

Why do you think Wild Horse Annie used photographic documentation to expose the round-up issues to the public?

During her childhood, Velma had listened to stories about wild horse “round-ups” but, though she found the accounts disturbing, she did nothing.

She later wrote, “Although I had heard that airplanes were being used to capture mustangs, like so many of us do when something doesn’t touch our lives directly, I pretended it didn’t concern me. But, one morning in the year 1950, my apathetic attitude was jarred into acute awareness. What had now touched my life was to reach into the lives of many others as time went on.”

Haunted by the image of the trampled foal, Velma went to see a round-up for herself. Armed with a camera, she hunched on top of her car and, much like a private investigator, secretly documented the horrific scene before her. The danger she put herself in as a consequence of her actions is clear in a *Time* magazine article dated July 27, 1959. The article describes how Charlie sat in the car with a .38 calibre revolver on his lap as Velma snapped photographs on the roof.

MY APATHETIC
WAS JARRED
ACUTE

“Wild Horse Annie” Bill

The wild horses and burros of the romantic Old West are fast disappearing. Until 15 years ago they still galloped over the western hills and grasslands in great herds, but since World War II an estimated 100,000 have been captured and cut up for dog food. Today, the Department of Interior estimates that no more than 20,000 wild horses still graze on the lone prairies. Last week the wild horses had their day in Congress.

Their frail, unlikely-looking champion, Mrs. Velma B Johnston, 47, is a Reno secretary. Ten years ago she was shocked to see a truckload of frightened, bleeding wild horses on their way to the slaughterhouse. She investigated the methods of the roundup and was even more deeply disturbed. She then

launched a campaign that has won her the nickname “Wild Horse Annie”.

For two hours last week, Wild Horse Annie told her story to 16 interested members of a House judiciary subcommittee. The mustangs are flushed from their hilly retreats by low-flying airplanes, whose pilots pursue the animals across the prairies until they are near exhaustion. Then trucks take up the chase. Finally, the horses are lassoed with ropes weighted with truck tyres or other heavy objects. The horses drag the weights around until they drop. Then they are hobbled and hauled into the truck. Wild Horse Annie documented all this with photographs that she took from the top of her car, while her husband sat below, a .38 revolver in his lap.

clarify

apathetic
acute

personal response

...like so many of us do when something doesn't touch our lives directly, I pretended it didn't concern me.

How can you relate to this situation? Give an example from personal experience.

ATTITUDE
INTO
AWARENESS

Velma's account of the round-up presented the public with a graphically chilling window into the extreme, gratuitous brutality of the capture:

The mustangs are driven, at breakneck speed, by planes, from their meagre refuge in the rough and barren rim rock into flatlands or dry lake beds. There the chase

is taken up by hunters standing on fast-moving pickup trucks, and the exhausted mustangs, after a run of 15 to 20 miles speeded by swooping planes, many of them carrying bullet wounds inflicted to make them run faster, are easy victims for ropers. Once the running horse is roped, a heavy truck tyre tied to the other end of the rope is thrown out of the truck.

THE FRANTIC HORSE, WITH HIS SIDES HEAVING AND BLOOD RUNNING FROM HIS NOSTRILS,

soon falls exhausted, and his feet are quickly trussed. Another line is then attached to his hind legs and he is pulled up a plank ramp into the bed of the truck. The ropes are removed and the animal is prodded to his feet. Frequently the hide is stripped from his side during the drag up the board ramp... Others, too badly hurt to load, are left to die from the injuries received in the long pursuit by plane and truck. Young colts are frequently abandoned and starve to death...

clarify graphically chilling window
gratuitous brutality
trussed

language and visual features

What effect does the choice of language, illustration and design on this spread have on you?
Has it influenced your response to the issue? Why/why not?

Velma discovered that often the horses driven to exhaustion would be left behind by the mustang hunters to be gathered later, their nostrils wired shut so they could barely breathe.

The “lucky” ones died on the spot; others were shot, wounded and left to die. Surviving horses were crushed into trains or trucks for transportation – without food or water – to the rendering plants. Many were packed so tightly that, when they died, they remained standing. There was no room for them to fall.

inference

What can you infer about the types of people the mustang hunters were?

THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR THEM TO FALL.