

Wheelman

My husband was stationed at Ft. Knox, KY as an US Army MI tanker and we lived off base. My mother had come down two weeks prior to my due date to visit and help out for after the baby was born because we knew in advance it would be a cesarean birth. The baby was due on June 4th and my husband called the afternoon before around 4:30 pm and said he would be coming home late that evening. We hung up and not more than 5 minutes later I went into labor – hard labor. At first I brushed it off as false labor that I had experienced two weeks earlier.

But this time was much different.

When the contractions began coming about 3 minutes apart in only 15 minutes, my mother was convinced this was for real. After having read tons of baby books I knew labor took anywhere from 8-10 hours minimum for a first time mom like myself so I had lots of time. Right? Right!

But I also knew contractions built slowly over time. They don't just sucker punch you and leave you in pain for long stretches that soon. They were supposed to build slowly and agonizingly so you experience the *joys* of natural childbirth with a slight 'breather' in between one another. I wasn't getting any breathers. I knew from the pain I was having and how quickly it was coming that something was definitely odd.

At my mother's insistence, and knowing my husband would still be by the phone, I called him back at quarter to five and told him I was heading up to the hospital because my mom thought this was really 'it'. He offered to come home and get me but again, my mom suggested he met us there, since he was already on base. In truth, she didn't think we had enough time but she didn't tell him for fear he'd race over and get himself hurt. At this point, my contractions were now about two minutes apart.

So with her daughter in tow and a grandbaby on the way, my mother helped me to her nice, new car and we drove to the post at a steady pace. Now when you come in and out of the base you have a checkpoint to pass. Upon seeing my overgrown clutched stomach they let us right inside and give me a 'good luck little lady'. At this time, it's 5 pm and the pain is intense. Contractions are a minute apart if that.

We came up to the traffic light near the hospital but no one moved even after the traffic light changed. My mom looked around to find out the hold up. My first thought (aside from "I'm never going to let my husband touch me again") was that maybe there was an accident. But I remembered, somewhere in my pain riddled mind, that the MP's (military police) stop traffic so everyone can 'salute the flag' at 5 pm. It's not an option. You have to stop and if you don't it's not pretty...So my mother asked me, "What do I do?" just as another contraction hit me. "Get to the hospital." I told her.

With tires screeching she pulled around the stopped traffic and flew past the MP. I looked behind us to see him dash to his car. Sure enough, he gave chase, sirens blaring. My mom

raced through the driveway, toward the hospital's front entrance and we passed my husband who was sitting in his truck, waiting for our arrival. I'll never forget the look on his face as he watched his outlaw wife and mother-and-law trying to outrun the MP's. I think his eyes literally left their sockets and he bruised his jaw on the truck door as he watched us speed by...

For the rest of the story check out 'Wheelman' in *They Lied! True Tales of Pregnancy, Childbirth and Breastfeeding* from Viva Voce Press.