Jen Lilley - Before Birth #2

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IN THIS EPISODE

Jen Lilley thought she was done. After fostering and adopting two boys, she experienced pregnancy exactly once — with her daughter Julie — and checked it off the list for good. Then, while using a family-planning app that had worked for five years, she woke up in Canada to shoot a Christmas movie with sore boobs and a feeling she could not shake, peed on a stick that said negative, and told the whole production not to worry. Days later, a French Canadian pregnancy test, a trash can, a virtual fitting, and a phone call to her manager — before her husband even knew — turned that relief upside down. Now Jen joins Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC, very pregnant with a surprise fourth child, to talk through a harder, more uncomfortable pregnancy than Julie's, lightning pains, a suture allergy that makes a C-section genuinely frightening, and why she is determined to avoid another breech baby. With midwifery care, a hospital tub, a rolling pin in her birth bag, and three due dates in May, her prayer is simple: a rested start and regular contractions with breaks in between. Will this baby follow the plan — and will Jen even make it to May?

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DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Welcome to the informed pregnancy parenting podcast. I'm your host prenatal focus car parker. Dr. Elliott Berlin My guest today is a repeat guest on the podcast. She's been here twice before and She's an amazingly fun person to talk to and to be around. She's an accomplished artist She's an actor. You know her from soap operas, you know her from the hallmark channel. She's my mom's favorite hallmark actor And last time I saw her she had three kids under three and now she's like about to pop again So Jen, Lily, welcome back to the podcast I cannot believe we're here again I mean Okay, let's go back to something. I feel like you once told me that you never plan to get pregnant and have kids

JEN LILLEY: Okay So yes in short I became a foster parent thought that my husband and I would just kind of foster and care for children and then Let them go back to their families. Hopefully more healed and full And then we ended up adopting our first placement Kaden and his little brother Jeff and while we were fostering Jeffrey we were like well We've already gone over the edge of becoming

parents We might as well try to get pregnant and I did want to experience pregnancy But only one time You know, I think it's incredible what women's bodies can do between Creating the whole baby to breastfeeding to birth. I mean, it's all really fascinating But I know on my last visit with you post Julie

JEN LILLEY: I was like, yeah check that off the list of accomplishments. I never want to do that again like glad I did it we're done

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, and you literally had three kids under three Yeah And somehow you always have a smile. You always look like you got good sleep And you make it look very easy the whole thing you make pregnancy look easy you make Fostering and adoption look easy. I don't know how you did it We did a whole episode on fostering adoption and it's still Like is in my mind fairly freshly, especially because of the pandemic and how that affected the whole fostering system So yeah, and then I remember distinctly you're saying good. I'm good. But here you are again Did you change your mind did the universe demand more from you?

JEN LILLEY: No, I did not change my mind. In fact, you know, I have three due dates I don't know how all the due dates are calculated like may 7th may 11th may 13th and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: May 13th is my birthday

JEN LILLEY: Oh I kind of hope she does not stay in Extremely uncomfortable, but if she does i'll let you know and i'll you know We'll celebrate that she shares a birthday with you Um, yeah, i'm still processing it I mean i'm still like waking up in the morning being like is this real Oh, but i'm having lightning and I have to pee and i'm having a contraction because I have to pee So yeah, it's real

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's real It's very much very real Unplanned a little happy surprise

JEN LILLEY: I mean Okay, so I Wanted to foster again I remember saying hey to my husband. Hey, maybe when julie our daughter Is about three she'll be three at the end of the summer You know, maybe when julie's three we should start fostering again And of course my husband jason's like are you insane? We have a five-year-old a four-year-old and a two-year-old And I shoot most of my movies in Canada for like six weeks and guess who gets to stay with the kids? Jason. So he's like, yeah, you're right. You get to go off and you know, fake fall in love with all of these guys and we're not fostering yet. And then I guess God had other plans because we got pregnant. And so we're having an infant, whether it's via foster care or my own body,

JEN LILLEY: I guess it's via my own body. But yeah, it was a surprise for sure. I say once you're already having another kid, why not also foster? Yeah, you have four children, don't you?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I do have four children. It was my wife's idea. So here's my theory on parenting and I wanna know your opinion. You go from one to two and I feel that that is extremely shocking as a parent. But then the leap from two to three kids is exponentially more shocking. Now, the leap to three to four, most people say, listen, you're already under the water. You've already drowned. The kids have you outnumbered. What's another five feet? Oh yeah, Jim Gaffigan said that. He said, if you wanna know what it's like to have a fourth baby, just picture yourself drowning and someone hands you a baby. And that's pretty much what it's like. But here's what I found. Yours is a

