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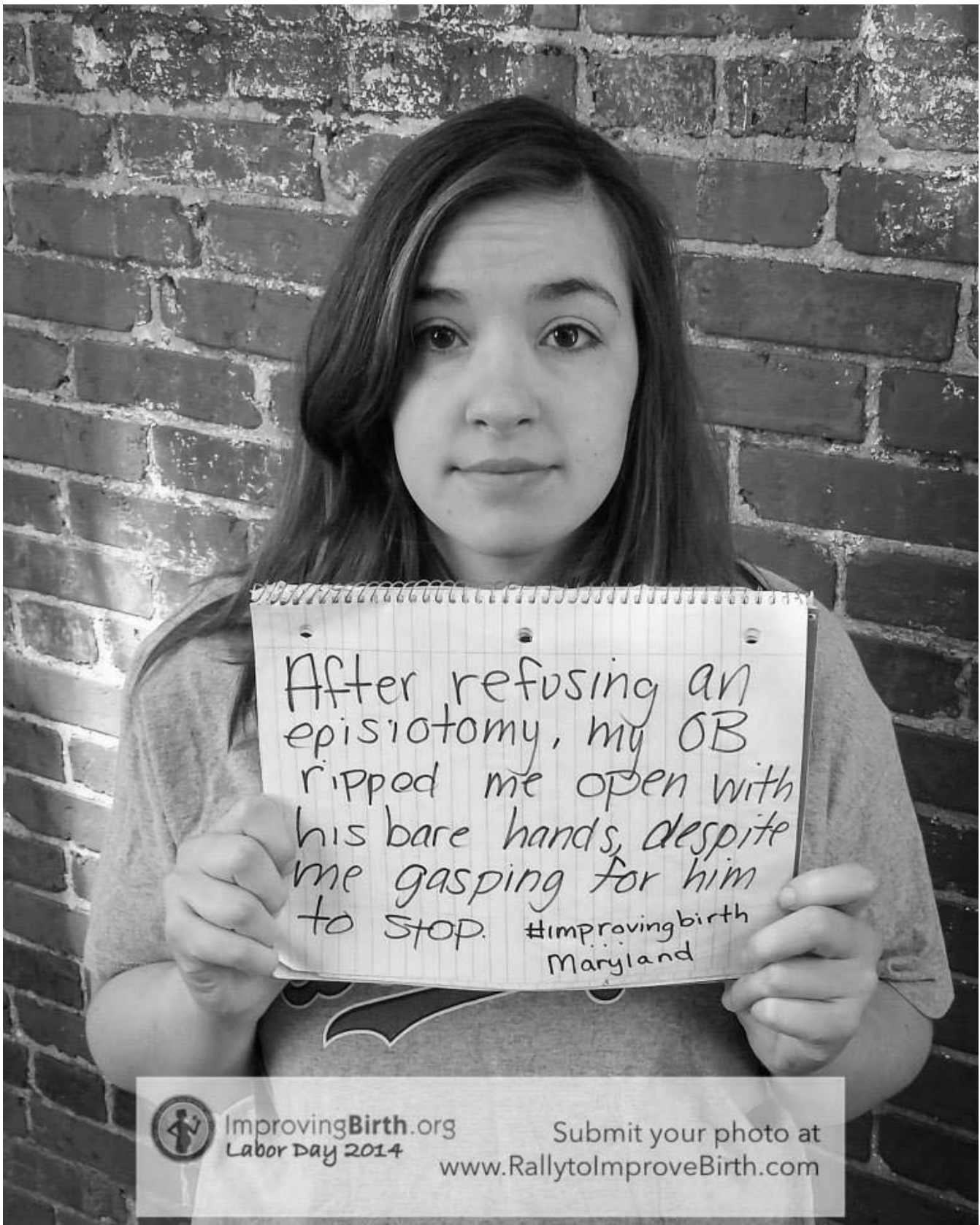
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Caught on Video: Improving Birth Breaks the Silence on Abuse of Women in Maternity Care

Posted by [Cristen Pascucci](#) on

[August 28, 2014](#)

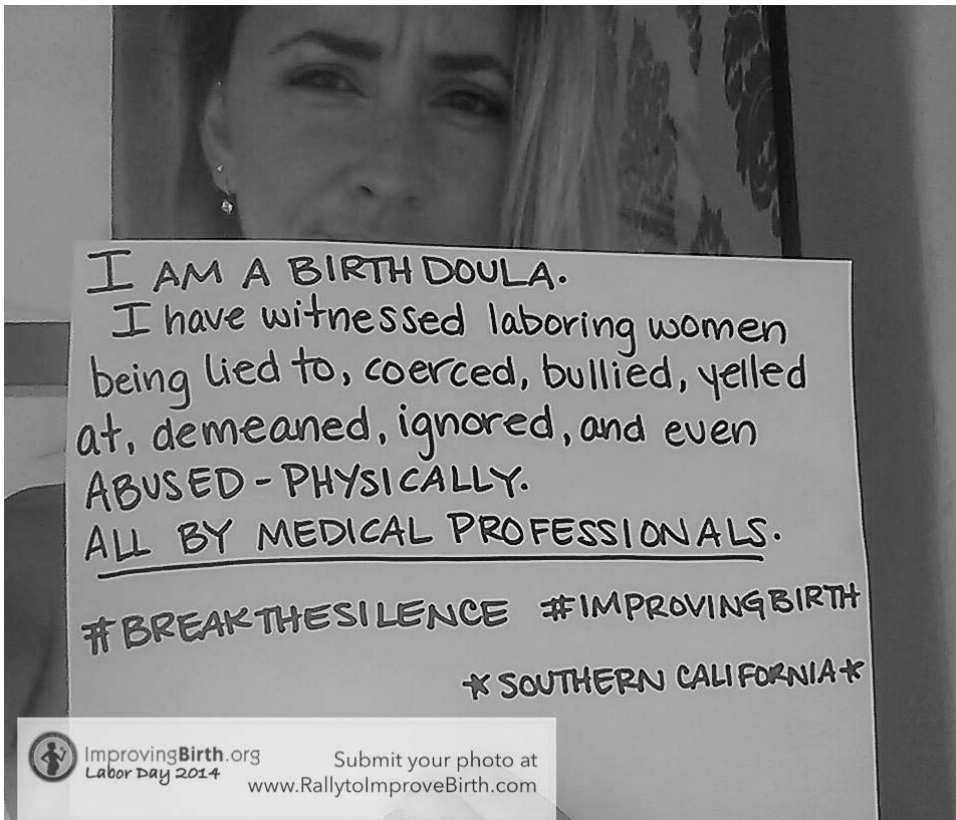
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To the reader: We are proud to say that we recognize and appreciate the many doctors, nurses, midwives, and other professionals who practice and promote respectful, evidence-based care. We do not believe that these cases of abuse against women represent "most" or "all" care providers--but where this abuse exists, it cannot be ignored any longer. We ask that you join us in calling for compassionate care of all women in all birth settings.

This article is one installment in our #breakthesilence campaign about abuse and trauma in maternity care, together with the [trauma toolkit](#) and [trauma resources](#) for mothers and providers, "[How to File a Complaint for Mistreatment in Maternity Care](#)," and the [photo campaign here](#).

* TRIGGER WARNING *

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"I have witnessed"

> **Kelly's Story**

"Dr. A came into the room and after two pushes he had scissors in his hands and told the nurse that he was going to perform an episiotomy. I said why? ... I pushed two more times and he was going to cut and I said "No, Don't Cut Me". Then I said "why, why can't we try?" He said why you don't go home and try or go to Kentucky! So then after he yelled at me he cut my Vagina twelve times. So before the episiotomy the nurse said it's only going to be a little cut. A little cut turned into Dr. A's horrific rage against me as a human being and against my will to begin with. I wanted to cry so badly and I was so horrified while he was cutting me."

The paragraph above is from a letter sent to a California hospital from Kelly*, a first-time mom who endured a forced episiotomy

(enlargement of the vagina with scissors or scalpel) at the birth of her son in 2013.

Kelly's experience is not an isolated incident. The authors of the national [Listening to Mothers II Survey \(2006\)](#) said, "[T]he great majority of mothers who had experienced episiotomy (73%) stated that they had not had a choice in this decision." Indeed, Improving Birth has heard from dozens of women who say their vaginas were cut against their will—women who said, "No, don't cut me!" and many of whom said they attempted to move away from the person coming at them with a sharp object (see one [series of comments here](#)). Routine episiotomy has been discredited by science for over 20 years. [Top](#)



"Either I break your water now or you can get up and go home."

