



WHY NOT HOME?

THE SURPRISING BIRTH CHOICES OF DOCTORS AND NURSES



ABOUT



Dr. Michelle Minikel thought home birth was crazy--until she got pregnant. Turns out she's not alone. *Why Not Home?* exposes a secret from within the medical community. A small but growing number of doctors, midwives, and nurses who attend birth in the hospital are choosing to have their own children at home.

Through the compelling stories of women who choose to go outside the hospitals where they practice to give birth, viewers experience the beauty and challenges facing families both at home and in the hospital in a way that hasn't been seen before.

Beyond the personal stories, *Why Not Home?* is a critical and thoroughly researched look at how we are providing maternity care in the US and the choices we are giving women and families about that care. Maternal mortality rates are rising in the US at a time when they are falling in every other industrialized country. *Why Not Home?* challenges viewers to move beyond the polarization and judgement that has plagued this issue for decades and instead embrace a more integrated and collaborative model for the future.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



I grew up hearing the story of the doctor and the surgical procedure that saved my life and my mother's (I was breech, delivered by cesarean section). I never considered that I might give birth outside of a hospital--until I got pregnant.

At that time I had been a nurse for five years and a nurse practitioner for three. Home birth wasn't part of my culture and wasn't something my training had directly addressed. Prompted by a colleague's experience, I started researching, asking questions, and considering my options in and out of the hospital. It was based on that research that I decided I wanted to pursue a home birth. As a low risk mom, it seemed I had the best chance of a safe and uncomplicated natural birth in my own home surrounded by people I knew and trusted. Some of my family and colleagues disagreed.

The decision wasn't easy to talk about. It's such an emotionally charged topic. Everyone has an opinion and a story to tell.

Since then I've met more health care providers, doctors, nurses, and midwives, who chose to give birth at home. These are not the women most Americans picture when they imagine a home birth mom. These professionals have direct and sometimes daily experience with the risks inherent in birth. Like all women, they wanted a safe birth, yet unlike 99% of women in the US, they chose to give birth at home. This is their story.

Too often polarization occurs on the topic of home birth. By focusing on hospital birth providers who choose home birth, I hope to bring a voice of moderation to the discussion. Together, we can move toward real improvements to maternity care in hospitals and at home.

What if the choice of where to give birth wasn't limited by cost or insurance coverage, fear or misinformation? What would change if families had access to the care provider of their choice in the setting that best fits their unique needs and values? It's worth at least asking, "Why not home?"

THE TEAM



PRODUCER/DIRECTOR, Jessica Moore

Jessica is a family nurse practitioner and filmmaker in Petaluma, CA. A graduate of the UCLA School of Nursing, she has always been drawn to people and their stories and is passionate about empowering women and families through information sharing. She became interested in filmmaking when the intersection of her personal and professional worlds gave her a story she had to tell. Her path to motherhood started with a high tech conception through IVF and culminated in a low tech birth at home. She tells the previously untold story of hospital birth providers who chose to give birth at home in her first film, "Why not Home?"

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER, Kelly Collins Geiser

Kelly studied cinematography at the Academy of Art in San Francisco. She spent several years editing at Fast Forward in San Francisco before she had her children and changed careers. She has returned to filmmaking for a project very close to her heart, "Why not Home?" Both of Kelly's children were born at home. Her birth experience was empowering and transformative, a feeling she wishes for all women regardless of where they choose to give birth. Kelly's artistic vision and training in cinematography, experience in editing, as well as her personal knowledge of the subject matter, make her a valuable member of the creative team.

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER, Erin Wrightsman

Erin brings her own exploration of the intimate and expansive spaces that exist in relationship into her work. She credits her love of community and wild spaces to her big family and her small town. Erin is a highly naturalistic, passionate photographer who specializes in creating warm, authentic portraits of people and families expressing themselves, their love, their connections with one another and their relationships to themselves and the world(s) they inhabit. Erin is especially passionate about birth and documenting a woman's transition from woman to mother. She describes her own birth experience as, "home birth at the hospital."

