Another Clinton Accuser Goes Public

By Lois Romano and Peter Baker
Washington Post Staff Writer
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Her story circulated in Arkansas for years and when Bill Clinton ran for president in 1992, his enemies tried to get her to tell the world. She refused. Five years later, she opened her door to find private investigators representing Paula Jones. Still, she would not talk. "I wouldn't relive it for anything," she told them.

In the 15 months since, countless others have come calling. Agents sent by independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr. The House Republican managers prosecuting President Clinton at his impeachment trial. Reporters from around the globe. She has talked and exchanged electronic mail with scandal impresario Lucianne Goldberg and once sought advice from Clinton accuser Kathleen E. Willey. Regular updates about her are posted on the Internet and dissected on talk radio.

Now, after years of laboring to avoid the public spotlight, Juanita Broaddrick, the woman known in government documents only as "Jane Doe No. 5," has decided to speak out about her sensational yet ancient and unproven allegation that the future president sexually assaulted her in a hotel room a generation ago.

The airing of her charges has come too late to have the impact desired by those who had urged her for so long to go public, now that the Senate has acquitted Clinton at his impeachment trial and virtually assured that he will finish his term in office. But Broaddrick's story is just one of the many loose ends of the Clinton saga that are likely to linger as he moves through the final two years of his presidency.

"It was 20 years ago and I let a man in my room and I had to take my lumps," Broaddrick said in an interview as she described why she
waited so long to come forward. "It was a horrible, horrible experience and I just wanted it to go away."

It never did. Broaddrick, 55, a nursing home operator from the tiny northwest Arkansas town of Van Buren, said yesterday that she finally decided to break her public silence because there was "so much misinformation out there." In one recent example, she said, she was incensed by an account in a supermarket tabloid that reported her husband had cut a deal with Clinton to keep quiet, an assertion she dismissed as completely false.

**Clinton Team's Denial**
The Clinton legal team has denied her allegation as "false and outrageous" and the president's advisers in the past have noted that Broaddrick once said so herself. When Jones's attorneys first subpoenaed her in their sexual harassment lawsuit against the president, Broaddrick swore out an affidavit and testified in a deposition that Clinton did not make unwelcome sexual advances toward her in the late 1970s.

"Any allegation that the president assaulted Ms. Broaddrick more than 20 years ago is absolutely false," Clinton's personal attorney, David E. Kendall, said in a statement released by the White House yesterday. "Beyond that we are not going to comment."

Broaddrick later recanted her sworn testimony in the Jones suit under a promise of immunity from Starr, saying she lied initially because she did not want to be drawn into the case against the president. Only in recent weeks did she agree to allow reporters to quote her account. NBC News last month conducted an interview that has yet to air. The Wall Street Journal printed a lengthy piece on its opinion page yesterday. And The Washington Post was granted permission yesterday to use interviews conducted off the record starting last April.

Hers has been a story hidden in plain sight since last March, referred to in vague terms in Jones's court filings and Starr's impeachment report yet never explicitly a part of the now-concluded congressional debate over whether Clinton should be removed from office for trying to cover up his affair with Monica S. Lewinsky. Few in official Washington who have been privy to the Broaddrick story have been entirely sure what to make of it.

Starr investigated briefly but dropped it after determining that it did not fit the pattern of obstruction of justice he was investigating because she stated Clinton never tried to influence her story. House Republicans urged wavering colleagues in December to read the sealed records of Broaddrick's FBI interview to shore up support for impeachment. And the House managers secretly contacted her to say they might summon her as a witness, yet quickly decided that her allegations were not relevant to the articles of impeachment they were prosecuting in the Senate.

Broaddrick, who owns a nursing home in Van Buren and a facility for mentally retarded children in Fort Smith, Ark., said she first met
Clinton in April 1978 when he was the state's 31-year-old attorney general making his first run for governor and she was working as a volunteer for the campaign.