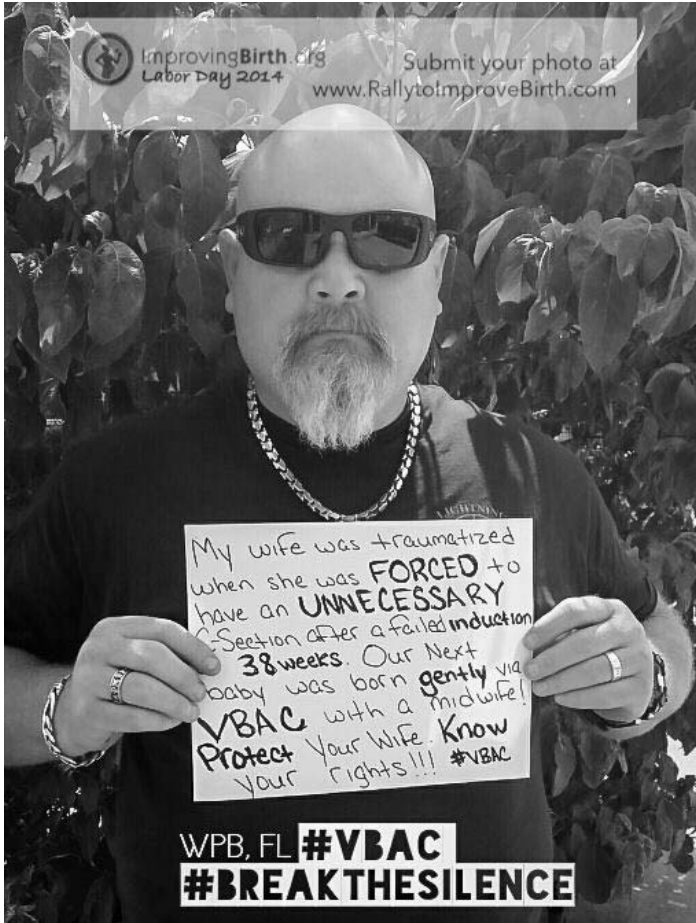
> Beginning to Break the Silence

Since the beginning of August, Improving Birth has received hundreds of photos, messages, comments, and stories from women from across the country about the abuse and trauma they have experienced in maternity care. Women are sharing these stories as part of our #breakthesilence campaign, which was inspired by the messages, emails, and phone calls we get year-round from our volunteers and from women giving birth in almost every state in the U.S. (Read [Dara's story](#), [Kai's story](#), and [Ashlee's story](#).)

Over and over throughout this public campaign, we've seen the same skeptical comments and questions:

- If this really happened, she would have sued!
- Those procedures were unfortunate, but surely they were medically necessary?
- Didn't the doctor do what he/she had to do? There must be more to this story!
- Childbirth is unpredictable; your expectations are too high.
- You have a healthy baby, and that's all that matters.

These are the kinds of things women hear all the time when they come forward with stories of abuse in their maternity care. The stories are so unbelievable and the treatment so inhumane, many people automatically question or justify what they're hearing.

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"My wife was traumatized..."

> **“I didn’t give birth! The doctor cut me and pulled my baby out.”**

During the birth of her son in 2013, Kelly endured what many women have described through photos this month: coercion, manipulation, bullying, and a total disregard of informed consent—enabling poor care that created health complications. It's important to note the prevalence of non-evidence-based care and health complications (especially for black women) in American maternity care, when we consider that at least some mothers are not being given a choice about their care. For Kelly, this ended in a traumatic, forced episiotomy, a recurrence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and need for further treatment of the cuts made to her vaginal area.

So, what sets Kelly’s story apart? In her case, there is no question about the facts she relayed. We can confirm her story, because it was captured on video (see "The Birth" below). Kelly’s mother filmed her grandson’s birth (with the full knowledge of the doctor in attendance) to share it among family members, but what she recorded was life-changing for Kelly in quite another way.

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"No meant NO!"

> **“I was ignored.”**

Kelly told us that when she hand-delivered her complaint six months ago, she spoke with the hospital’s Director of Women’s Services for 45 minutes about what had happened.

She says she never received a response, even after inquiring several times about what was being done or what the next steps were. To compound this dismissal, when she returned to ask for help, as the assault had triggered symptoms of previous PTSD and she was experiencing complications from twelve cuts to her vagina, she says that she was told she would get over it in time.

After it became clear she was not going to receive a response to her letter, Kelly tried to find a lawyer to help her bring a claim for a forced procedure. She received several denials from lawyers who expressed sympathy, but were unable to see the value in a case where there were no permanent damages or deaths. Improving Birth and Human Rights in Childbirth also tried to help Kelly find a lawyer in California, without success. **UPDATE, April 2015: See "We Will Not Be Silenced: An Update on Kelly's Story"**

As far as we know, this doctor is still attending women and babies at this hospital. **UPDATE, April 2015: We believe the doctor has been suspended from the hospital, but the hospital will not confirm this.**

If you are or know of a California lawyer who might be able to help Kelly, contact us here.

It seems incredible that such a violation would not be immediately investigated by the hospital once it was reported, but we have yet to meet a mother whose complaint about mistreatment to her doctor, hospital, or state licensing board was taken as seriously as it was made. Improving Birth has worked and spoken with a number of women who have gone through the process, all of whom were initially ignored or dismissed. Some women say they were met with outright hostility when they tried to make complaints about bullying, coercion, and forced procedures.

For women violated in childbirth, there does not appear to be any meaningful process for recourse or enforcement—even when their rights to informed consent and refusal were disregarded and/or they believe that assault and battery occurred. Jenn Noell of Outer Banks, North Carolina attempted to report to the police that, during an unmedicated birth, the on-call doctor manually penetrated her with both hands while she was pushing, ignored her shouts of, “No!”, intentionally tore her vagina with his

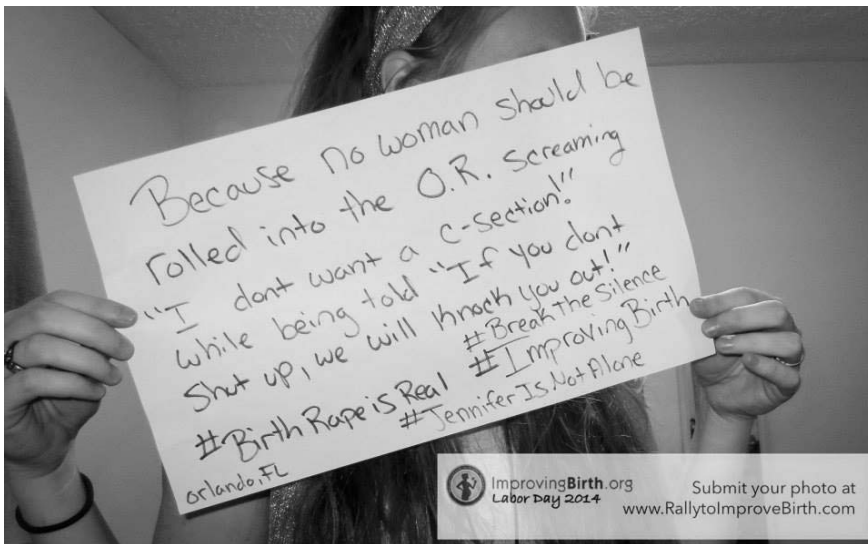
fingers, forcibly removed her placenta, and then began stitching her perineum after birth without using a local anesthetic. Local law enforcement declined to pursue charges after the district attorney's office opined that the doctor's "duties" included "invad[ing] certain areas." Neither was this woman able to find a lawyer to take her case for a civil action.

Most women never get to that point, though, simply because these abuses are considered part of childbirth in some places. When they attempt to speak up, family members, friends, care providers, and others often dismiss them with some of the statements we listed above. For a traumatized woman busy caring for a newborn, the idea of speaking up in the face of such skepticism can be overwhelming.

In Covington, Louisiana, Andrea Davis told us that she can't think about her most recent birth "without crying and becoming physically ill at times" after, she says, the doctor manually removed her placenta and performed a uterine sweep following the birth, ignoring her distress and actually refusing to speak to her. She said, "I have never had someone put their arm up inside of me in my three previous births, let alone without telling me what they were doing first, and without asking permission. [The doctor] had zero respect or regard for me as a human being."

When she spoke to a friend in private about what had happened to her, she said that rather than receiving support, she was met with coolness. She was warned "that if I keep talking about the OB who was abusive to me I could be sued for slander. I'm sick to my stomach thinking that she could harm us again.... and enraged that I could be harmed by telling the TRUTH about what she did to me."

Improving Birth and Human Rights in Childbirth have worked together since 2012 on an unofficial hotline for women needing support in these situations. From those efforts was born the [Birth Rights Bar Association](#), the U.S. legal network [launching in August](#) 2014 to educate, train, and organize lawyers around issues related to childbirth. [Top](#)



"If you don't shut up, we will knock you out."

> **"I don't want anyone else to go through what I went through."**

Kelly has been coping with a recurrence of PTSD since her son's birth, as well as complications from her medical treatment. It was emotionally difficult for her to revisit the trauma of her son's birth in order to document it and make a complaint; the lack of response to her complaint has been devastating.

Kelly has chosen not to be a victim. She made the brave decision to share her story and video (see "The Birth") because she doesn't want anyone else to experience this kind of treatment. [Top](#)



"...treated me like a criminal..."

> The Tip of the Iceberg

Unfortunately, it's not just about episiotomies--although routine episiotomy is still very much alive in some places, despite decades-old evidence against it. As an example, one Lexington, Kentucky hospital had an episiotomy rate of over 15% in 2011, while another Lexington hospital five miles away, serving the same population of women, had a rate of less than 1%. In the Westchester, New York area, two hospitals ten miles apart have episiotomy rates of 64.7% and 9.5% for the year 2012.

We regularly hear from women about violations like this:

- Forced vaginal exams during labor
- Being told they are not allowed out of bed, to use the bathroom, or to leave the hospital
- Being ignored or yelled at when they ask questions about their care
- Being told they are not allowed to give birth vaginally
- Being forcibly placed and restrained onto their backs during birth when they want to assume a more comfortable position
- Manual removal of the placenta without notification or permission
- Being given high-risk medications to hurry labor along without notification or consent
- Manual breaking of the membranes to accelerate labor without notification or consent
- Having membranes stripped (a way of inducing labor) without notification or consent at a routine prenatal appointment

Almost every one of these procedures and practices, done as a matter of routine, creates or increases risks of injury, complications, and even death. Please note that while the vast majority of the violations we hear about are associated with hospital birth, they can happen in any setting, with any provider.

