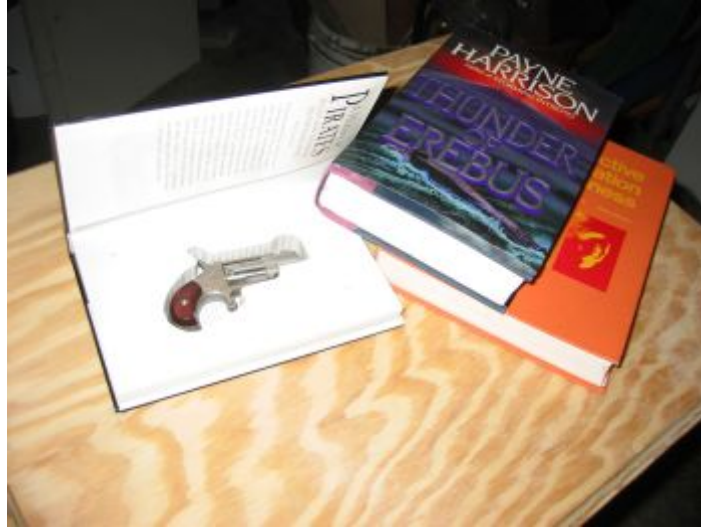


# Making a Book Safe

*By: RollingHitch*



I've heard that these things are called book safes, but they are more like a secret hiding place in a book. Regardless, it's a fun project that may prove useful.

Years ago I saw one of these things in a catalog and set about making my own with an x-acto knife. The process was laborious and I never finished. I recently picked up a power scroll saw for a good price at a flea market and it afforded me the right tool for the right job. I'll explain other ways to make a book safe without a power scroll saw later in the article.

The first thing you will need is a hardback book that you are willing to destroy. The thickness and size are important and will determine the size of the object or objects you wish to conceal. My scroll saw has a two inch height limit so very large books have to be cut using a different method. So if you have a scroll saw here's what you do.

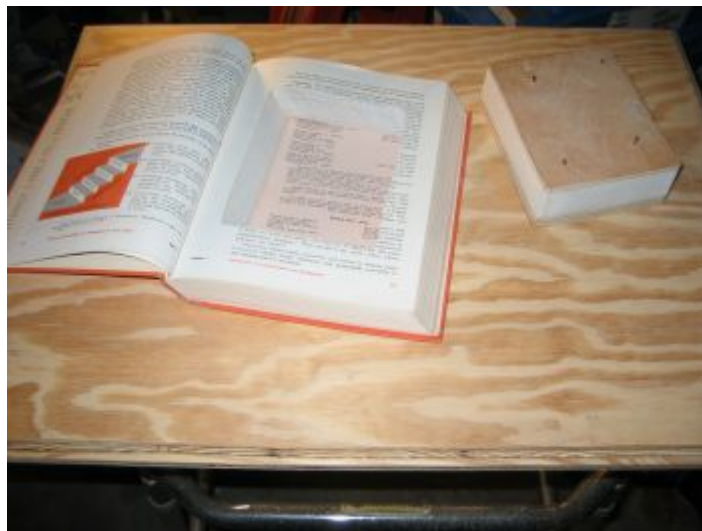
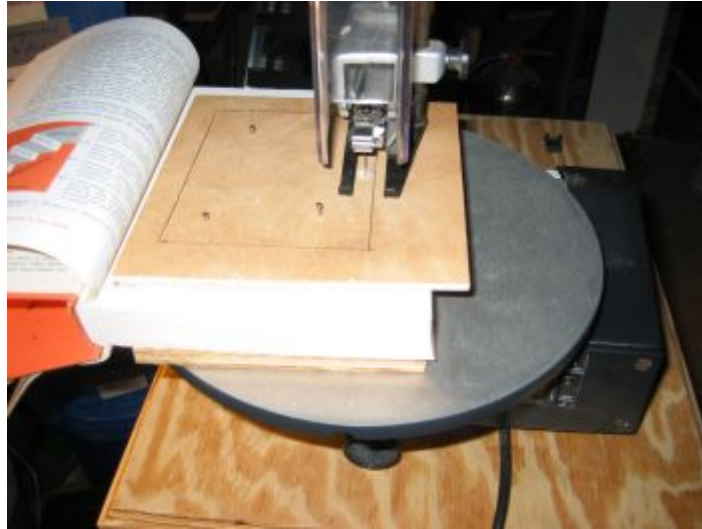


My first book was just a simple rectangle design of no particular size. Begin by folding the front and back covers of the book along with a few of those thick pages. The thick pages will serve as the bottom of the compartment and a loose top for the compartment. In order to hold the pages of the book together while sawing, you will need to bind them with two pieces of "waste board". The easiest way to do this is by nailing them together with finishing nails. Be careful not to nail all the way through the bottom board or you won't be able to manipulate the working piece in the saw. If your nail length is too long after nailing the boards together, you'll need to cut off the tops. I also like to nail the pieces together inside the lines of the design. I did not do this on one book and it just doesn't look good.

