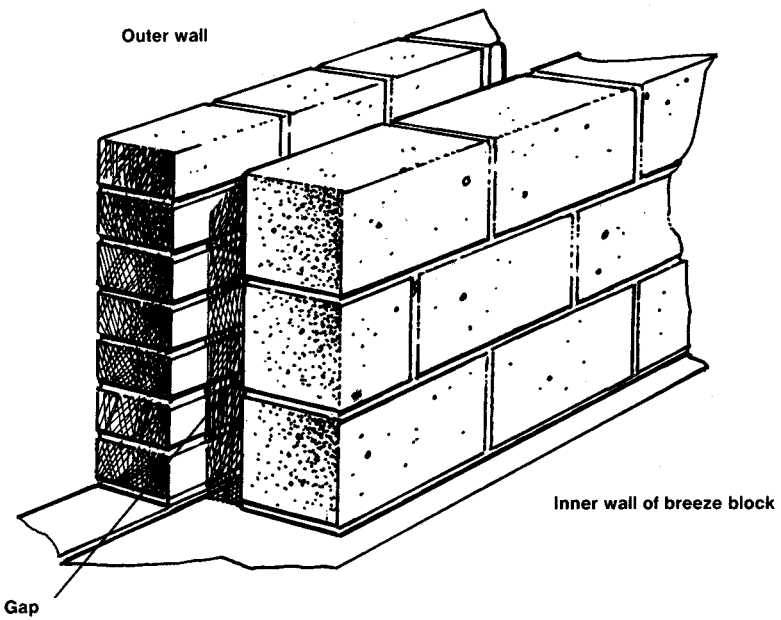
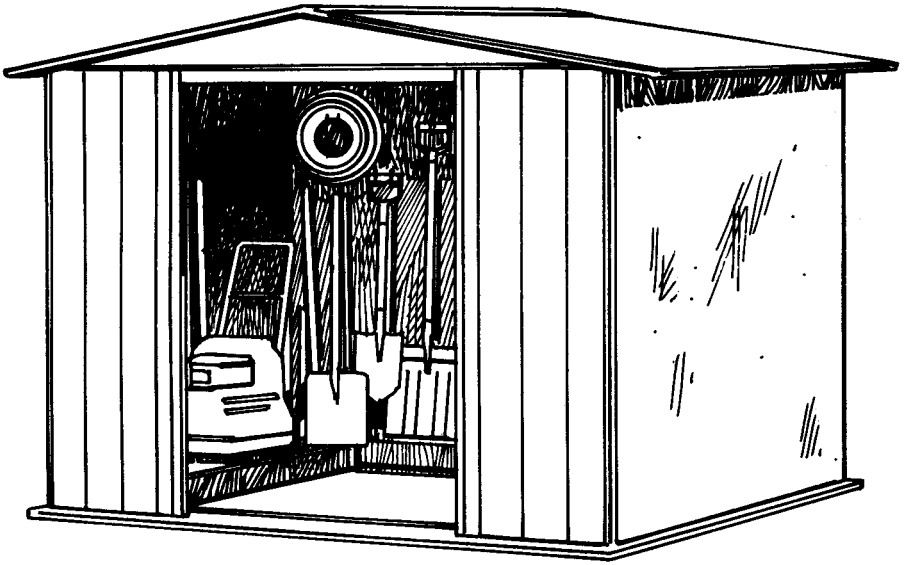
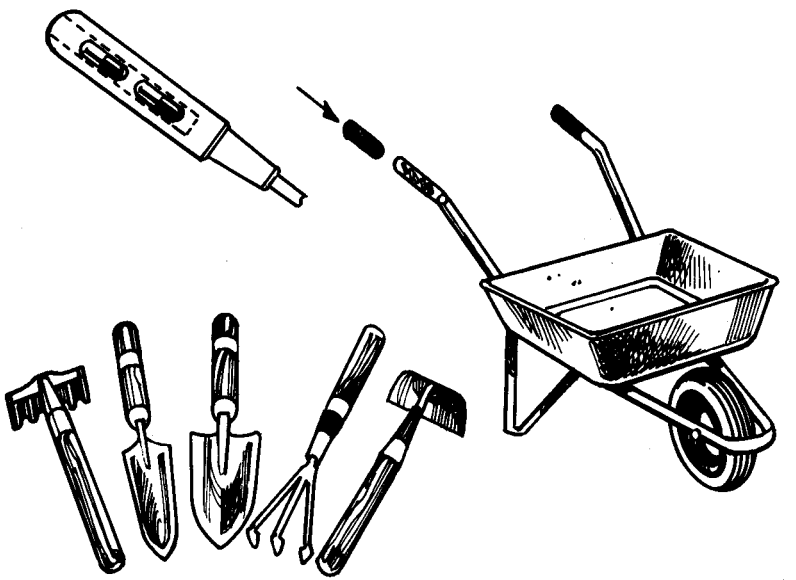
You can then construct a suitable door into this gap using techniques in this book.



The tool shed or garage, if well equipped with tools, is probably the best place to start having a go at some basic conversion techniques. Spades, forks, rakes, and the like can all be turned into safe spaces by simply boring a channel inside of wooden handles. Metal-handled tools will probably be hollow anyway, saving any effort at all. The garden wheelbarrow, if of a tubular construction, can have items pushed inside with little difficulty, especially into the handle lengths. The tire can also be removed, items taped to the inside of the wheel, and the tire replaced. Always leave the tools in normal locations, and if unused equipment is doctored, make sure to roughen the appearance of the tool to give the impression of use.

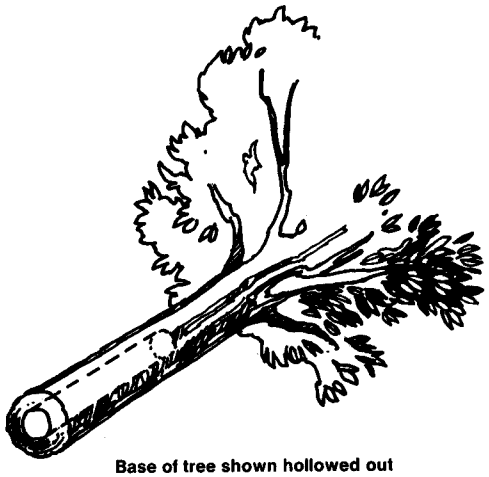




Various tools with handles drilled out

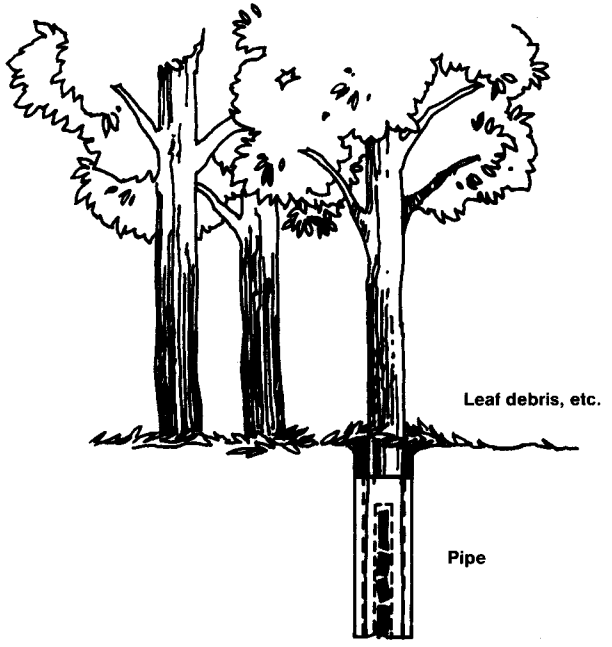
to receive the base end of the tree, and should be of sufficient length to resist any levering effect that the tree, once inserted into the pipe, is likely to create when swaying. The specific length and diameter of the pipe will be determined by the size of the tree.

The next stage is to bore out a cavity from the base of the tree large enough to conceal the items in question. Care must be taken that the cavity does not exceed commonsense limits; that is to say that enough width must be left in the shell of the base to provide support. A few tests showed that at least a quarter of the original diameter should be left intact to provide the required support. This still gives more than adequate space in all but the skinniest of trees. With the items secured, and water-protected if required, the tree is replanted into its



Base of tree shown hollowed out

pipe-holder. The surrounding earth is used along with general debris to finish the job and conceal any trace of the pipe base. This is a fantastic hide if used on one or two trees amongst many. It will take many weeks for the tree to show sign of distress.



It is also possible to use a sort of double bluff technique to get away with hiding persons in the most unlikely, yet obvious places around the home. People were amazed recently when the British press reported on the capture, by police, of a guy who had been on the run for several months. He was not wanted for any serious crime, but he was convinced that the punishment for his offenses would be severe. Apparently he stumbled on his hiding place by accident. He had jumped bail and was sweating it out at home. British police being what they are, they considered it unlikely that he would be silly enough to go straight home, so they left quite a gap between his jumping bail and their visit to his home.

This apparent lack of interest spurred our friendly bail-jumper's confidence, and after a while he began to carry on with his life more or less as normal. He didn't risk

leaving the house, and, being motivated by fear rather than cunning intent, he made no plans to skip town. The first visit by the police in search of our friend was apparently provoked by a report that he had been seen in the local pub, but this was later proved to be an excuse for bothering the guy's wife.

Now, the knock at the door which heralded the arrival of the boys in blue happened to coincide with our friend's attempts to repair a faulty washing machine in the kitchen of his home. Most of the innards of the machine had been removed and taken to the workshop in the yard for overhaul, leaving a few minor pump parts in the otherwise hollow machine, and it was to these parts that his attention was turned. In a moment of panic (that's his story anyway) he clambered into the machine, which was of the front loading type, pulling a few items of washing over him to create the illusion to onlookers that the machine was ready for use.

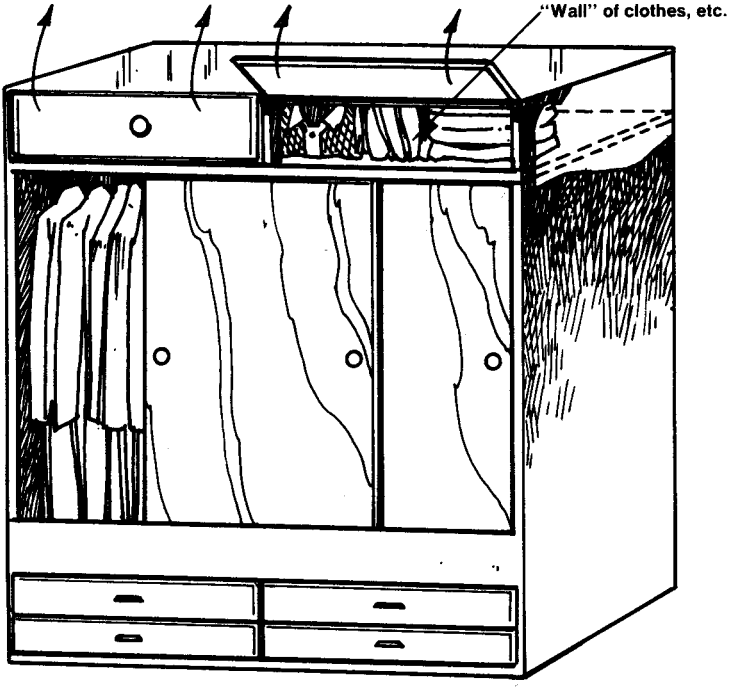
In due course the police entered the house, and what is reported to have been a thorough search of the property took place. None of the officers thought to examine the washer closely, and this lack of enthusiasm or skill was repeated on several other occasions during searches over the following year. Eventually a nosy neighbor spotted our friend in the garden and called the police, who arrived and caught him off guard. It should be said that he was in fact fed up with his secret existence, and he was actually pleased to get the affair over with.