Many more women report being bullied into or forced to have a Cesarean section. The cases of Rinat Dray – the New York mother whose doctor wrote that he “decided to override her refusal to have a C-section” – and Jennifer Goodall in Florida – whose hospital wrote to her that she would receive a Cesarean “with or without your consent” if she presented in labor – are the most extreme recent examples of something we hear about at the rate of about one a month.



"I don't do f***** VBACs!"

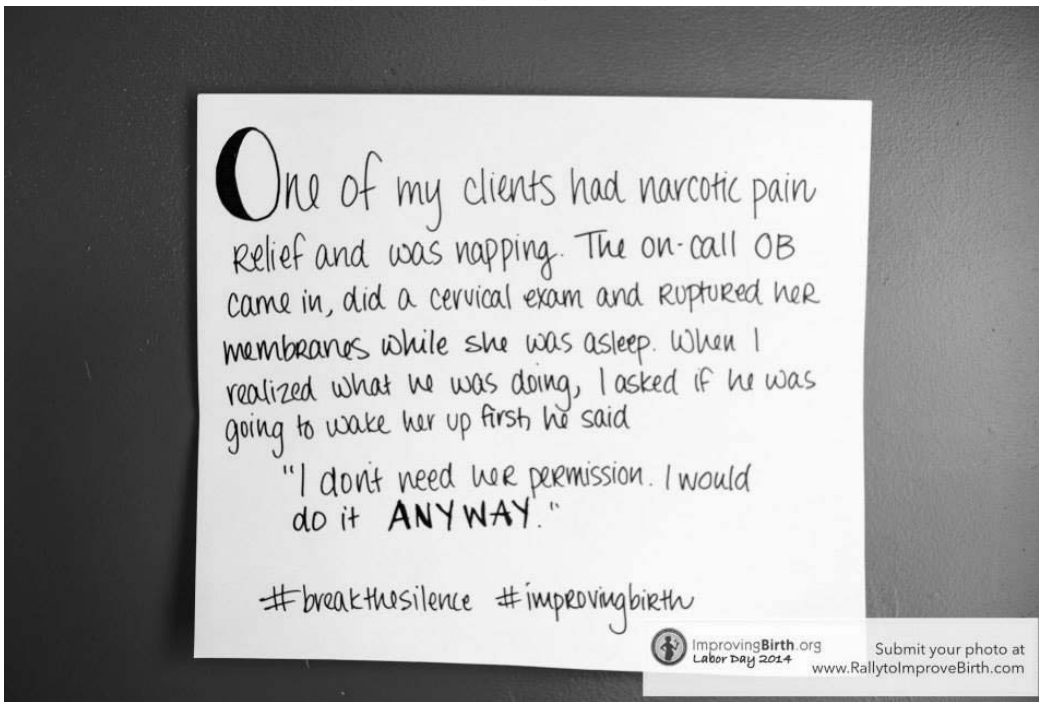
Neither is it about just force. Mothers and birth professionals from all over the country report that, more commonly, "consent" is obtained through inaccurate, incomplete information (no discussion about the risks of a procedure, for example) or under duress ("The doctor won't come in until you let me give you another vaginal exam.").

Lisa Sandhusen in New Jersey said, "As a postpartum doula for six years, I often see how new mothers who are struggling with the conflicting emotions of coming to terms with how they were treated during labor and birth and the desire to be loving attentive mothers to their newborn babies. Often times the experiences and feelings are brushed away or justified with the phrase, 'At least the baby is healthy.'

"It breaks my heart to see women disregarding their own experience to enter into motherhood with wounded hearts and bodies. My job has evolved into gently coaching these women through trauma at a time when they should be enjoying the time learning about their newborns. The women that I work with are educated and fortunate in that they can afford the services and support of someone like me. Imagine what the average woman goes through."

Almost one in ten American women leaves childbirth meeting criteria for PTSD. While nature can certainly create a traumatic birth, so much of the trauma we hear about has nothing to do with medical circumstances and everything to do with how a woman was spoken to, listened to, and respected. Much of this trauma seems to be entirely preventable.

A recent study from University of North Dakota researcher Sarah Edwards, Ph.D. found a strong link between coercion and postpartum PTSD. "We investigated what factors predicted whether women developed PTSD after childbirth, including risk factors like having a history of physical or sexual abuse or domestic violence, low socioeconomic status, age, and education level of the mother. First, we were surprised to find that 34% of our sample of 1,125 mothers reported PTSD symptoms related to their births. Then, we were really surprised when we found it the strongest predictor of developing PTSD after labor was not a history of trauma, but rather *the level of coercion the women experienced during their labor and delivery*. This makes it clear how important it is that women are treated with respect, dignity, and care when giving birth, to prevent serious mental health complications post-partum." [Top](#)



"I don't need her permission."

> The Birth

TRIGGER WARNING

Kelly's birth story and video are very graphic and may be difficult for some readers/viewers, especially those who have experienced sexual assault and/or trauma in childbirth. For legal and privacy reasons, we are not revealing the names of anyone involved.

Below are a link to the video itself and a detailed narrative of the events written by Human Rights in Childbirth founder and birth lawyer Hermine Hayes-Klein. Ms. Hayes-Klein has also written [an excellent analysis of some the legal, human rights, and liability factors at play here.](#) [Top](#)

TRIGGER WARNING

[YouTube Video of the birth of Kelly's son here \(7 minutes\)](#)

TRIGGER WARNING

Narrative by Hermine Hayes-Klein

The scene opens with a woman on her back in a hospital room. Her feet and legs are up above her in gynecological stirrups. You can't see her face; camera is angled from below, so you see her exposed haunches, her vagina and anus. The camera is held by the woman's mother, let's call her Grandmother. You don't see Grandmother's face during the video either; you only hear her voice from behind the camera.

The birthing woman, Kelly, has a tube running to her pubis, a urethral catheter that was part of the epidural process. She received the epidural after telling the nurses, as she told her prenatal providers, that she had been raped and sodomized twice, that she was feeling scared, that she needed them to be gentle and to ask her, step by step, every detail of what was going to be done. The hospital staff gave her a drug to calm her, and an epidural.

Kelly is a healthy young woman having her first baby. Her pregnancy and labor have been normal. She has a partner holding her left hand, and the nurse on her right. The nurse says, "Cinco de Mayo baby. It's going to come out with a sombrero. Just kidding." The nurse watches the monitor until she sees a contraction coming on. Then she loudly directs Kelly to push push push, talking nonstop for the length of the contraction. Kelly pushes hard; you can hear her exertion, working against gravity because this position makes her have to push her baby up into the air. Slowly the baby starts to crown. The baby's head is just opening the

labia; not yet out far enough to stretch the perineum.

A man in a white coat has been sitting on a stool between Kelly's legs. During her contraction, while she's pushing, he stands and holds up a long, sharp pair of scissors. He mumbles toward the nurse, "I'm going to do the episiotomy now."

Kelly cranes her head up and says, "What's up, doctor?"

He says, "I said I'm going to do the episiotomy now."

Kelly objects: "What? Why? We haven't even tried."

The doctor explains: "Listen, dear. You are pushing, baby's head comes down and doesn't come out because there is no space here to come out." He stands now between her legs, gesturing with his hands, one of which holds the scissors. "OK? Baby's head about that big and your vagina is only that much. Ok?"

Kelly says, "But why can't we just try?"

The doctor says, "Try? You're trying all the time and it doesn't come out. And if it comes out its going to rip the butt hole down clean." He makes a slashing motion with the scissors toward her anus as he says this.

The nurse reassures Kelly: "We're not going to feel it, remember? And you have the epidural."

Another contraction comes. The nurse directs Kelly to pushpushpush gogogo. In the foreground, the doctor bustles with scissors and a medical cloth. He throws the cloth over Kelly's lower belly, exposing her perineum below it, and approaches with the scissors.

Panting with the contraction, Kelly calls out desperately, "No, don't cut me!" From behind the camera, Kelly's mother chastises her in Spanish, telling her not to argue with the doctor, to let the doctor do his job. T

he doctor says, "Yes, tell her!" Kelly begs, "No! Why? Why can't we try?"

The doctor's voice is authoritative now, even angry, as he responds: "What do you mean, 'Why?' That's my reason. Listen: I am the expert here."

Kelly pleads, "But why can't I try?"

The doctor answers, " 'Why can't I try?' You can go home and do it. You go to Kentucky." [Kelly has never been to Kentucky.]

Grandmother and the nurse berate, chastise and urge Kelly to submit to the doctor. Grandmother says, "No, you can't fight with the doctor. Just do it, doctor."

The nurse says, "If you rip, you'll rip more than a cut and it's a lot more pain too. He said it's only an inch. An inch isn't that bad. Do you want to see an inch again?" A contraction comes. Kelly is pushing and breathless; she can't speak.

Grandmother says, "Just do it, doctor." The doctor starts to snip Kelly with the scissors. You can hear the scissors cut her flesh 12 times.

He reaches in and wrenches, twists, and pulls the baby out of her. Everybody around Kelly cheers throughout this delivery.

Kelly is silent. The nurse lifts her beautiful baby up to meet her. Kelly tries to smile.

Read Ms. Hayes-Klein's human rights analysis in its entirety here.



"He said he forgot."

> What Do Doctors Say About Kelly's Treatment?

