

Submission
No 525

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My name is _____, I am a teacher and a mother of two beautiful girls.

My first daughter was born in 2019 at _____ My second was born 8 weeks ago June 2023 also at _____

The significant age gap a silent nod to the trauma I experienced at birth and the repercussions thus had on me for many months after.

Being the first time giving birth I had no choice but to trust the system. My waters broke and I did not go into natural labor so I was sent home. I was then monitored and told to come back in two days to discuss induction. When I arrived they began prepping me for an induction. I tried to explain I wasn't here for an induction I didn't even have my bag with me the midwife made a snide comment along the lines of well when would you like to have this baby next week? I persisted and told them I wanted to wait to see if I went into labor naturally. They said I needed to wait to see the doctors. The doctor came in and threw stats at me that said the longer I waited the less chance there was of me going into labor naturally and the higher the risk of infection. My husband began to get concerned and so I agreed to the induction. I remember the doctor coming in to put the drip in and I began crying. He asked why. I simply replied I wasn't meant to be having my baby today.

My birth ended after being wheeled into theatre for an emergency c section. They gave me one last chance to push. I did, they gave me an episiotomy, forceps and vacuum were also needed. My baby needed CPR at birth had a 3 Apgar score and was taken straight to ICU for monitoring.

1. I was asked if I consented to an episiotomy. Yes did I know what this meant. No. Did I know it meant I would be cut. No.

2. The ramifications of being left after the most traumatic and vulnerable moment in my life still haunt me today. My husband had to go with my daughter. I was taken to a large dark room where I waited alone for the drugs to wear off. I remember feeling a fight or flight response that I needed to get to my husband and to my daughter. I noticed a phone in the nurse's top pocket and asked if he could call my husband.

3. I then got taken upstairs to my room, still alone. Told that breakfast wasn't served till 6am and I needed to go and get it myself from the lunch room. I gave birth at 2am. After being induced the morning prior. I hadn't eaten a thing.

4. I suffered so much trauma from being separated from my baby. I was not offered the at-home midwife services and so it wasn't until my 6-week check my GP diagnosed me with postnatal depression. Which lasted 2 years. I was hypervigilant with my daughter. I had separation

anxiety and wouldn't even let my husband take her out. It caused marital issues because he thought I didn't trust him. I couldn't return to work because the fear of leaving her was paralyzing.

I don't understand why I couldn't have been wheeled up to ICU. My husband had to argue the point after he came down and collected colostrum once. The second time they asked he told them no you bring my wife here so she can feed her baby. I still cry that I missed her first feed. My husband had to give her expressed milk while I lay alone in the ward.

The worst part is that I didn't even realize how bad my experience was until I had my second baby. I had a natural labor and an amazing experience. I was up and felt myself within three days. I couldn't believe this was possible. The pain I felt after my firstborn was unbearable I described it as being hit by a truck. My back took months and months to recover. I remember telling my husband I was broken my body had been broken.

I cried to my midwife in my 34 week check with my second as I described the room I was taken to after birth alone. I pleaded please I don't want to be alone can I bring a second support person and if they take me to that room again can they come. She was amazing and explained they had been in the recovery room because it was protocol after going in for "surgery" even though I never had the C-section.

Please the midwives are amazing just give them adequate conditions to do their job well and don't let red tape create unnecessary trauma for all.