

The day that changed my life



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The Day My Life Changed Forever I will never forget the day when my life was changed forever. I was twenty-two years old and about to give birth to my first child. I was having a girl, who I was going to name Mia Alexandria. Up until this point in my life I was able to go and come as I pleased, but that was about to all change. I knew that having a child would change my life but did not know how much. It was in December of 1996, and was a cold, dreary winter day. I was in my eighth month of pregnancy and I was crabby about having to lug around extra weight that was in my belly.

I awoke early that morning and decided to run some errands. I drove a Jeep Wrangler at that time, a red one with a white hard top that consistently bounced around the road with every bump and crack that you hit. I can still feel the bitter draft that seeped through the cracks as I drove. It was a stick shift, which many of my friends did not know how to operate. Reluctantly, I hopped my pregnant body up into it barely being able to move my limbs from being bundled up in my poufy parka. My friend decided to join me that day to keep me company.

Our first stop was to the unemployment agency. The unemployment agency back then was located in several buildings scattered throughout the state so you just had to find the closest one to you, drive to it, fill out some paperwork, and stand in line to file your claim. Things were not done as they are now with all the fancy computer technology. As we arrived in the parking lot I was feeling a little anxious, not having applied before, and not knowing what I was going to say to the person behind the counter.

I had been released from my waitressing job a few weeks before because of my pregnancy, the owner was afraid I might slip and fall while I was working
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and didn't want to be responsible or even take that chance. The owner said I could come back after I had the baby but in the meantime I wasn't able to pay December's rent nor did I have any food in my apartment. My mom said I could come eat any time I wanted at her house and always sent a care package with me when I left, but still that did not pay the rent.

Needless to say I did not have very much money for gas to drive back and forth to her house either and we lived about 15 miles apart. I wasn't sure if I was going to qualify to receive unemployment but I knew I desperately needed to do something because of the baby I had on the way. When we walked into the building I saw a tremendously long line, a take a number sign, rows and rows of chairs with other fellow unemployed citizens, and quite a few government workers behind the counters. The place was huge.

The atmosphere felt stuffy to me and the room was predominantly filled with men that displayed gloomy faces. I took a number and my friend and I took our place in line. We were standing for about twenty minutes when all of a sudden I felt this rush of wetness between my thighs. I was not sure what had just happened but I thought to myself I could not have just had an accident like a preschooler. As I mentally assessed the situation, the only thing that kept me running from embarrassment was my long parka that came down past a good portion of my back side so you could not see my midsection.

My bladder control was not as it was before I was pregnant; however when I realized after a minute or two that maybe the liquid that was uncontrollably releasing from my body was not urine at all, but that my water had broke, which meant I was going into labor. Being twenty-two and it being my first

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child I think I may have been in shock. Not knowing what else I should do, I decided to walk up to one of the few ladies I saw in the office. I wanted to ask what I should do because I had already signed in. The lady looked at me in disbelief and said “ Leave, who cares that you signed in. You need to go to the hospital”.

My friend and I looked at one another and then quickly scurried out to my Jeep and jumped in. My friend thought she should drive but did not know how to drive a stick-shift. I figured it was probably a much better idea if I drove and assured her I was not in any pain and I was fine to drive. I swiftly sped off not really having the next destination in mind but knowing I had towards the hospital. I was not in pain and did not want to rely on someone else to decide what to bring to the hospital for me so I decided to make a pit stop back at my apartment before heading over to the hospital.

When we arrived only twenty minutes or so had passed and I thought by now something else should be happening with my body and was anticipating the worse was about to come. I changed out of my miserably wet pants and I quickly gathered up the things I thought I should bring. We jumped back in my bouncy jeep with our destination being the hospital this time and began making our journey there. We had about a thirty minute drive to Royal Oak Beaumont without traffic and even though I was not having any contractions I knew I did not want to give birth in my vehicle.