little unique for two reasons. They happen like right on top of each other.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And it's this kind of mix between biological and adopted kids, which are different processes of them coming into your world. And they each have their own challenges and they're different. So I can't speak to your specific, but I can tell you that overall, over the past almost 20 years of working in pregnancy, most moms, most birthing partners tell me that when they have their second, it's the craziest change in the world. It's like a huge, huge increase. It's not even double, it's triple or more. And the dads or non-birthing partners tell me that it's okay, it's an increase, but it's okay. And then when you have the third, that's when the dad or non-birthing one is like, holy crap, this is a lot of work.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And then the mom is sort of like, yeah, it's okay. So what happens there is I find like in the most common setup, the woman will have the second baby and then be around that baby all the time, both babies. So she's already outnumbered by the second one. But for me, for example, when we had our second and I was home, my wife was also usually home. So it was still not outnumbered. It was still like man on man, you know, defense. And then she had to really know how to thrive with two needy customers at the same time, but I didn't yet. And then the third one came and like, I'll be home and she's taking care of the baby and I'm outnumbered with the other two. And that's when I had to get used to taking care

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: of two needy customers at the same time, you know, and it was a big challenge for me. But either way, I think for both of us, by the time that fourth one came along, yeah, it was whatever.

JEN LILLEY: Yeah, like I'm way less stressed about this baby than I was with Julie.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, that's good. Yeah, it is good. Well, okay, inquiring minds wonder the surprise, like, you know. Yeah. How hard you were trying to not get pregnant.

JEN LILLEY: Well, first of all, I was doing natural planning, which had worked for us for five years before Julie.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Is that literally just looking at the calendar and being like, this is a safe time, this is a less safe time?

JEN LILLEY: Yes, and I had an app that I used that had always been super accurate for me. And I remember after I had stopped breastfeeding Julie, you know, it takes a while for a woman's body to get back to, I only breastfed Julie for 11 months, but then I got on, well, you know, I mean, some women breastfeed for a long time, but I went on like a stronger birth control pill and I hate birth control, you know, but it does take like a while for your body to get back into a rhythm. So I was on birth control, but I retain a lot of water and it makes me feel crazy like it does for a lot of women. So I got off of birth control in January of 2021. So come like August, 2021, my cycle had been in a regular rhythm and I don't fully know what happened,

JEN LILLEY: but we went by the app when it said we were like in the fertile zone, we did not have sex, we like did full abstinence. And then the week after we had sex three times because I was going to Canada and I remember like... Thursday, I know the day I conceived. I know I did. I woke up like

two days later, same thing I did with Julie. And I was like, Oh no, I feel pregnant. Like my boobs were sore. And I just like, I feel pregnant. And so I was like, Oh my gosh, I was going to Canada to go shoot a movie for Christmas. And I remember being like, this is not good because I didn't want to be pregnant. And so I got some pregnancy tests out that I had, threw them in my bag and went off to Canada. I'm in line at the customs situation in Canada.

JEN LILLEY: And I am feeling so pregnant. Like I have all the early symptoms, just like sore boobs and like tired. And I just, I know I'm pregnant. I'm convinced. I texted my friend Ashley, who used to be our nanny. She's incredible. She's like early childhood development degree. She is also a nurse. I mean, so right. So she can like teach my kids how to read and give them a tracheotomy, God forbid. She's super reliable. Yeah, she's amazing. And I remember texting her and my husband Jason in a group text. And I was like, y'all better pray right now because I think I am pregnant. And she's like, this is the best news ever. I have been praying that you would get pregnant. She was like,

JEN LILLEY: I thought I was going to move back to Oklahoma. And I like really wanted you to get pregnant. This is so great. And remember you said you wanted a baby, like when Julie was about three and I'm like, you stopped right now. And Jason's just like, oh my gosh. So then my husband says, oh, huh. Well, I did make that joke to my family. And like, what are you talking about? He goes, I told them you were pregnant with twins. I was like, okay, I got to get through customs. Like y'all stop right now. You better just say a prayer because I do not feel good. And I'm in this line and I do not know what we're going to do other than Ashley. You're not moving to Oklahoma if I'm pregnant.

JEN LILLEY: So I go through customs. I wake up the next day and I don't feel pregnant. And I'm like, thank you, Jesus. This is great. And so Ashley's texting me every day. Have you peed on a stick yet? Have you peed on a stick? And I'm like, no, you know, I I'll wait till, you know, like the first day of my supposedly missed period. And she's like, okay, when is that? I'm like, it's Friday. Like it was like a week from them. Like I had early symptoms. Friday comes, I get the stick out. I pee on it. It's negative. I breathe a huge sigh of relief. And I'm like, okay, great. Meanwhile, I'm doing a two week quarantine. So it's Friday, negative pregnancy test. No problem. I think the Wednesday rolls around. And again, I'm sitting in my laptop. I'm

JEN LILLEY: working on like my Christmas is not canceled campaign for children in foster care. And again, like very sore boobs, very strong pregnancy symptoms. And I'm like, this is not good. This is not good. I'm going into a fitting that following Friday for my movie. Oh, and by the way, the director I'm working with, and the crew, and the production company, all the same people that I worked with when I found out I was pregnant with Julie.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Your verse. Oh, that's hilarious.