Dr. Michael Klein, MD, CCFP, FCFP, FAAP (Neonatal/Perinatal), FCPS, is a pediatrician/neonatologist and family physician researcher and educator based at Children's & Women's Hospital and the Centre for Developmental Neurosciences & Child Health of the Child and Family Research Institute in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Dr. Klein pioneered randomized controlled studies on episiotomy in the 1980s and 90s, conducting over ten years of research that reached some groundbreaking conclusions (see articles [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Thanks to his work, we have known for over 20 years that while episiotomy can be appropriate in rare circumstances, when applied routinely, it "cause(s) the very trauma that it was supposed to prevent" (see article [here](#)).

Of Kelly's case, Dr. Klein said, "The physician here applied a medio-lateral episiotomy unnecessarily early through thick tissue, but rather than making a single definitive cut, he makes a series of short cuts that cause unnecessary bleeding and will interfere with healing. The episiotomy was done so early that the perineal tissues did not have time to stretch, so that the tissues were thick and bloody, a situation that would not have pertained if the professionals had waited... Having decided in advance to do an episiotomy, the doctor apparently does not even know how to do one--how to time it to minimize trauma. This behavior makes it more likely that severe trauma will occur, including tearing into or through the rectum. Our research and the research of others show that it is episiotomy that is the cause of severe trauma, not the prevention of severe trauma...."

He went on to say that the "doctor and the nurses were simply unwilling to allow time for the perineum to stretch, so that episiotomy would be not needed.... The mother is clear that she does not want an episiotomy. Her wishes are ignored and **the clearly planned episiotomy is simply justified in advance so that the professionals can do what they planned to do anyhow.... It was all about the impatience of the professionals who were not remotely interested in the values and needs of the mother. They just wanted the birth expedited.** This is a picture that was often routine in the past, but since the early 1980s this approach cannot be justified, if it ever was." (Emphasis added)

Dr. Klein concluded, "this video shows a woman assaulted by uncaring professionals who ought to be sanctioned."

We also asked California obstetrician/gynecologist Dr. Nick Rubashkin, MD, MA, for his opinion. Dr. Rubashkin is a staff

physician at the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco, and a former Fulbright Research Fellow at the Visiting Scholar Institute of Behavioral Sciences, Semmelweis University, in Budapest, Hungary.

He said, "Informed consent is an ethical and legal imperative for all physicians, including obstetrician/gynecologists... Informed consent to this episiotomy did not happen. Kelly was simply told by her doctor, 'I am going to do an episiotomy now.' He did not respond to the patient's clear requests for more information and for additional alternatives... This is unfortunate, because had the medical staff in the room listened to the mother, she might have avoided an unnecessary and painful procedure that may well result in future complications for her."

> TAKE ACTION NOW!

We believe one of the best things we can do right now is to create awareness to "break the silence" around these abuses, and support each other in sharing our stories without fear. Here's what you can do.

#1 Support Kelly's case. Because Kelly has been unable to find legal representation, she is representing herself in filing a lawsuit by May 2015, before the statute of limitations runs out on her claim. At this point, her case is 100% funded by other women--many of whom have also seen or experienced violence or coercion in childbirth. Go here for [an update on her story](#), and go here to [contribute toward her legal fund](#).

#2 Sign and share the petition to California Attorney General Kamala Harris asking for help in holding care providers and hospitals accountable for abuses of laboring women. [The petition is here](#).

change.org

#3 Use your social media reach to help get the message out to one million people by the end of this month (August)!

- Share a photo that's meaningful to you from our [#BreaktheSilence photo project](#) or our "1 in 3" photo, using hashtags #breakthesilence and #improvingbirth. Feel free to tell your own story on your page when you share.
- Every photo you share will link back to this article, so each share brings more people here to learn about these issues.
- Change your profile picture to the Improving Birth logo, [here](#).

Attend a Rally to Improve Birth near you this Labor Day week! Join thousands of others across the country this September 2015. [Find a location here](#), or [host a rally](#) in your town.

Get your story on public record. Over 40 mothers have already submitted stories that have been shared with the court on behalf of Rinat Dray, the New York mother who brought a lawsuit for her forced Cesarean section. We are still collecting these stories to be shared in future cases. The intent is to illustrate for courts that an incident of bullying, coercion, or force in childbirth is not an anomaly. If you'd like to be counted in this important effort, spearheaded by lawyers with Human Rights in Childbirth, please [share your story here](#). [Top](#)

If you are a mother or witness struggling with birth trauma, we hope our [Trauma Toolkit](#) may be of help to you. You may also find helpful "[How to File a Complaint for Mistreatment in Childbirth](#)," and please do not hesitate to [contact us](#) on your journey.

* Not her real name



Author Cristen Pascucci is vice president of Improving Birth and has been running its "hotline" for pregnant women with lawyers from Human Rights in Childbirth. She is also the founder of [Birth Monopoly](#).

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Comments



1. **Jean** says:
[August 28, 2014 at 3:07 am](#)

I wish we had doctors in my area that were worth a damn and practiced evidence based medicine. Unfortunately with it being such a small town it is hard to find anything worth a shit. One of the doctors in my town holds the record for how

many mothers have died on his watch during his career in Texas. Another hold a record for most infections caused during c-sections. The doctor I went to seemed absolutely wonderful until we were in the delivery room where he threatened to leave because I refused an epidural and wouldn't stop making noise, and cut me without informing me what it was, why he was doing it, or that he was going to do it. Also he didn't use anesthesia during the cut or the stitching. My boyfriend had to threaten him just to keep him in the room with us.

[Reply](#)



o **Drea** says:

[October 23, 2014 at 6:50 pm](#)

Are you in Abilene?

[Reply](#)



▪ **Jean** says:

[January 1, 2015 at 4:49 pm](#)

No. Not Abilene. Further east. Polk county. The damned big thicket.

[Reply](#)



2. **Alicia Cooper** says:

[August 28, 2014 at 4:13 am](#)

I just signed the petition.

[Reply](#)



3. **Amanda** says:

[August 28, 2014 at 11:25 am](#)

I feel so bad for these women. Just because they are pregnant does not mean that they do not have Patient Rights-which the doctors are obviously violating. As a young woman it makes me not want to have children of my own.

[Reply](#)



o **liz** says:

[August 29, 2014 at 4:27 am](#)

Don't let this discourage you from the joy of having babies. Thankfully you can find wonderful birth services offered from incredibly knowledgeable midwives.... giving birth either at a birth center or even in the comfort of your own home. Some hospitals even offer midwives. Just do your research first, write a birth plan, know who will be with you in the birthing room and have them advocate for you. Hire a doula who will coach you through the birth process and who will advocate for your rights. There is hope and birth can be an incredible experience with people who your trust.

[Reply](#)



o **Brandi Cook** says:

[September 1, 2014 at 7:44 am](#)

I agree with Liz-I had 3 out of 4 wonderful deliveries. Having great nurses make all the difference. Interview your doctors/hospitals as if they are being paid by you-because they ARE. Don't let someone else's horrible experience

ruin a beautiful one for you!

[Reply](#)



4. **Ashley Ann Allee** says:

[August 28, 2014 at 3:45 pm](#)

With my first daughter, I was pressured into a pitocin induction. They ruptured membranes artificially and it was very painful. They used internal monitors and didn't take them out until my daughter was halfway down the birth canal. She had visible marks on her forehead for about a year and a half of her life. After giving birth to her whenever I had an orgasm my cervix hurt.

With my second daughter, I told them I did not want an induction, but we ended up being convinced that it was necessary. I told them okay I'll do the Pitocin but I don't want my membranes ruptured. They did it anyway. Told them I didn't want The internal monitors. They did it anyway.

With my son, I went to the hospital in active labor, and after observation was sent home. They told me it was not active labor. I went back later that evening and again after observation was told I was not in active labor. They gave me an Ambien and told me to go home and get rest.

Around 3 o'clock that morning I gave birth to my son in the drained bathtub because I had just finished taking a hot bath trying to make the pain go away and had stood up after draining the water only to discover my water had broke. He came out so quickly I wouldn't have had time to go to the hospital.

My mother had been sleeping through most of it but came running into the room when he was already out. I had to deal with my mother, my two daughters, and emergency personnel seeing me naked and covered in blood. I was shaking uncontrollably.

Apparently when he came out he ripped me all the way to my anus. I don't remember much of the labor and delivery because of the Ambien. When I got to the hospital the on-call doctor who told the nurses to send me home the two previous times delivered my placenta and stitched me up.

I tried to tell the local newspaper about it. The local newspaper advertises for the hospital. I ended up sounding like an idiot in the article and the doctor ended up sounding like a concerned medical professional.

Because we are talking about giving live birth, I will spare you the stories of trauma experienced as a woman going through miscarriages in emergency rooms. If I ever have another baby I'm just going to go straight midwife/doula homebirth route.

[Reply](#)



5. **Sarah Carlton** says:

[August 28, 2014 at 5:45 pm](#)

THIS is part of the motivation for my wanting to be a birth doula. I want to PREVENT situations like this. ALL moms deserve to have someone in that room who will help them fight for what they want. If that means asking for another doctor at the last minute or even physically forcing the doctor out of the room, that's what I'd do for her. I've still got a ways to go before I'm certified though.

I am crying right now after reading the transcript from the video. I crying because what happened was awful. I'm crying because I'm scared it could happen to me at the birth of my next child. I'm crying because she didn't have anyone helping her to stop the doctor.

