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Clinton Accuser's Story Aired *By*

Juanita Broaddrick wipes a tear from her eye during a January interview shown on "Dateline NBC" Thursday. (AP)



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Juanita Broaddrick told her story to a national television audience last night, saying she did not tell authorities 21 years ago of her contention that Bill Clinton sexually assaulted her because "I just don't think anyone would have believed me."

In a gripping account punctuated by sobs, the Arkansas woman told "Dateline NBC" that in her Little Rock hotel room, Clinton suddenly "turned me around and started kissing me, and that was a real shock. I first pushed him away. I just told him 'no.' . . . He tries to kiss me again. He starts biting on my lip. . . . And then he forced me down on the bed. I just was very frightened. I tried to get away from him. I told him 'no.' . . . He wouldn't listen to me."

But Broaddrick could not remember the date, even the month, of the alleged 1978 incident. And NBC's Lisa Myers reported that Broaddrick, a volunteer in Clinton's first gubernatorial campaign, attended a Clinton fund-raiser three weeks later. "I think I was still in denial," Broaddrick said. "I still felt very guilty at that time, that it was my fault. By letting him come to the room, I had given him the wrong idea."

Asked about Broaddrick's allegation at a news conference earlier in the day, President Clinton said: "Well, my counsel has made a statement about the . . . issue, and I have nothing to

add to it." Attorney David E. Kendall's statement called the charge "absolutely false."

The nursing home operator, previously known as Jane Doe No. 5, told Myers that she felt "violated" but finally stopped resisting Clinton's sexual advances because "it was a real panicky situation." She said that "he was just a vicious, awful person."

Pressed by Myers as to whether she was raped, Broaddrick said she had been. "It was not consensual," she insisted. As for her feelings now toward the president, Broaddrick said: "My hatred for him is overwhelming."

NBC's decision to broadcast the Jan. 20 interview after a month of heated internal debate dramatically boosts the visibility of Clinton's latest accuser, since "Dateline" normally draws an audience of more than 10 million households. Broaddrick has already given her account of the alleged 1978 incident, when Clinton was Arkansas attorney general, to the Wall Street Journal editorial page, The Washington Post and, in an article published yesterday, the New York Times.

Had NBC aired the interview during the Senate impeachment trial and the furor over Monica S. Lewinsky, it might have had a significant impact on the political climate. Whether the story has any lasting significance now, outside the context of any legal or impeachment proceeding, is unclear. NBC executives say the Myers report needed further checking and corroboration before it could be broadcast.

Broaddrick was dubbed Jane Doe No. 5 in the Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit against Clinton early last year, when Jones's attorneys cited her in court papers and she filed an affidavit calling the allegation of sexual assault "untrue." In the interview, Broaddrick, 56, said: "I didn't want to be forced to testify about the most horrific event of my life."

Broaddrick later recanted that affidavit when questioned by FBI agents working for independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr, who found her account inconclusive. Two of the House impeachment "managers" spoke to Broaddrick but did not pursue her allegation.

Broaddrick told NBC she considered coming forward last year, after Kathleen E. Willey accused the president of groping her in the Oval Office. But, she said, "I just wasn't brave enough to do it."

Dabbing at her eye with a tissue, Broaddrick said she agreed to go on camera because "I just couldn't hold it in any longer." She said she did not want her grandchildren to ask: "Why didn't you tell what this man did to you?"

NBC interviewed four friends who say Broaddrick told them about the alleged assault soon afterward, including Norma Kelsey, who said she saw Broaddrick's swollen lip and torn pantyhose that day.

But the man Broaddrick was married to at the time, Gary Hickey, told NBC he did not remember the injury or her attempt to blame it on an accident. Myers said divorce records show Broaddrick's claim of an altercation in which she says Hickey hit her in the mouth. But she said this was a one-time incident.

As she has in her newspaper interviews, Broaddrick recounted how Clinton tried to apologize to her in 1991 and said he was a changed man. "I told him to go to hell, and I walked off," she said.

Broaddrick said she is pursuing no book deal or lawsuit, but that "all of these stories are floating around . . . and I was tired of everybody putting their own spin on it."

Myers asked: "What is the purpose? Do you want to destroy the president?"

"No, I don't want to do anything," Broaddrick said. "I do not have an agenda. I want to put all of these rumors to rest."

NBC said the White House would not answer questions about Clinton's whereabouts on April 25, 1978, the day records show Broaddrick attended a nursing home conference at Little Rock's now-defunct Camelot Hotel. But the network said Arkansas newspaper accounts suggest Clinton was in Little Rock that day – he had no public schedule during the period of the alleged assault – and attended a fund-raiser in a nearby town that evening.

Lanny J. Davis, former White House special counsel, assailed the Broaddrick story before the broadcast, saying: "Is journalism about reporting facts or not? Where have we gone when an unsubstantiated allegation becomes a fact if others report it? It is not corroborated because her girlfriend saw her with a swollen lip. That doesn't make the charge of rape a fact."

Saying that "proving a negative" is impossible for the White House, Davis added: "How do we know she didn't lie to all her friends? We know that, voluntarily, without anyone influencing her, she swore out an affidavit that she now says she lied about."

David P. Schippers, chief investigator for the House Judiciary Committee Republicans during the impeachment proceedings, said Tuesday that his staffers interviewed Broaddrick more than once and "have assured me that she is the most credible witness that either one of them have ever talked to."

Appearing on MSNBC's "Hockenberry," Schippers said he concluded that no one connected with the White House had suggested that Broaddrick file a false affidavit. "I think it would have been folly for us to have attempted to just poison the water with this story, when it really had no specific bearing on the impeachable offenses," he said.