The moral of the story (in fact it contains a few!) is clear, and it got me thinking about similar places that with a little preparation would serve as hiding places unlikely to be even considered by the average policeman or other searchers. I found that apart from the washing machine (with the rotating drum removed) there were several other items that worked well. I am keeping a couple of them to myself, just in case, but here are a few

possibilities that should be of use.

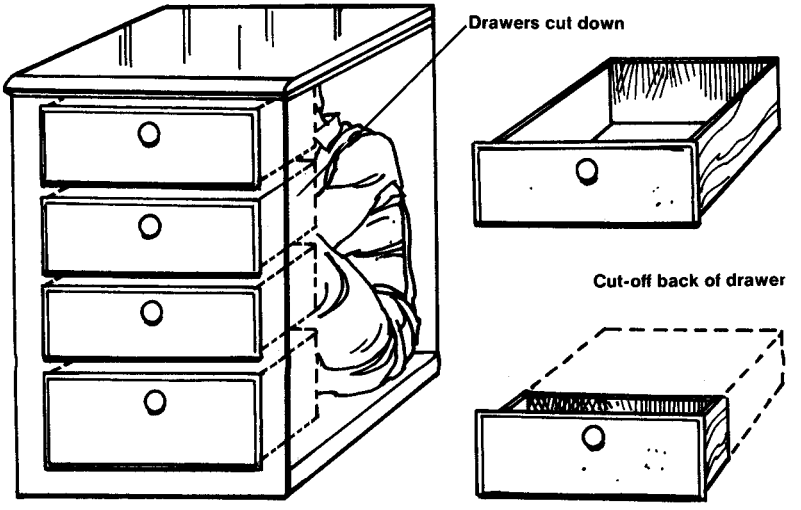
Always spend some time preparing the selected hide, as the effort will be more than rewarded if you get away with it. Also bear in mind that the success of this type of hide relies on the fact that the searcher is looking for people, and people are not generally expected to be found wedged inside washing machines. There is no logical link in the mind of the searcher between the size, shape, and weight of the person for whom he is searching and small or confined areas usually associated with other purposes than containment of humans. If the searcher is looking for goods as well as personnel, or if he is just *looking,* this effect is reduced if not totally lost.

The large type of fitted bedroom closet containing wardrobe, drawers, and overhead units, as shown, is ideal



for hiding personnel. Use the top units and ensure that an adequate supply of clothes or whatever is kept there to provide the camouflage. In the majority of searches for persons, the large wardrobe itself will be opened but the top unit will be ignored or at worst examined only in a cursory fashion.

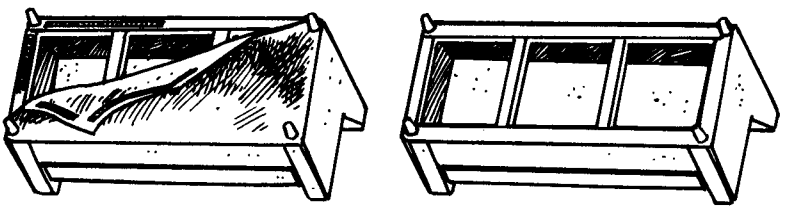
The drawers themselves, if cunningly altered, will do just as well. Simply remove the drawers and remove enough of their length to enable you to secrete yourself behind them and replace them. As long as the drawers slide out a few inches, they will serve the purpose, but in most modern units there is adequate space for about six inches to be removed from the back of the drawers, enabling a person to hide without giving the game away. Always have the drawers full of "rubbish," and leave one of them partially open so that any searcher can readily see that a human being could not possibly be hidden within. Concealment, not comfort, is the name of the game.



Person hidden behind converted drawers

The bases of modern divan beds are easily doctored by removing the bottom covering of material. This is often simply stapled on. Cut away enough of the internal padding to take your shape, attaching velcro strips or any other convenient form of fastening to allow you to replace the base once you are hidden within. Access may also be gained via any drawers which may be fitted to the bed.

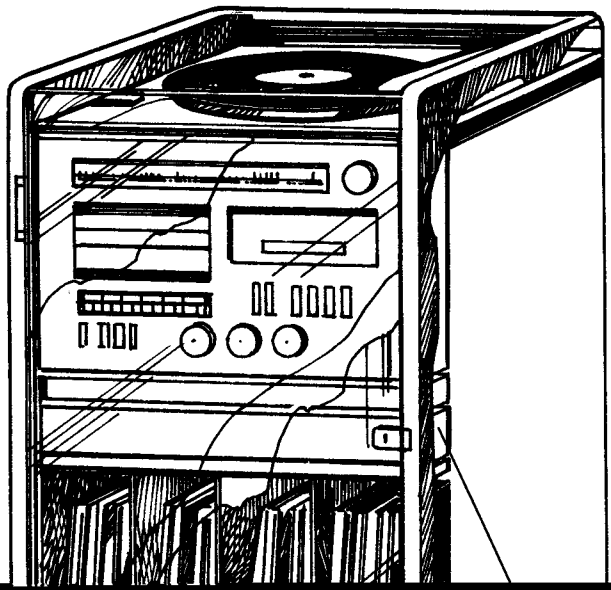
Base view of divan

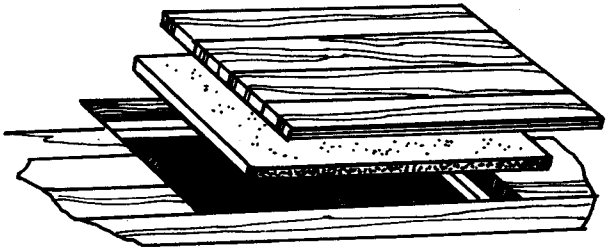


Base shown with cover removed to reveal strengthening braces; these easily support a man's weight.

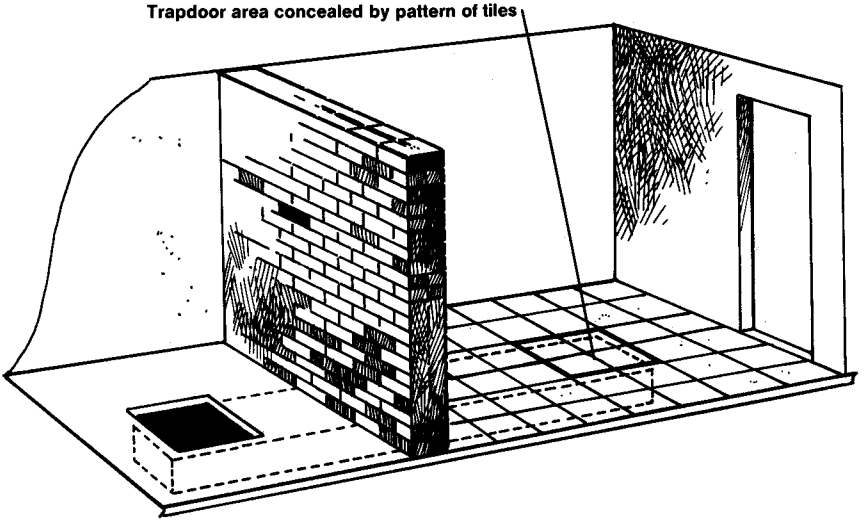
Large rack music systems can also be prepared to conceal a fair-sized person. The type of system I experimented with was a large but commonly available J.V.C. set-up. Of course, it is only the size of the actual unit that matters, not the equipment within. Indeed, as the conversion requires the butchering of most of the equipment, the items will probably be selected for their low value. Don't underdo it though, as a flash looking unit which houses very cheap and nasty audio gear might attract interest. The audio equipment that is to be housed in the unit is disassembled until only a fascia affair is left, as shown. The front of the items when placed in the unit gives the impression that it is all above board. The stack of records at the bottom are cut down in a similar fashion to create the same illusion. There is no need, obviously, to butcher the record deck, as this sits atop the unit as shown. The beauty of the cabinet I used

was that it also had a lock on the front door to deter nosy searchers from looking to see if you have their favorite record.





secured with high powered adhesive. The end product will be a trap door affair, as shown above. The underfloor beams should be fashioned so that they will receive the door with a tight-fitting, positive action; no giveaway lumps or bulges should be visible when any floor covering is replaced. (See the end of this section.) You will probably get away with using a small handsaw, hammer, and chisel for the cutting and shaping work.



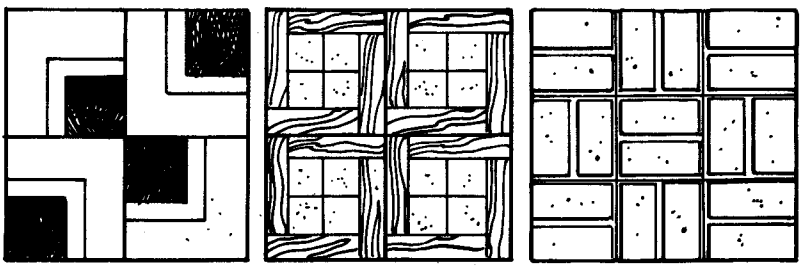
Hidden room

And that's about it. One crawls from the door under the floor and up into the hidden room. Once again, make sure that adequate outside monitoring facilities are installed. To emphasize the need for such facilities, I must make a quick reference to some of the other publications covering this topic that are on the market. While useful for some applications, many of these publications explain how, for example, a hidden room may be constructed. They detail the actual building of a wall, and suggest methods of entry that a blind three-year-old could find. Alternatively, they give excellent entrance/exit methods, but neglect to mention that they cannot be operated from the inside. Now, that's fine if the room is to be used for nonhuman contents. If anyone pops in while the room is in use, you simply close the door, and any search will turn nothing up. Where this is the case, very primitive entry and exit designs and camouflage techniques can be used with a degree of success. However, as for the comments in many such books that, "such and such method is not worth the trouble," I can only assume that if "such and such is not worth the trouble," then the goods, people or whatever you might intend to hide are not worth much either! Time and trouble will repay you a hundredfold; always remember that.

A few notes about camouflage are in order here. When using the underfloor entry method, always select a floor covering that lends itself naturally to visual confusion. That means the surface pattern or design of the covering is *not* a plain, single colored, single shaded type, such as a plain one-piece carpet or piece of linoleum. *Always,* where possible and when the job warrants it, use either carpet tiles or parquet floor coverings. By using tiling or parquet covering, the door area is concealed naturally, as shown.

It is impossible to tunnel under an uncut carpet in order to reach the door without loosening the carpet so obviously

that anyone entering the room after you will notice immediately what is going on, and coming up with a method for relaying the carpet once you have passed beneath it is beyond me. Any cut-out made in a plain, one-piece carpet to cover the trapdoor would be apparent.



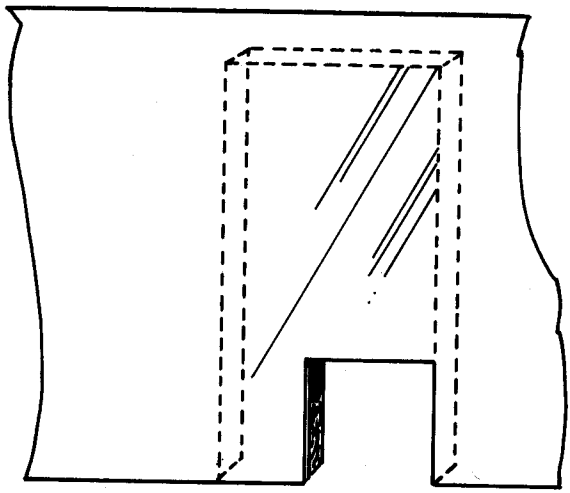
Visually confusing patterns will effectively conceal trapdoor location.

