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(54) **Security apparatus**

(57) A cash drawer (2; 60; 102) having a selectively concealable internal compartment (12; 70; 112). The drawer (2; 60; 102) is arranged so that the content of the internal compartment (12; 70; 112) cannot be seen when the drawer (2; 60; 102) is open. The internal compartment (12; 70; 112) may be selectively retractable into a concealed space or may be coverable with a cover (72). A solenoid (32; 132) may be used to conceal the selectively concealable compartment (12; 70; 112). A separate release mechanism (36, 38; 136, 138) may be provided for reversing concealment of the selectively concealable compartment (12; 70; 112).

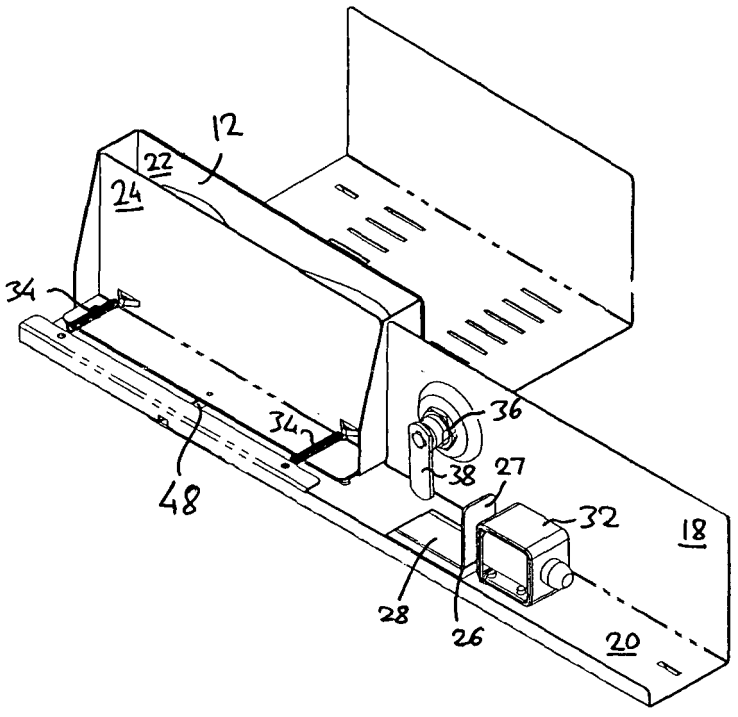

Fig 2

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to security apparatus and in particular to security apparatus for concealing money in a cash drawer or register.

[0002] In known cash drawers or registers, money is received in trays which are sub-divided into compartments for different denominations of bank notes and coins. The compartments are open-topped for ease of access by the operator. A disadvantage of such an arrangement is that they also permit easy access to the money held to people attempting to rob the cash register.

[0003] Some known cash drawers address this problem by providing a compartment with a bottom closure that opens when the cash drawer is closed. Any money held in this compartment drops through the open bottom of this compartment into a secure box when the cash drawer is closed. The bottom closure of the compartment is closed when the cash drawer is open so that the compartment appears to be a standard compartment.

[0004] One disadvantage of such known cash drawers is that they require space for the collection receptacle below the cash drawer. This space is not always available and cash drawers of this type cannot therefore be used in every installation. A further disadvantage is that a point of sale unit that is to be fitted with these cash drawers needs to be considerably modified so that money can fall from the cash drawer into the collection receptacle.

[0005] The present invention attempts to overcome or at least mitigate these disadvantages.

[0006] According to the present invention there is provided a cash drawer having an internal compartment, and comprising means for selectively concealing the inside of the said compartment, or at least a part thereof, such that the contents of said compartment or said at least part thereof cannot be seen when the drawer is open.

[0007] The cash drawer of the present invention thus permits valuables to be concealed from view when the cash drawer is open so as to prevent removal of these valuables by an unauthorised person.

[0008] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the compartment, or a part thereof, is movable to a position which conceals the compartment's contents or the contents of at least part of the compartment.

[0009] One preferred cash drawer comprises a concealing space and means to selectively retract the compartment into said concealing space. Preferably the retracting means is arranged to translate, tilt and/or pivot said compartment into the concealed space. When the compartment is so concealed, at least the opening of the compartment through which money or other valuables can be inserted into or removed from the compartment is concealed from view, so that an observer does not recognise that the compartment could hold money or other valuables.

[0010] In specific embodiments, described herein, the compartment is mounted for horizontal translational movement or for pivotal movement, more particularly for pivotal movement about its end.

[0011] In preferred embodiments, parts of the concealable compartment may still be visible after concealment. For example, a front wall of the concealable compartment may still be visible after concealment. Any part of the compartment visible after concealment of the compartment is preferably arranged to appear to be a standard part of the cash drawer. For example, a front wall of the concealable compartment may appear to be part of another wall of the cash drawer, for example the back wall.

[0012] The present invention accordingly extends to embodiments in which not the entire internal compartment is concealed but in which only an opening of the compartment (through which in normal use money or other valuables would be inserted) is concealed so as to attempt to render the internal compartment unrecognisable as a compartment.

[0013] The cash drawer preferably comprises spring means for biasing the compartment towards its concealed position. This means that only a small actuating force may be required to move the compartment, and, moreover, that the movement of the compartment to its concealed position may be effected relatively quickly.

