

Sex, Donald, Hillary and Bill

“Every survivor of sexual assault deserves to be heard, believed, and supported.” Hillary Clinton tweet, December 2015

If you're not familiar with the name Juanita Broaddrick, or her story, you soon will be. Donald Trump will make sure of that.

Juanita Broaddrick says that in April of 1978, when she was 35, the then-attorney general of the state of Arkansas raped in her in a Little Rock hotel room.

Ms. Broaddrick was a businesswoman who ran a nursing home, and that's where the attorney general, who was running for governor, first met her. They met again in Little Rock a short time later when Ms. Broaddrick was attending a nursing home conference.

She says they were supposed to meet in the coffee shop of her hotel, but when the attorney general got there he said there were too many reporters around and suggested they talk in her hotel room. Ms. Broaddrick says the request made her feel “a little bit uneasy” but she thought it was all going to be professional.

Ms. Broaddrick didn't tell her story publicly for 20 years – not unusual in rape cases. Through his attorney, the former attorney general – Bill Clinton – has denied the allegation.

The other night, Donald Trump used the R word on national television. While Sean Hannity ticked off a list of offenses allegedly committed by Bill Clinton – “touching and fondling and touching against a woman's will” – Trump added, “and rape.”

This caused a stir in the mainstream media, an institution that tried its best to downplay or ignore Juanita Broaddrick's

story when it first came out.

Matt Lauer on the Today Show said, "Up next, a word used by Donald Trump while talking about former President Bill Clinton that has him under fire this morning." Under fire? From what source? Journalists?

On CBS, Nancy Cordes said, "The topic of rape is murky territory for Trump, who was also once accused of rape by his ex-wife Ivana – a charge she later recanted."

Andrea Mitchell of NBC News called it a "discredited and long denied allegation." And as if they were reading from the same talking points, Tom Llamas on ABC News said, "The rape accusation is decades-old and discredited."

Old yes? But discredited?

It's true that in 1998, Ms. Broaddrick told Paula Jones' lawyers, who were seeking information about Bill Clinton's alleged sexual abuses, that "I do not have any information to offer regarding a nonconsensual or unwelcome sexual advance by Mr. Clinton." And she added: "These allegations (of rape) are untrue."

Hence, the characterization that her accusation of rape was "discredited." But there's another possible explanation: Ms. Broaddrick had also told the Paula Jones' lawyers that "It's not pleasant and I won't even go into it. . . . It's very private. We're talking about something 20 years ago. . . . It's just that was a long time ago and I don't want to relive it." And she added this: "Well, there's just absolutely no way that anyone can get to him, he's just too vicious."

Juanita Broaddrick didn't go public with her story until 1999 – but only after her name got out and tabloid stories began to surface that she says were wildly untrue. That's when she talked to NBC News and the Wall Street Journal.

But she did tell her story privately, to friends immediately after she says she was sexually assaulted. In a January 20, 2016 piece in National Review, Ian Tuttle says, "... Juanita Broaddrick's claim was supported by not one but five witnesses and a host of circumstantial (though no physical) evidence. Broaddrick's colleague Norma Rogers, who was attending the conference in Little Rock with her, says she found Broaddrick in her hotel room crying and 'in a state of shock' on the morning of the alleged assault, her pantyhose torn and her lip swollen. According to Rogers, Broaddrick told her that Bill Clinton had 'forced himself on her.'"

But even if the story is true, Hillary didn't rape anyone. Trump may have brought it up to send a not too subtle message to Mrs. Clinton – *Call me a sexist and watch what I'll do to your husband, and you* – but does that mean the media should play along?

Consider this: In 1999, a few months after telling her story to Lisa Myers on NBC, Ms. Broaddrick told the Drudge Report that Hillary Clinton met her at one of her husband's campaign rallies just two weeks after the alleged assault. This is what Ms. Broaddrick says happened:

"She came directly to me as soon as she hit the door. I had been there only a few minutes, I only wanted to make an appearance and leave. She caught me and took my hand and said: 'I am so happy to meet you. I want you to know that we appreciate everything you do for Bill.' I started to turn away and she held onto my hand and reiterated her phrase – looking less friendly and repeated her statement – 'Everything you do for Bill.' I said nothing. She wasn't letting me get away until she made her point. She talked low, the smile faded on the second thank you. I just released her hand from mine and left the gathering."

In 2003, speaking to Sean Hannity, Juanita Broaddrick added this: "I could have passed out at that moment. . . . Cold

chills went up my spine. That's the first time I became afraid of that woman."

Only two people know for sure what happened inside that hotel room in 1978 – and the mainstream media, which examined Donald Trump's relationships with women (Page One, New York Times – and picked up by TV, print and Internet journalists) haven't shown the same curiosity about Mrs. Clinton's role, if any, in her husband's sexual forays. Was she part of the slime machine that Team Clinton established to delegitimize women who made accusations against her husband? Did she keep silent for political reasons? Was she in any way an enabler?

Even though we can't know for sure if Ms. Broaddrick's story is true, given Bill Clinton's history – with Paula Jones, who says Governor Clinton exposed himself in front of her while she was a state employee and was summoned to his hotel room; or with Kathleen Willey, who claims President Clinton groped her in the Oval Office, to name just two – the allegation made by Juanita Broaddrick sounds, at absolute least, plausible, especially coming from a businesswoman who immediately told her friends what supposedly happened.

And now Donald Trump has released a short black and white video on Instagram that features the voices of women who claim that Bill Clinton sexually abused them. One of those voices is that of Juanita Broaddrick. Bill Clinton is shown with a cigar in his mouth – and the ad ends with Hillary laughing ... and the words: "Here we go again."

This kind of attack, of course, could backfire on Trump – unless he makes absolutely clear that he's not blaming Hillary Clinton for what Bill might have done; but that he's blaming her for whatever she might have done to protect him – and by extension – to protect herself. Perhaps he had that in mind when he inserted a caption that runs with the ad. It reads: "Is Hillary really protecting women."

For all we know the next ad Trump posts on social media may be one about that tweet Hillary Clinton put out last December, the one that says:

“Every survivor of sexual assault deserves to be heard, believed, and supported.”