

# Rear Spring Testimony

by Tom Endy

A fellow in Australia reported his experience with the installation of a Mitchell overdrive in a 1928 Model A Ford Phaeton. The car is a right-hand drive. The Mitchell instructions say to remove the rear axle assembly from the car with the rear spring still attached to the axle assembly. I believe this to be an unsafe process. **The rear spring on a Model A Ford is lethal.** My advice has always been to leave the spring attached to the frame of the car and to remove the rear axle assembly with a proper spring spreader.

The folks down under attempted to remove the axle assembly without a proper spring spreader and a shackle broke in the process. Fortunately no one was hurt.



**Note how far the end of the spring is sitting from the broken shackle.**



**Fortunately the spring was still attached to the frame of the car when the shackle broke.**



**A proper spring spreader was obtained to reinstall the spring. The hazard here is the 86-year-old 3/8" rusted center bolt may be ready for the head to pop off. If it were to do so the top leafs will fly 20 feet in the air and possibly injure the fellow working over the spring. If he escaped injury he needs to run like the devil, because they will be coming back down.**

Whenever it becomes necessary to remove the rear axle assembly from a Model A Ford the safe and prudent thing to do is to obtain a proper spring spreader. Install the spreader to take the tension off the spring. Remove the shackles from each end of the spring and lower the rear axle assembly and pull it out from under the car.

The spring spreader can be left in place under the car indefinitely until the rear axle assembly is ready to go back into the car.

This series of photos demonstrates the hazard of dealing with the rear spring on a Model A. Had the shackle broken when the rear axle assembly was out from under the car with the spring still attached it would have pirouetted and likely broke the other shackle and propelled the spring into the air.

The other hazard is the 3/8" center bolt that even when new was not meant to contain the energy packed into a Model A rear spring when spread to be attached to the axle assembly. A rusted center bolt head can easily pop off allowing the top leafs to fly 20 feet into the air.