

Hospitals & Asylums

The Birth of Eliana Miriam Scelza

Brother Anthony J. Sanders

A. There is a New Person in the World

There is a new person in the world - Eliana Miriam Scelza, was born on December 6, 2008 at 8:10 pm, to Sharon and Jay Scelza, under a beautiful sunset, high above the Willamette River, in Portland, Oregon, USA in the 12th floor of the OHSU hospital complex where my sister, Sharon, is studying nursing. Eliana weighed 7lbs. 8 oz. at birth.



Eliana was a deep purple color when she arrived but after she took her first breath and began breathing regularly her skin color slowly changed to become the healthy pink color you see in the picture. Those first seconds, before the baby takes her first breath are trying. Jay cut the umbilical cord that nourished the fetus in utero with nutrient rich oxygenated blood and Eliana became an independent mammalian life-form instinctively foraging for her mother's breast. If they didn't pick her up and place her in her mother's arms she would have crawled there herself. After 12 hours of observation in the hospital the elated new parents took home a perfectly formed, healthy baby girl. Jay wrote,

“So we all came home last night and even got a little sleep in between peeks of wonderment at her perfect newness! We decided on our original name for her which is Eliana Miriam Scelza. We'd been calling her Elly since about June when we found that name in the Sanders Family Tree, which dates back to the 1500's, and liked it so much it just stuck, so gradually we lengthened it to Eliana, because it just flowed out of Elly. We made list after list of names to try to find the right name, but Eliana is the only name that made it in the top three every time. It turns out Eliana is a popular name in Portugal, Spain and Italy, as well as here in the US where it has been gaining in popularity for the past decade, despite not knowing anyone who ever met any Elianas (we do know a very sweet little Iliana, though). And her middle name, Miriam is her great-grandma's name (my mom's mom, who went by Mim)”.

Eliana is a healthy, lively, baby girl. She is a natural breastfeeder and frequently suckles noisily with great relish. She is a productive baby soiling nine or ten diapers a day with baby turds a consistency similar to yellow cottage cheese. Eliana is quite vocal in regards to expressing her hunger and feeds at least ten times a day. Once suckling she becomes a happy, slurpy and contented infant for ten or fifteen minutes and then usually becomes tired and goes to sleep. She is adorable when asleep and can be held and doted on for hours at a time.

B. Delivery

Sharon called me in the evening of St. Nicholas day, December 5th, to tell me she was having stomach cramps, maybe gas. That sleepless night I read the book on Baby's first year that I bought as a gift for the new parents and learned that the cramps were probably Braxton-Hicks contractions that signal the start of labor. The next day I received a call that they were in the hospital. Jay reports, "Everything went very smooth, due in part to Sharon's high tolerance for pain which is so great that she was able to convince herself that it was merely 'early' or 'false' labor until we arrived at the hospital at about 3pm, where we were told she was dilated to 8 cm (almost there)!" The text recommends that one doesn't rush to the hospital, instead eat a good meal and have a more enjoyable and short time, on the delivery table. Sharon called the pain, "so intense it was beyond pain".

The labor itself was quick, particularly for a first time mother, who often spends 24 hours in labor. Eliana's delivery lasted a total of five hours, from the time she entered the hospital. There were only 3 intense hours of pushing, from the womb and into the room! The birth was all natural. No drugs. No episiotomy. No forceps. When the baby first arrived the nurses gave the newborn an Apgar score of 8, on a scale of 1-10 on the evident health of the newborn, which was raised to a 9 shortly thereafter. Hospital staff gave the baby a vitamin K shot that did not cause the baby to turn yellow from jaundice from liver failure. Although modern medicine did their best Eliana and Sharon were too healthy for any complications. The midwife and nurses commented on how textbook perfect the delivery was. The new mother called it an "amazing, crazy, wild experience. Anyway there is a new person in the world".



C. Pre-Natal Memories

Sharon took excellent care of Eliana in the womb. Sharon ate a healthy, mostly organic diet, has never been a smoker and abstained from drinking alcohol for the duration of her pregnancy. As you can see in the picture below she also got plenty of exercise going for long walks with Jay. However like most first time moms Sharon was late. The predicted due date was November 22. But Thanksgiving came and went and the turkey never came. We had to wait for the St. Nicholas day stolen, a Dutch holiday baked good, to come out of the oven. Jay wrote, “our loaf bread finally finished baking”. Baby’s due date is notoriously unreliable and is instead more of a two week window, before and after, when 95% of babies can be expected. December 6th was fourteen days late. It tends to take longer for first time mothers whose bodies and minds have never before performed the difficult act of childbirth.

