

Submission
No 122

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Hospital 1st Sept 2014

I was booked in for a planned c- section with my private obstetrician, this was my 3rd child. Previous children had been delivered at - one natural 2nd c- section no issues to report. I was delivering at the public hospital as I had let my obstetrics portion of my health insurance go after my second to save money, didn't get around to re-activating in time. So had my usual obstetrician and had to pay the hospital to allow her to come in and deliver my baby.

The day of the birth, a VERY young person came into the pre theatre room had no idea who he was my husband tells me he introduced himself as the trainee Anaesthetist, he looked no older than a high school student. He then went to work "trying" to get the epidural in, they just keep letting him try over and over again. I would get shooting feelings down my leg, he would say "was that your left?" And I would say no that's my right". This went on for over half an hour my obstetrician was in the theatre in the next room all scrubbed up she couldn't come out she just asked if everything was ok which the staff behind me all yes yes ok. In the end they believed he got it right, I went into theatre, I felt the knife on my abdomen by then they were way behind on schedule I was immediately put under general anaesthetic - no choice.

My husband was removed from the room, we both missed the birth, he was brought back in once she was wrapped, he saw me with "a tube in my mouth and tongue hanging out" he seriously thought in that moment I was dead, one of the nurses grabbed him told him not to look handed him the baby and walked him out. I obviously woke up in recovery no baby multiple doses of pain relief few hours went by no one would say anything to me, I finally had the clarity to ask if my baby was alive, the nurse just looked at my chart "she is in the maternity wing as far as I can see" I didn't know it was a girl, I asked "it's a girl?" She was then obviously embarrassed and realised what was going on, she disappeared very fast. From what I have been told I was taken to the maternity wing no earlier than 3 hours post surgery, thankfully being my 3rd I knew what to do as soon as my husband handed her to me, she had been desperate to feed but I completely unwrapped her took everything off her except her nappy to check her over and have her skin to skin and her body was blue. My husband raced her off again, I was stuck in the bed with a catheter couldn't move an agonising half hour not knowing what was happening. I do not know to this day what they did but she came back looking a lot better, I immediately fed her and kept her with me from that moment. I was kicked out at 7am two days later, as they needed the bed and I was a "veteran" mum that was fine without help. My husband couldn't get me that early as he needed to drop the other two at school and daycare, so I sat in the hallway with all my stuff and waited. I still remember the agonising hike back to the car as there is no parking by mid morning, I tore open my wound walking back to the car, I was in mental and physical pain after everything I had been through. I saw a NSW Health nurse who came to the house that was one good thing that does stand out in my memory, she re-taped the wound showed me what to do to keep it closed and clean.

On my 6 week checkup with my OB in her rooms I addressed I wasn't happy with the whole scenario of what happened, she advised unfortunately as it is public you are at the mercy of the public system and there is nothing that can be done, if I planned to have another child best I sort my health insurance again to avoid this. Needless to say I won't be having anymore children, and god help all those women at the "mercy" of the public system".