Thank you to the traumatized mothers who have shared your stories in this effort to improve the birthing realm for all women. May you find peace and comfort from your suffering.

[Reply](#)



o **Sky** says:

August 29, 2014 at 2:42 am

Doula's can't do what you are saying. All they can do is stand back and witness the trauma, and become traumatized themselves.

Reply



o **Theresa Armstrong** says:

August 29, 2014 at 10:01 pm

This is also why I started doula-ing. We need you mama. A blessed, yet unrelenting, work we do.

Reply



o **Virginia Cunningham** says:

October 12, 2014 at 10:41 am

Sarah, will you be my doula? What you said is exactly what I need from my doula.

Reply



6. **Angela H.** says:

August 28, 2014 at 5:51 pm

This made me cry. I had a horrible experience where I had went into the OB ward to be checked to see if I was leaking water, the nurse who checked me, purposefully broke my water because I was already at 4cm and she made no apology for what she had done considering I just got done telling her to leave my water bag alone, I wanted to let it break naturally. Then the nurse told me I wasn't having any contractions because they were not showing up on the monitor (keep in mind, this was my 3rd child), 2 hours later my husband and I tried to tell her that my son was coming out and she yelled at me, telling me that if I didn't stop telling them how to do their job she was going to get the doctor. Well, my son's head was crowning and that was when she finally believed me and the nerve to tell me to push while she had to run to find a doctor because she was busy being rude. Then after, the doctor of all people, put a clamp on my sons cord after I and my partner explicitly told them we are having a lotus birth and explained we did not want the cord or placenta touched in anyway. All this and this is NOT considered medical malpractice? I am so happy that there are folks out there that want to stop this treatment of women in hospital settings. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.

Reply



7. **Jen** says:

August 28, 2014 at 11:28 pm

Physicians are under pressure to deliver a healthy baby. If a baby is born dead or injured there is often litigation against them. They do what they are taught, whether it's frequent pelvic exams or breaking the water. If something untoward happens due to a patient's noncompliance, it's their skin on the line. So, until the US changes from being a litigious society, physicians must do what they think is best, even if a silly mother to be has to endure an extra pelvic exam. This is the new face of medicine in the US.

Reply



o **J** says:

August 29, 2014 at 5:18 am

Way to minimize what women have gone though. Episiotomies and breaking the water are not an "extra pelvic exam". Ripping a mom's perineum with his fingers because the doc didn't want to do a VBAC is sexual assault. How would these actions be perceived if the setting were different? Woman says no, but the attacker cuts her vagina

with a knife? It is horrific! The one with the knife being a doctor doesn't make it magically ok. Expecting informed consent is not being "silly". If informed consent is that difficult for a doctor they should change to a job where they don't interact with patients.

[Reply](#)



o **Amy** says:

[August 29, 2014 at 7:04 pm](#)

Jen, are you serious? A "silly pelvic exam"??? This woman was butchered! This is NOT the new face of medicine in the US, unless you can name other fields of medicine where people are surgically cut into against their will and while screaming "NO!" and are forced into mandatory surgery.

[Reply](#)



▪ **Amy** says:

[August 29, 2014 at 7:05 pm](#)

Oops, I meant "extra pelvic exam" and why is the woman "silly" for having a voice in her care and about what is done to her body?

[Reply](#)



o **Theresa Armstrong** says:

[August 29, 2014 at 10:03 pm](#)

I don't think a mother who says NO to anyone touching their vaginas is "silly". Poor choice of words.

[Reply](#)



▪ **Jeffrey** says:

[September 5, 2014 at 6:56 am](#)

And how do you expect a doctor to deliver the baby without examining the vagina to determine how the baby is presenting?

What if the doctor needs to do a vaginal exam because the baby might be breech? The mother might be screaming no don't touch me but if the doctor doesn't act to make sure there aren't complications of labour the baby is likely to become hypoxic and die.

What if the uterus ruptures in which case no matter how hard the mama is screaming "i dont want a c-section" without one she and her baby will most certainly die? What's the doctor supposed to do then?

Maybe the doula can light a scented candle and magically fix the problem?

Jesus Christ.

[Reply](#)



o **jennifer** says:

[September 7, 2014 at 4:32 am](#)

Jen, many of these procedures talked about(even if informed consent had been given) are done when not medically needed and increase risks to mom and baby rather than improving outcomes. There is plenty of research on this and it is every doctor's responsibility to be basing what they think is best on the research and providing evidenced based care, which is clearly not happening. The US has the worst maternal mortality rate of industrialized countries (ranks about 50th) and high infant mortality as well. Pelvic exams and breaking the water increase risks of infections and lead to increase c-sections which is major abdominal surgery increasing mom's risks in this birth and all her next births. It is the woman's "skin on the line" far more than the doctor's.

[Reply](#)

- **Nerida** says:
[October 4, 2014 at 1:37 pm](#)

Well said Jennifer.

[Reply](#)

8. **J** says:
[August 29, 2014 at 5:02 am](#)

There is the horribleness that happens after the baby is born too and people are punished for having a hospital transfer. The doctor threatened to call CPS because I wanted to breastfeed my baby. I know that sounds crazy, but it is true. I was ridiculed for not pumping enough milk. Baby got some formula while we were still talking about it. There was also the talking to my husband like I wasn't in the room/ didn't have a brain, and making up reasons to keep baby at the hospital, and lying in my medical records.

[Reply](#)

9. **Marie Pearce** says:
[August 29, 2014 at 11:32 am](#)

Physicians are causing harm. So why have them at all? The big lie our society has been fed is that all women need help to give birth. They don't, we just think we do. We've been convinced that we need to be told when we're in labour, when to push, that our bodies lie to us and are not to be trusted. Well women know how to give birth, just as we know how to conceive and grow a baby. Of course a small number of women will need some help, but not every woman and every baby. What I hear from these stories is women being interfered with and hurt, when they were doing just fine all by themselves. I think it is our power in bringing new life into the world that is feared, and that is why we are abused.

[Reply](#)

10. **Jessy** says:
[August 29, 2014 at 12:16 pm](#)

I was handed over to residents at the teaching hospital I gave birth at. They started an induction without a doctors permission and had to stop in the middle to change the method they were using. Not only that but every vaginal check became 4 when each resident also had to check me, my epidural was done incorrectly and after telling me that it was my fault because I had moved, the doc confessed he had actually been letting the resident do it and it was his first time ever. After 6 hours of them telling me there was no other pain killers they could give they finally said, oh we have something that will take the edge off, and gave it to me without my knowing as active labor started. I slept through the birth of my miracle baby and it's the hardest thing for me to live with because she will always be my only child. After that the hospital staff weighed her wrong and messed up all chances I had of breast feeding her because they force fed her formula without my knowledge. It was terrible. I mean maybe I had high expectations for my birth experience but this wasn't right at all!!!

[Reply](#)

11. **Lisa** says:
[August 29, 2014 at 2:45 pm](#)

When I had my son in 2001, I was told by the doc he had to be a c-section since my hips weren't right to deliver a baby. No x-rays or tests to figure this out. In addition, this was after being induced for 8+ hrs and them trying to break my water 2x's. Each time resulted in the hook being removed with tissue and a lot of pain since his head had never dropped. We were given the choice to agree to a c-section or go home. Doctor advised a c-section would happen either way. We decided to go with the c-section since we had seen decells on the fetal monitor most of the day. Doc said it was likely because the

baby kept moving. Had a spinal block and fell asleep during c-section. I came to with the nurses telling me, "Here's your son!" They passed him in front of me to see. He was blue and not breathing. I passed out again. When I came to, there was still no cry from the baby. The doc was standing over me closing me up discussing his golf game with another doc. I asked about the baby. Doc looked up and said, "Is that baby breathing yet?" No response from the nurse. Again, I passed out. When I finally woke up, I was alone in the hospital room. In extreme pain I called the nurse. She came in and gave me more pain meds and I finally found out my son was doing ok after 6 min of not breathing. Fast forward two days. My doctor was on vacation and his coverage doctor came in to do the hospital release. I informed him the staples were burning, so he removed them and sent us home. The next morning, after a shower I found blood on my towel when drying off. Panicked, I called the hospital. They told me to put a pad over the incision site and come into the office later in the afternoon. After changing two pads, it was time for the appointment. Since my doc was still on vacation, I got to see another doc in the practice. She looked at the incision site and stated it was infected. Not to mention it had sealed it's self shut again. Without pain meds, she started to forcefully tap the incision with her finger. When she finally broke it open, she started to scrap it out. I was crying and trying to get up off the table. My Mom was there holding my hand through it all while the nurse was telling me to breath and relax. Since I was crying, she forcibly packed the incision site. By the end, my Mom was crying with me and the nurse looked very pale. It was horrible! The incision had to be packed three times a day for weeks. It made me never want to have another child for many years. No woman should ever have to go through this stuff!

[Reply](#)



12. **Jen** says:

[August 29, 2014 at 10:10 pm](#)

After hearing 2 friends horror birth stories and many more stories of lack of care and bullying, I actually decided not to have children. This is all about money and the view that the baby is more important than the mother, when in fact the converse is true. It is shocking to me that you can't find a lawyer to take her case. How horrible. Just keep letting us destroy your body against your will and oh, pay us money to do so. Horrible.