You could fix a rug to the top of the door for camouflage, but even then, although the room would appear normal on casual examination, an attempt to move the rug would probably be made during a search. More about eye confusion techniques later.

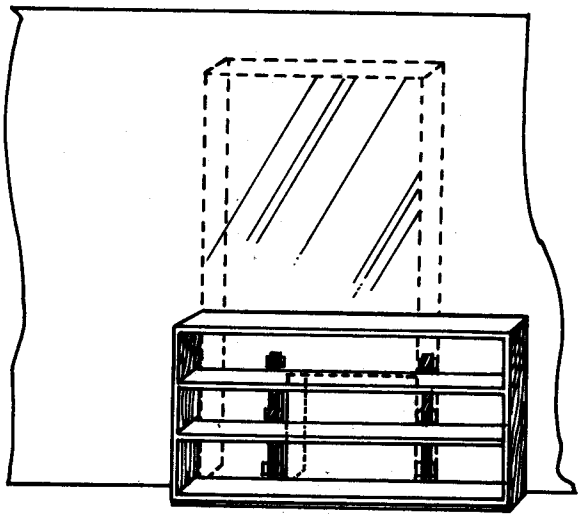
There is an even simpler way of constructing a secret room, requiring much less effort. This is the preferred technique when the layout of the building permits. You are effectively going to make an existing room disappear.

The first step is the obvious one of removing doors and any door trim. The doorway is filled in with a combination of plasterboard, plaster and insulation material, leaving sufficient room, of course, for you to enter and leave with whatever you may desire. Use the minimum space that will do. Make or buy a shelf assembly to serve as your door. One of the back panels of the unit is doctored (using any of the techniques shown herein), and away you go. The points to remember are that if the room is to be used for personnel, some method of securing the door from the inside without leaving telltale

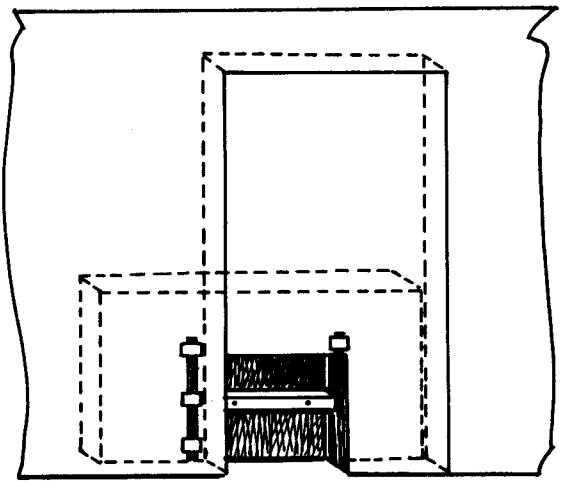
signs on the outside must be devised. A possibility is shown below.



Old door location covered by plasterboard, with inside of board covered with insulation to lessen echoing effect



The back panel and shelves are held in place with powerful magnets which mate with metal strips on the frame area of the room entrance. To remove the panel simply grasp the shelf and pull. A handle is attached to the room side of the panel so that it may be placed in position from the inside. A couple of screws should also be used from the inside of the room to lock the panel into the rest of the shelf unit.

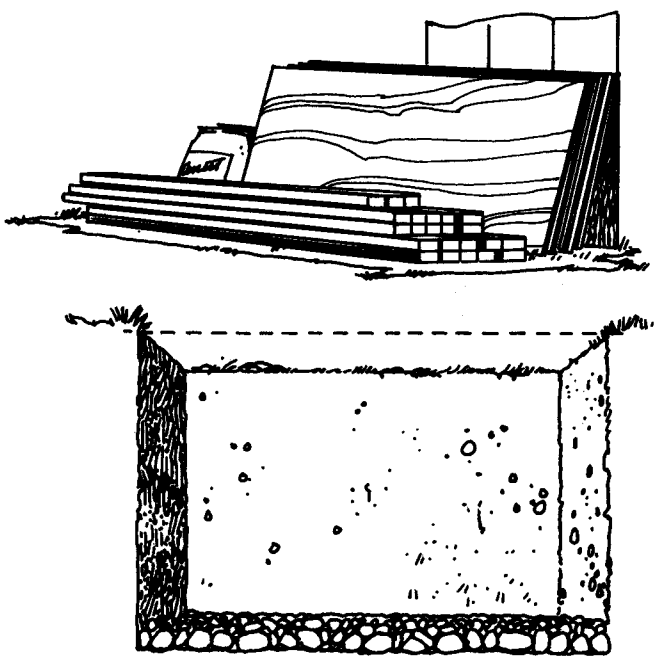


Rear view (inside)

Ornaments, books, or the like should be left on the shelves, and it is important to select these carefully, or custom-build the shelf unit around selected articles so that the false shelf and panel can be lifted in and out without disturbing them. Small pieces of sticky pad can be used to secure items to the shelf. Your level of construction will depend on what degree of search, if any, you anticipate.

Where circumstances permit and the effort involved is justified, excellent hides can be constructed in the garden or other outside areas.

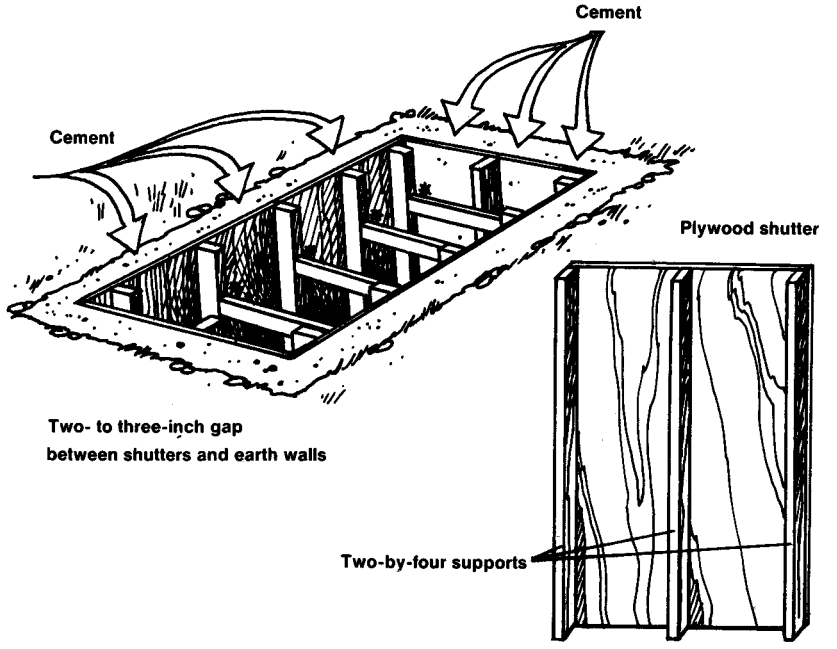
Numerous plans for underground shelter constructions can be found in most military surplus stores. These are easily modified to suit specific requirements. Remember, of course, to pay particular attention to the disguise and camouflage aspects of the design. A simple underground hide can be constructed as follows, the only materials required being several two-by-fours, some plywood sections, and a quantity of concrete or cement.



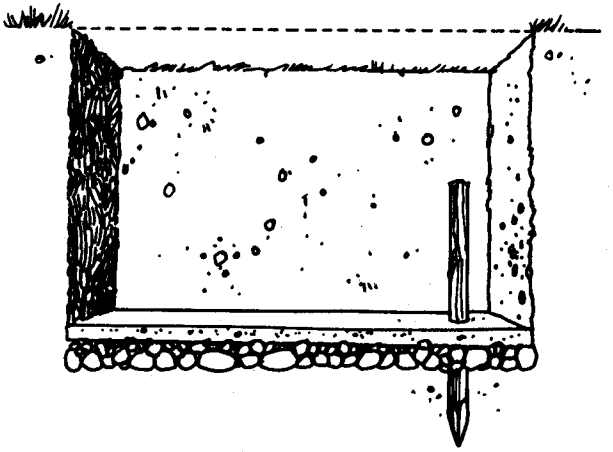
Base of hide lined with rocks removed during excavation

The first stage of the operation is obviously to measure out the area of the ground to be used and dig out to the desired depth. Any rocks that you uncover during the excavation should be retained, as they will come in handy

as foundation hardcore for the base of the structure. When the required size is obtained, layer the base of the excavation with the largest rocks at the bottom and any small gravel forming the final top layer as shown above. The cement mix is now poured over the rock base, and voila, you have a floor. If considered necessary, drainage can be facilitated by inserting a suitably sized pole through the cement and the rock base into the earth below. This pole is removed just before the cement hardens completely as shown below. The floor may also be sloped slightly to improve run off capabilities.



The simplest method for constructing the walls and roof area is to make up a series of shutters, as shown, which are used to line the wall area of the dugout. The two-by-fours support the plywood frame, and the whole assembly is secured using two-by-four braces (shown above). The cement is poured into the framework and

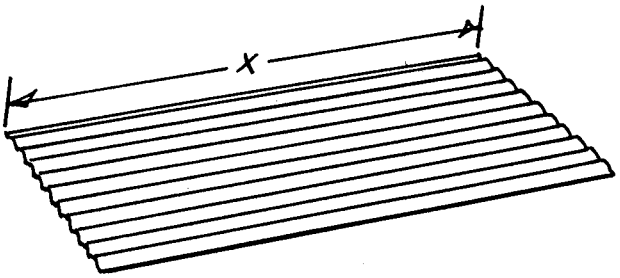


Base of hide, showing cement floor and pole used to create drain

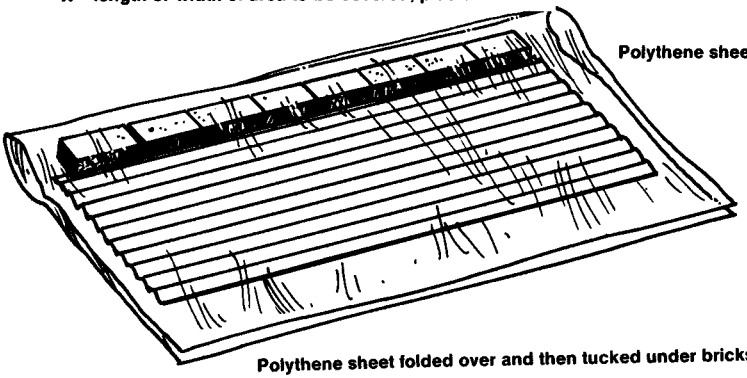
left for at least a couple of days to dry thoroughly. Reinforcing bars made from salvaged steel can be used if desired, but the finished structure will be strong enough for most uses. A thin film of linseed oil applied to the inside of the plywood framework before final assembly will provide for easier removal when the cement is dry.

Although shutters can be constructed in a similar fashion to make the roof, casting off-site is just as simple by using sheets of corrugated iron covered with polythene plastic, as shown. The corrugated iron sheets lend themselves well to use as molds, as the ridges can be used to secure any reinforcing bars that may be used. A simple brick wall can also be used to prevent the cement from running off before it begins to harden and to give the casting extra depth. Once set, simply put the roof sections in place, paving-slab fashion.

