



January 22, 1987

COPY

Mr. E. F. Spang, State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Post Office Box 12000
Reno, Nevada 89520

Dear Mr. Spang:

Around noon on January 19, 1987 a BLM contracted tractor/trailer was observed at the Coaldale Junction containing wild horses from the Reveille roundup. I assumed at the time the horses were being transported to the Palomino Valley facilities and continued on with my field work. I arrived in Fallon at 5 p.m. at which time I spotted the same tractor/trailer rig containing the wild horses parked across the street from McDonalds' in Fallon, an apparent breakdown. I recorded the liscense numbers and inspected the trailer, where at least three horses were down.

At 8 p.m., a substitute tractor pulled up to replace the original. I approached the man connecting the trailer, introduced myself and inquired how long the animals had been on the trailer, or when they were loaded. He referred me to the driver Mr. Gregg Cook. I again introduced myself and inquired as to how long the animals had been on the trailer. He said he didn't know. He said he was trying to get to Palomino as quickly as he could. I told him that I would follow him into Palomino. I went across the street and called Fred Wyatt to inform him of the breakdown and that I would be following the trailer in to inspect the animals as they were unloaded. Mr. Wyatt assured me that either himself or an employee and the veterinarian would be there when the truck and I arrived.

I took the mileage from the capture site and approximate speed and computed that since the truck had been seen at Coaldale Junction at noon, the animals would have had to been loaded prior to 10 a.m. I then assumed the same speed and computed the 170 miles from Coaldale to Fallon and estimate the breakdown occurred between 3 and 4 p.m. on that date.

The vehicle arrived at Palomino at 10 p.m., unloaded by 10:30 p.m. I counted 51 horses being unloaded at Palomino, and while visably weak and shaken, those appeared to be in fair condition. The BLM employee and the veterinarian remained in the trailer so I inquired if the load was okay. I was told that one animal was down and they were giving it time to get up. I didn't inspect the vehicle myself, thanked them and left.

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Monday, January 20, was a federal holiday so I postponed inquiry on the load. Tuesday, January 21, while at the State Office on different business, I spoke to Mr. Rathbun, Mr. Frei, and Mr. Sweeney about the Sunday load, advising them that Mr. Wyatt had not been advised of a breakdown. Inquired why there had been no contingency plan for the common occurrence of vehicle breakdown. I also vented my anger that 53 wild horses had been left in a truck for twelve hours when the Fallon holding facility was less than 2 miles away. I also stated that I would be putting this in the record in the form of a letter to you.

Today I confirmed that yes, one horse was down, but that 2 more were dead! Not only were there not any contingency plans; but wild horses weak from winter, heavy with foal, and stressed from capture in frigid weather were left in a trailer for twelve hours. I respectfully remind the Bureau you are charged with the protection and humane treatment. Haste to comply with a court order does not cancel those obligations. Furthermore, it points again to the continuous need for surveillance. It also brings home the fact that asking a direct question does not necessarily mean you will receive an honest answer. I have resolved I will be more steadfast and less trusting in my future endeavors.

Most sincerely,

Dawn Y. Lappin (Mrs.)
Director

cc: Board of Trustees
David Hornbeck