JEN LILLEY: I had already made a joke to them in a zoom. Don't worry, I already peed on a stick. It was negative. Oh, accurate. Like, oh, good. Because that was very scary for us last time finding out you're pregnant after we filmed. So I'm like, on Amazon, in Canada, I'm like Inca backwards, like French Canadian quarters. And I'm like, Oh, my gosh, I've got to get a pregnancy test like rush to this hotel. Like, I have to know like, this is not good. I'm texting Ashley. And she's like, I haven't stopped praying. Now I'm praying for twins. And I'm like, then my in laws make some joke about me being pregnant. And then Jason's like, Oh, yeah, I need a joke that Jen's pregnant with twins again. And I'm

like, this is not good. This is not going well.

JEN LILLEY: Spoiler alert, it's not friends. We don't think I mean, unless we're in for a major surprise. But

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: you did say you feel big.

JEN LILLEY: I feel huge. We did ask our midwives to check a couple times. Like, are you sure there's not two in there? But Friday arrives, I'm supposed to go into this fitting this like virtual zoom fitting because it's like all COVID right. And Amazon arrives first with the test. Again, by Friday, I don't feel pregnant anymore. So I'm thinking, okay, great. They're coming in with the dresses. I'll just go pee on this second stick. So that I can just get it out of my mind and be done with it. I go into the bathroom, pee on the stick. And I think it's negative. And it was one of those moments in life, where everything goes into slow mo. And it's like, I see the pregnancy test. Like making its way into the trash can. And then I'm like seeing in my head,

JEN LILLEY: this is a French Canadian test. Those lines are different than on the pregnancy test. So luckily the housekeeper had just taken out the trash. So I go back into the trash can. I take out the test. I'm shaking. I took out the box. I looked at the pregnancy directions in four different languages. One of them was like Chinese. It was like all these letters, I don't know. It's all like all the illustrations are like positive, positive, positive, positive. And while I'm like freaking out in the bathroom, I get a knock on my door and they're like, you're fitting. And I'm like, I'm feeling great. Great. Oh my God. So then I'm freaking out. I'm like, I go through the fitting because I'm like, okay, I have no time to call my husband right now.

JEN LILLEY: I'm in this like virtual fitting with the whole, everybody I've just told, don't worry. I've already peed on a stick. It's negative.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So not only are you the only person who knows at this point, everybody else doesn't only not know, but they've been assured that you're not pregnant.

JEN LILLEY: Correct.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. And yet you can't tell your partner. You can't tell your nanny. You can't tell anybody. Wow. What an awkward situation.

JEN LILLEY: So awkward. So I finished the fitting and I remember in the fitting like a couple of times because the way you do the virtual fittings is you have your iPhone set up with like a ring light and there's like a board meeting of zoom, you know, and then you kind of exit the frame to go change. And I remember a couple of times when I exited the frame, I would like verbally out loud to myself, be like, oh my God, oh my God. No, it's, so I'm waiting for this fitting to end and it ends and they leave. And I remember texting my husband and being like, hey, so, or maybe I called him and I was like, hey, so what are you doing? Like, are you driving or anything? He's like, oh no, I'm helping your dad on his house. And I was like, okay, call me later.

JEN LILLEY: I text Ashley, I'm like, hey, what are you doing? Ashley's my nanny friend. She's like, oh, I'm nannying, you know, she nannies with this other family. She's like, and we're about to drive, I'll

call you later. And I was like, okay, so then I called my manager and he answers the phone and I'm like, hi, do you have like at least 30 minutes? And he's like, sure. And so I was like, what are you doing? Are you sitting down? And he's like, yeah, I'm sitting down. And I was like, oh my God, Mitch, I'm pregnant. He's like, congratulations, this is the best news ever. And I'm like, what? This is not the thing you're gonna hear from your talent manager, especially when you play like a romantic lead,

JEN LILLEY: like nobody wants to watch a pregnant lady fall in love. It's a very confusing backstory. And I'm like, I don't know what to do because I was faced with this contract. I've now moved over to GAC Family, which is like the Hallmark reboot from the old CEO started his own network. And I'm faced with this, we have this contract that we've been like discussing for almost a year. And it's getting to the point where we're ready to like sign this contract. And it was the exact same timing that I signed my Hallmark exclusivity was when I was pregnant with Julie and they didn't know. And so I'm thinking, oh my gosh, Bill Abbott's gonna think that this is my MO. Offer me a contract, I'm gonna get pregnant and not be available. And?

