that means I have a job security exactly totally I love that we're gonna take a break because now that you're pregnant we'll talk about your pregnancy and your plans for your upcoming birth and how they've changed at the last minute but before that I do have one question that's been on my mind for the past ten minutes what language do you think in mostly English to be honest okay there we go me too okay we're the same Z's nobody can tell us apart okay we're gonna take a quick break we'll be right back with Ali say welcome back to the informed pregnancy podcast it's dr. V with

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: always say during the break she did not have the baby just by way of an update we still have about ten minutes so who knows it could happen alright so you found out you're pregnant very interesting surprise for you and your partner I mean you had compromised and said let's wait a couple of years you wanted sooner he wanted later I mean did he get on board was he like sad

ALIZEE GAILLARD: was he excited so I wasn't being nervous about his reaction I couldn't because first of all I couldn't believe it he was such a shock and second of all I wanted him to be happy I wanted him to want it as much as I wanted it you know and his reaction was just amazing he was just saying all right let's do this and I was blown away I'm like okay and for two three days I could feel him being maybe quiet and I couldn't fully enjoy it yet and enough to three days he was like super excited to be because we were saying we're 35 both of us if that happens it happens you know it's meant to be so there's no other path so yeah we'll be parents yeah

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and between the two of you you're 70 exactly okay how were your first and second trimester and also the fact that you're a model and models like your whole business is your body and how you look you know I've had a bunch of models come through the office very professional models and career based models and like you know some of them are very excited about the changes and the bump and you know some of them are so freaked out about it because they're so used to focusing on every line and curve and it all changes during pregnancy so first of all how'd you feel during your first and second trimester and second of all how have the body changes been

ALIZEE GAILLARD: for you so I thought I would be like my mother she had the easiest pregnancies never sick one day and delivered the baby so quickly and the first trimester was really rough for me I

was very sick I was in bed for almost two months throwing up every day terrible nausea and yeah couldn't eat I lost a little bit of weight at the beginning and then on the fourth month on then he was just such a bliss you know it was amazing it was easy even now I'm super active I don't really work out right now in a bit lazy during my pregnancy but I mean in the sense very active I'm doing things around the house all the time I still cook as much or go out see my friend as much and I'm ready to pop but my friends like hey come on over

ALIZEE GAILLARD: I'm like okay sure you know I've been staying a very small circle obviously because of coping I only see two couples all the time um my closest friends leave a block away but yeah so it's been for me I only started showing my bump around five and a half six months but the longest time I wasn't showing anything no wage no bump nothing probably a combination of being

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: your first pregnancy being super tall and being I think that combination of

ALIZEE GAILLARD: three things yeah probably yeah that's true but then from one month to another I gained 20 pounds and I was like whoa the bump came and so far I've gained 50 so like 48 50 pounds for the whole pregnancy and it was a bit of a surprise I didn't expect to be as much weight but you know what there's a time for everything I mean I've worked 15 years modeling and I've been lucky that I never had to really watch my weight or diet or anything like that. And now I'm like embracing the pregnancy. I feel so blessed and so grateful to become a mother that it's so secondary for me and I'll have all the time in the world to lose it later. That's fine.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You know, that's what I say every single day for the past 30 years. There's always a plus size modeling, you know, if I don't lose a 50 pounds, no, I'm kidding. But yeah, no, we can model together. We could audition for the same gigs. I, uh, but you are modeling now, not, you know, pregnancy modeling.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Yes. It's a completely different market that I had no idea of. I was hoping I could work a little bit here and there. And, um, surprisingly it's been pretty good, of course, because of what's happening. There's less work, but I've been pretty active and working with different brands and it's been a great experience. You work less hours. They pamper you even better than usually and pays better than before too. I mean, yeah, it's great. I love, I'm like, I can just do pregnancy modeling forever. I love it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, and you want to have that next kid right away. So maybe you can for a while.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Exactly.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: In terms of birth, you know, did you have preconceived ideas? No pun intended about how you might give birth. Did you do research along the way? What kind of plan did you make and has it stayed the same? Where has it started to change?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: So coming from Europe, you know, the treatments are so different first of all, you see the organicologist where it comes near every year. And you see the doctor at least 45 minutes to an hour. Sometimes you just, yeah, it's like, there's no nurse that checks your weight and all of this and your vitals and no, you just see the doctor and you speak about all everything that's