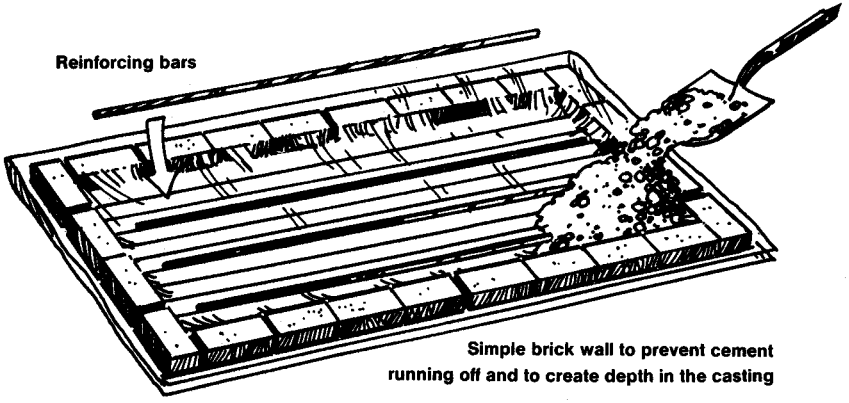
The roof sections are cast slightly oversize to provide a good fit when placed on the concrete wall and to enable good camouflage to be effected by using the surrounding earth. It should be noted that the hide itself must be sunk



X = length or width of area to be covered, plus 6 inches



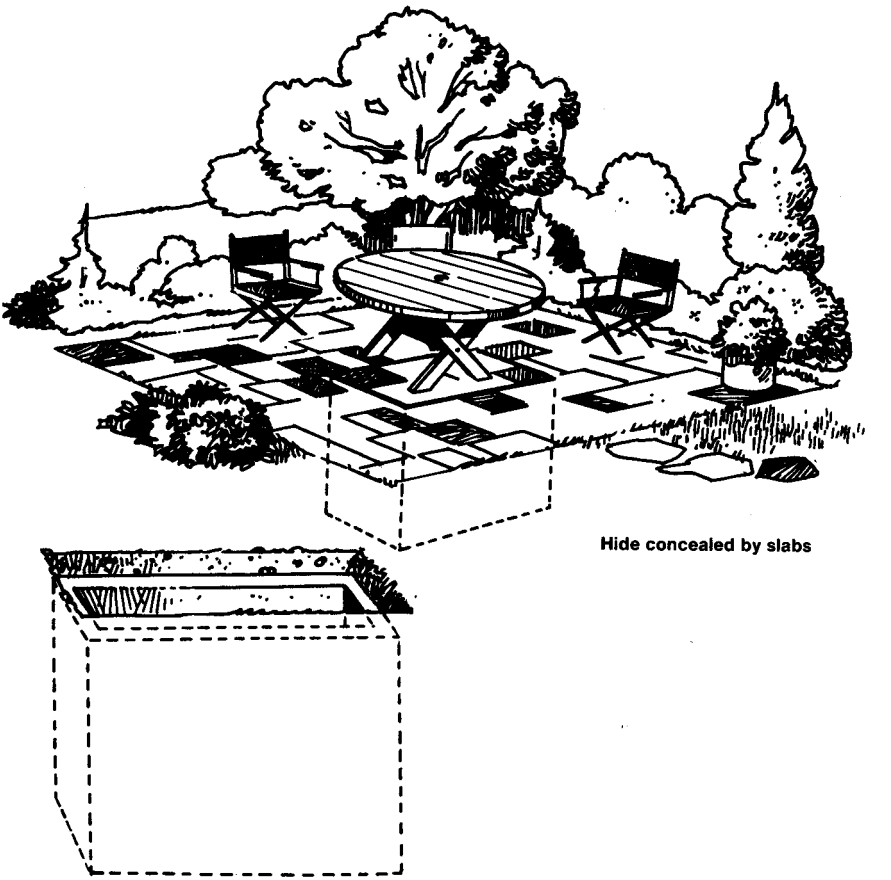
Polythene sheet folded over and then tucked under bricks



Simple brick wall to prevent cement running off and to create depth in the casting

The iron sheet is lined with polythene and the wall built around it. The bricks also secure the polythene during pouring. Half the mix is poured in, and before it is completely hard the bars are inserted. The remainder of the mix is then added.

slightly below ground level to allow for the fitting of the roof without creating a mound. The finished roof should be almost flush with the surrounding ground. The entrance is made by casting an undersize roof section and the doorway camouflaged by any number of possible methods according to the location of the hide. One possibility is to hide the shelter beneath some sort of garden patio constructed from paving slabs; entry is effected by simply lifting your chosen door slab.



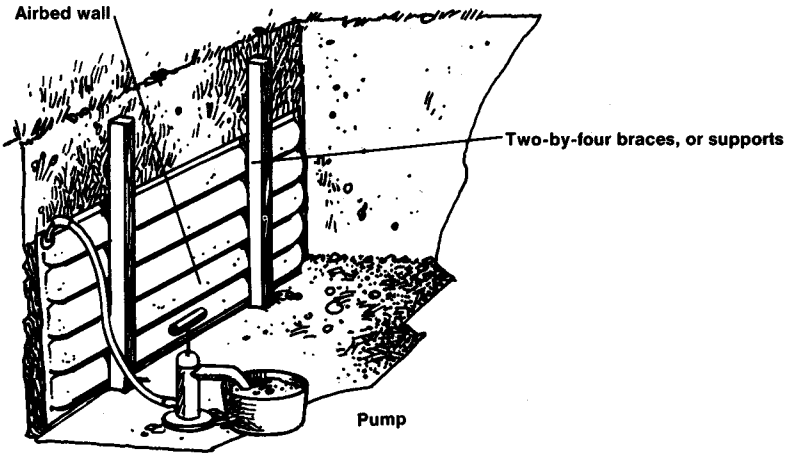
Hide concealed by slabs

A few other unorthodox techniques that can be employed in the construction of concrete underground hides are given below. With a little ingenuity, a lot of time and expense can be saved when undertaking such projects.

A very useful method for making preformed wall or roof units from cement or for casting on-site is the use of airbeds or plastic rafts like the ones used on the beach.

The existing valve assembly is removed and a larger access port affixed using super glue or vinyl repair glue. These products are obtainable from hardware outlets and swimming pool supply shops.

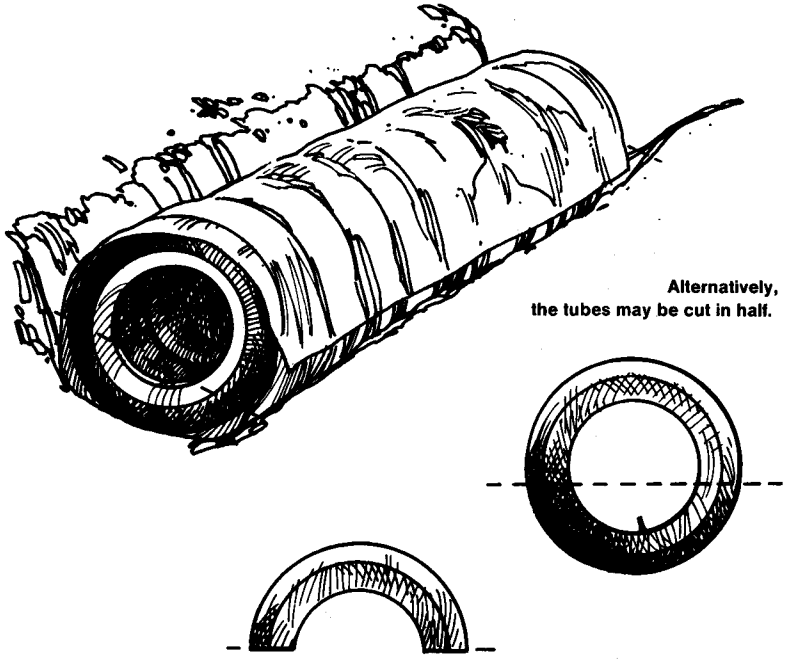
If an on-site casting is requiring, the airbeds are affixed in place, loosely at first, and the cement mixture pumped inside. The old-fashioned type of stirrup, or foot, pump can be used for this with excellent results. As the beds fill with cement and begin to take shape the fixing braces are readjusted to maintain a secure fitting in the required position.



While testing this method, I found that air pockets formed within the bed as the cement was pumped in.

These are easily removed by piercing the rubber with a small pin or nail. The air and some water will be forced out, but the cement, as it hardens, prevents the hole widening unduly and cement being lost. Once the cement hardens the rubber mold can be peeled off or left in place for a very professional-looking finish.

The inner tubes of large truck tires can be used in a similar fashion to create a wide variety of useful castings, the most obvious of these being roof support pillars for underground connecting tunnels. It is worth

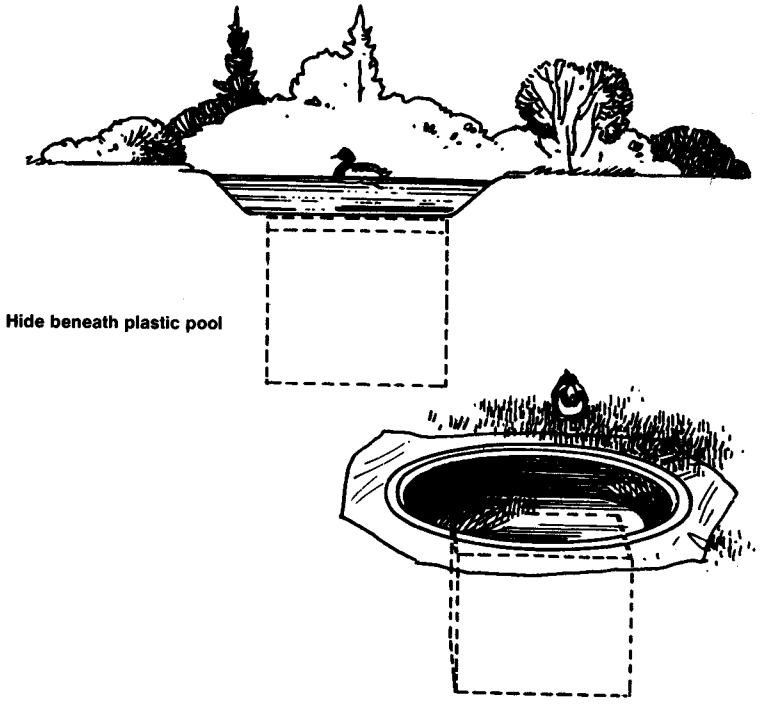


Once set, the tubes may be used as a one-piece unit, in which case the lower half is buried.

noting that if a long term of use is anticipated from an underground cement-based structure, more care should be paid to the use of reinforcing materials. Metal bars,

unless completely rust-free and protected by suitable paint, will deteriorate within the cement after a time, and gases given off due to chemical reaction will split the cement. Air pockets will also have a detrimental effect on the long-term safety of cement structures. These points are really only valid if you intend to use an underground hide for personnel over prolonged periods when safety will be of paramount importance.

An ornamental pool is another possibility. The ground surrounding the hide is adjusted so that the pool body (of the preformed plastic type) can be dropped into the earth covering the door of the hide.

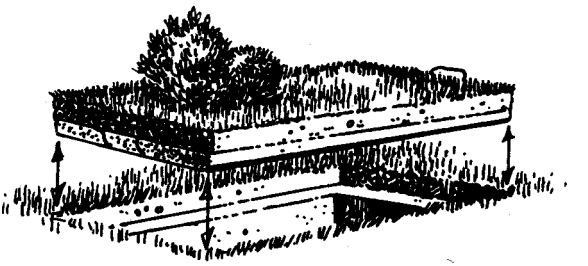


Side view of pool, showing rim that rests on earth surrounding door

Alternatively, the area could be turfed over, as shown.

