

Submission
No 773

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Montana Bennett

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Partially
Confidential

On the 14th May 2022 I gave birth to my son at 19 weeks and 5 days at home. My son was born too early and did not survive.

At 11 weeks gestation I began bleeding. Following an ultrasound it was found that I had a subchorrionic haemorrhage, although the baby appeared well. I was sent up to the EPAS clinic at [redacted] Hospital where I had the worst interaction with a learning obstetrics doctor. Without looking at the ultrasound he declared I was having a miscarriage. To add to the difficult experience, the doctor could speak very little English. I argued that I just saw my baby on the ultrasound which prompted the doctor to look at ultrasound. He advised that there were no treatment and sent me on my way. Throughout the rest of my pregnancy I endured heavy bleeding. I frequently visited the EPAS at [redacted] and had more unpleasant run ins with this same doctor.

At about 18 weeks, I experienced what I could only describe as my waters breaking. This was followed by regular "cramping". I returned to [redacted] in the early hours to receive no more than a bedside ultrasound and again, sent on my way. The fluid that was leaking was not tested. In the next day I had to go on a work trip to Sydney. The night I was away I was enduring intensive cramping. I went to [redacted] hospital where I was treated for a suspected UTI. Again I was sent away. Over the next week, every afternoon and throughout the night I experienced severe cramping, all the while I was still bleeding. I visited my GP who palpated my stomach and advised that we should wait until my 20 week scan (five days away) to see what direction we head in.

That night after visiting the doctor, the cramping intensified. I instinctively got into a warm bath at 1am under candle light. I worked through the cramping until I unknowing birthed my son. He was born trying to fight. I called an ambulance and was taken to hospital. Paramedics worked on my boy until we reached hospital. Once I reached hospital I was jammed with syntocin and my grieving body was infiltrated with who knows how many sets of hands. Doctors tried to pull the placenta out of me. For anybody that doesn't understand birth, following the delivery of a baby, your uterus continues to contract to deliver the placenta. I was never given this chance. Instead, I was treated as an emergency FOR NO NEED. I was grieving and alone and was in no position to have my say.

In the week following my loss, I began to experience temperatures. Upon return to [redacted] it was found that I would require a D&C because not all of the placenta was removed. To further add to my trauma, I was now back in hospital.

Following my sons birth, I researched lots. I drew to the conclusion that I was in prodromal labour for some 10 days leading to his birth. Twice I attended a hospital. Once I visited my GP. How in this day and age can it not be concluded that a woman in starting labour. Waters had broken. My cervix was open. This was not picked up on.

My sons birth at home was beautiful. Women know how to birth. Even though I wasn't aware I was in labour, I birthed. I am so glad I had this experience and I was able to spend his last few moments with him alone. As soon as I got to hospital I was stripped of any choice. I was grieving and I was taken advantage of. I was stripped of any choices because I was in no state. I regret not staying at home. Where I am sure nature would of taken its course and I would of soon birthed my placenta. Rather than it be torn out of me. I feel as though the doctors and other hospital staff were more interested in the 'rush' of the emergency than that of the woman who had just lost her son.