[Reply](#)



13. **Anne** says:

[August 30, 2014 at 6:23 am](#)

I wish there were lawyers out there willing to rally with us, take on our difficult cases, and even if we lost, we'd still force doctors and hospitals to spend money on legal representation. Do what the big corporations do... drag it out in court and bankrupt the %^#@! butchers. I am so sick of people telling me "At least..." At least I have healthy babies. At least I didn't have to endure the pain of labour. At least I was lucky and survived. How do you put a value on the memory of your children being born and your first moment with your child? I had to stop reading all the posts from mothers and birth care providers because it was too upsetting. Rallies are all fine and good, but when they don't stop wars, or influence our government to do something about the impending climate disaster, how are they going to change anything for women? Sorry, but I don't have much faith in any of this making much of a difference, especially not for those like me, stuck awake in the wee hours because, yet again, something has triggered the PTSD from that horrible horrible day when my babies were born... a group of words that should NEVER have to be strung together. The solution is SUE THEM INTO THE DIRT!!! Please anyone who is a lawyer or knows a lawyer, let's rally the lawyers. Let's set up a free pool of legal representation and a hotline for mothers to call so that they can get immediate legal help and we can change the system with the only language it speaks... profit margins.

[Reply](#)



o **Cristen Pascucci** says:

[September 4, 2014 at 11:37 pm](#)

Anne, there are lawyers helping. Check out the Birth Rights Bar Association at <http://www.birthrightsbar.org>. I think the press release for their launch is somewhere in the article. So very sorry you are going through that. ☹

[Reply](#)



14. **Colette** says:

[August 30, 2014 at 8:59 pm](#)

As a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa I had a screaming fight with a nurse because she spanked a woman who had just delivered. Why? She wanted to punish her for refusing to give birth lying on the delivery table. The mother had delivered 7 previous babies at home, squatting on the floor, and when they told her to push while lying on her back she was not happy about it. She pushed the nurses away, got down on the floor and delivered after about 5 contractions. Everything was fine, but the nurse was furious at being disobeyed and began spanking her bare bottom. I'm pretty sure that mother strongly regretted coming to the hospital to deliver!

This kind of mistreatment is common there, because there are few laws that protect patients and the concept of informed consent isn't really there, especially at the rural clinics and hospitals. But it is shocking and enraging to hear so many stories from the U.S. too!

[Reply](#)



15. **sarah** says:

[September 1, 2014 at 1:16 am](#)

I was coerced during my labor in Nov 2013. The doctor came in only after thirty minutes of pitocin and told me she had to rupture the amniotic sac then or she wouldn't be able to do so later. As she was measuring me, I told her I wanted to wait, and when she settled down and because I hesitated she ruptured my water. I cried because it hurt so bad. And despite my desires for a natural birth, I was coerced into an epidural after a certain length of time because they might not be able to return quick enough if I wanted it. Then I was told, once I was only allowed an hour to progress my labor on my own and then that I was shrinking, that my daughter had passed her meconium. That wasn't their biggest concern though, and that if I didn't go into the cesarean before 3 that I wouldn't be able to see my daughter until after 7 in the morning whether it was cesarean or natural birth. I refuse to have a cesarean ever again. Vbac by a midwife is the only way I'll have a baby unless emergency.

[Reply](#)



16. **Connie** says:

[September 3, 2014 at 9:52 pm](#)

My first born was a cesarean, not by choice. My ob had convinced me to go into the hospital because he stated that blood pressure was high. The original intentions of this hospital visit was to bring the blood pressure down (though I could of rested in home in bed but it was Friday and he would be out of town that weekend). Once there they I put on a gown and they immediately began giving pitocin. My son was not due until April 12 and this was happening March 30. I had not dilated much I think about 3 cm when they decided to give me pain medicine. I consented to that because I did not realize you should reach second stage of labor before consenting but I was ignorant. After that contractions stopped and so did labor. My water was broken and the next morning I was having no contractions. The doctor came in and told me I needed a cesarean, and I knew I was doomed. The cesarean was performed and my baby came into the world at 11:48 a.m. I was not able to hold him I was gagging and coughing from all the trauma and meds and basically from what had just happened. The baby roomed in with me, I had no help, I had to fight to get a room away from someone who had sick people visiting. I wanted to breastfeed but the lactation nurse made me feel like a complete idiot each time I tried to get help. The third time of calling her I caved in a gave a bottle because she was useless. They treated me like a vaginal patient I stayed cold and freezing the whole time shaking and tremors coming off the meds they pumped me full of. My son was circumcised had i known lots of things about that he wouldn't of been, and even if we had decided we would of done it after I had established breastfeeding. The last day a friend of mine that had worked in labor and delivery had to talk them into giving me a rx for pain meds and on top of that they convinced me that all patients walked to the front, not taken by wheel chair. I was so happy to leave that place and established a VBAC success story for my second child and have been breastfeeding since his birth. I have a lot of catching up to do form the ppd and ptsd from the birth of my first child it took me five years to even consider a second one. I only hope that this kind of condition improves for women.

[Reply](#)



17. **Laura G** says:

September 5, 2014 at 3:09 am

When my first son was born in 2007, I had preeclampsia(sp?) at 39 weeks so I was sent to the hospital to be induced. I knew it was too early, despite the fact that they told me he would probably weigh around 8 lbs. My cervix was closed, and I knew in my heart it wasn't time yet, but I was too naïve and stupid to ask what level of risk was involved in being monitored and waiting – or even if that was a reasonable option. Anyway, I was in labor all day with zero dilation before the doctor gave me the choice of having a C-section now or an emergency one at 3 AM. I chose the former. At least two nurses in the operating room were not wearing head coverings or masks; I am not sure about gloves. They gave me an epidural which failed. I felt everything, from the second incision until well after they had stitched me up after the delivery and surprise appendectomy. They did not offer to put me under general anesthesia, but my doctor was “kind” enough to stop the surgery long enough for them to give me the twilight meds that supposedly make you forget everything. They don't work. I did not scream or curse or cry. I did tear through the straps holding me down – and two ligaments in my wrist which had to be surgically repaired later. The mood in the operating room was jovial. One nurse accidentally knocked over an IV rack that would have hit my newborn son's head had not my husband covered him with his own body. She said “oops.” I was not taken to recovery but to a normal room. When it was over I told my husband I wanted to die. He had to bully the staff into getting me pain meds. They left my 6 lb. son in the room with us, expecting my husband to care for us both. He lost 9 oz. in 24 hours and would not eat. The staff were unconcerned, so my mother stayed up with him all night (2nd night) and taught him how to suck using her pinky finger. I was required to get up and walk the morning after my surgery – hours before it would normally happen, and days before it should have. My complaints were ignored and brushed aside as though I were prissy and weak. My uterus was massaged every few hours – roughly and with no regard for my comfort or situation. Neither the forced walk nor the uterine massage was repeated at my later C-section. Three weeks later I called about excessive bleeding and clotting and was told to wait it out. A day later I had a raging fever. I was still told to wait, that it was probably a UTI, but if I wanted I could come in the next day and see the nurse practitioner. I went to the emergency room instead. I had an MRSA (staph) infection. I told the ER doctor what the on-call OBGYN said, and he called him and “had words.” I am certain that I picked up the infection in the operating room where my abdominal cavity was wide open for 1.5 hours in a less than sterile environment. I did not sue the doctor or the hospital, but maybe I should have. I was pathetically grateful to be alive. I had severe PTSD for months afterward and considered an abortion when I unexpectedly conceived my 2nd child 10 months later. The sleeplessness, nightmares and flashbacks severely impacted my ability to care for my son, and the only thing that kept me from hurting him sometimes was the fear of going to jail. I thought I was going crazy. But I was repeatedly informed that at least I had a healthy baby.

Reply



18. **Stephanie Weitzman** says:

September 5, 2014 at 6:09 am

Wow! I felt all alone until I heard these stories. Me and my husband were blessed with a surprise daughter in 2012. Our youngest son about a week shy of turning 18 years old when I gave birth to our daughter. I was induced after being almost a week past due. About two hours into the inducement I told my husband that I think my water broke to please get a nurse: a nurse came in checked me and left. Didn't say a word! Of course I was concerned so I hit the page button and a different nurse came in and seemed extremely bothered that I had a question. I wanted if in fact my water broke and if it did was it clear. The nurse said if there was an issue that I would have been notified. Well, how was I supposed to know? Four hours later I had made very little progress and for the first time was convinced that I needed an epidural. I gave in and told the nurse that I could still feel every contraction on the left side of my body and was told to not worry about it. Then I started shaking. I was shaking so bad and out of control that my husband thought I was having seizures. Once again our questions were left unanswered. At the shift change a very nice mid wife was assigned to us. By this time they said our baby was in distress and they filled me with saline water thru my vagiba. I was in labor for almost 24 hours and the doctor comes in for the first time and says if you aren't dilated to 8 we are doing a c-section. Much to my relief I was dilated to eight the next examine. However, two hours later the doctor says I have to have a c-section because at the next examines my body started to swell and I was only dilated between six & seven. I was terrified especially after he said it will be easier on them because I had the epidural. I quickly told him that I could still feel everything on the left side of my body and he laughed at me. I was given a spinal block in the OR. In a few minutes I felt like I couldn't breathe and was terrified. I lifted the oxygen mask from my face and the anesthesiologist asked what I was doing. I said I can't breathe. He said if your taking your breathing and put the mask back on me. I didn't know that it was a side effect of the spinal block. After this horrific ordeal I started feeling very ill at home and was in so much pain I was crawling to the bathroom. It took six weeks of me complaining for a doctor to listen to me and not blame my pain on postpartum disorder. I was infected with the E. coli virus in my bladder and by the time I received proper treatment my bladder lining had been eaten away by the bacteria. Ten

months later I was diagnosed with interstitial cystitis. My life is not the same. I live with constant pain and everyday I live with the feeling like I have a UTI. I received horrible care while in labor and post delivery. I pray no woman has to go through what we gave endured. My husband complained to the hospital director but all she wanted us to do was agree to tell our story on videotape for nurses and doctors to watch. We refused. At the time our daughter was 48 hours old. We didn't know about the E. coli infection yet. I begged to be realized early from the hospital due to the lack of care by the nurses. I was put in a closet size room with our baby and the nurse didn't check on us for the first time until six hours after my husband went home. I had no help in caring with the baby. I had to push the emergency button when she projectile vomited in her incubator. I never witnessed that before in a newborn. The nurse told me for having other children that she didn't think I knew what I was doing, she said, "that everyone knows that c-section babies projectile vomit because they weren't squeezed thru the birth canal so their little bodies are full of amniotic sac fluid." I never had a c-section before so I didn't know. All I know was I heard my baby choking and I am trying to move as fast as I can with staples in my stomach. This whole experience was a nightmare.