An outbuilding could be built over the top of the underground hide and flooring used to effect the disguise.

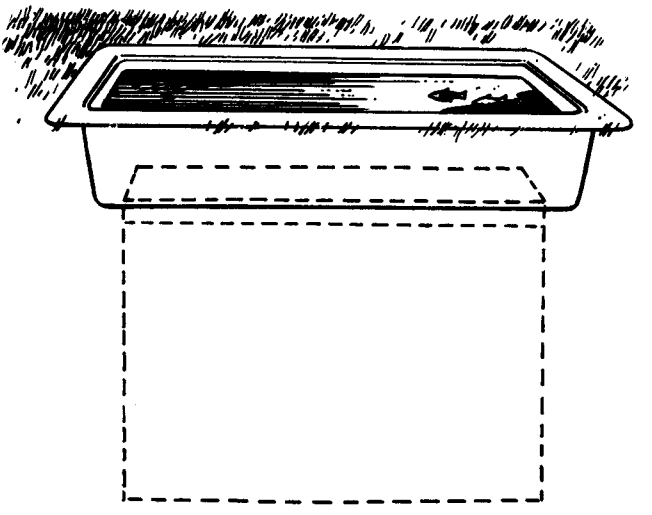
Tray containing turf lifts in and out.



A sheet of suitable material is used to cover the door and turf affixed so that the lid and turf can be removed as one.

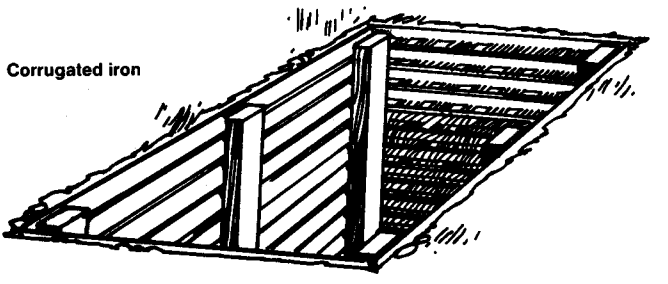
Or for a really flash hide, a small garden pool could be constructed over the top of the underground hide, access only being obtainable by draining the pool and removing the butyl rubber base, which itself would give access to the door panel (this could be a paving slab). The possibilities are endless, but this should have given you a few ideas.

If you don't want to go to the length of using cement, a very useful underground hide can be made in a similar fashion to that shown previously but with corrugated iron sheets used in place of the cement. Once the dugout is made, several lengths of angle-iron, wooden stakes, or other suitable objects should be affixed along the walls



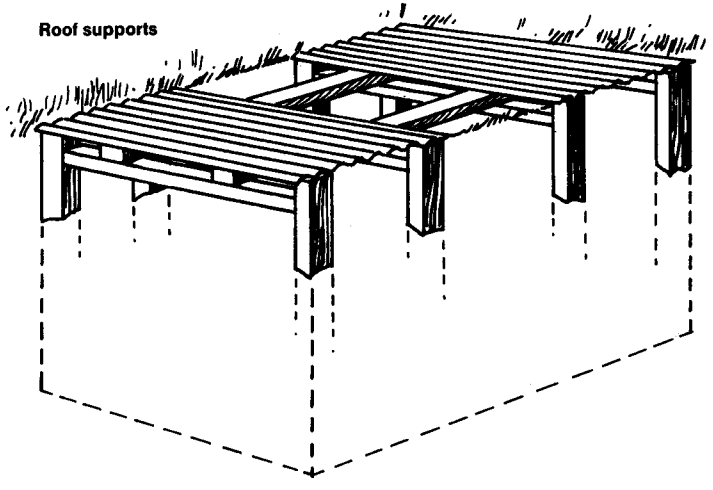
Butyl rubber pond or pool liner

of the dugout as shown below. The sheets of corrugated iron are attached to these "fence-posts" with nails, screws, or the like until a metal wall is completed. Next, to the



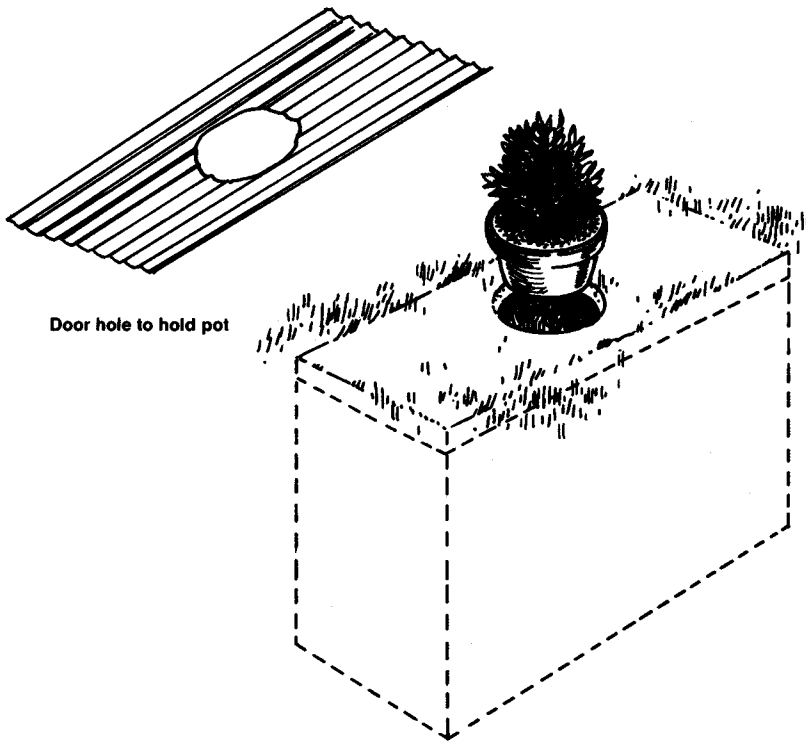
top of the "fence-posts," attach more sheets of the corrugated iron until you have a roof. Depending on size

of the dugout, it may be necessary to fix support braces beneath the roof, as shown.



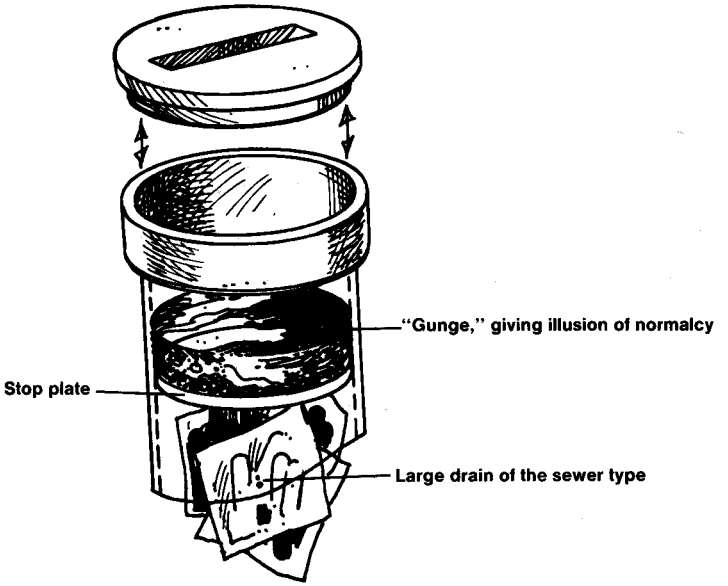
A more elaborate system of roof support beams can be employed which will give the structure considerably more rigidity. Turfing is the best form of camouflage for such a hide, with the door taking the form of a small bush which is actually planted in a tub and then planted atop the door area. You will get a better idea of what I mean here from the diagram.

Satisfactory underground hides can also be constructed using sand bags as walls, military fashion, and a sheet of strong Kippex material can be used as a roof in many instances with great effect. Kippex is a brand name of a type of manmade material used in the manufacture of tenting. It is very strong if tightly sprung and makes for superb expedient hides.

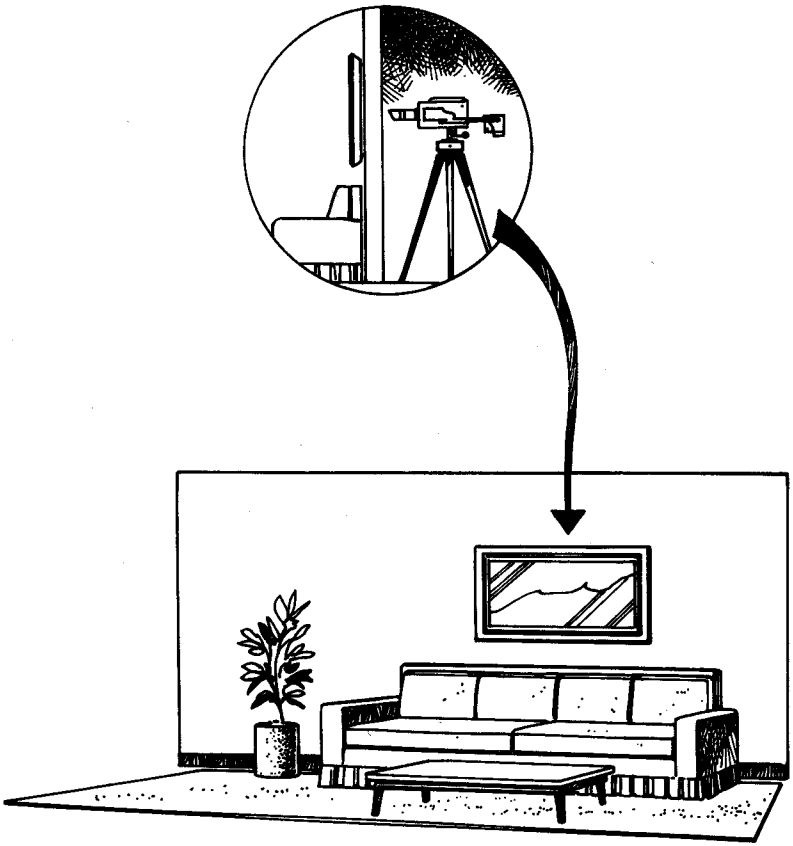


Soil completely covers pot so that only the bush is visible.

A length of pipe of the type used in sewer construction and often left lying around unattended on building sites can be put to good use in the field of hide construction. Simply sinking the pipe vertically in your yard will make a great hide. If you look carefully you will probably be able to find a suitably sized manhole cover that will make the finished thing that bit more professional. Were such a technique used, it would be a simple matter to install a stop plate of wood halfway down the pipe to cover the goods or person so that the top half could be filled with grungy water deterring most would-be searchers and creating the illusion of a genuine in-use pipe.

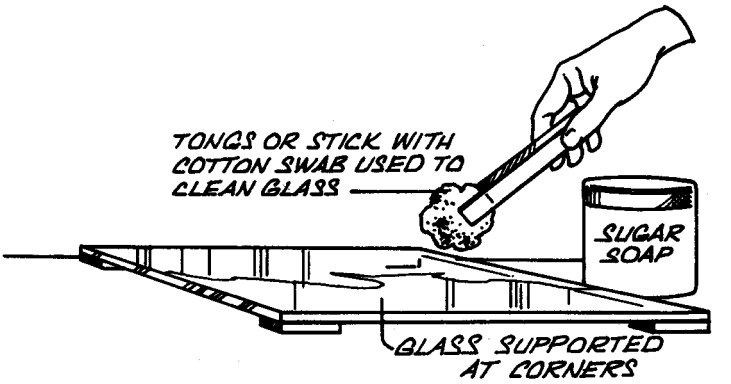


The use of a two-way mirror to monitor what is going on outside a hidden room from within is a well-known practice. It may be that you are to undertake some sort of surveillance operation where a hidden camera is to be used, or maybe you just want a quick and simple method of checking that the outside area of the hidden room is clear before you make your exit. Once again, the possible uses are endless, but such mirrors are often expensive to purchase, especially if you require a custom-built one to suit a specific purpose. With a little work, however, you can make your own two-way mirrors cheaply and easily. As the construction of these two-way mirrors requires the use of chemicals, be sure to take normal precautions including the wearing of gloves and, if available, protective glasses.



