

Submission
No 1384

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Not only was the birth of my child the best day of my life - it was also the worst. The labour: I arrived at the hospital after labouring for 24 hours at home. My contractions were lasting longer than normal (5 minutes each), and something just didn't feel right. But as a first-time mum I didn't know what to expect and so put all my trust in the midwives, after all it's their job, they know best. I remember being told I had to have a vaginal examination. I was not told why and what risks this undertook. I found it so uncomfortable and painful that my body was backing up the bed. I didn't know I could tell her to stop. But my body was clearly telling her NO MORE, however she continued. I was then told to go home and even though I felt I needed support was told I could only stay if I was induced. I was not informed of the risks or what an induction entailed. My waters were broken, and I was put on Syntocinon. My contractions became unbearable and never ending which led to an epidural where I was placed on my back. As soon as the epidural kicked in I passed out. I woke up to find everyone in a panic because my baby's heart rate had dropped. No-one informed me what was happening or to get me to change positions to see if it helped. I was told my baby needed the "clip". No one informed us that it was a screw or that it would pierce through the skin. That's when things went from bad to worse. I will never forget what happened next. Being told your baby's life is at risk and potentially your own, is the scariest and most terrifying thing any mum could hear. Along with that overwhelming feeling that no one can prepare you for. Things started happening before i had time to process what was going on, midwife's and doctors running around like crazy, undressing me, giving me medication, yelling at me for information regarding your name, DOB, due date and more that I couldn't even comprehend. My husband was taken away from my bedside to get changed and was informed about the situation. Apparently along the way I signed a contract form. I can tell you now I was not mentally stable enough to be signing anything. I don't remember what I signed, and I gave consent to things I didn't understand. Everything was happening to me, not with me. I didn't feel like I was present anymore just watching the world spin in front of me. Does anyone think to stop and check on the mother. WHAT ABOUT ME!!! When I got to theatre I was separated from my husband while waiting for the Obstetrician. WHY? I have never been so scared in all my life and my only security was left outside the door. I NEEDED HIM. Eventually he was allowed back in and everything started. No one explained to me what was happening. They talked over me to each other like I wasn't even in the room. When they say you won't feel any pain they're right but you feel everything else. Every pull, every tug, every push, every yank. Feeling like they are going to break your ribs as they push down with all their body weight. Then nothing. I'm just left lying there lifeless with no clue what's happening. Waiting to hear from someone to say our baby is ok or not. They just took him straight over to the warmer to be wiped down and checked. If it wasn't for him crying I would have thought my baby was dead. His Apgar score was 9 so WHY? Why wasn't he with me? WHY wasn't I the first person to hold my baby? WHY did I have to feel so disconnected from my baby? WHAT ABOUT ME!!! Not being able to see or hold my baby properly was heart breaking. I just wanted it all to be over with, but it was only getting started. Waiting there feeling alone while they stitched me up for the next 45 minutes. My body soon went into shock and uncontrollable shaking and vomiting. Getting me to a point where I didn't even want my baby anymore. I was moved to recovery and separated from my son. My midwife told me it would only take 5 minutes, 4 HOURS later I was still in recovery trying to work out why? Where was my baby and why couldn't I have him with me like everyone else? No one could answer any of these questions. Before I got back to my room, multiple members of our family had arrived to the hospital. Without my husband and my permission staff showed them to my room where they got to hold my baby before me. WHAT ABOUT ME!!! When i finally got back to my room, I felt so disconnected from my son. This wasn't my baby, I wasn't his mum, my baby must have died. During my hospital stay I was treated with such disrespect. The night was especially difficult as my husband wasn't allowed to stay. When baby did a poo I had no help with changing. Baby was placed between my legs by a midwife, handed wipes and

a nappy and then she left. How was I supposed to sit up and change him when I was still half numb, sore with stitches and a catheter and cannula in. I couldn't even put my bed up. Other times I'd finally fall asleep only to be woken by a nurse who would turn on all the lights to do her observations only to leave them all on when she left. How was I supposed to turn them off when I couldn't get out of bed? Of course I wanted to get out of there as soon as possible. How ironic I had to leave the hospital to get the care I needed. I was home within 48 hours. For weeks I struggled to move, walk, sit up, shower and get dressed. Coughing, sneezing and laughing all felt like someone had stabbed me and ripped every stitch open. Holding my baby and feeding my baby were tiring and painful. It took weeks for me to build a bond with my baby. I was made to feel like a caesarean section was the easy way out for the medical staff and my feelings were invalid. It was the hardest thing I have ever done and I wouldn't choose it again if I had a choice.