

Submission
No 619

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I was booked for induction at 37 weeks with my first baby after being told my whole pregnancy my baby was measuring big. Tape was inserted but without a bed to put me in, and not being allowed to leave the hospital grounds, a single mother, I found a seat in the carpark and waited. No action. I asked multiple times to leave or for a bed or somewhere comfortable to sit. No was always the answer. Eventually, 11pm pains increasing, I was given a bed in a general room with a man who had a broken arm and I could help myself to the shower as the hot water would help the pain. I was woken at 4am to be told they were taking me to break my waters. With a total of 27 hours in labour with no progressing or dilating, somewhere in there I begged for an epidural, 3 hours later it was delivered. And failed. I knew something was wrong but they took the gas and left.

The antithesis happened to walk past and hear me screaming and came in to see, he knew instantly it had failed and was back an hour later to administer a second. Eventually I was rushed for an emergency Caesarian. I was told I would be in recovery under 1 hour and my baby would be in the nursery with medical staff only the entire time. 6 hours later I was wheeled out of the recovery ward to my brother sitting in a room with my baby. That night my baby began to choke. First time mum, no one to help me, unable to move from the bed, I pressed the emergency buzzer for nurses, no response, I screamed for help as I watched them walk passed the open room door, I managed to scoot over on the bed far enough to reach the crib and picked him up by the blanket to stop him choking.

At least an hour passed before anyone came to help because I'd fallen asleep holding my baby, the help that did come was an aggressive unimpressed nurse who snatched the sleeping baby off my chest, yelled at me about the dangers of co sleeping, put my baby back in the crib and pushed it far enough away that I couldn't reach it. I sat awake crying watching my baby in fear of him choking again. She did come in a few more times through the night to tell me I had to feed him, pulling my gown down and shoving him at me. Morning came and she told me it was shower time, warned me I may notice some "discharge" and to just wash it down the drain, when said discharge was more like a hemorrhage I sung out for help, she opened the door and growled "Great! I guess I'll have to clean that up".

She wouldn't let me change my sons meconium nappy and when I tried to take a photo over her shoulder she again growled that it was disgusting why would I want to even see it and told me to delete the photo because she didn't give me permission to take her photo, she wasn't in the photo and I tried to show her but she was adamant. My sons legs kept turning black, completely black, he was covered head to toe in an awful rash that looked like he was burnt all over, they ignored my requests to have a doctor check him until my dad visited and rushed the baby out into the hall screaming for help.

The paediatrician said "all I can put it down to is newborn rash" On leaving the hospital alone pushing a pram full of stuff carrying my baby, nurses laughed and asked if I'd like a wheelchair, not knowing what to say and feeling already like a complete failure, I laughed and let myself out. Home midwives didn't believe there was something not right with my cesarean wound, I asked at least 3 times to have it checked I was told it's my first baby and to believe them it

was completely normal. The pad eventually came off in the shower and then checked for the first time at my sons 6 week check up. I had a severe infection, my wound was rotting and open in several places.

The only people who made me feel like a human were a night nurse checking on the man with a broken arm, and the male midwife who broke my waters and offered me something to eat and drink for the first time since the morning before.

I was made to feel like such a burden every time I asked a question, and an animal anytime they did actually “help” me.

After trying for my first baby for over 10 years, going through ivf to conceive him and always planned to have another baby, I have since fallen naturally and had an abortion out of fear of what birth would be like a second time around.