going on. And then he checks you with even the breast exam that you never do here. Like that's a yearly thing that we do in Switzerland. And here, when I came to the U S it's like, you have this really rustic chair and you pull out these two metal pieces. You put your feet on there in Switzerland. I feel like I'm in alien with this giant chair and futuristic.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: And they do a sonogram every year to check your ovaries and everything. So, you know,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, 45 minutes, none of the doctors, our models just not set up that way to spend the kind of time with people.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: And if you, if you have 10, five, seven minutes, you're lucky. Yeah. So that's why I really didn't like the experience. I felt like every appointment was kind of rushed, even though the doctors that I was seeing are great, you know, but I just didn't like the lack of connection and really such a number. So I decided after being advised by a friend of mine who went into more natural birth and burning center. Sorry. Oh yeah. Birth center. Yeah. So after being advised by a friend and through her experience, I'm actually the mother of her daughter. She went into a burning center and she kind of introduced me to that world. I was contemplating doing a home birth or birth center, but I'm like,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: maybe for baby number two, but I'm still going to do a hospital birth, but I really wanted something with more time and care. So I decided to have a midwife now, thank God I can have my partner and a second person before it was just one person. So I wanted to have a midwife, but then I can't have a midwife at Cedars with me. And thanks to you, you told me, well, why don't you get a monetarist? And I was like, what is a monetarist? And you explained to me that it was a mix of both a doula and a midwife so that she can do the prenatal consultations and postpartum care as well and be there for the labor with me at home. And then once we get to the hospital, she turns into a doula. So that's what I did.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: And my plan changed really last minute because I knew my first initial doctor, my OB, I knew she was pregnant, but she didn't really make it clear with me that her duty was before mine. So when I was 36 weeks pregnant, I said, just innocently, like out of the blue, I asked, well, by the way, what do you do? And she told me she would do like the date was before mine. And I was like, wait a minute. So you won't even be there for the birth. And she's like, no, I'm like, oh, that's just great. You know, I was a bit bummed because if I had known that I would have probably been with another OB because I feel more comfortable being followed by the same person that will be there at the delivery. Yeah.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: So I changed doctor in the same practice, but I went with Dr. Brock because I heard about him on your podcast, first of all. Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It was several episodes, Dr. Brock. Yeah.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Yeah. And also because he has the lowest rate of C-section at Cedars. And I really want something without the least intervention possible. Obviously, if my health or the baby's health requires intervention, sure, that's fine, but I don't want to be encouraged to get pitosis and all that stuff, at least eventually to C-section, you know, so I really trust this doctor. 37 weeks I actually

