

Submission
No 1349

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I will pre-face this submission with, I sued, and they paid me out. The amount of gross negligence was incredible and outstanding. Both my husband and I are NSW health care professionals who were ignored throughout pregnancy and birth. Because of these events ii have been left with depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The birth occurred 3 years ago, and I have recently started anti-depressants as I am no longer coping.

I was a 30-year-old female, fit and healthy. The worst day of my life occurred on the day I birthed my son. I was found to have low amniotic fluid during at 38-week scan, up until then pregnancy had been okay. I was told I would have an induction and presented at the birthing suite. The midwife told me that if I was 2cm dilated I would be going home. Contradiction and after correction the midwife made it obvious that she did not like or care for me. I was induced at 3pm and my husband was told to leave. I started contracting at 11pm. Alone, even though it is NSW health policy that I am entitled to have a support person. At 2am they moved me into the birthing suite. I was advised not to call my husband, but I did anyway, and he came. I was given an early epidural at around 4am due to insurmountable pain which allowed me to relax and rest. At 10am I was advised I was 10 cm dilated and told to push. I pushed for 1.5 hours and failed to progress; the obstetrician was called. He entered the room and told me we would be doing forceps. I was not asked, I was not consulted, I had no risks or complications explained to me. The forceps were placed, the episiotomy done, and this doctor pulled 3 times, with enough force to move me on the bed. On the third pull my son was born, my coccyx fractured and 600ml primary post-partum haemorrhage. I was left with an episiotomy and a high lateral wall tear. The obstetrician was teaching a junior doctor. Before he began to stitch me up, he turned to the junior doctor and said, "I'm going to stitch her up tight so that it's good for him" and gestured to my husband holding our 30-minute old son. My son, thankfully, well, and healthy. I continued to bleed, a lot. My husband informed the midwife staff that I was anaemic, to which they denied, and we were made to feel as though we were burdens. They told me to stand, which I could not do, they rolled their eyes at me for being "weak". Little did they know I lost just shy of 1.8L both primary and secondary postpartum haemorrhage and my haemoglobin was 70 and I ended up with 2 units of blood and an iron infusion. They refused to x-ray my coccyx "as it will not change the treatment". When they found out my husband and I were health care professionals, the same obstetrician stated "If I had known, I would have taken you for a c-section! You would have recovered so much faster". I asked for a c-section. I asked during a midwife appointment for the risks and complications of a c-section and her response was, "you do not need to know this, because you will not be having one".

I have been left with severe mental scars, I find it incredibly difficult to be intimate with my husband, all the sexual joy has been taken because I now feel that my body was purely made for him and not my own sexual pleasures. I have constant flash backs. I am soulless and a shadow of the bubbly, strong and independent female I used to be. I am mad that I let this happen to me, that I was in a vulnerable position, however I do realise that this is my illogical PTSD brain talking and there is no way I could have stopped this. Physically, he tore one side of my pelvic muscles off my bone, he did not stitch me up correctly and the muscles of my vagina are no longer connected to each other. Instead, now just buddled up with scar tissue and not contracting. I also have a 3B tear which was diagnosed during investigation apart of my lawsuit. My coccyx still has painful spikes and I find it difficult to defecate.

I describe my birth as a rape. It was the worst day of my life when it should have been the happiest.