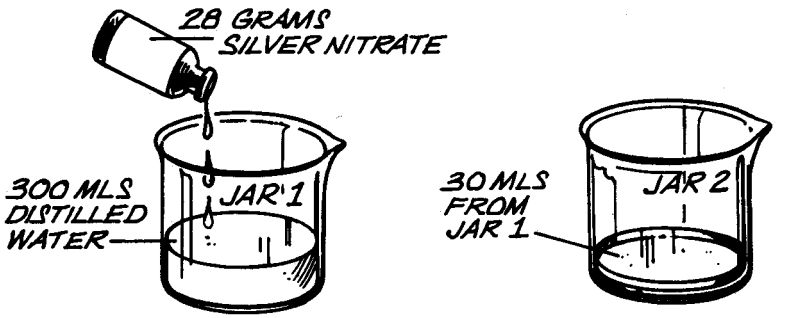
Sketch showing mirror in room, behind which is hidden a video camera

Normal window glass is used, and the first step is to ensure that the selected piece is chemically clean. This is best achieved by bathing the glass in a sugar soap solution, or by swabbing with dilute acid. Sugar soap is a chemical product used by decorators. It contains no soap as such, and soap should never be used in an attempt to clean the glass. After either of these treatments wash down the glass with clean water. Leave the glass, supported at only its edges, to dry naturally. During this time you can prepare the chemicals needed as follows.



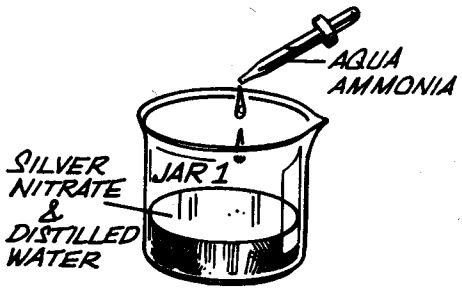
First, obtain three glass containers; jam jars will do nicely. Mark the jars 1, 2, and 3 to avoid confusion later. Into the first jar, pour 300 mls of distilled water and to this add 28 gs of silver nitrate. Stir well.

Into the second jar, pour 30 mls of the solution from jar one.

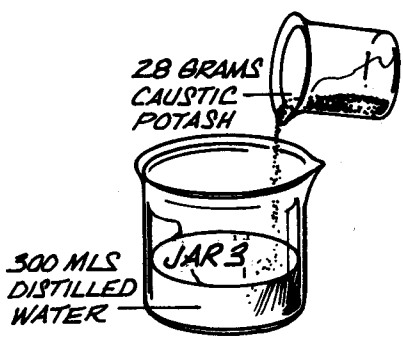


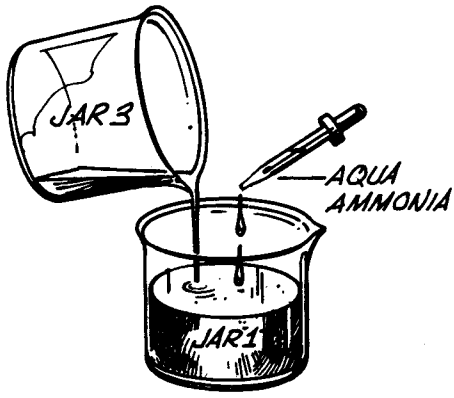
The next stage is to add with an eye dropper small quantities of aqua ammonia (10 percent strength is enough) to the solution in jar one. As the aqua ammonia

is added the solution will turn brown but then clear again as the solution is stirred. Continue adding the ammonia until the solution only just clears, or is just on the verge of remaining brown. At this stage the mix is correct.

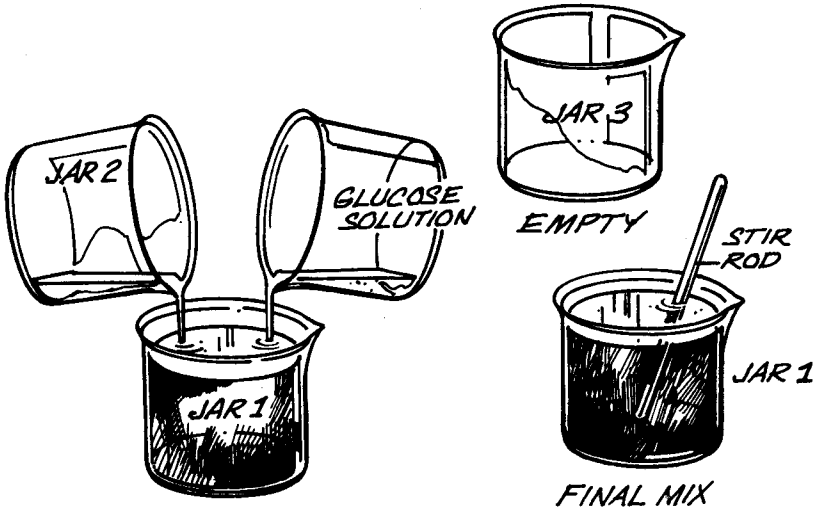


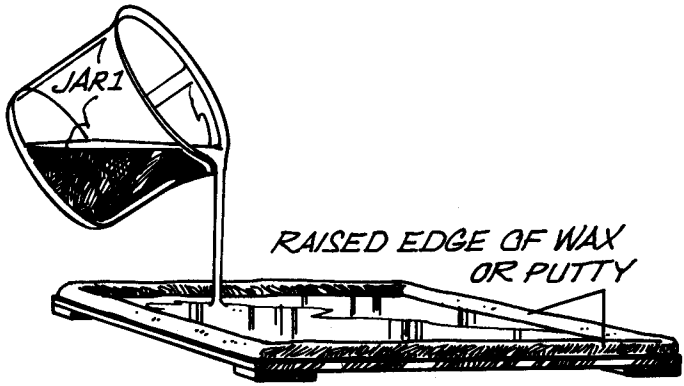
The solution for jar three is made *exactly* as follows. Pour 300 mls of distilled water into the jar and then slowly add, in small amounts, 28 gs of caustic potash. A degree of heat is generated as the chemicals mix, and the resulting solution must be allowed to cool before continuing with the process, which is simply to add the contents of jar three to those of jar one. Stir the solution, and add small quantities of aqua ammonia until the solution is neither fully clouded nor completely brown.





Next add the solution in jar two to that in jar one. The mixture will now turn dark brown again. The final stage in the preparation of the mixture is to add 15 gs of common glucose to 300 mls of distilled water. Stir well and add this to jar one. This mix is the final working solution. The glass to be used is supported at its edges, and a shelf or wall of melted wax or putty affixed around

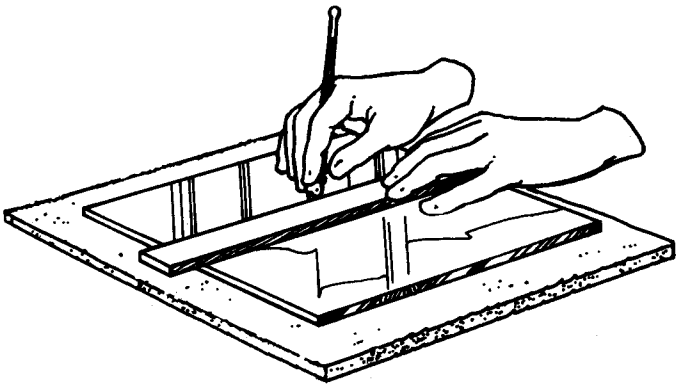




the upper edge, as shown above. The solution in jar one is poured over the glass until the surface is thinly but uniformly covered.

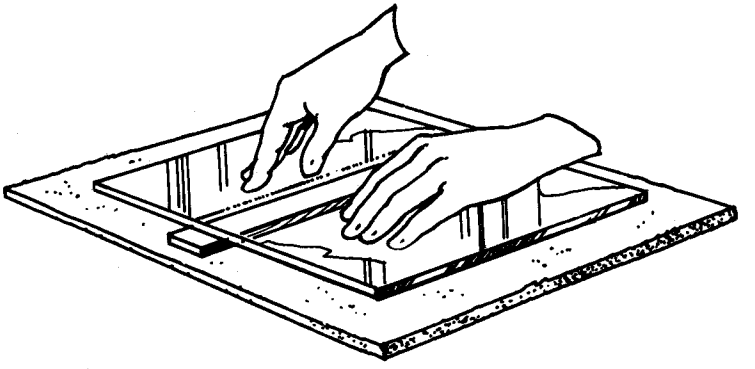
Leave the glass for about twenty-five minutes to allow the process to take effect. At intervals of a few minutes, look from underneath the glass to see that a mirror surface is forming. At the same time, check that some item placed beneath the glass is visible from above. Once this stage is reached, pour off any excess solution and rinse the glass under running water. Allow it to dry naturally. A thin coat of clear varnish or plastic seal can be applied to the treated (see-through side) of the glass for added protection. In position, the effect is heightened if the mirror-side area is well lit and the see-through side (hidden room) is somewhat darker.

The technique for cutting glass, or tiles for that matter, is given below. Using this method saves on time and also on glass! Place the glass on a level surface padded with rags or newspaper and mark the dimensions to be cut using a pencil or felt-tip pen. Place a straight edged tool across the marks and score the surface with one smooth

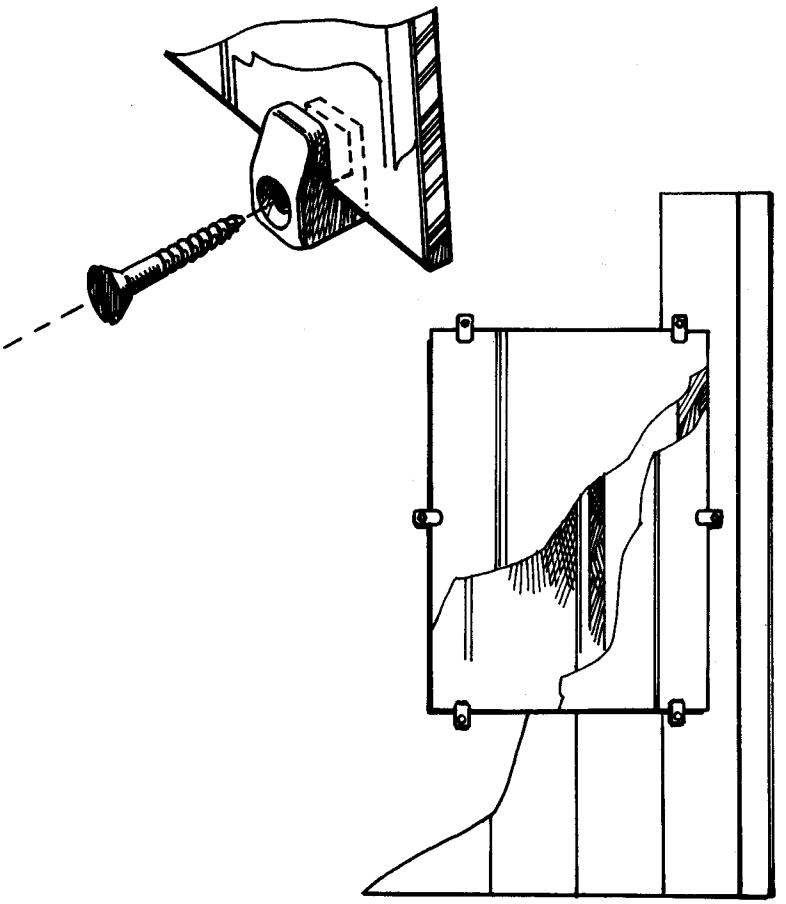


stroke of the glass cutter. Hold the cutter as shown above. Don't be tempted to make another score with the cutter, as this damages the cutting wheel.

