



*NOTE: In All Honesty is a theatrical podcast produced for the ear and designed to be heard, it features both spoken word and music. The following transcript has been made available for the hard of hearing and to increase accessibility to our podcast. If you are able we strongly encourage you to listen to the audio, which includes emotion and emphasis that's not on the page. Episodes are transcribed by the creatives behind the podcast, and may contain errors. Please check the corresponding audio before quoting in print.*

- EPISODE 6 – THE FELIX FACTOR -

[GILLIAN SPEAKS] This project has been produced and recorded on the lands of the Woi Wurrung, Boon Wurrung, and Wathaurong peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and welcome all First Nations people listening today. We acknowledge the rich history of story-telling and music within this culture.

[IN ALL HONESTY THEME MUSIC BEGINS]

Hi there, and welcome to In All Honesty. I'm Gillian Cosgriff, and I have composed and performed the music in Season 1. This is a podcast that allows people to share experiences they've been through, that society doesn't like to talk about.

There's no interviewer, there's no questions and there's no prompts. We send our storyteller away with a recording device and they get to tell their story on their own terms. These are stories you don't get to hear every day. If you haven't already we recommend you go back and start from episode 1 so you're getting the full story.

There are some swearwords in this podcast and as a content warning we'll be discussing still birth, pregnancy loss and dealing with losing a child. If you need to talk to anyone about anything you hear today you can contact Life Line on 13 11 14 or check our show notes for additional resources.

Thanks for listening –

[THE FELIX FACTOR]

[MUSIC BEGINS]

[BERT SPEAKS] Okay so, post uh, Meg's birth and burial and the whole graveyard scenario um, we come to the newest member of our family Felix James.



[BERT SPEAKS & GIRL SINGS] Felix James LaBonté. What a little banger.

[GIRL SINGS] Felix James LaBonté, what a little banger.

[BERT SPEAKS] he's a legend. He's now eleven. Uh... So let's fast forward from Meg's, Meg's birth, let's forward, three years to 2009 and Felix is born. And if it seems like that's a fair gap, it was. Because after Meg we, it was maybe a year later that we decided we'd try again. We, uh, we couldn't get pregnant, we tried for quite a while – I can't remember the exact timing of it– but we tried for a while and we couldn't get pregnant. And Amanda did some, and I did some tests and I was okay and Amanda did some tests and we discovered that she wasn't, for whatever reason, from the operation or the, the um, maybe the trauma of what had happened, she wasn't ovulating anymore. So she hadn't been able to produce any eggs and so, um, she went on this drug called Clomid. It's the most horrific fucking thing you'll ever have to deal with, if you ever have to deal with it. I, I can unequivocally say this, and I have permission from Amanda to say this. The person I was living with on that drug was not my wife that I had married previously. The person in that period of time was some evil witch that had arrived at our home, that I had to have sex with on occasion to get pregnant. And, let me tell you, that was, that was difficult, because I didn't really like the person that was on this drug. I've never seen a drug change a person's personality so much, it was, it, it was, and I'm not, I'm not trying to make this sound like it was dramatic, it was full on. It was extraordinary. Um.

Thankfully, Clomid worked quite quickly though, and within three months we had fallen pregnant again so we could put that little puppy to bed. But then, then the next level of anxiety begins because you now have to go through that whole forty week period where you pretty much just hold your breath. You just hold your breath and you hope and pray that it's um, gonna have a really good result at the end. And you don't know. Like we didn't know with Meg, you just don't know. And, and Amanda wanted a different approach to this birth for many reasons. Um. We found out the sex of the child this time around which we hadn't done previously because we liked the surprise. But this time, we thought the surprise would be a little bit too much on the day if, well if it had gone either way. If it had been a girl I'm sure it would have been highly emotional and, and in many ways maybe too emotional. And if it had been a boy, um, which it subsequently was, we it may have been emotional for all the wrong reasons. So we thought we should be prepared for, for what was coming and we found out that um, we were having a little boy. Um.

And, and I guess we, we, it sounds weird to say this but we grieved that, I guess, a little bit. Because, yeah, we knew we weren't gonna be having a daughter. Not that we wanted to replace Meg with another girl, or Felix for that matter. Just, I don't



know. I don't know. We grieved the fact that we weren't having a girl. Just for a moment. Um. I don't really need to explain that. It's just what we did. It was unspoken but I know we both felt it. Um.

Skip to the birth, and it was the quickest, calmest, most amazing thing ever. There was, there was no drugs this time, there was, it was just, we were in,

[BERT SPEAKS & GIRL SINGS] she went fight or flight, she flew.

[GIRL SINGS] She went, fight or flight she flew. She went, fight or flight she flew. She went, fight or flight she flew.

[BERT SPEAKS] We gave birth. Uh, she gave birth. Should never put myself in that equation! I, I was there, but I didn't do anything, other than rub her back. Uh and, little fella was born. He was the first child born on New Year's Day in 2009 in Geelong. So we, we made the paper. Two days later we were in the paper with our baby, and our, our youngest, which was pretty funny.

Um. Now skip forward six and a half years. You never quite know how the youngest is gonna approach – he was the only one not around. So Felix had felt a sense of, I guess, uh, he felt a bit left out of the whole equation, of the Meg...factor. Um. And he started to talk about her at school a lot. his teacher at parent teacher interviews was telling us that he was speaking about his sister quite often and it was confusing for some of the younger kids. Um. You know they were grade one. Cos, they knew Felix didn't have a sister. But, what was he talking about? And, kids are kids. They say things like, "You don't have a sister," and he's like, "Yes I do!" and he'd get quite upset by it. And then he came home and I remember vividly him just bursting into tears and just saying, looking at his mother and I and just saying,

[BERT SPEAKS & GIRL SINGS] "I just want to meet her. Why can't I meet her? I just want to meet her. I'm the only one that never met her."

[GIRL SINGS] I just want to meet her. Why can't I meet her? I just want to meet her. I'm the only one that never met her.

[BERT SPEAKS] Um. It, it broke my heart. It really. It broke my heart. Not in a bad way. Just, I, I got it. I understood what he was – I didn't think it would effect him. I didn't think, for a moment, I didn't think, he'd have the understanding of what that was, to want to know his little sister. Um, his big sister I should say. His older sister, um. And I, I guess again kids'll surprise you, they don't – they seem to understand the other side or whatever it is, whatever you wanna believe, better than us.



And so, we, the next day we went down to the grave and we sat and he spoke to his sister. And. There were no tears, he just had, had words to her, just told – just told her about his day. And if you get a Felix story it's in such great detail that, it's literally, you know, "I woke, I stepped out of bed, I walked eight paces..." like it's so detailed it's fucking excruciating some times. But it was beautiful to listen to him telling his sister about his day. And as we were leaving he looked at me and he said, "I'd really like my name on that grave stone."

And, I don't know. Would we have had Felix whether Meg'd survived? I couldn't tell ya. But I can't imagine life without him. So I don't know. He's the little gift that keeps on giving too. I guess we're just lucky. We've got two miracles, and we've got a third that just looks over us. So, yeah. That is uh, what we call the Felix factor. Mm. It's pretty cool.

[MUSIC CONTINUES AND FADES]

[GILLIAN SPEAKS] Thanks for listening.

[IN ALL HONESTY THEME MUSIC PLAYS]

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