JEN LILLEY: So then I'm like, I don't know what to do. Do we tell Bill? I just don't wanna feel like he thinks this is my MO. I feel really deceitful right now. And Mitch is like, no, this is great. Let's call the agents. And I'm like, oh God. So he's like, okay, I'm gonna call Glenn. We're gonna have a family team meeting. So my agent and my manager found out before my husband, before my parents.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's so funny. But I mean, you just, you could hear yourself overflowing with the need to tell somebody.

JEN LILLEY: I was dying and they're over the moon. They're like, this is the best news ever. And I was like, you guys are not gonna make money off of me for like a year. Do you understand what you're saying? And they're like, that's okay. You're adorable pregnant. We love you pregnant. Everybody loves you pregnant. And I'm like, I don't.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh my God, there's so much more to this story. Let's take a little break and come back and find out what happened next. Welcome back we're talking to Jen Lilly. Wow you are a surprise master and I will say this that just teaches you to be careful what you pray for and what jokes you make. I feel like either the joke gods or the world gods got together and said you need to have another baby but I believe it I think that the more nice people that have babies the less I'm worried about

JEN LILLEY: this crazy world. Well thank you it's funny because I remember also asking my son Caden who was four or five at the time I said hey buddy do you want to have another baby you know like in our family because he was counting how many boys we had in the family and how many girls we had in the family he was like mama we have three boys and we only have two girls and I was like yeah should we get another baby and in perfect comedic timing I was so proud of him he said mama I am allergic to three things bees flies and babies none of those things are true I was like well that was a really nice triplet that you wrote as a four-year-old good comedic triplet really admire your sense of humor and then I said hey buddy but there's a

JEN LILLEY: lot of babies that don't have mommies and daddies who can take care of them and he goes I guess we should help those babies. Does he know that he does and that's been the biggest

blessing of this pregnancy minus the baby we're very very excited to meet this baby I do want to say that like she's very wanted it's just the pregnancy's been hard but it's been such a blessing in this pregnancy because both of my boys now have asked me like hey when I was in your belly and so that's been able to bring up a lot of good conversations now at first same boy who said he was allergic to bees flies and babies I said hey buddy so you didn't grow on my belly you grew in my heart like oh okay cool and I was like and you know

JEN LILLEY: I just you know you were the best gift that we ever got and you're the whole reason why we have you know Jeffrey and why we have Julie because if it wasn't for you you know like mommy and daddy wouldn't be mommy and daddy's and we just love you so much well then I guess he started really understanding that boys grew in hearts and girls grew in bellies oh boy shoot so I'm gonna have to address that so I told both of them you know hey you grew in another mama's belly and she loved you very very much but she just did not know how to be mommy and she wanted daddy and I to be your parents and so did God and that's why we got the best gift in the world and that's why we got you so they do know and that's like a

JEN LILLEY: very loving way to word foster care I mean unfortunately with foster care the truth is is that you know it's an unsafe situation if they're going to adoption their birth mom the boys share birth mom she did want us to adopt but she didn't have a say in it and I stay in touch with her but it's been great to kind of give them a little bit of respect and empathy for her also from an early age that she wasn't a not a willful child abuser she just really didn't know what she was doing. So it's been great and opening up some good conversations and giving them some confidence. And I will also say that when I've had horrible contractions and pain and heartburn and all these things, Caden's the oldest. So he's often with me,

JEN LILLEY: you know, like still like the other two are in bed and he's like, mom, are you okay? And I'll be able to say to him in confidence and say, Caden, you know why I love you so much? Cause you and Jeffrey never did this to mommy. Yeah. When you told me that he grew in

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: your heart, I literally started crying. Yeah. And then when he thought that boys grow hearts and girls grow in bellies, I started crying of laughter. So it was really cute. I mean,

JEN LILLEY: I was fully prepped to have a baby. I just didn't know it would be through my own body. So yeah, it's been an interesting pregnancy night and day, this time around.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Before we get to that, two questions. Number one, how does your family planning app work

JEN LILLEY: while you're breastfeeding? I don't think I used it while I was breastfeeding because I didn't have a period for at least a year after Julie. So you just assumed that you wouldn't get pregnant. No, I was breastfeeding and I was on a low dose birth control. Breastfeeding. Okay. And then once I stopped breastfeeding, I started birth control pill. And that one made me gain a bunch of weight and feel like a little mentally unstable. And so I stayed on that for maybe another year. And then I was like, I can't keep going like this. And I had more of a regular cycle. Yeah. And then you got off the pill and then you use the app. Yeah, I use the app and then you got on the pregnancy. Yeah.