[Reply](#)



19. **Amy** says:
[September 5, 2014 at 6:19 pm](#)

I had been saying for many years I thought I experienced PTSD after the birth of my first child, but said it jokingly, not knowing that it is a real thing. My PTSD wasn't caused by any doctor or hospital, but because the situation was just traumatic in itself. I was laboring naturally with a midwife, not in a hospital and she did everything she could, but after about 23hrs, my son turned his head and got stuck. So she took me to the hospital. That is where the nightmare began. I was so exhausted by that time, I could not be cognitive enough to make any decisions. The doctors gave us a choice of forceps, suction, or C-section. My husband choose the C-section. I don't remember a thing after that except pieces of traumatic events that followed. From what I pieced together, after they delivered my perfectly healthy boy, I bled profusely (to the point of losing over half my blood volume in my body) and they said they were going to need to give me a hysterectomy. I remember about 6 nurses or doctors at the end of the bed rushing around in an emergency manner. They were pushing on my belly where I just had the C-section very hard, I guess to try and stop the bleeding. I also remember one doctor with his hands up to his elbows "gutting me out". I do remember it being very painful and I clung on to the bedrails crying out. After flashing in and out and it was all over, I had to have 2 blood transfusions. For the remainder of the week, nurses came in and "pounced" on my stomach several times a day (for reasons I'm not really sure... maybe I was told, but my mind was in a fog and I felt the trauma right away... I was in a state of shock). For weeks and months I was bawling my eyes out wondering what was wrong with me, why can't I do what I needed to do, why was I not bonded to my baby. I thought I just had postpartum depression. It was definitely much further than that. I would have flashes of the experience and my heart would start racing. I constantly was asking my husband to fill in the pieces of what happened and he really didn't know or understand or what was happening to me. He didn't know how to help me. I did not receive any follow up. After my son was 8 weeks, I then had to have parts of my bone removed from my leg (from pre-existing condition before birth/pregnancy). I couldn't walk and take care of my baby, let alone myself. It was six months before I could get around on my own. At that point as I started to try to take care of my son, I was having a difficult time dealing with life and my responsibilities. I totally did a number on myself mentally, blaming myself and thinking I was some kind of idiot that I couldn't deal with performing basic life duties without breaking down. This went on for years! Yes, I said YEARS! I begged God to take my life because I was a horrible mother and wife. I wanted to run away. Needless to say, I wondered why people had kids and I definitely didn't want to do that again. Finally, after going to see a psychiatrist, I got on medication and tried to level out. It took 7yrs later to work through all that crap that I experienced. We did end up going on to have another child and everything worked out beautifully the 2nd time. Now as my son is turning 12 this month, I look back and I wonder if any of that could have been avoided. Maybe, maybe not. But I do intend now to share my story and help anyone suffering from a traumatic birth experience. It is a REAL thing!

[Reply](#)



- o **waltrip** says:
[November 11, 2014 at 7:41 am](#)

How did you have a second child if you had a hysterectomy?!

[Reply](#)



20. **J Dun** says:

September 5, 2014 at 9:07 pm

As horrible as the stories here are, I am in a way glad to know I was not the only one, and that I am not being unreasonable or overreacting. My story wasn't nearly as bad as many here. (Not that it makes it ok!) But every time I see my kid's birth certificate, the name of the horrible doctor who abused me is written there in big letters, her signature like a stain on it. Every time I think of my child's birth, I think about all the negative things and get angry. So I just try to never think about the birth. I am robbed of that "should have been happy" memory forever. Luckily I have many years of raising that perfect child to make good memories. But as we here all know, that dilutes the trauma, but never fully erases it.

Reply



21. **Heather** says:

September 8, 2014 at 5:39 pm

I feel for all you lovely women. I'm 60 years old and had three of my four babies at home, for all of the reasons mentioned. I never had and never will trust MDs. My first baby was born in a birthing center and even that was too medicalized for me. I thought we had fought these battles 35 years ago, but obviously not. It seems to only have gotten worse. I can only say HOME BIRTH, with a well trained lay midwife. My home births were transcendent, and when my son was born (baby number 3) I caught him myself! After my births I felt strong and powerful, and knew I could do anything, which a great way to feel when you have four kids to raise!
My love to all of you, and I hope things improve.

Reply



22. **Michelle Adams** says:

September 15, 2014 at 7:50 am

The picture with the caption under is "treated me like a criminal" is almost word for word what happened to me with my last one.....I'm in the UK. She's now six months and even now I'm still suffering flashbacks.

Reply



23. **MJ** says:

September 17, 2014 at 7:28 pm

Can I tell my story about the midwife who failed to notice I was in labor, was then rude to me about my pain and refused to acknowledge it, performed an incredibly painful manual cervical stretch without pain medication and informed consent, tried to deny me an epidural? Can we talk about that too, or just OBs?

Reply



o **Dawn** says:

September 18, 2014 at 3:25 pm

MJ, I'm so sorry that happened to you. Bad providers are in every position in childcare. Others have shared their stories of midwives, OB's and nurses. The majority has been about OB care because it reflects the number of women giving birth in hospitals.

Reply



24. **Nerida** says:

September 18, 2014 at 12:21 pm

More than doulas in birthing suites, we need our own team of lawyers present, taking notes, filming and recording and kicking ass. (preferably on a discounted fee charge out rate). That would make for an interesting double degree –

Law/midwifery. I'm not for discrediting the value of doulas but I really dont know that they could have much sway over a doctor.

Reply



25. **Rebekah** says:

November 16, 2014 at 11:01 pm

I just want to say that not every Dr. is horrible. What they did to her is so wrong I don't understand how he is not in jail. I love the hospital I gave birth in with both of mine. My first I was induced (pre-eclampsia) with pitocin and the balloon. I was in labor for 49hrs. They ended up breaking my water 15hrs before I had him. When they decided to break my water they asked me, and informed me of the risks. I agreed to it, but asked if I could get an epidural first because I was scared of the hook they use. They told me that was fine and that there was nothing to be afraid of. They described what it would probably feel like having my water broken and demonstrated how they do it. They asked me if I needed a break from the pitocin for a little while before hand because they could tell I was exhausted. I said yes, they turned it off and let me sleep for an hour. They woke me up after an hour and told me they needed to turn it back on if that was ok. I said it was. I ended up on oxygen because mine and his stats kept dropping. They would have me turn every 30mins. They got me multiple cups of ice (and even let it melt some so I could drink water, even though that's against hospital policy). They got me the epidural and the nurse held my hand and helped hold me still (I was shaking and crying the entire time, terrified, I hate needles) After I was done getting it the dr. came in and asked if I was ready to have my water broken. I told him no, but let's get it done with already. He laughed and asked if I was sure. I said yes. They helped me get situated and the nurse held my hand again and tried (failed miserably, but tried) to distract me. The dr. told me what he was doing the whole time. (He also showed me again how they would do it before proceeding with it.) He broke my water and told me I did great and asked if I was ok. I told him I was fine and he said he'd check on me later. Hours later I felt a lot of pressure and told the nurse, she asked if I wanted her to check me or if I wanted to wait on the dr. since he'd need to check me too. I said I'd wait on the dr. He came in about 10 minutes later and checked and I was ready to push. He told me that he needed to get ready and had the nurse get me up in position. They moved the bed into a slant and put my feet in stirrups (I was still slanting down towards the ground though, it was very interesting) She had me start pushing some, then the dr. came back ready to go. They coached me through it, constantly telling me how well I was doing. I pushed for over an hour. He got 'stuck'. There was never any mention of an episiotomy. The dr. encouraged me, and tried telling me where to direct the pushing at by pressing there. He put lube on me and tried coaxing my baby out. He saw he was sunny side up and asked me if I wanted him to turn him (tried telling me why, but I don't remember why). I said no. So he said ok. I was asked if I wanted to see me give birth and I said no. I got him out and had torn inside and out. The dr. stitched me up, telling me what he was doing the whole time, and told me I did great. He asked if there was anything else he could do for me and I said no and thanked him. (My son was taken to the NICU for some tests because of ultrasounds done while I was pregnant) I was able to sleep until I woke up. They didn't care that I was in the laboring room still. When I woke up the nurse got me food immediately, helped me go to the bathroom and took me to see my baby. She helped me get him latched on and then helped me get into a room and settled. The rest of the time I was there I had so much help from everyone. I also had the dr. offer me another day to stay if I wanted it, I declined. (I had 5 different nurse and 2 drs during my labor there. I was always treated with respect and given options in my care) I had my second there too. I went in with preterm labor at 35 weeks. My water was already broken. I was informed of everything they would do, what the outcome could be. I was offered a steroid shot even though I was past 34wks. I said yes. I was informed I wouldn't be able to get out of bed once I got up to the delivery room. When I asked why I was told politely that since he was still floating there was a risk of cord prolapse and they didn't want to risk it. I told them that was fine. I was told if I wanted I could try to go pee before getting in bed, so I did. Hours later I wanted an epidural and I was told no. I asked why I couldn't have one and the nurse said she'd get the dr. to explain it better and in the meantime she'd give me something to numb the pain. She got him in there very quickly and he told me he knew I was in pain and he was very sorry, but he didn't want to risk my labor slowing down and having to start pitocin (since I had already told them I didn't want that unless absolutely necessary). That since my water had been broken for a very long time (I didn't go in immediately since I thought I was just peeing myself) I needed to have him delivered by that evening (I came in at midnight) or else we risked infection. I told him ok, and asked when I'd be able to get it. He told me that as soon as I hit 5 and he was sure I was still going to continue to labor he'd get it to me immediately. So, a few hours later I asked to be checked and he came in and told me that I had hit 5 and he was positive I wouldn't stop laboring on my own so I could have it if I wanted it. I told him I wanted it as soon as possible and he went and found the anesthesiologist himself. I got it done and a few hours later I felt like pushing. The nurse told him I was ready to push, he came and checked me and said that I was most definitely ready and asked if I could hold on just a second for him to scrub up. I told him sure. He scrubbed up and asked if I wanted to watch and I said yes. (I felt nothing and was super excited) I was coached to push and within minutes I had him out. He had the cord wrapped around his neck 3 times, the dr. calmly pushed him back a little and asked me not to push anymore then unwrapped him. The dr. helped guide him out and I didn't tear at all. I asked if I had torn and was told nope, that I did perfect. He asked if I wanted to cut the cord and I was like nooo, lol so hubby did it. (It was a few minutes after I delivered) I was asked if I would allow him to teach a student dr. on delivering the placenta and I said yeah. He started coaching him as I watched them work over my baby. I asked if he was

