

Submission
No 1393

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

I was having my first baby and wanted to have a home birth but at the time we did not have the money to pay for it. So the next best thing was the birth center attached to hospital. Unfortunately my pregnancy went longer than acceptable and I was kicked out of the birth centre program. I was not going to have the midwives I had met through my pregnancy and I was told I could not use water immersion for pain relief. At 40+1 I was told by the head OB if I did not have a IOL my baby would die everyday I would be harassed to have an IOL. I finally gave in and allowed an IOL this went against my intuition and only caused fear. During the labour I did not feel supported or was not extended kindness as I was the woman who was being non compliant. When my baby was born I was still being harassed and forced into complying with hospital policies. There was no regard or respect for my body autonomy or family values. After my baby was born I was left lying in the bed for 5 hours waiting to be sutured. My baby was in the SCN not one person came and told me how my baby was doing or offered me water or nourishment. They were clearly annoyed that I had not complied. When my baby was taken from me I said my husband would go as well they said he could not go as it would be too traumatic for him to watch what they needed to do. I said if he doesn't go my baby doesn't go. I was separated from my baby for 12 hours when I did see my baby her head was stuck to the cot with dried formula. I had not consented to formula or asked to express for breastmilk. The birth centre midwife came to see me and ask why baby was in the nursery. I said I was not sure and told her about the formula. She went out of the room when she came back she said baby can stay here now. She removed the feeding tube and helped me to breastfeed. I heard later that a baby had died the same day my baby was born so everyone was extra vigilant especially because my baby was overdue. I can never change this story or get the time back with my daughter. I later went on to become a midwife. The degree was very difficult due to the amount of trauma you are exposed to. Then once you are a midwife trying to navigate a system that is based on fear rather than trust in women is even harder because you then become a part of the problem. Speaking up against the system when you are working in it is very difficult. Maternity care is so broken it needs to change for women, babies and midwives. If babies were brought into the world touched by only gentle loving hand the world would be a very different place. If women were supportive birth they way they chose without fear women's health and children's health would change. Breast federation rates would increase this in turn would improve long turn health outcomes.