JEN LILLEY: It was funny too. Cause I remember like the night, I know the night we conceived, cause I even thought like right after, oh my God, I just got pregnant. Why? I don't know. It was like in my head. I knew I was like, this was okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. So mom was intuition. I'm with it. Yeah. So my other question was like,

JEN LILLEY: now what we do next time when you're trying to not have a kid. Oh, Jason's getting a vasectomy. Oh, there you go. Yeah. And I told them, you know, he's going to have to get one of those gaps in the tube. Like we're going to have to do like a secure job. Oh, extra vasectomy, which I would hate to do to anybody, but my pregnancy's been so much harder this time around. Yeah. So let's talk about night and day. I guess last time was day. Last time was day. I think a lot of pregnancy too. And I think labor is a mental game. And I think the first time around, I really wanted to be pregnant. And so every single nuance of pregnancy was an experience I was willing to experience. You know, I didn't really have nausea or morning

JEN LILLEY: sickness with Julie. With this baby, I had a lot of nausea, but no morning sickness. So it was kind of constant nausea, first trimester, super normal, you know, first trimester, you're nauseous and you're tired, which is rough. Is that when you were shooting?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, how do you do that? Like I only had limited experience with nausea and fatigue, like after a stomach bug or something like that, and I could barely focus enough to watch TV.

JEN LILLEY: Well, one thing that was kind of a saving grace was that our catering was really bad on set. And so a lot of people got food poisoning. And so I could kind of hide it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Blended?

JEN LILLEY: Yeah. So nauseous. Like that lunch was terrible. You know, but also I think that I know for me with acting, I can really mind over matter until they call cut. Like I can just somehow get through like the 14 hour days and then die as soon as they call cut. I don't know if it's an actor thing or what, but I can definitely kind of just take myself out of my body and be the character and then go back into all the reality of.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. That's, I mean, a gift that's truly talent. Yeah. It's amazing. Oh yeah. So a horrible first trimester compared to last time.

JEN LILLEY: Yeah, but also not excruciating.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. And you know, excruciating because you've had excruciating women's health issues.

JEN LILLEY: Yes. And I would still say that when my ovary torqued, when I was, I believe I was 19, that was still more painful than labor. So that's kind of where I'm holding myself mentally. Now, second trimester, you know, it's a bit of a reprieve for everybody, but I felt like, I don't know, I've had heartburns starting like first trimester. I've just, I don't know, I've just been very uncomfortable. Like it's just not been a comfortable pregnancy. I started having, I can't remember what the official medical

term is. It's like pubis something, lightning crotch. That's what people call it. That's yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: like you're being electrocuted in the, yes, they're a little different. So there's synthesis, pubis dysfunction, SPD, and some people call it public synthesis dysfunction, but then there's lightning crutch. I feel like it's a little bit of a different sensation where you're just walking and doing your thing and someone jabs into your vagina. It started trying to stir for me. Wow. Yeah. I mean, someone just told me she was online at the supermarket and then just jumped and almost dropped her groceries. And people are like, are you okay? Are you okay? She's like, oh, it's just my crotch.

JEN LILLEY: For like 60 seconds. You cannot talk. It's it was worse than like some of my labor contractions with Julie.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. So again, I'm trying to picture. I mean, I know you're not filming now, but imagine that one of your scenes.

JEN LILLEY: No, I would have to be like, y'all. Sorry. We got to cut. Like there's no way. James, you really, I love when you. Yeah, there's no way. So that started really early on, but I will say, um, positives have been, you know, my daughter, Julie was breach.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I was going to ask you about that.

JEN LILLEY: Yeah, no. So I started doing spinning babies and all of the things that I learned in my first pregnancy very early on. So, you know, doing the inversions and things like that, which make your head, you know, all the blood rushes to your head and it's kind of a horrible sensation too, but I'm like, I was too scared to do ECB and all of that again. And so this last time, yeah, it did. However, I found out because I didn't think I ever needed to know. Cause I thought I'd never be pregnant again. I found out recently because I started chiropractic care this time, maybe like week 10 of pregnancy and was like, I'm doing Webster's I'm doing the inversions I've been doing massage. I've been doing everything I can to ensure that I do not have a

JEN LILLEY: breach baby this time chiropractor kept asking me about my labor. Because if you remember my labor with Julie was wild. I never had regular contractions. I had double peak contractions. So they'd be like 90 seconds on five seconds for Lenting 90 seconds, another peak off the charts. And so my chiropractor kept saying, well, was your baby mal-positioned? And I'm like, no, we had did ACV. She wasn't breached. And she's like, yeah, but was she mal-positioned? You know, people don't have twin peak contractions in general. And when they do like it's your body trying to get that baby in the right position. Well, I started looking at all my photos and videos. She was sunny side up.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Post-hered baby.