During a campaign stop at her Van Buren facility, she said, Clinton talked with her and invited her to visit his campaign office in Little Rock. Broaddrick, then 35, agreed to do so a week later, on April 25, while in the capital with a friend for a conference sponsored by the American College of Nursing Home Administrators. "We were very excited," she said. "We were going to pick up all that neat stuff, T-shirts, buttons."

Staying at the now-defunct Camelot Inn, Broaddrick said, she called the campaign headquarters and eventually talked with Clinton on the telephone. She later recalled he said he was not going to his headquarters that day and suggested they meet in the hotel coffee shop instead.

Arriving later in the lobby, he called and asked if they could have coffee in her room instead because there were too many reporters in the lobby, Broaddrick said. "Stupid me, I ordered coffee to the room," she said. "I thought we were going to talk about the campaign."

As she tells the story, they spent only a few minutes chatting by the window -- Clinton pointed to an old jail he wanted to renovate if he became governor -- before he began kissing her. She resisted his advances, she said, but soon he pulled her back onto the bed and forcibly had sex with her. She said she did not scream because everything happened so quickly. Her upper lip was bruised and swollen after the encounter because, she said, he had grabbed onto it with his mouth.

"The last thing he said to me was, 'You better get some ice for that.' And he put on his sunglasses and walked out the door," she recalled.

With no witnesses and the passage of so much time, Broaddrick's story is difficult if not impossible to verify, although her husband and a friend told The Post in separate interviews that she related her account to them contemporaneously. Norma Rogers, an employee and friend who traveled with her to the conference, said that she returned to the hotel room that day to find Broaddrick badly shaken and her lip swollen. They quickly packed and left, stopping to get ice for Broaddrick's lip on the way back to Van Buren, both later said.

Rogers, who has since moved to a suburb of Tulsa, Okla., and uses a married name, and Broaddrick said they had not talked for several years until the episode was resurrected in the Jones lawsuit. "It's true unless she has been lying to me for 20 years and I don't think she did," Rogers told The Post last spring, before the two reestablished contact. "We were close enough at the time that if something else had happened I believe she would have told me."

Rogers's family had its own unusual experience with Clinton that could affect her view of him. As governor in December 1980, he
commuted the life sentence of a man, Guy L. Kuehn, who had killed Rogers's father, Ray Trentham, a school custodian, during a robbery.

**Husband Supports Story**
Broaddrick's current husband, Dave Broaddrick, also backs up her story, saying she told him about the alleged encounter with Clinton days afterward. At the time, both Dave and Juanita Broaddrick were married to other people, but having an affair. They eventually married in 1981.

"I was very angry but there was nothing I could do," he said yesterday. "I was put in a very helpless situation. If it happened today, it wouldn't matter who it was, I would confront it. At the time I was not able to because of my personal situation and I have to live with that."

Otherwise, though, there is little to document the account. Separate items in the April 25, 1978, edition of the Arkansas Gazette indicated that a nursing home administrators conference was held at the Camelot Inn on that date and that Clinton had only one publicly announced event that day, an evening appearance in nearby Conway. White House officials and the state attorney general's office said they do not have records of his schedule from then and the Camelot has since closed.

Broaddrick said Clinton called her at the nursing home several times afterward but she would never take the call. The next time she recalled seeing him was in 1991, when she said she was summoned out of another nursing home meeting in Little Rock to meet with him.

"It was unreal. . . . He kept trying to hold my hand," she said. "I can still remember his words. He said, 'Can you ever forgive me? I'm not the same man I used to be.' . . . I told him, 'You just go to hell.' And I walked away. I was shaking."

Broaddrick never reported the alleged incident to authorities and said it never occurred to her to do so, because Clinton was a rising politician while she was "young and vulnerable" and in the middle of an extramarital affair.

"I had blamed myself all these years," she said. "I am a businesswoman, I made money. But I was insecure about men."