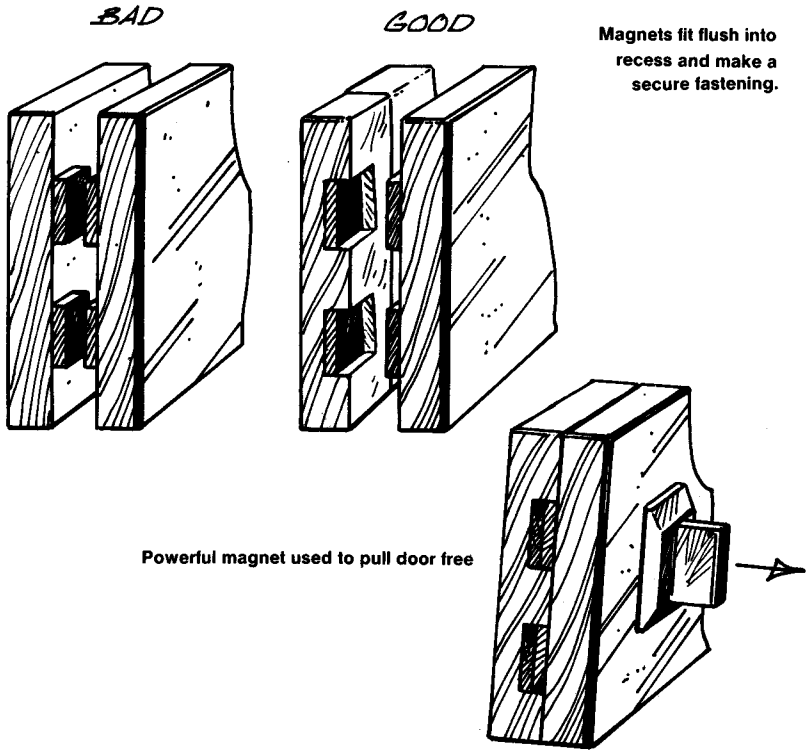
Next place the glass over the ruler (or other straight edge) as shown and press down on both sides, snapping the glass cleanly in two. If patterned glass is used, the score mark is of course made on the smooth side.



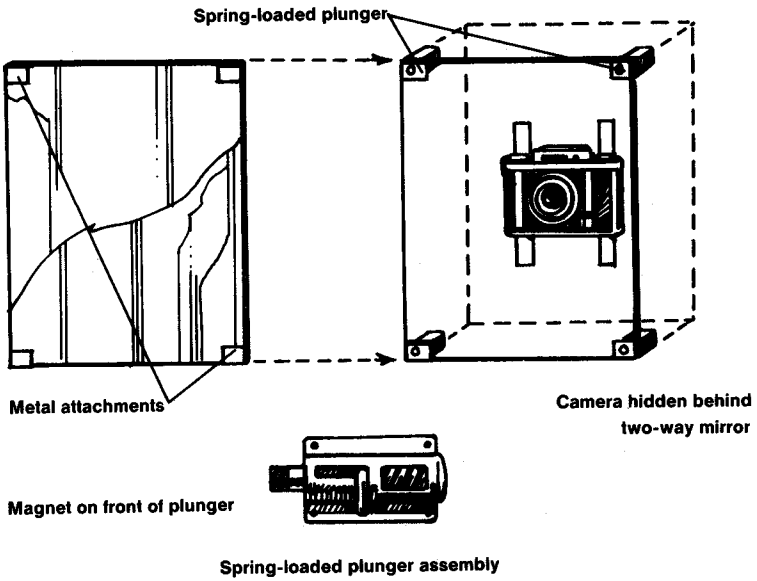
A common type of mirror fixing is shown below, and the illustration alongside shows a possible location for a two-way mirror, in the hallway of a home where a hidden camera could be used to record the comings and goings of visitors, invited or otherwise! You'd be surprised how many people unconsciously adjust their clothing or hair in front of a mirror, making for a good picture if a hidden camera is in use.



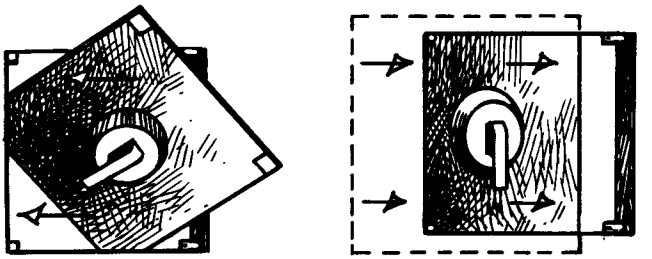
Always remember when using velcro or magnetic strip and metal fastening techniques that for a flush, and therefore unnoticeable, fit the fastening material should be recessed as shown below. Simply attaching the fastening material to one or both surfaces will result in the joint being easily detectable. Magnetic fastening techniques are to be preferred as their use facilitates rapid removal and placement of the door without the need for any attachments whatsoever. Simply apply a more powerful magnet than that being used as the fastener. Double-layer cooking foil tacked into the recess with magnetic strip or several single magnets attached to the door inner is one method of fixing.



Another very useful form of fixing two-way mirrors in place is to use a spring-loaded magnetic catch, as shown below. This type of catch is available from many hardware outlets, and is also used on many home hi-fi systems.



As the spring-loaded plunger is depressed, a latch at the rear of the plunger engages with a cut-out. The plunger remains locked rearward, and the door is held tight against the front of the plunger by a small but powerful magnet. To open the door, the door itself is pushed from the front, which releases the pawl on the plunger, pushing it outward; the door flies open. The metal attachments required on a section of two-way mirror are easily disguised as normal wall fittings or embellishments. Should it be necessary to close the door from within, a strong, glass cutter's sucker pad can be used, as illustrated in the diagram on the next page.



Mirror turned at an angle and passed through opening into room, then pulled back against the spring fasteners

Plunger used to handle mirror from behind

4. AWAY-FROM-HOME HIDES

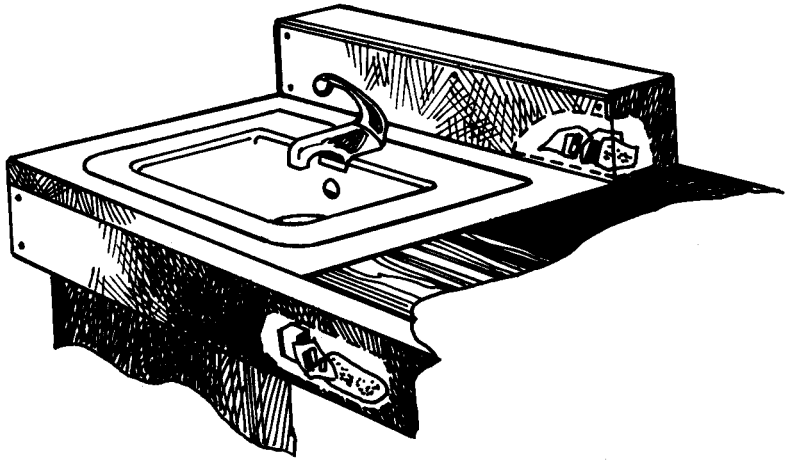
PATRONS OF HOTELS AND MOTELS ARE TRULY sitting ducks for burglars no matter how good security may seem. You may have considerable amounts of cash or other valuables with you that you have no desire to have taken from you by the first down-and-out with a gun that happens to collar you. And yet you may have no desire to draw attention to your possessions by opting for the hotel safe; many rip-offs go down after a watch has been made of persons depositing valuables in hotel safes during their stay. They reclaim the goods, leave the hotel, and head for the car park, and—well, chances are they never make it.

Here are a few stashes that apply not only to home base, but also to hotel, motel or any temporary quarters.

Next time you have occasion to stay in a motel, have a look for a wall-mounted radio speaker. Most hotels mount these so that they cannot be easily stolen by visitors, yet it is still possible to get to the inside of the unit for repair. If the front of the speaker appears to be covered completely with acoustic foam, have a quick tug at one corner; usually it will peel off to reveal four or more screws. Undo these and you will be able to get at the inside.

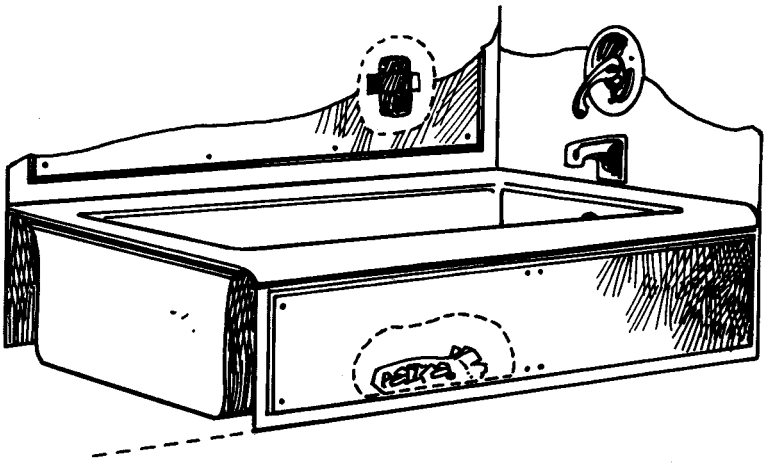
The bathroom has to be the first choice for this type of hide. Not only are bathrooms areas in which people under normal circumstances spend little time, or visit infrequently, but a visit to the bathroom takes little justification. "Do you mind if I use your attic?" just doesn't ring true, does it? However, several minutes can be spent in friends' bathrooms without arousing the slightest suspicion. Hotel bathrooms are cleaned (sometimes) by disinterested people, and the chances of any radical difference in the design or layout of the target bathroom between the time you make the stash and the time you return to collect is highly unlikely.

Paneling, especially that around the bath itself, is easily removed with a small screwdriver, and it is usually possible to obtain sufficient access by removing only a



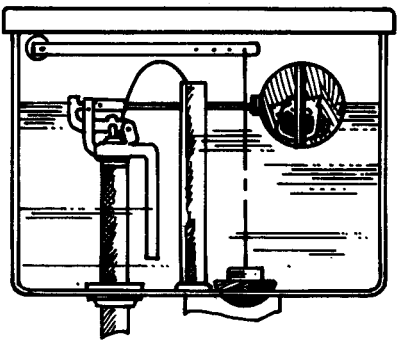
Most panels are unscrewed easily.

couple of the retaining screws. While I was in the army stationed in Germany, I used to steal ten-man "ratpacks" and stash them behind the paneling in the ablutions until



I went on leave. Apart from a few damp boxes, the stash was simple, yet effective.

