

LIVING ROOM TIMES

BINDER UPDATE

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Clinton accused of rape

On NBC, Arkansas woman alleges assault 21 years ago

WASHINGTON (Reuters)— Arkansas businesswoman Juanita Broaddrick alleged in an emotional television interview broadcast on Wednesday that she was raped by President Bill Clinton 21 years ago.



“My hatred for him is overwhelming.”
—Juanita Broaddrick, on Bill Clinton

Clinton on Wednesday declined to comment directly on Broaddrick's charge that he sexually assaulted her in a Little Rock, Arkansas, hotel room in 1978, but noted that his private lawyer, David Kendall, had denied the allegation.

Kendall addressed the charges on Saturday after they were publicised by two major newspapers. "Any allegation that the president assaulted Ms. Broaddrick more than 20 years ago is absolutely false," he said.

NBC News taped what was then an exclusive interview with Broaddrick in January but scheduled it for broadcast only after The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post published detailed accounts of the nursing home owner's allegations.

NBC said it had been checking Broaddrick's story. Its presentation of it on "Dateline NBC" noted various inconsistencies and omissions.

Broaddrick, 56, told NBC News correspondent Lisa Myers she had actively resisted Clinton's advances and there was no way he could have viewed the alleged incident as consensual sex.

She said he apologised for it and sought her forgiveness in 1991, shortly before launching his campaign for the

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Above: President Clinton stays tight-lipped when asked Wednesday about Juanita Broaddrick's sexual assault allegations against him.

Below: Clinton (left) is seen with Broaddrick (right) and an unidentified retirement home resident (center) in this 1978 family photo.



Media squirms at new sex scandal

WASHINGTON (Reuters)— The Monica Lewinsky scandal is not even cold, and already the U.S. media is squirming over a completely different sexual allegation involving President Bill Clinton.

The latest case to hit the mainstream media -- it has rocketed around the Internet and the tabloids since at least 1992 -- is Arkansas businesswoman Juanita Broaddrick's charge that Clinton sexually assaulted her in her hotel room in 1978, in Little Rock, Arkansas, when he was state attorney general.

Clinton's lawyers have vehemently denied the allegation and the president declined to discuss it further when asked at a news conference on Wednesday.

According to reports in the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post and
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"It's ugly and vicious and it's very interesting how the press is dealing with it... Nobody wanted to break it, and in a funny way, nobody did break it. Everyone is writing about how everyone is writing about it. We found this way to back into these things."

—Mike Hoyt, senior editor,
Columbia Journalism Review

Clinton accused of 1978 sexual assault

Juanita Broaddrick makes allegation in taped NBC interview

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presidency.

She said she had not pursued charges against Clinton, then Arkansas' attorney general and a candidate for governor, because she felt responsible for inviting him to her room.

Broaddrick told NBC she first met Clinton in April 1978 when he was making his first run for the governorship and she was a volunteer in his campaign.

Later, while in the state capital for a nursing home seminar, she met him again at the hotel where she was staying, she said. According to her account, Clinton suggested they have coffee in her room but once there forced her to have sex.

"I tried to get away from him and I told him no. That I didn't want this to happen. But he wouldn't listen to me," she said tearfully.

"And I was even to the point where I was getting very noisy, you know, yelling at him to ... please stop. But that's when he would press down on my right shoulder and he would bite on my lip," she said.

Broaddrick said her lip swelled up and she drove home from the conference that day with a friend, Norma Kelsey. NBC said Kelsey had corroborated Broaddrick's account but declined to be interviewed on camera.

Broaddrick said she did not report the alleged attack to authorities because she feared being dragged through the mud, since she was having an extramarital affair at the time with the man who would become her second husband.

"I didn't think anyone would believe me in the world," she said. "I just wanted to just walk out of there and forget that it had ever happened."

"I was also afraid of what would happen to me if I came forward. I was afraid that I would be destroyed

like so many of the other women have been," she added.

Broaddrick said she did not tell her first husband, Gary Hickey, either and acknowledged attending a fund-raiser for Clinton some weeks later.

NBC News conducted its interview with Broaddrick in January, during the height of Clinton's Senate impeachment trial, but said it decided not to broadcast until this week because it was checking the facts.

It said Broaddrick gave many details about the alleged incident but could not say exactly when it happened. Records suggested April 25, 1978, as a possible date, the network said.

Broaddrick's name surfaced in the 1992 presidential election campaign when a friend in whom she had confided revealed her allegations, but she never came forward publicly.

Subpoenaed by lawyers in Paula Jones' sexual harassment suit against Clinton, Broaddrick denied in court papers that there had been any unwelcome sexual advances by Clinton.

She told NBC: "I didn't want to be forced to testify about the most horrific event of my life. I didn't want to go through it again."

But she revived the accusation before independent counsel Kenneth Starr's federal grand jury after being granted immunity from prosecution. She explained to NBC that she feared lying to a federal grand jury.

Starr decided not to pursue Broaddrick's story after determining it did not fit the pattern of obstruction of justice he was trying to establish in connection with the president's affair with Monica Lewinsky.

Broaddrick denied having any ambition to make money out of the alleged attack. Asked about her feelings now about Clinton, she said, "My hatred for him is overwhelming."

Media squirms as new scandal breaks

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the New York Times, Broaddrick last year denied in a sworn statement that the alleged assault occurred, but later told NBC television correspondent Lisa Myers in a taped interview that it did in fact happen.

After long debate at NBC, the Broaddrick interview was scheduled to air on Wednesday evening on the network's "Dateline" program, one week before a much-promoted interview with Lewinsky was set for broadcast on rival network ABC's "20/20".

Both interviews fall within the February-early March "sweeps" period, when television ratings are used to set crucial advertising rates. NBC officials have said the Broaddrick piece was cleared for release only after journalistic questions were answered, and denied the timing had any relation to "sweeps".

The New York Times, in a detailed piece published on Wednesday, said the story had been offered to the Times in the endgame of Clinton's first presidential campaign in 1992, and was seen by the newspaper as "the kind of toxic waste traditionally dumped just before election day." The Times declined to run it then.

So why run it now?

"... These allegations played at least some small role in the impeachment of a president," the Times' managing editor Bill Keller said in the article. "And our readers, who have doubtless encountered the story in other places, are entitled to read our best take on it."

But Keller acknowledged a certain "scandal fatigue" after more than 13 months of the unfolding tale of former White House intern Lewinsky and her affair

with the president. The scandal made Clinton only the second president to be impeached in U.S. history. The Senate voted February 12 not to remove him from office and acquitted him of perjury and obstruction of justice charges.

The Washington Post ran a front-page version of the story last Saturday, one day after the Wall Street Journal had an extensive story on the matter, with its own distinctive line drawing of Broaddrick, on its op-ed page.

Besides its coverage of Broaddrick's allegations, the Post's media columnist, Howard Kurtz, wrote of the tortured behind-the-scenes debate over whether to make the story public.

"The differing approaches reflect the struggle of a number of news organizations, including the Washington Post, to deal with a delicate, long-ago allegations that could have affected the president's impeachment trial had it been carried in the mainstream press," Kurtz wrote.

Mike Hoyt, the senior editor of Columbia Journalism Review, said the story's winding path from rumor to Internet to mainstream made him "uncomfortable."

"This is, in a way, more serious (than the Lewinsky matter)," Hoyt said in a telephone interview. "And it's ugly and vicious and it's very interesting how the press is dealing with it."

"Nobody wanted to break it and in a funny way, nobody did break it," Hoyt said. "Everyone is writing about how everyone is writing about it. We found this way to back into these things."