After keeping the secret until December Sharon and Jay finally wrote to tell the family about the wait. Sharon was finishing up the fall quarter work and was busy studying for two final exams and writing a term paper. Jay sent pictures of Sharon studying and from a walk in the woods they take at least once a week. There is a forest right outside their home and they also like to take day trips to the many parks in the Portland vicinity. Many mothers report that exercise helped them to stimulate childbirth. The prayers of expectant loved ones may also help. Keeping pure and holy is definitely the way to a healthy and natural childbirth.



D. Newborn Care

Elliana, or Ellie for short, is a perfect infant human being. She is absolutely adorable when asleep. When she wakes up she can focus on people's faces and her features, like her perfectly formed lips, become more defined, and the whole room brightens. She tries to understand what is going on and, if stimulated, seems to make some correct, and then maybe some incorrect, linguistic assumptions before she becomes confused and starts crying for a breast. While completely pleasing her without food is impossible, thoughts, games and psychology tailored for her level of comprehension, or solid, undisturbed, practical and harmonious human thought patterns, like movies, books or spirited conversation, can keep her amused for a while.

Baby's experiences and built in drive to communicate can affect the connections in her brain. Being deprived of exposure to language can delay speech and cause difficulties in mastering the intricacies of language later on, even though their physical equipment for speaking is perfect. Babies who are neglected and abandoned to lives in playpens and cribs may develop strange rocking and self-stimulation patterns, and if deprived of affectionate human contact may die. It is important to eliminate the vectors of post partum depression to reduce the chances of SIDS, crib death. Make sure the crib where your baby sleeps makes you and your baby happy. Textbooks recommend mothers breastfeed for as long as possible, this is important to confer antibodies and immunity to the baby, and discourage the father from administering formula milk. A breast pump is a compromise for the working mom.



E. Infant Psychology

Before birth, a human baby brain produces an average of 250,000 new cells every minute. During several key points in development, it generates over 50,000 brain cells per second. By 20 weeks, the brain has already created 200 billion neurons. But 6 weeks later, only about 50 percent of those growing cells still survive. This overgrowing and cutting back of brain connections is the way nature customizes the brain to provide the exact mental equipment she requires to survive in her unique world. Even with all those connections, your baby's brain will double its weight by her first birthday, and continue to form some 1,000 trillion neural connections over the next two years.

Talk to your baby, she will understand your most heartfelt and deepest held beliefs. A baby has been born with "mirror" cells, a series of neurons resembling tiny, branching electrical wires scattered in various places in her brain. They provide her with a sophisticated form of instant replay. If you move into focus, less than a foot from her face, purse your lips into a kiss, or make other facial gestures, your baby may imitate you. Modern nursing wisdom promotes the practice of skin-to-skin contact with the baby. Physical contact and sound of a beating heart is soothing to the newborn who spent the majority of her existence inside her mother's womb, surrounded by the sound of her beating heart and nutritious pulse of her blood stream. It will be months before Eliana will be teething, crawling, or talking. Eliana is newborn, growing fast and making her mom a real red titstered nurse, nine months early.



F. Citizenship

Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, the parents Jay and Sharon Scelza have decided to get married. At the birth of Eliana Jay wrote, “So for all of you wondering yes, Sharon and I are now married in the 'together forever' sense, but no, you didn't miss the ceremony, since the papers have yet to be signed in the legal sense, but the proof is in her arms as I write this”.

The parents asked me to solemnize their marriage. I therefore filled out a free registration form on the Universal Life Church website and was instantly ordained a Reverend by email. The new parents were wise to wait until after birth to petition for the tax benefits of marriage. The \$25 registration fee with the county goes to a subversive “Domestic Violence Fund” that finances Planned Parenthood and Folic Acid. I therefore wed thee can-sir and angina and advise you to heed the counsel for divorce to admit no evidence regarding your partner unless it is important for the welfare of the child. For a memorable anniversary party we await the last day of the year.

Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity, and that the child, by reason of her physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, Eliana has been registered with a name and social security number under Art. 7 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and Principle 4 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