JEN LILLEY: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. I mean, it makes sense. And also where you feel that intensity in your back. Oh, I mean, we had some audio of you like laboring and praying.

JEN LILLEY: Yes. I mean, and that was a great birth in a lot of ways because it did feel like kind of this holy and awesome experience. And I was so mentally revved up for that, but this whole pregnancy, I feel like I've just been trying to get my head in the game to face labor again, because if you recall with Julie too, I was so calm that I got an epidural 20 minutes before she was born because the nurses had said, Oh, as calm as you are, it's going to be another 12 hours. And I thought, Hey, I can't take this pain anymore. If you're telling me I'm like halfway there and B I was just exhausted. And I know from your podcast, you know, listening to all these other moms, so much of the labor game is just fighting the exhaustion more than

JEN LILLEY: the pain it's like getting through the exhaustion part. So I thought if I ever happened to accidentally do this again, I'm going to get the epidural from the get-go, but no, I'm not because if you also recall the epidural slowed my contractions down for the first time, they started becoming five minutes apart, which tells me that I might not progress well if I get an epidural and then furthermore, I found out after Julie that I was allergic to sutures, so like if I go into a C-section, I could probably die because I, well, that is daunting. Yeah. So that's why I was so determined.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: No, non-allergenic sutures.

JEN LILLEY: No, listen to this. I talked to my midwives. We do all this research because I'm like, there's gotta be something because they're like, yeah, you can get glued or stapled on the outside. And I'm like outside. I'm not worried about what about your uterus. Yeah, exactly. They said the only other sutures that they can come up with are made from cat guts. First of all, gag me with a spoon. Second of all, I'm definitely allergic to cats. So I don't think that's a reaction for me. So I was really determined to not have a breech baby. so that I don't have to worry about running into a caesarian there. And then I was also just, I'm now determined to do it on medicated in hopes that, you know, I'll have less complication.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: They don't have like a hot glue gun or something. They got to come up with something like shark tank. All right. This is a lot to process. Let's take a little break. And when we come back, we'll figure out your whole birth plan. It'll be totally fine. Don't go anywhere. We'll be right back. Welcome back. We're talking to Jen, Lily, one of my favorite, favorite people. All right. So you're having this baby. You have so many conflicting thoughts floating through your head. And I feel like also last time there was fear, like you doubted your ability to do it, to handle the intensity of natural labor, and then you found that you were like really good at it.

JEN LILLEY: Um, your memory is slightly off. Yeah. Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I'm much older than that's fine.

JEN LILLEY: We haven't seen each other in a long time. We didn't think we were doing this again. In fact, when I first started listening to your podcast again, like start of third trimester, I would just sit in my car before I would pull out of my driveway and shake my head and be like, why am I listening to do my favorite intro music again? This is not supposed to be happening. The first time around I had like warrior mentality. Like I was like, my body is made for this and I can do this. And I've had like a twerk ovary, which is super painful. Like I can endure labor. And I could have probably not gotten the epidural, but this time I'm just like, my prayer is that I do not go into labor, you know, like

JEN LILLEY: with no sleep and that I just have regular contractions because I'm like, if I can just get a break between contractions, like a normal human being, then I can do it. But Julie's was so erotic that it doesn't give me a lot of confidence. Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So it's the opposite. You last time felt like I can do anything and then it hit you a lot harder than you thought it would.

JEN LILLEY: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: But you just didn't have like typical progression of labor. You don't have typical pattern of labor, the timing, the, the sensations, all not typical, much more intense than typical.

JEN LILLEY: Yeah. This time I'm doing midwifery care. Nobody's yeah. I found a hospital that will allow you to labor in a tub. Even if your water has been broken, which is not, I could not labor in the tub last time, which was so brutal because I did have the back labor because she was sunny side up and all of that. Um, so yeah, I'll labor in the tub and I'm just hoping that it's not late at night that I go into labor. I I'm hoping I'll be rested and this progressive hospital. Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Are you allowed to eat?

JEN LILLEY: Um, the midwives basically said we're not allowed to be a hospital policy, but they're not going to be with us all the time. Kind of weak point. Okay. But they're really cool. And there's like no OB when you deliver, it's just the midwife team, unless something arises. So I like that there's like the natural aspect to it, um, non-invasive aspect to it, but also there's the safety, like I have a security blanket of feeling like, okay, there is doctors in an operating room available if I need some sort of intervention, it sounds like you

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: have like a utopian best of both worlds set up there.

