

Submission
No 791

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

BIRTH TRAUMA

I was 23 when I conceived my first child. We were full of excitement and joy for what this new baby would bring to our lives. Little did we know, I would suffer trauma so deep that it would take 7 years to heal from it.

At 39 weeks I was induced at _____ Hospital, NSW as I tested positive for pre eclampsia. I wasn't given any information regarding this. I was held down by a nurse and had a catheter violently shoved into my urethra to get "clean urine" to make sure it contained the protein as the cup test was inconclusive. I screamed from the pain and cried and the nurse said "if you think this hurts then childbirth is going to be a big shock for you". I was then transferred to _____ Hospital due to it being a high risk birth. Upon arriving at the hospital on the 19th April 2016, I was forced against my will to have a cannula inserted in to my hand. I begged them not to. I said i wanted to wait until i was in active labour if a cannula was needed, as I wanted to be comfortable when I was getting through the long and difficult part. When I asked why it was necessary they said "just in case you go in to labour during the night". I said this wasn't a good enough reason. They ignored my requests and just came in and forced me to do it. Then the gel was inserted in to my cervix and I was left in the room to sleep. I didnt sleep though as I was extremely scared and uncomfortable.

The next day more gel was inserted and then I was given pitocin to induce labour. It was very slow and wasn't progressing so they turned the pitocin up very high. I instantly began having the most horrific and violent contractions I've ever had. I have had 2 children since and I can confirm those contractions were the worst. I was crying out for help, and the midwives were rolling their eyes at me and saying I needed to calm down, the pain couldn't be that bad.

As the day went on, I was denied food and water. I was starving and dehydrated. After 12 hours of horrific pain, the head midwife on the floor that day came in and checked my cervical dilation. I was 1cm. I was crushed. I BEGGED for an epidural. She said no, its too early. I was weeping. She ignored me. She came back 10 minutes later and said she couldn't wait all day for me to go in to labour, and they needed my room so she said I had to have a stretch and sweep. I declined. She tried to force me but I kept kicking her away. She instructed 2 other midwives to hold down my limbs and that is when I was assaulted. My soul left my body at that moment. I could see in her eyes, she was getting off on hurting me. She was enjoying being in a position of power and inflicting pain on a vulnerable person. If you lined up 1000 women, I could pick her out. I will never, ever forget her face. I have seen it in my nightmares for 7 years. My mother and husband had to watch as I was assaulted by that woman and left to lay in my own blood as she had been so rough. That was the first of 4 assaults I experienced during the next 3 hours. Each time was the same. Me screaming. Her assaulting me. Blood. My mother was so upset, she tried to talk to the midwife in the hallway and she was dismissed.

I finally progressed and was moved to the labour ward, away from the evil woman who assaulted me. I was given the epidural I requested due to maternal exhaustion. When it was time to push, my baby's heart rate dropped very low and the doctor asked me if I consented to a vacuum delivery and episiotomy. I consented to both.

After her birth, we were left in the room. A few hours passed and nobody had come to move us, and I needed to use the toilet so my husband helped me off the bed. I stood up and blood gushed out of me. So much blood, it was actually unbelievable. I nearly collapsed. I realise now, I had hemorrhaged and was left untreated. I was taken to the maternity ward after this. It was 4am so my husband had to leave. I didn't sleep. I was so traumatised. By 6am the puddle of blood I was sitting in had started to drip off the bed. I called the midwife in and asked if someone could help me. She told me "the sheets are in the cupboard down the hall. You have to change them yourself". I couldn't walk due to the episiotomy being stitched up incorrectly so I had to lay in my own blood that got bigger and bigger until 9am when my husband arrived.

The next night, at about 9pm, I asked one of the midwives if they could fill my drink bottle up as it was empty. She declined and said "You need to learn to start doing things for yourself now". I tried to get up and walk but collapsed on the ground, so she begrudgingly got me one small cup of water with, no exaggeration, one mouthful of water in it. Hers is a face I could also pick out of a line up. She was getting off on watching a vulnerable person struggle.

After my traumatising experience, I developed PTSD, post natal depression, post natal psychosis and severe anxiety. I had to take 200mg of Zoloft just to be able to function.