**What’s a SNIPPY?**

*By Tony Angiola and Katie Paige*

**“What is a Snippy?”**  
That curious question recently came from a well-known figure in the UFO/UAP world who, despite their recognition, had never heard of the infamous case of Snippy the Horse. It’s a reminder that no matter how seasoned you are, there’s always another strange chapter waiting to be discovered.

If you’re a MUFON investigator, or an enthusiast of UFOs, cryptids, and high strangeness, you may be asking yourself the same question. The following account is based on unsealed APRO files that were hidden from the public for more than 35 years and are now preserved at the National UFO Historical Records Center in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. This investigation uncovers the hidden truth behind one of the most important mutilation cases in history.

**The Valley of Shadows**

The San Luis Valley has long been a hotspot for high strangeness, but it wasn’t until the Snippy case—the first animal mutilation to gain worldwide attention—that its reputation became widely recognized.

At the time, Agnes King lived on the King Ranch with her son Harry. Agnes, born in 1882, was in her mid-80s; her husband Coley had passed away in 1961. Residents in the area often reported strange lights near Mount Blanca, the 14,351-foot peak that loomed just three miles from the ranch. The Kings themselves told of seeing luminous objects moving in and out of the mountain, while others described craft hovering over the Sand Dunes National Monument or balls of light streaking across the valley at impossible speeds.

**The Horses**

In 1967, Snippy was a 3-year-old Appaloosa gelding, which is essentially a male horse that has been castrated and is still classified as a colt due to his age. He was born in Estes Park, Colorado, in October 1964 and was given to Nellie Lewis, the wife of Berle Lewis, for her 43rd birthday in November. Two years later, Nellie brought Snippy home to the San Luis Valley, where he would split his time between the Lewis cabin and the nearby King Ranch, just a few miles apart.

A person standing next to a horse

AI-generated content may be incorrect.A horse and a foal in a fenced in area

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Berle Lewis with 1mo old Snippy and Mother Lady

1 mo. Old Snippy with Mom Lady, Estes Park, Colorado, November 1964

A group of people standing next to horses

AI-generated content may be incorrect.The King Ranch pastured four horses: Smokey (Black), Sheiba (Sorrel), Lady (Dapple Grey), and Snippy (Appaloosa). The first three were large, mature horses standing 14 hands high and weighing around 1,200 pounds each. Snippy the colt, was younger and smaller—10 hands high and about 900 pounds—but distinctive in appearance.

Smokey held by Nellie Lewis and Sheiba held by Agnes King

Next door was the Wellington Ranch, grimly nicknamed the “Dead Cow Ranch” due to the many cattle mutilations that occurred there. Before Snippy’s death, people rarely spoke of “mutilations,” attributing bloodless animal deaths to lightning strikes, coyotes, or natural causes—even when the bodies showed surgical precision and missing organs.

**Confusion over Identity**

Over the years, Snippy’s name and even his sex became muddled. When we once mentioned “Snippy” at the UFO Watchtower and referred to him as male, we were quickly corrected: “Snippy was really Lady, a mare.” This confusion can be traced back to Berle Lewis, who decades later introduced new information that contradicted earlier reports.

A person standing next to a horse

AI-generated content may be incorrect.APRO’s own files show inconsistencies, with pronouns shifting between male and female, and later sources incorrectly linking Snippy with Lady. Yet photographs from the time tell a different story. In one image, investigator Alice Richmond stands with Lady and Sheiba—both alive after Snippy’s death—contradicting Berle’s later claims. How is Lady alive after Snippy’s death if Berle was accurate?

“Only witnesses to Snippy’s murder!”

A skeleton of a human body

AI-generated content may be incorrect.A diagram of the bones of the pelvis

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Ultimately, the bones themselves provided the answer. Examination of the hip structure confirmed Snippy was male. This conclusion was further supported by Leona Wellington, daughter of Earnest Wellington, who was present during the 1967 investigation. She confidently recalled that Snippy was male, a detail consistent with her firsthand involvement.