JEN LILLEY: Well, knock on wood. Let's hope so. Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Um, who's coming to the birth?

JEN LILLEY: Uh, right now it's my husband, of course, rockstar Jason. I have just secured a birth photographer and then we'll see because my friend Ashley is out of town and so was my best friend Sayla and I think I'm going to have the baby early. I don't think I'm going to make it to May. I think she's either coming like May the 4th, like a Star Wars baby or single de Mayo. I like Cinco de Mayo idea, but if she's not down to have tacos every single birthday of every single life, then I don't want her to come on sync. Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: If you pick that day, that's your picking. I'm talking to the baby. Do you know what you're having?

JEN LILLEY: I'm having a girl, which is great. So I'll have two and two.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Do you have a prediction on how big she will be?

JEN LILLEY: No, I thought she was going to be like an eight pounder because she was originally measuring 60 percentile and Julie was 40th percentile.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How big was Julie at birth?

JEN LILLEY: Six and a half pounds. Okay. She was 38 weeks, 39 weeks and six days. Oh, okay. And then this baby, we just went in for the next sonogram because you know, when you do midwifery care, they don't do as many sonograms, but I've had a lot of early labor signs. Like I lost my mucus plug at 33 weeks. Look under the couch. But my midwives were like, that's okay. And I've listened to a bunch of your podcasts and they're like, it's okay. Your body can reproduce that comes back. I lost more at 34 weeks and was like, oh God, they're like, again, it's okay. Like I've had just different little things that have kind of scared me. But the midwives have been also really cool. And so I've been really trying

JEN LILLEY: to be really laid back about it and stuff. We went into the sonogram and this last sonogram. So my last one was 20 weeks, right? The anatomy scan we had in a scan at 37 weeks and she was measuring 29th percentile. So she's six pounds, two ounces as of like a week ago and her head is smaller than Julie's and she's in the proper position and she's not sunny side up. So I'm pretty jazzed about that. So you're thinking six, five again. I don't know because don't they gain like

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: a half a pound to a pound in the last week's a week. Yeah. So I mean, it could

JEN LILLEY: be, but you're pretty convinced it's going to be early. Yeah. But if she was six pounds, two ounces a week ago, I'm like, maybe she'll be like about a seven pounder.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, a seven for post birth interview to see how close you were. Okay, six pounds, 10 ounces. Final answer. And so is there going to be someone replacing your friend Nanny? Like, do you need one more person in there? Is there going to be

JEN LILLEY: The hospital just upped it to three people. So I think it'll just be me and the birth photographer and Jason, unless I get lucky and Ashley comes back soon. She's not back due until May 7th. So there's a chance she could be one of the due dates. Yeah, it's one of the due dates.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, cool. Are you like from last time? Again, hoping you have a better pattern and more normal progression. But are there things from last time that you bring with you as lessons learned, like in terms of coping and, you know, handling the intensity?

JEN LILLEY: Yeah, I think I love the rolling pin. That was amazing. Last time, my best friend Sayla had brought a rolling pin and that was really wonderful. So I've got a rolling pin in my birthing bag. I've got essential oils this time. I mean, I think that the main thing for me is just breathing. And I think that I could have not gotten the epidural. I just thought it was gonna be 12 more hours. I slept so well, though.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Is your birth photographer also gonna do video?

JEN LILLEY: This one does not, to my knowledge.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, so just pictures.

JEN LILLEY: But I will have my phone and I'll try to record some.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, we need some stuff. I'm kind of wondering if it's going to be precipitous because

JEN LILLEY: that's what you said last time. Yeah, but last time my birth was induced. You know, my body wasn't ready. I was at two and a half centimeters, but my mom and both my grandmothers had precipitous. I remember you said that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Early prodromal labor. Yeah, but who doesn't have their fun with them? Even if it's precipitous,

JEN LILLEY: that would be even a better recording. Oh yeah. My grandmother had one of my uncles with her pants still on.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow.

JEN LILLEY: How fast it came. Yeah, I don't want that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Or she's really this slow to get her pants down.

JEN LILLEY: I mean,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: to that being so pregnant, pants on and you're like,

JEN LILLEY: shift the weight,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: the dresses because I can't get the pants on. That's what everyone says. Dresses and Birkenstocks. How has midwifery care compared for you to obstetric care? I know you loved your OB, but like just practical differences.