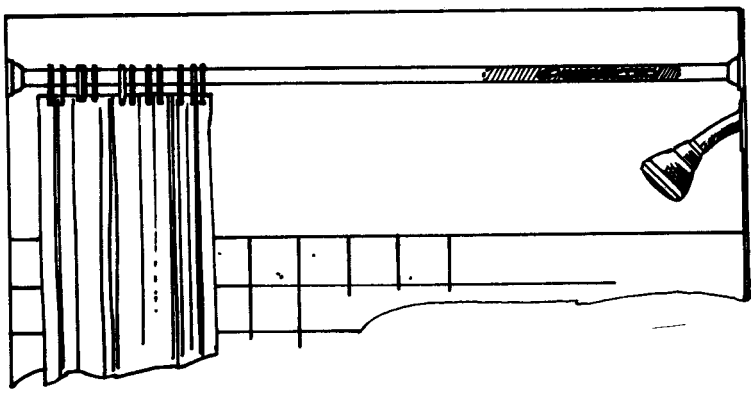
The toilet cistern itself is lifted off quickly and suitably sealed items may simply be dropped in. If they are likely to interfere with the flow of water from the cistern, tape them to the inside of the unit or use sticky pads. If time permits, the ballcock mechanism that controls the level of water in the cistern can be unscrewed and items hidden within. If it is the sealed type, cut it with a hobby knife

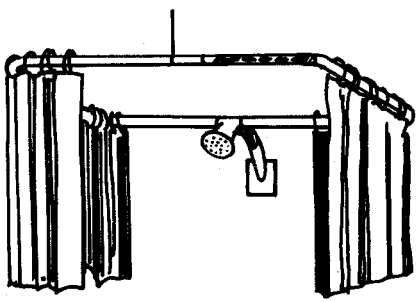


Ballcock valve assembly

and reseal with plastic tape or super glue. A small tube of glue, a roll of tape or box of sticky pads, a small pocket-clip screwdriver, and a hobby knife can all be carried easily in a jacket pocket. A Swiss army knife will do most jobs required and takes up little space.

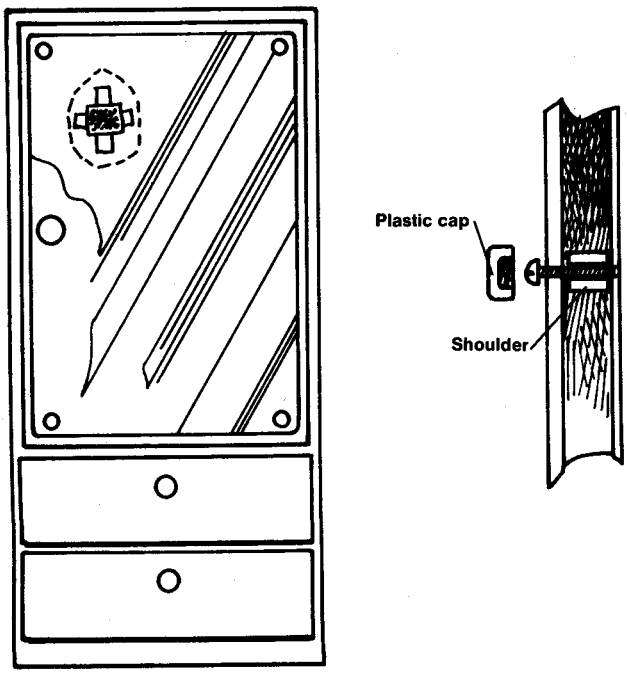
The pipework or tubular shower curtain track can also be used, of course. Most of the shower curtain track railing is tubular, and access can be obtained by removing an end cap. Pipework will often sport a draining or unblocking plug which can be unscrewed and items inserted. Take care not to overdo the size of items, as a blocked pipe will obviously attract attention.





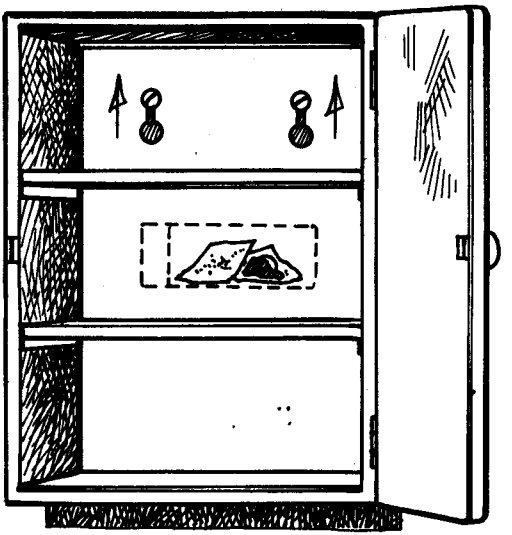
Light fittings, electric sockets, and so on can be used as shown in earlier chapters. Remember to take precautions against shock by insulating items. Use insulated screwdrivers and wear a rubber glove on the working hand.

Bathroom mirrors or the type of mirror fitted in most hotels can be removed. Lever off any plastic screwhead covers, and release the mirror from its mount. This is usually two or more small shoulders (shown below). A space exists behind the mirror to which items may be attached, or, depending on the material used for the backing, a trench can be cut out. It takes only a few



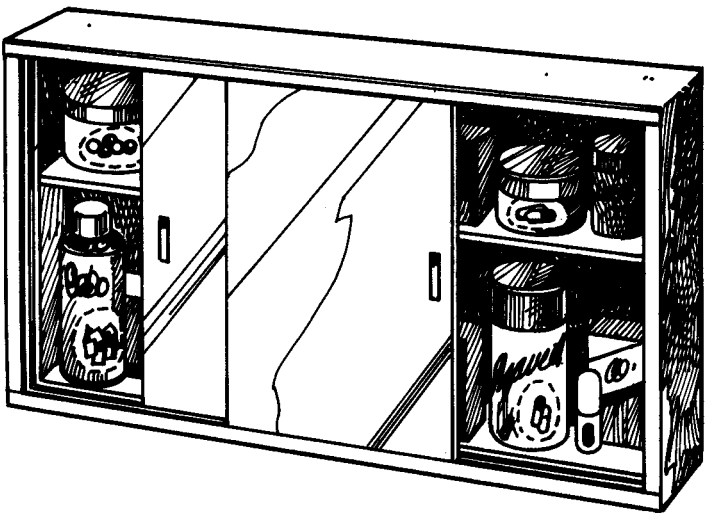
minutes to release most mirrors, and the likelihood of cash or papers being discovered in such a place is remote. What are you looking at when you look into a mirror?

Bathroom cabinets are also mounted simply, usually with a couple of basic brackets or hooked onto a couple of screws as in the diagram below. It is a simple matter to lift the cabinet, complete with contents, off the screws and cut or scrape away a hide from the wall behind. Replace the cabinet, and that's that.



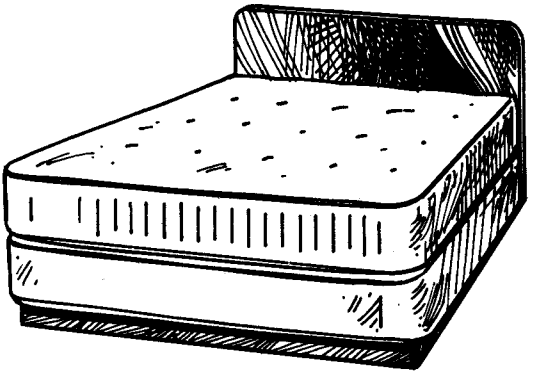
In a friend's home the bathroom will be full of toiletries and other objects that can be used to conceal items of a variety of sizes. Large jars of face cream, bubble bath, bath salts, and so on may be available. The way to use such hides is to think before you stash. Always go for large jars containing plenty of whatever. The idea is that

even if the contents are used before you make a return visit to collect, plenty will remain in the container to conceal the stash. Obviously this is really most suited for small objects, but drugs, which are relatively expensive for even miniscule amounts, will find a happy home in such hides.



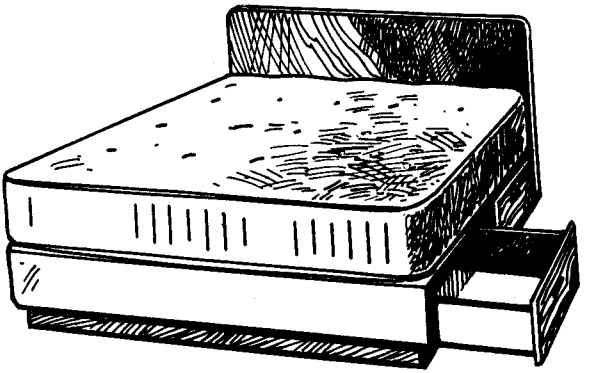
Bedding and the bed frame itself, especially in hotel rooms, can be readily used. Many modern beds of the divan type are nothing more than large wood framed boxes covered at the bottom with a layer of material. This layer can be separated and resealed with glue, or by pushing home any original staples with the heel of your shoe. The drawer divan type of bed is even quicker. Simply pull out a drawer completely and affix your valuable to the back of it as shown. Most of these drawers have a stop block on the top rail to prevent the drawer being pulled

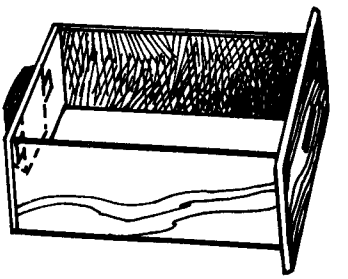
completely out by accident. Give it a bit of jiggle and it will come.



Material peeled back

Bottom view





If the building you are in is multistory, the top of the elevator which is accessible via an escape hatchway in its ceiling can provide useful space. When you're in a hurry items can be simply pushed up through the trap to rest on the elevator roof.

5. HINTS AND TIPS

A POINT WORTH REMEMBERING ABOUT MOST thieves, especially those house-burgling types, is that they are usually in one hell of a hurry. They want to get in and out as quickly, and with as much of your property, as possible. The same can be said of the majority of hotel thieves. Very few of them are gun carrying pros who will stop at nothing. So as to lessen the chance of your hidden valuables being found by one of these types, it is sometimes worth leaving a decoy. Deliberately leave a few dollars and a cheap watch lying around in the hotel room when you go out. Chances are the thief will grab the stuff he finds and clear out, leaving the well-hidden items safe. This technique also cuts down the risk of the hardened crook getting really annoyed at not finding anything and deciding to wait for your return in order to persuade you to part with some valuables. Nine times out of ten, he will be happy with what he can get easily, count his blessings, and go.

Believe it or not, everyone in the world has a blind spot. That means that there is a certain area within the person's field of vision that he cannot see. It may be six inches in front of him, but he will not see it. This fact can be used to great benefit in the design of camouflage

wall coverings. Certain patterns would make it impossible for anyone not already aware of the locations of say, a release button, to ever find it visually. It is this principle that explains why truck mechanics often leave a wheel nut untightened after a wheel change, or why some people cannot see things that are right in front of them. I'm sure you must have been with someone looking for his car keys or the like, and you have been saying, "There! Look, in front of you," yet he still could not seem to focus on them.

You can determine your blind area by holding this page about a foot in front of your face and closing your right eye. Slowly move the book toward you while you look at the small black dot. Although, at first, you will see both the dot and the square, when the book is at your blind spot, the square will disappear. Although still there, you will no longer be able to see it. This "gap" in your visual world is *always* there! and the possibilities for exploitation of this phenomenon are tremendous.

Most examiners will ignore everyday things like a pot of stew or a bowl of fruit, and this principle can be applied to the construction of hiding places as well as to quickies. Unless well trained and well practiced in the art of search techniques, most people do not actually see what is before them. They see a mental projection of what the initial form of the object suggests to them.