

# Man trapped for six months in abandoned US ghost town

By 9News Staff - Oct 5, 2020

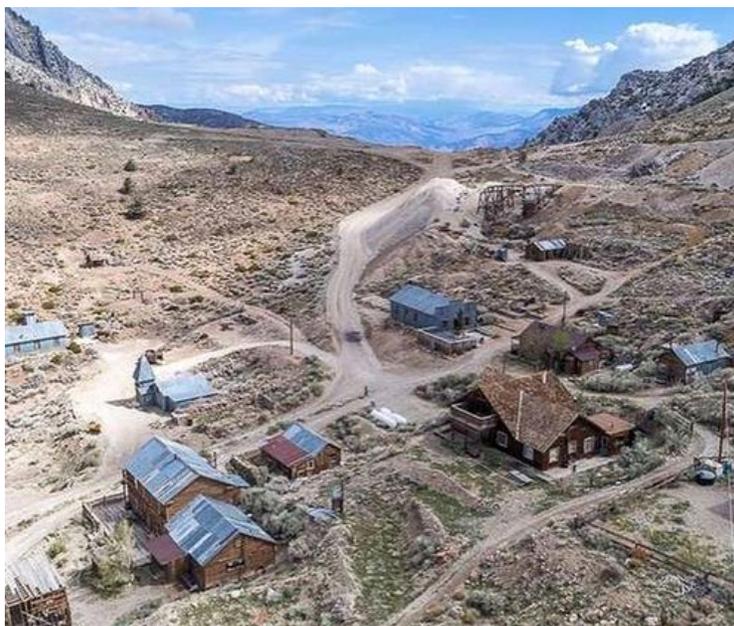
For a man chasing some sweet isolation, Brent Underwood sure got it.

In 2018 the former investment banker snapped up the California ghost town of Cerro Gordo for \$US1.4 million, less than a pokey studio apartment in New York City.

Located in the Death Valley, about a three-hour drive north of Los Angeles towards the Nevada border, Cerro Gordo is an abandoned 19th-century silver-mining town.



Brent Underwood bought the California ghost town of Cerro Gordo for \$US1.4 million.



The town has electricity, but no running water.

Mr. Underwood, 31, has been stuck in Cerro Gordo for about six months, after the road to the town got snowed in, in April and the coronavirus pandemic hit.

Conducting an interview on Reddit, Mr. Underwood said the old town has around 50 kilometres of mining shafts which he explores for three or four hours every day.

"I find all sorts of things from the past, and I really like it," he wrote. "I keep them all in this small 'museum' I'm making. Dynamite boxes, old clothing, pocket watches." But the one thing he hopes to find more than anything? A pair of old Levi's jeans.

"Levi's made the first blue jean for California silver miners in 1873," he wrote. "They are THE thing to find for denim collectors and Levi corporate can buy them back for close to \$100k (\$139,000) because they're so rare. "They've found original Levi's here before in the mines and in the buildings. So I know they're here. I just have to find them. "It's become a personal quest."



Most nights at Cerro Gordo the stars and moon are so bright you can walk from building to building without a flashlight, Mr Underwood said.



"These were the holes where they pulled millions worth of silver out of," Mr Underwood wrote.

Cerro Gordo was founded in 1865 and was once the largest mining town in California. But once the seams of silver ran dry, everyone left. Mr. Underwood told Business Insider the town has full of macabre stories. At one time, he said, there was on average one murder a week as miners drank heavily and searched for personal fortunes.

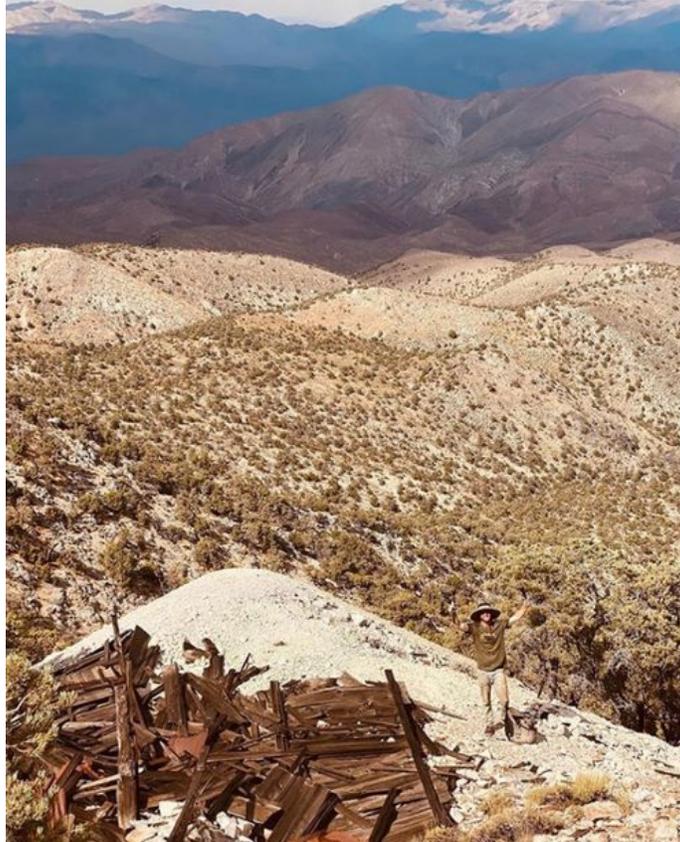
"Cerro Gordo is about as real-deal Western town as you can find," he said. He said one rumor had it US train and bank robber, Butch Cassidy, hid out in the town for a while.

"There's a story that 30 miners got trapped in one of the mines underneath the building I live in," he said.

"As grim as it is, they're still down there." But despite the town's rich history, Mr. Underwood said he has no interest in running ghost tours.

"But if people want to come and look for ghosts, that's their issue," he wrote on Reddit, answering questions from users.

"Some are 100 per cent convinced there is paranormal history here, some think that's bogus. I don't want to push one way or the other. People can do what they want once here."



Mr. Underwood finds another abandoned mine an hour or so hike from Cerro Gordo



Mr. Underwood has documented his first six months living full-time in the abandoned mining town of Cerro Gordo on YouTube. (YouTube)

In 2018, a friend texted Mr. Underwood asking if he wanted to buy a ghost town. After scoping out site maps and images of the old abandoned town, he hustled up some investors and they purchased it. The plan is to restore the town, so people can come and stay and enjoy the peace and solitude. There are 22 buildings, including a church, hotel and general store.

"I think part of the beauty of the town is the space and stillness, so always want to be conscious of how many people are up here at any time," he wrote. "But I think it would be really cool to let people stay in some of the original buildings."

Mr. Underwood has begun documenting his adventures on [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#). Footage on his social media shows him alone, hitting golf balls into the vast open desert, and scrambling down mine shafts.

"I came up here in mid-March to act as caretaker," he continued. "I imagined coming up for a few weeks. It's been over 6 months now. During that time here was a few snowstorms, a devastating fire, earthquakes, a flood that washed out the road, and a lot more."