JEN LILLEY: Um, I think midwives are just so much less inclined to intervene or worry, you know, which I like. And I think what's also awesome is I'm really allowed to birth in any position. They just told me I have to get out of the tub and that's a hospital thing. It's not their role. It's like, Oh, for the final moment, I can't do a water birth. So they're like, you're not going to want to get out of the tub, but you do need to get out of the tub. But they have like the bars. I asked them about like lighting. I'm going to bring twinkle lights and stuff because all I know is that people say every pregnancy and every birth is different. So I don't know how I'm going to be in this one. But in my birth with Julie, I was really,

JEN LILLEY: I like to be alone. I like things to be dark. I just like to have my music on and just breathing. I'm pretty sure I'll be like that again. But I'm excited this time to know, hey, you should get on your hands and knees to help your baby get in a better position. So they're not sunny side up, you know, and I can labor over a ball and why that helps. And I've just learned a lot more this time.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. Well, I don't know, I have a feeling that it's going to be since the pregnancy was more challenging, I think the birth will be easier. That's my prediction.

JEN LILLEY: Do you find that with your guest? I've been trying to figure that out. Because part of me with the harder pregnancy has been a little more worried.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It's the most common pattern for the second birth. The second pregnancy and birth is that the pregnancy is harder and the birth is easier. That is the most common pattern. Pregnancy harder. I mean, in your case, there's a spiritual element to it. You kind of really want the first one and blindsided by the second one. But there's also like, you're always older on the second pregnancy, your body's been through a lot just from having been pregnant, given birth, raised a newborn into an infant and toddler and then being pregnant with other kids, like less time for self care, all that stuff makes the second pregnancy just harder on your body. So that's the most common thing. Like once in a while, I had a patient who was

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: grossly obese for her first, and she had a very tough pregnancy and then she lost 117 pounds and her second one was much easier than the first. That's the exception to the rule, you know, and then the birth because your body's already done it from start to finish. It's just sort of seems like somebody's already walked through the cornfield and now there's somewhat of a path. And so it just tends to go like when I was doing doula work after doing a few second time births, I was like, I'm opening up a service called second time birth doula because you kind of get the same flat fee for doing a birth that takes you a fraction of the time.

JEN LILLEY: Yeah, so I'm hoping I'll know, you know, I mean, at some point, you'll know you're in labor, but I'm just hoping that was my fear the first time. So then when my water broke in the routine appointment, there was a lot of relief that came because I was like, okay, good. I won't be having a baby on the four or five.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, okay. Who knows? It's very exciting. I know and hope you'll come back and tell us how it all went down again. And after that, it'll be a much more interesting story if you accidentally get pregnant after a vasectomy with a little highway gap. Okay, nobody can see the expression on your face except me right now.

JEN LILLEY: I'm sweating, sweating thinking about it. I bet they could imagine. Did you work more during the pregnancy after that movie? I ended up not shooting any more movies, which was surprising because with Julia, I think I shot four while I was pregnant. But this time around, I now run a marketing company called Christmas is not canceled. And we do a ton of fundraisers for children and foster care in the summer. We do backpack school school supplies with virtual camps. It's really super fun. And then in the fall I do like people can win the ultimate Christmas and they hang out with celebrities and they go to make believe college called Christmas University. And we take Christmas themed classes every single week over zoom and we're raising money

JEN LILLEY: to give like tens of thousands of toys to toys for tots. So that ends up being a year round business for me where I'm constantly planning. So I'm doing that. I'm writing a book on foster care and then I have three other children. So unfortunately I haven't slowed down.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Not surprising. You make the energizer bunny look sluggish. That's great. It's just the truth. All right. Final question before we go about names. Do you have a name for the book? I don't think we do. I'm writing it with Dr. John DeGarneau. Yeah. I mean not that you asked me, but if you want to put on names, I'm master of puns. And then the other thing is do you have a

JEN LILLEY: name for the baby? I do. By the time this air is she'll already be named and it'll be public. Her name is Jackie Grace. So it'll be Jacqueline, but it's Jackie, which means God will protect her. And then Grace means empowered. So I thought that was appropriate for a semi-COVID baby.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. So her legal name will be Jacqueline. You're going to call her Jackie, or is her legal name going to be Jackie and you call her Jacqueline?

JEN LILLEY: Her legal name will be Jacqueline.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. Sounds so beautiful. All right. Sending incredible positive vibes for you. And I look forward to talking to you on the other side. Let me ask you this. Where can we find you online?

JEN LILLEY: Oh, I'm mainly on Instagram, which is at Jen, J E N underscore Lily, L I L L E Y. I'm super active there. and everywhere else is kind of just fed from Instagram.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, I'm thinking about buying Instagram and taking it private. I'm thinking about it. Jen underscore Lily, I will see you there and I will see you back here when you have another story to tell. Hope it's a good one. I know it's gonna be a great one. And then for us, we're also on that Instagram thing. It's at Dr. Berlin, D-O-C-T-O-R-B-E-R-L-I-N. I got a.

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