I had heard numerous crazy stories from people throughout my pregnancy about giving birth in weird places and just really wanted to make it to the hospital. When we arrived at Royal Oak Beaumont I entered through the emergency room. The security guard went to get me a wheel chair but I felt

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that I was fine and decided to walk up to the labor and delivery floor. When I got to the floor the nurses greeted me excitedly and hooked me up to a computer with all this wires that were connected to a stretchy band that fit around my belly.

I didn't know what they were for at the time, but now I know they were to measure my contractions. The nurse checked my dilation status and I was at a four and when you deliver the baby a person's dilation status is at a ten. The nurse bundled all my belongings in a plastic bag and swiftly rushed me to appropriate room for delivery. When I was walking to my new room the nurses were astonished that I was dilated to four and walking around without feeling any pain. I didn't have the foggiest idea what was going to happen so it really didn't faze me.

My friend must have been calling every person I knew because people started trickling in to see me. Tons of family and friends rotated in and out of my room bringing gifts and helpful encouraging tips. The hospital staff allowed many more people in the room at one time than I thought was allowed. I had been at the hospital for about an hour and a half and still wasn't feeling any contractions even though the nurse said I was having them. One of my friends had brought a deck of cards and another stopped at the store and brought me candy for my weest tooth I had so we were playing cards and I was eating candy when the doctor showed up. The doctor was a middle age man, probably in his forty's, which I had never met before. He was the doctor responsible for the patients from the office I went to for my prenatal checkups. I went to the hospital obgyn clinic where the doctors were doing their internships and other senior staff doctors oversaw that they were

performing the correct way. He told us I probably would not be having the baby for a few hours, it was now about dinner time and I was starting to get hungry.

My dilation status had stayed at between four and five for quite some time and he decided to order for me to have pitocin which tricks your body into starting to have contractions so your body will deliver the baby faster. This drug mimics the effects of the hormone, oxytocin that naturally is released in your body to induce labor. My dad and step-mom did not want to miss the birth of my first child but wanted to leave to go get dinner and they were going to bring me something back.

They said I could not eat but they were allowing me to eat the candy which was a little strange. Eventually I knew I would want some dinner though and encouraged them to go and come back. Little did my dad or I know that what he feared was about to come true. He kissed me on the head and said "Don't have that baby till I get back, ya hear". I laughed and replied "Ok". My dad left and the nurse came in to administer the pitocin. As the medicine flowed through my IV into my vein it felt not quite cold but a cool trickling rush like some little bugs were invading my body.

It had only been a few minutes when I could start feeling maybe a little squeezing of my belly that they were calling a contraction. About seven or eight people were standing in my room talking to one another and asking me a bunch of questions when all of a sudden I felt the biggest kick, it felt like someone punched me in the stomach. Then next came a contraction, it was hard 6 And it hurt. I yelled to the nurse " I think I'm about to have the baby", she said " Let me check probably not just yet".

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I shouted back “ I think I need something for pain then”. Quickly I was administered some Demerol which was supposed to curve the pain. It just made me feel like I was going to vomit as it rushed through my veins and gave me the biggest high I had ever felt. Again I felt a big contraction “ I want everyone out” I yelled. Everyone scurried out the nurse checked me and I was about to have the baby, she pushed the emergency button and the doctor came running. No one was ready, none of the packages were opened up for the delivery, and no one had their proper labor and delivery gear on.

There was no time for any of that I had one more contraction and I was told not to push yet but there was no pushing nor any stopping that baby from coming into this world. Next thing I knew this small watermelon size thing came bounding out and it was over. No more pain, no more scary anticipation, and no more extra weight in my belly. And of course my dad had missed it. Mia Alexandria was here and weighed 5lbs 15oz, and was 19 inches long. My freedom at that moment ended forever. I would always be responsible for this other little person forever, or what would seem forever.

No more just getting up and going. No more random journeys in my jeep at the spur of the moment not knowing where we might end up. Everywhere I would go from then on out I would have lots of extra things I would have to take with me for the care of the baby. Even though my life changed at that moment forever it was for the better. The birth of my daughter made me think about all my actions and the consequences that may follow. I always tried my hardest to do the right thing and be the best person I could be from that moment on because I wanted to be the best mommy ever.