

Submission  
No 288

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I would like to share my experience of birth trauma.

I have experienced this twice, having had 4 births in total.

My first baby was born prematurely, at 34 weeks. I had been in hospital with premature rupture of membranes for 8 days prior to her birth. It was in the public system. The night I went in to labor, the midwives reported that they were understaffed. I had laboured for approximately 7 hours, mostly with no midwife in sight. When my partner or mum pressed the buzzer for assistance, no one would come. I didn't know what was happening as it was my first birth and was scared, also due to the fact my baby was premature. Things had become extremely intense and I screamed at my partner to go down the hallway and find someone and demand an epidural. The midwife eventually came, I was told to sit on the edge of the bed so the needle could go in to my back. However I couldn't sit down as I could feel the head between my legs. I was forced to try and squat and stay still. I now know I was in the transition phase and I hadn't even been checked by the midwife. I was about to push my baby out. However was given the epidural and the midwife left the room and told me not to push until she came back. No one came back at all. The epidural started to wear off and no one was answering the buzzer. I screamed at my partner to go and find someone. They came and topped up the epidural. However I started blacking out and they had to give me something to counteract it- I think my blood pressure dropped too much. I was told once again not to push and the midwife left. A couple of hours later the doors to the room opened and in barged a team of people, including a doctor who appeared to be carrying a large set of metal tongs. As they stormed in the doctor said "she should never have been left fully dilated for 5 hours" and then I started shaking uncontrollably with fear as he used the 'forceps' to extract my baby.

With my second birth i wanted to avoid similar trauma so enlisted a private obstetrician. I was upfront with my wishes for an as intervention-free birth as possible. She kept pushing me to be induced from 37 weeks pregnant. I kept resisting. Until at my 39 week appointment, she said to lay down on the bed and she would 'check' me. However she seemed to reach her arm up really high inside me and it felt like she was using fingernails to scratch me and moved around a lot, I was crying out in pain. As I stood up, and with my preschooler present in the room, there was a gush of blood/fluid and I started crying. She told me that my waters had broken and I better head over to the hospital. I was panicking and shaking and couldn't believe what happened, my preschooler needed counselling to process her trauma from this as well. This was an indescribable trauma for me as I felt so completely violated