EDITOR, Victoria Toth

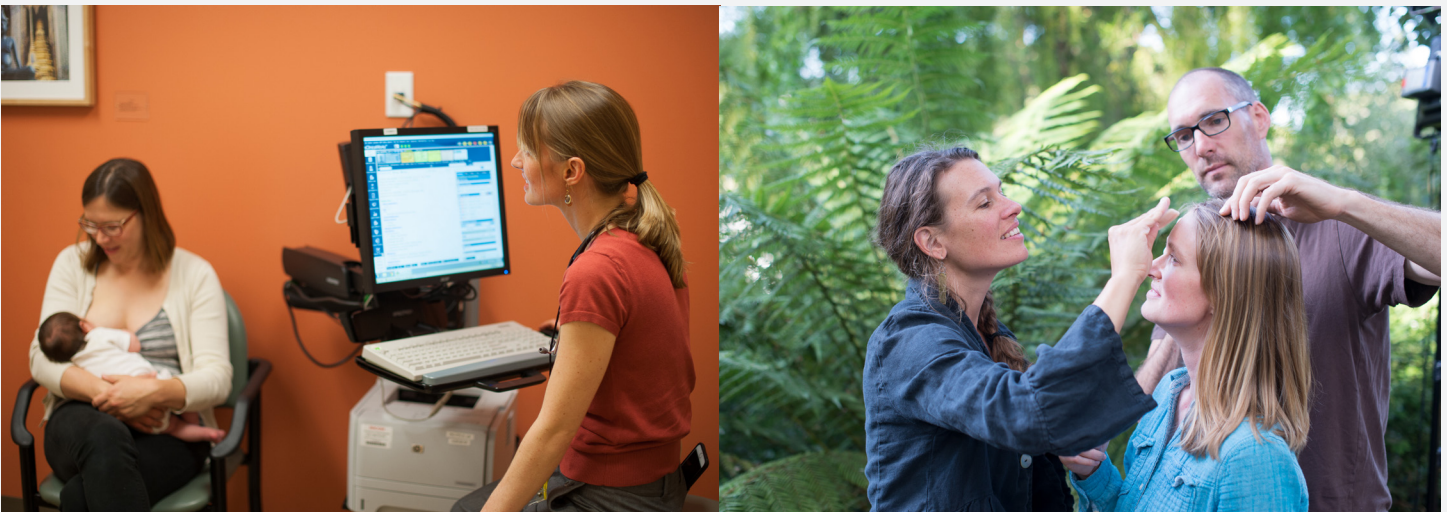
Victoria studied at University of Stirling, Scotland and UC San Diego. She spent 7 years in Prague, Czech Republic working on feature films, commercials and running a theatre company, Misery Loves Company with her husband. Together they staged the Eastern European premiere of Angels in America. Since leaving Prague she has worked mostly as an editor in non-fiction TV and documentary: In New York, the critically acclaimed Brooklyn North Homicide Squad, also First 48, Dallas Swat, Flip This House, Flipping Boston, Be Good Johnny Weir, Swamp People and many more. Feature documentaries include The Federation of Black Cowboys and Gordon Parks - American Masters. And for light relief - two seasons of Emmy winning comedy series, Children's Hospital. She is married to Richard Toth. Their son Gus was born at home 11 years ago. Victoria is the team's East Coast representative. She lives with her family in Brooklyn, NY.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, Michael Lindemuth

Michael studied cinematography at San Francisco State University and has been working in the film industry for the past 12 years. He has expanded from production assistant to camera assistant and is now filming more of his own work while continuing to shoot for larger commercial clients such as Lagunitas and Bank of Marin. Personally, he one daughter born in October 2014. Born at home himself, Michael and his wife experienced first hand the choices and challenges that come with pregnancy and delivery that he explores in his current project "Why not Home?"

SOUND DESIGN AND COMPOSER, Chris Vibberts

Chris is passionate about music and sound. His unique compositions and sound design can be heard in a number of award winning short, animated, documentary, non-profit, and feature length films, as well as on TV. His work includes campaigns for Subway, NBC, ESPN, Honda, Bay Alarm, JW Marriott, AAA, Speedee Oil Change, and Sector 9. Playing instruments including the guitar, drums, keyboards, sitar, sax, banjo, accordion, and flutes from around the world, his music has been heard in projects spanning the globe from USA to Korea, Mexico to India. He and his wife planned a home birth, but ultimately delivered a healthy baby girl in the hospital.



REVIEWS



“Why Not Home? is a thoughtful look at complex issues. It’s down to earth style puts a human spin on the contentious topic of home birth. I hope that every expectant parent, as well as medical and nursing students see this film. There is something for everyone in this beautifully done film.”

— Robin Elise Weiss, PhD, MPH, LCCE and President of the Lamaze Board

“Why Not Home captures the beauty of natural birth in a way that is so hard to articulate. It shows inspiring stories of how medical professionals can collaborate to make birth better, and how women can be empowered in the process. Medical professionals and women need to see this film because it demonstrates what some of us already know, low risk birth should be considered simple and normal.”

— Jessica Taylor Goldstein, MD Family Medicine Obstetrical Care Provider and Resident Educator

“That you braved the numbers, and did so in a clear way that did not seem lecture-ish or dry is amazing, and grounds your points from the individual ‘n of 1’ experiences of each woman in the film.”

— Alden Blair, MPH, Epidemiologist

“I am a new RN working in Labor and Delivery and this movie was incredibly informative and eye opening about the different ways to have a baby. I was reminded of the true beauty and miracle of childbirth and was inspired to learn more about home births.”

— Marissa, RN

“WHY NOT HOME?” in the news:

PRESS DEMOCRAT
SONOMA MEDICINE MAGAZINE

INFO@WHYNOTHOME.COM / WHYNOTHOME.COM