started seeing him, which is super late. And I also got my midwife, yeah, also at 37 weeks I found her.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So your whole plan changed a lot at 37 weeks, you went from a new doctor, and 37 weeks just like you're already termed, you know, you're already in the zone of when the baby can come. That's when you found your doctor and your doula slash monetarist. So it's going to be your partner and your monetarist laboring with you at home, and then when you go to the hospital, Dr. Brock will attend your birth.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: And also because part of me was thinking, you know what, I can just keep on with the same OB and when she gives birth, I'll just switch with whatever doctor will be available then at the office, you know. But then I'm like, no, I only get to give birth like once, two, three times maybe. So I really want to take that chance and have more control over what's happening and choose my birth, I mean, my daughter's birth, you know, planning better.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, it sounds like you want to labor at home for a while, which is great to have a monetarist there because they do have medical training, medical benefits, you know, they can monitor things, they can monitor your surveys, they can monitor your baby's heart rate, they can monitor your vital signs and make sure that things are going really well. And that can help you stay home confidently longer. And then also, you know, things are going well, make sure you don't get to the hospital until you're close to the end. And so you're just ready for the last bit of transition and pushing. I mean, it sounds like a great plan. And you're strong and healthy and tall and you have a fairly decent chiropractor, everything should go well.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It's all in the chiropractor, you know, that's the whole secret. It's a lot of pressure, I mean, it's a lot of pressure, I would say. Do you have fear at all about childbirth? You're so like European confident. I'm like, once you have a snake on you and you're naked, does all fear away? Is it?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: You know, I think women have been birthing for centuries and centuries. And of course, when it happens to you, it's different. It's a whole new experience, but I'm not afraid of it at all. In a weird way, maybe I'm just totally naive about it. And I'll be like, oh, my God, it was the worst. It was so painful. And I'll try to go without the epidural. But if it's too painful, you know, I'll consider getting the epidural because I don't take any pride of being in pain and be like, I did it without an epidural. You know, whatever works best at the time will do. So, no, I'm not afraid of birthing itself. I'm only afraid of not having control over decisions that are made at the hospital. And that's why I took a midwife or monetarist,

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Kimberly Boncaron. She's if I say her name right. She's wonderful and really clicked and just having someone to advocate for me, you know, because as much as I've learned through your podcast, I'm not a doctor. I don't know everything about all of these medical terms necessarily. I'm way more informed than I was a couple of months ago, sure. But for me, that is the part that I'm like, OK, 30 percent of birth in the US are caesarean. It's crazy to me.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, it's very high. Most of them are not people asking for caesarean. They're unexpected caesarean.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Yeah, which I understand and I respect, too. It's just not my personal choice. It's just such a personal decision that, you know, I'm not judging anyone's decisions, but that's just not my decision. And so that's the only thing that I would fear in a way that I'm letting control, you know. So that's why I have Kim with me and my partner.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, I'm on the same page. I think there's a million great ways to give birth. You know, it's great to explore the different options and pick the one that's best for you and then surround yourself with a team of people who are going to support you all the way in your choices, as long as you're within the realm of health. And, you know, you're open minded to interventions, too, if you need them, which takes off some of the pressure. I'm just like, I must do it this way. No. All right. I'm, you know, forever grateful to spend time with you and.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Likewise, always a pleasure.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Your warm Swiss, Haitian energy. And I'm excited for you. I don't even know if I'll see you again before you pop.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Maybe. Maybe, maybe not. We'll see. I'll let you know.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It's a story of my life. But either way, you've committed to coming back and sharing with us how the experience goes. So hopefully next time we talk to you, you'll have a sweet little baby in your arms and a great story to tell.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Mm hmm. I hope an easy and smooth delivery.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Smooth. I can hope for easy, but I hardly ever see easy smooth.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: You know, it's labor. I know it's like, I don't think I'll be like my mother because she's an alien. But when I asked her, did you have to get it up and know why? Didn't really hurt that much. I'm like, what? Like she's the only person that ever said that I know is not going to be me because, you know, she wasn't sick. She didn't have any symptoms and I was sick like a dog. And you never know until you get there.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I think it's a mindset, maybe two or I don't know. Yeah, I do have one final question for you. Where can we find you online?

ALIZEE GAILLARD: So you can find me on my Instagram. It's at Alizee, A-L-I-Z-E, underscore, Gaia, G-A-I-L-L-A-R-D. Or my website is www.alizee-gaia.com.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, wow. This could be a whole other episode. On Instagram, it's an underscore, but on www, it's a hyphen.

ALIZEE GAILLARD: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. OK, good cliffhanger. Alizee, thanks for joining me and sharing your story, and also for teaching me how to pronounce Gaia. And also at home, thanks for listening to the Informed Pregnancy podcast. If you like our show, share us with your friends. Like us in your app, and leave us some feedback. And then visit us online at informedpregnancy.com.

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