Broaddrick's name first surfaced more than a decade later when Phillip Yoakum, a former friend who said she had confided the story in him, took it to Republican Sheffield Nelson, who lost a race for governor to Clinton. Yoakum brought Nelson to her nursing home in 1992, and they urged her to come forward, but she did not.

Jones's lawyers heard about her from another Republican activist in Arkansas who led them to Yoakum. After their private investigators visited Broaddrick on Nov. 13, 1997, her lawyer, Bill Walters, a Republican state senator, contacted a Clinton lawyer and asked for a draft affidavit for her to sign denying the "rumors and stories" about
her and Clinton. "These allegations are untrue," she said in the Jan. 2, 1998, affidavit, "and I had hoped that they would no longer haunt me or cause further disruption to my family."

Unswayed, the Jones team used an uncorroborated letter from Yoakum to raise the allegation in court filings last March 28, just days before a federal judge dismissed the lawsuit.

**Starr's Inquiry**

FBI agents working for Starr then approached Broaddrick and after being promised that she would not be prosecuted for perjury she disavowed her previous sworn testimony without getting into details, sources have said. Starr made note of her change of heart in a passing reference in an appendix sent to the House along with his Lewinsky impeachment referral. The FBI interview, which deemed her account "inconclusive" according to the sources, has never been made public, although a variety of House Republicans read it in a sealed room before voting to impeach Clinton on Dec. 19.

The House Judiciary Committee Republicans who would handle Clinton's prosecution in the Senate first got in touch just after Thanksgiving. Rep. Asa Hutchinson (R-Ark.), who knew Walters from GOP political circles, met with Broaddrick, focusing not on the alleged assault but on whether anyone tried to silence her.

The House team later sent two investigators to meet with her. And another manager, Rep. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), had "a five-minute conversation" with Broaddrick but also told her she would not be relevant to the trial.

"From my standpoint, I think it was appropriate behavior on our part," Hutchinson said. They never pressed to include the Broaddrick allegation in the trial, he added, because "it would have been wrong to throw out something pejorative to the president and not probative to the issues involved."

**The Discussion Spreads**

Although her allegation had been covered in the news media sporadically, it became the subject of widespread discussion in political and journalistic circles in mid-January, when NBC News correspondent Lisa Myers conducted a videotaped interview with Broaddrick at her Van Buren home. Word of that interview was leaked to Internet columnist Matt Drudge, whose report triggered thousands of calls to NBC from viewers angry that the account had not been broadcast.

Fox News Channel later reported the allegations, but without an interview with Broaddrick. As the president's impeachment trial moved toward a verdict, the Broaddrick controversy was all over the Internet and talk radio and was mentioned on some cable talk shows.

Her version of the allegations emerged publicly for the first time yesterday when Dorothy Rabinowitz, an editorial writer on the Wall Street Journal's conservative opinion pages, published a lengthy
account of her interviews with Broaddrick last week, granted after Broaddrick grew frustrated with NBC's hesitation.

"Juanita has never been in control of this story," Dave Broaddrick said yesterday. "She told it when she has had to in legal situations. This is the first time, under no pressure, she has been able to be in control of the story since it happened, and that's a refreshing place to be."

Looking back, Juanita Broaddrick said yesterday that she does not believe she made a mistake by keeping quiet in 1978 but wishes she had come forward in 1992. "I feel that had I come out in '92, that it may have made a difference," she said. "I regret that."

As for going public now, she said, "I feel like I have gotten the biggest weight off my shoulders. I did it because of my twin granddaughters -- they're 12. . . . When they ask me about this in a few years, I want them to say, 'That was a neat thing you did.' I didn't want them asking me, 'Why didn't you come forward?' "

_Staff writers Lorraine Adams, Charles R. Babcock, William Claiborne, Juliet Eilperin, Guy Gugliotta, Howard Kurtz and Susan Schmidt and staff researchers Nathan Abse and Alice Crites contributed to this report._