Next, drill a pilot hole for the saw blade. Scroll saw books go into great detail on the proper placement and size, but for this project, it's not that big of a deal. Just drill a hole big enough for the saw blade and make sure the edge of the hole is along the edge of your marked design.



By having the two boards on the top and bottom of the book pages all you have to do is cut out the center and you'll have the secret hiding space in between the book covers.



For finishing up the job, I use rubber cement to paste glue along the inside of the cavity. It holds the pages together and still allows the outside edges of the book to appear natural. If you'd like you can line the inside with felt.

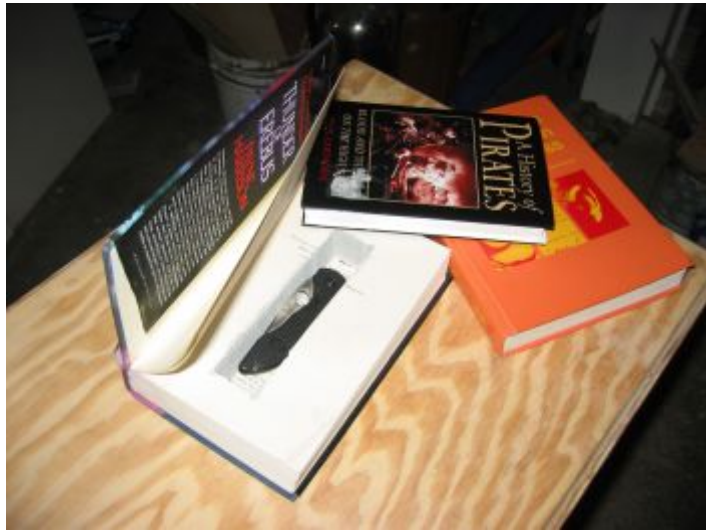


On my second book I got a bit fancy by tracing an outline of a small NAA 22LR pistol. By leaving enough room for a finger to access the space, it makes a neat hideaway space for small arms.





If you don't have a power scroll saw you can still make a book safe by using a hand scroll saw. The process is just the same except you have to mount the book with waste boards in a vise for sawing. It takes a bit of elbow grease but it can be done. Another option is to use a power jigsaw. I initially thought this would take a fine toothed saw blade, but is it better with a wood cutting blade. Find the kind of blades that have teeth like a Swiss Army Knife saw blade. (I call them flesh aggressive) Jigsaw blades now come in a variety of lengths as well and a longer blade will help with thicker books. Draw your design and drill four pilot holes, one on each leg of the rectangle, so you won't have to make tight corners with the saw. Here are a few pictures to show this process.



From this point you can get as creative as you like. You can purchase small fishing tackle boxes and custom make a book safe to fit. You can line the inside with padding, or cut designs to fit just about any object. Just last weekend I bought a paper sack full of hardback books for \$3. If you pay more than a buck a book, you are paying too much.

A word of caution for those who are seriously concerned about the security of using a book safe. If you have ever watched the recently airing TV show called "It Takes a Thief" you will know right off the bat that the burglar has a habit of swiping all the books off of bookshelves looking for hidden money or items behind the books. Consider this if you intend to hide valuables. There is an old saying that if you want to keep a secret from children, just print it in a book. That may be true, but be very cautious. I found everything my Dad ever hid. Remember that.

I once went out of town and needed to leave a master set of keys in case I didn't come back. I left one key that unlocked access to the others in a book safe. I then telephoned the name of the book and emailed other parts of the last minute "treasure hunt" being careful not to connect all the instructions in one single communication. I suppose the possibilities are endless.

Lastly, I showed on of these to a close friend and was surprised at how impressed he was. I later regretted it knowing that I had compromised a possible hiding place. As with all secrets, keep it close. Enjoy.