



These stairs head down to the crypt room, which is bottom left. Note the open crypt room door.

Challenge #3:

Louisa opened the bronze lid of the glass-topped casket on Lookout Mountain on June 3 for two hours of viewing before the body was buried.

If the body switch had occurred in May, this means everyone who viewed Cody on Lookout Mountain was actually seeing a look-alike cowboy instead. Could Louisa have been fooled? Could they all have been fooled?

According to Mortuary Manager Hansberry, the embalming process in 1917 was good enough to retain a 95% appearance of a cadaver after 5 months. According to embalmer Joseph Bona, quoted in "Buffalo Bill" by Nellie Synder Yost, Cody had "fine, big veins" and on the day of burial said Cody was "as good a specimen as you could ask for - almost perfect preservation."

This sounds tough to overcome unless the embalmer's quotes for the book were collected via the Denver Post, owned by the man who had the most to lose if Buffalo Bill's body HAD been switched, Harry Tammen. Tammen had loaned Buffalo Bill \$20,000 for six months at 6 percent interest in the winter of 1912 to cover half the cost of storing the Wild West. When Buffalo Bill couldn't pay up, Tammen impounded his show in Denver and basically placed Cody in servitude for the next few years in another show that Tammen bankrolled. Yost wrote in her book that Buffalo Bill hated Tammen so much that Cody had written to a friend that he'd like to kill the man.

And what about fooling Louisa? If Louisa accepted the body as that of her husband, it's probable that

everyone else on Lookout Mountain that day would have too. People typically accept the reality they are presented with. If you're attending a highly-publicized funeral, unless something is wildly amiss, you'd never question who is actually in the casket.

In addition, if Louisa did receive \$20,000 from Tammen for the body, raising doubts about its identity would have threatened her payoff. However, it seems unlikely Louisa realized anything was amiss because before she died four years later in 1921, she requested burial with Buffalo Bill on Lookout Mountain. This was granted and Louisa's casket was placed on top of Buffalo Bill's burial vault and covered with more concrete.

Challenge #4:

Burying Buffalo Bill on Cedar Mountain would have been no easy task with hand tools

Mountains are basically rock, and the Lookout Mountain burial site had to be blasted out with dynamite to create a deep enough hole. Richard's granddad's account says they brought shovels and picks to perform the task. At the least, this would suggest a shallower burial than the standard six feet. Today, Richard is one of the few people who knows the exact location of the alleged Cedar Mountain burial site. The site is not open to the public and access requires gaining the permission of a private landowner.



The author in the crypt room at Olinger's. Mortuary manager Bob Hansberry says Buffalo Bill was stored in the middle crypt directly next to the door.

So, is Buffalo Bill buried on Cedar Mountain? Unlikely? Yes. Impossible? No. You have to decide for yourself. Without locating the Cedar Mountain site, finding a body and conducting a DNA test, the burial controversy can never be put 100 percent to rest. Golden, Colorado and Cody, Wyoming have been arguing about custody since 1917.

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