

Submission
No 690

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

My birthing experience took place at _____ hospital on the 17/11/2017.

My pregnancy was fairly straight forward and I am grateful for that. My had beautiful intentions for my hospital birth, went in with a birth plan and a doula and planned to have a hospital birth. When I arrived at the hospital in the night of the 17th I was welcomed and taken to the birthing sweet. I requested to get in the bath and spent 5 hours of my labour in the bath, it was quiet and peaceful and I had my pain under control. When things started to amp up and progress more, I no longer wanted to be in the bath and so I hopped out. By labour then really progressed. I was walking around the room and leaning over the bed when I felt in incredible pressure in my vagina and had the urge to push, thinking it was my babies head but soon finding out it was thr amniotic sac filled with fluid. I pushed it out and it exploded on the floor, the midwife was immediately alarmed as there was meconium present. From

This moment the entire energy and atmosphere of my labour changed, there was a very obvious anxiety and fear present and an urgency to get the baby out. I continued to labour as I moved swiftly into transition, the contractions were strong and very painful and very close together and I felt I had no rest in between. I remember the midwife saying to me that she was concerned about baby and that she would like to monitor his heart beat. I agreed even though I found it incredibly hard to lay on my back still while contracting while they put the machine on to listen to baby's heart beat. Once they did listen there was more panic, the midwife said the babies heart rate was too high and that she was going to get another midwife to come in. The second midwife made the discovery that they were in fact listening to my heart beat and no the babies but just Incase they would like to pop a monitor on babies head " just a little clip" Incase he was in distress due to the present meconium.

By this stage I was ready to push and no longer could be on my back and I was on all fours on the bed, I'm not entirely sure what happened between the monitor being popped on his head and this moment but I remember having a cannula put into my hand while deep in labour, the midwife told me that she had called the OB and then my final moments of labouring were the midwife and the OB standing by the bed trying to get me to lay on my back so that he could examine me. I refused, as I knew my baby was coming. My birth doula at some point during this period came to me and said, I'm so sorry I don't want to alarm you but if you want to have this baby vaginally you need to push and get him out because I've seen all the signs before they are preparing you for a C section. This is not what I wanted and so I was screaming and pushing outside of contractions to get my baby out.

The midwife on duty asking me to still lay on my back so they could examine me, at this point I yelled my baby is coming! Leave me alone. As I pushed he did come, very quickly and I remember them being shocked and someone pushed the emergency Button behind the bed because of the meconium. Around 10-20 people came flying into the room right at the moment when my baby was born in a complete panic. I didn't hear him cry over the commotion and I was so anxious for him to be close to me, he was placed on my chest even though they wanted to take him to check he was ok, I refused. My doula had to really fight for me to hold our baby. He was placed on my chest and that's when I noticed the "the clip" on his little head to monitor his heart which was actually a screw that was screwed into his head. In shock I said " what is that on my babies head!" And the midwife sheepishly said that's the foetal monitoring clip as she took it off. It left a nasty bruise on his head. During this time

the OB was examining me, as I had torn quite badly. I had a 3rd degree tear and it had torn through one fibre of my anus. A needle was inserted to numb the area and the OB sutured me up. It was very uncomfortable and I remember struggling to connect with my baby in these moments, it felt like there was no space in between birthing my baby and the OB examining me to stitch me up.

The worst part was when the OB said “ I’m just going to pop a finger in your anus now to insure you have no internal tears” and before I could say anything his finger was in and out of my anus. The next 90 minutes I had skin to skin with our baby but the entire time I was being pressured by midwife’s on duty saying that they needed to check him over because of the meconium, by this stage he was actually already attached to my breast and suckling. He was not in any distress at all. I knew this because I am his mother. I eventually did allow them to be weigh him etc but I felt we had to watch them like a hawk to make sure they didn’t do anything we didn’t want to him. A really nice midwife came on duty and helped to wipe off the meconium that was all over his body and in his hair.

After this we were moved to another room, they came in every two hours to do checks on because of the meconium even though he was fine. I was so tired I couldn’t sleep though because of the 2 hr checks. The next 2 days were not relaxing, I didn’t feel nurtured at all. I was struggling to feed and to get him to latch properly eventually one night when had been crying for a while a midwife came in and said “hasn’t anyone showed you how to feed you baby” and she grabbed his little head and forced him onto the breast. I was in shock. I felt really unheard and unseen. The entire time I was in hospital 3 days I was pressured by multiple staff members to vaccinate our baby and to go on antibiotics Incase I got an infection because of my tear. It was really exhausting and I felt really worn down.

I eventually agreed to have the genetic heel prick test in a moment of weakness when my partner Adam left to get me some food. 3 staff members came in and told me the risk of not getting this test done. I was terrified and so agreed. I will never forget that moment, even though just a little prick my baby whaled in agony and held his breath he was so upset and I felt terrible. This was not what I wanted and I was convinced out of fear. On the third day I went home, I was relieved. On the 6 day weigh in my partner had to drive us 40 minutes to the high way on a bumpy road with stitches and a new born to meet a midwife at a service station to weigh our baby as driving out to our rural property was too much of a liability.