ok and was told yes. (He still wasn't breathing)They got him to breathe and brought him over to me. I got to hold him for a few seconds then he was off to the NICU. He asked me to push the placenta out and told the student dr. what to do. And there that was. I was told I did a great job and asked if I was ok. I said yeah and he left. The nurse told me she had never seen anyone act like I did during labor and that it was awesome. She helped me get up and go to the bathroom. Got me some food and got me into my room. As soon as I got there I was able to go to the NICU. I had amazing nurses and dr.'s during both of my children's births and after. I'm sorry this was soo long, but I felt like I needed to give a detailed account to show that not every dr. or hospital is horrible. Don't just jump on the bandwagon and hate hospital births. They aren't all bad.

[Reply](#)



o **Heather** says:
[February 6, 2015 at 7:08 am](#)

I had a bad experience with a nurse with my first son bit during both deliveries u had amazing nurses and OBs who were supportive, respectful, and treated me well. The one nurse insisted I was in false labor when I came in after 22 hours of strong contractions that had gotten to the point where I couldn't talk through a contraction anymore. I was one hour away from my due date. She gave me ambien and sent me home. I came back 5 hours later and she said, 'Oh honey, I guess it wasn't false labor after all.' She completely ignored me when I said I hadn't had a single Braxton Hicks contraction until that day. She basically ignited me when I was admitted and asked for pain meds to help me sleep. Had she been my delivery nurse I probably would have had a bad experience. As it happened, my L & D nurse was so great I asked her if she could be there for my 2nd baby. My normal OB had emergency surgery (twins early and breech) dictating my labor so her coworker delivered my son and other than being male (I didn't want a male OB) was just as fantastic as my normal OB. She got to deliver my 2nd and she explained, coached, and talked to me the whole time. I never felt like I was pressured or bullied. I feel for the women with such awful stories because I got close to having such a bad story myself. It must be horrific to have a birth go so wrong against your will but just as there are bad stories, there are also good ones. I hope these women can experience good, respectful births from here on out.

[Reply](#)



26. **jacs** says:
[November 23, 2014 at 11:16 am](#)

OMG, these stories are beyond words, I genuinely can't find the words to describe how shocked and upset I am at reading them.

This is all about the power of the health care professionals and nothing about respecting these poor women; no wonder PTSD and PND are increasing in the way they are.

I am appalled and disgusted that colleagues can act this way and there are no repercussions of them. They shouldn't be in the role full stop! I'm so angry at the fact that this happens at all in the West; no wonder the States have the highest maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality rates.

What on earth is it going to take for things to be made better!!!

[Reply](#)



27. **ann** says:
[February 25, 2015 at 10:32 pm](#)

My first birth at Miami valley hospital Dayton Ohio family begging. I got to the hospital after my water broke. The nurse asked me if she could check me to see how many cm I was. She put her hand so far up me she was pushing my baby's head out of my pevesh. I had grab her rest and started to try and stop her and pull her hand out while screaming stop stop your hurting me your pushing him out of my pevesh. She wouldn't stop bc that was her gloe. She had need up turning my son the wrong way and he had Marco from this that wasn't there before. A nurse had try ed in to talk me into pain killer's for well over 4hrs with me saying no over and over. Then when I asked for over the contents med son the nurse started bullying me. I was pushing my son out the OB DR come and told me I had to have an second bc I had been pushing too long when I

told him no. He said I will call cps And left. I'm glad today that I can stand up and say no no. The nurse put in a full cat in for no medical reson and didn't ask to. I was given stich stiche's without med son and with out being asked for a srap only one so it wasn't needed. This was my first brith I have 3 kid's. This is only some of what happened. I tried to get a lawyer no one will help me. Sorry for the bad spilling it's my phone

[Reply](#)



28. **ann** says:

[February 25, 2015 at 10:52 pm](#)

I no this is for laboring wemon. I had a DNC at Southview hopstial in ohio.I was lied to about needing this sugary. The only question I had was what are the odds I could wack up dearing my sugary. The dr told me that doesn't happen. I wack up dearing my sugary. I remember the lights and them unlockin my bed to move it and feeling the bed move the lights moving as they was walking them pulling me in the recovery room and re locking my bed in place. I was in so much pain It made me feel like I was going to get sick. The nurse started yelling at me and cussing me out bc she thought I had lied about eating or drinking before the sugary but didn't care that I was up.the pain was so bad that the hopstial almost od me on pain killer's I was poring sweat the heart mudshines started going off bc my heart was beating 200 and up ber min the Dr's walked in and then turned around and left.it take the Dr's over 30 min for pain killers. I still have nightmares and so dose the man that drive me bc they left him in the room and told him to Com me down and left me their. I tried to get a lawyer but no one will help me. I didn't put everything on this post.

[Reply](#)



29. **L** says:

[April 17, 2015 at 11:03 am](#)

Find a kynd lay midwife and have your babies at home, mamas. I had 3 that way – zero problems. Medical bullying and intimidation is endemic now. Don't fall into that trap.

[Reply](#)



30. **barbara vacek** says:

[May 2, 2015 at 5:38 pm](#)

I was 17 when I got pregnant with my precious son .I was 18 at delivery not allowed out of bed .I was restrained by nurses on both sides, I was trying to sit up and get in a more normal pushing position. I too was pushing into the air because nurses and doctors tilted the bottom of the bed to be more comfortable for them and it was hard to breathe with my head down and my butt in the air. I had Demerol 100 mg real early in the birth process so I was not medicated, no epidural and no one to tell me what would happen to me or what birth was ,”just push your baby out” When my contractions got serious ,my mom and aunt Alice told me to breath ,but I was hyperventilating from Trauma .Pitocin was running in me to make my birth faster and the Doctor was on the way but I was told by nurses, medical staff not to push but my baby was there crowning being born and you get to the point you have to push and my Doctor ran in with a scalpel and I cried and asked him not to cut me .He used scissors and cut me into my rectum

[Reply](#)



31. **Amy** says:

[May 25, 2015 at 5:47 pm](#)

Traumatic birth, while horrible, should never be called birth rape. For those women who have been raped, it comes off as very, very offensive.

[Reply](#)

32. **California Woman Charges Doctor With Assault & Battery For Forced Episiotomy | Robbin Whachell** says:

[June 4, 2015 at 9:58 pm](#)

[...] more information on Kimberly Turbin's story, see Caught on Video: Improving Birth Breaks the Silence on Abuse of Women in Maternity Care and We Will Not Be Silenced: An Update on Kelly's [...]

[Reply](#)



33. **Pat Fox** says:
[June 5, 2015 at 4:56 am](#)

What I cannot understand after reading here and watching the video is why criminal charges were not filed also? I worked in healthcare and taught medical assisting for decades and one of the most important parts of ethics and law is that doing anything to a competent patient without consent is assault.

Further, seeing the lack of skill of this physician, a malpractice case is self evident. He should never be allowed near a patient again.

[Reply](#)

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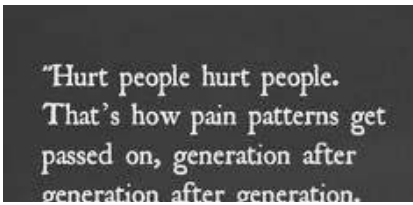


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Thank you to all of the fathers! We know families come in all shapes and sizes, and we want to take a moment to say we appreciate you for supporting your partner in labor and birth and advocating for better maternity care. Happy Father's Day!



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