Snippy’s hip structure

**The Death of Smokey**

One week before Snippy’s mutilation, Smokey, the black horse, was found dead near the pasture where Snippy’s body would later be discovered. His death was never investigated; it was assumed he had been bitten by a rattlesnake after slight swelling was observed on his hip. Yet this explanation made little sense—such a bite would have needed to strike the nose or neck to prove fatal to a horse of Smokey’s size.

**Discovery of Snippy**

On September 7, 1967, Agnes noticed Snippy was missing. He had last been seen the day before. She asked Harry to look for him on September 8, but he was too busy and could only search the next day. Heavy rain had recently fallen, meaning fresh tracks would have been visible.

On September 9, Harry set out and, after getting his truck stuck in the mud, finally found Snippy just a quarter mile from the ranch house. What he discovered was shocking.

A horse lying on the ground

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Snippy’s condition left Harry stunned, his body was nearly unrecognizable, except for the Appaloosa spots and his distinguishable white markings on his leg. All the flesh from his neck upward was gone. A clean, cauterized incision encircled the collar, leaving only stark white vertebrae and skull—bone that looked aged as if he were laying there for years despite being freshly exposed. Over the next few days, the bones changed color: first bright pink, then tar black. While examining the remains, Nellie and Berle Lewis joined Harry and noted an overpowering medicinal odor that none of them could explain.

Snippy dead approx. 9 days

**Forensic Findings**

A week later, Dr. Altshuler of Alamosa examined the remains. Cutting into the skull, he found the brain cavity and vertebrae completely dry. Every organ in the body had been removed without a trace of blood. The only anomaly inside was a small deposit of white powder in the stomach. Snippy’s right hind leg appeared to have been broken, as if he had been dropped from above. His left hind leg, like his neck, was stripped entirely of flesh.

A animal lying on the ground

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

Snippy; notice bare left hind leg and broken right hind leg

**Environmental Anomalies**

Investigators also documented strange phenomena in the area surrounding the carcass. Green ooze pooled near the body. Earnest Wellington and Nellie reported finding an odd “tool” some 500 yards away in a patch of Chico brush, resembling a chicken gizzard and seeping the same green substance.

On the ground nearby were scorch marks and clusters of cylindrical holes, each four inches across and four to five inches deep. Some formed a circle around a brush; others aligned in a straight line. Two unusual imprints appeared in the soil, side by side, as though left by a very heavy bird-like creature that briefly landed — and then vanished.

Even stranger, three fence posts had been severed cleanly, as if by extreme heat—in comparison to something like a “lightsaber.” The posts, spaced sixty feet apart, suggested something massive had crossed over them. APRO investigators later noted pressed circles in the ground: one large, seventy-five feet in diameter, with five smaller fifteen-foot circles arranged around it. The sand inside the impressions was smooth, with rain divots surrounding them—evidence the objects had been present during a brief shower.

**Aftermath**

In the weeks following the investigation, tragedy struck. Earnest Wellington died suddenly, a loss his daughter Leona still believes may have been connected to his involvement with Snippy’s case. One of the APRO investigators also passed away prematurely within the year.

Reports of unusual animal deaths continued in the valley—bloodless carcasses, craft sightings, strange humming sounds, missing time, and encounters with otherworldly figures. Witnesses spoke of glowing orbs, black boxes in the sky and on the ground, sudden headaches and heart attacks, even a strange visitor in a local art shop who seemed unable to produce “earth money.”

The Snippy case marked the beginning of a pattern that has haunted the San Luis Valley ever since.

**Closing**

For the complete story, including transcriptions of original interviews with Nellie Lewis and others, along with APRO and NICAP documents from the joint Space Object Research Team (S.O.R.T.) led by Dr. Leo Sprinkle, see the book *Snippy: A King Family Legacy*. The book features a foreword by David Marler, a note from Linda Howe, and a dedication to Chris O’Brien, ensuring this extraordinary case remains preserved for history.