[0014] The retracting means preferably comprises a solenoid.

[0015] The solenoid may selectively move the concealable compartment between its concealed and non-concealed positions, but preferably it operates only to move the compartment to its concealed position.

[0016] In a preferred embodiment, the solenoid may initiate the retraction of the compartment into the concealed space, with the retraction being effected or completed by the spring means.

[0017] Preferably a detent is provided to retain the movable compartment section in its non-concealed position, to prevent unintentional movement thereof as might occur, for example, due to vibration or the cash drawer being jolted.

[0018] In the particular arrangement discussed above the solenoid may operate so as to release the detent holding the compartment, whereupon the compartment may move under the force of the biasing spring, with or without assistance from the solenoid.

[0019] In one embodiment, the retracting means may comprise a linkage for moving the compartment between its retracted and non-retracted positions. The linkage preferably comprises a reciprocatable actuating member.

[0020] A preferred reciprocatable actuating member comprises a slot which engages with a pin which follows a path defined by the slot during reciprocation of the actuating member, thereby moving the compartment. The pin is preferably mounted to the compartment.

[0021] Guide means may further be provided for guiding the compartment to move in a desired path during its movement, for example while the pin is moved as discussed above.

[0022] Preferably the slot comprises a section extending in a direction having a component orthogonal to the direction of movement of said linkage. Accordingly the compartment can move in a direction orthogonal to the direction of movement of the linkage, which may facilitate location of the actuating member.

[0023] A preferred cash drawer further comprises a release mechanism arranged to move, or permit movement of, the compartment back to its non-concealed position.

[0024] The release mechanism is preferably arranged to operate the linkage so as to move the compartment to the non-concealed position. In this preferred embodiment, the linkage is accordingly used both for moving the compartment to its concealed position and to its non-concealed position.

[0025] The release mechanism is preferably key operated, the key preferably not being held by the operator of a check out desk but by a person not normally present at the check out desk. Check-out personnel cannot therefore be forced to move the concealed compartment to its non-concealed position during an emergency.

[0026] Preferably the release mechanism is biased away from its operating position so that it does not obstruct movement of the linkage to its concealing position and avoids the possibility of the compartment being prevented from being concealed.

[0027] Preferably the cash drawer is arranged so that the compartment can only move into the concealed space when the cash drawer is closed. Thus an observer is advantageously prevented from witnessing the movement of the concealable compartment to the concealed position. This makes it more difficult for an observer to ascertain the operating principle of the cash drawer and accordingly helps to prevent removal of valuables from the concealable compartment.

[0028] In a further embodiment of the invention, the concealable compartment may comprise a cover for selectively covering the compartment so as to conceal its contents. In this cash drawer therefore there is no need to move the concealable compartment into or to provide a concealed space. Instead the entire internal space of the cash drawer can be used for storing money or other valuables.

[0029] Preferably the cover is biased towards a position in which it does not cover the compartment. The cover may accordingly move towards an open position unless such movement is restrained. This is advantageous as no special linkage mechanism needs to be provided for permitting access to the concealable compartment. The compartment can be concealed by simply pushing the cover over the compartment.

[0030] The cover is preferably a pivotable cover, which can for example be moved to its closing position by a flip lid on the cash drawer.

[0031] Retaining means for retaining the cover in a position in which it covers the compartment is preferably provided.

[0032] In one embodiment the retaining means comprises a mechanical catch. In an alternative embodiment, the retaining means comprises a magnetic catch.

[0033] The cash drawer further preferably comprises a solenoid for moving the retaining means to its operative position in which it retains the covering member in its covering position.

[0034] Means to release the retaining means from that position are also preferably provided.

[0035] The release means is preferably arranged inside the cash drawer and is ideally concealed from an observer, so that the cash drawer appears to be completely standard.

[0036] Preferred cash drawers of the invention comprise a user operated actuator, e.g. a switch, that initiates operation of the concealment means. This actuator, e.g. switch, may, for example, be provided as part of a key lock already present on the cash drawer, for example in the form of an additional switching state of that key lock. The actuator may be situated in the cash drawer or remote therefrom.

[0037] The present invention is applicable both to flip top and reciprocating cash drawers.

[0038] Some preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 shows a first embodiment of a cash drawer in accordance with the invention;
Fig. 2 shows a perspective rear view of internal components of the cash drawer of in Fig. 1;
Fig. 3 shows an underneath view of the arrangement shown in Fig. 2;
Fig. 4 shows the cash drawer of Fig. 1 in a second configuration;
Fig. 5 shows the perspective back view shown in Fig. 2 with the cash drawer in its second configuration;
Fig. 6 shows the cash drawer shown in Fig 4 with coin compartments removed;
Fig. 7 shows a cash drawer according to a second embodiment of the invention;
Fig. 8 shows a note compartment and coin cup insert of the cash drawer of Fig. 7;
Fig. 9 shows a locking member of the cash drawer of Fig. 8;
Fig. 10 shows the insert of Fig. 8 with a note compartment being concealed.
Fig. 11 shows a third embodiment of a cash drawer in accordance with the invention.
Fig. 12 shows the cash drawer of Fig. 11 in a non-concealed configuration.
Fig. 13 shows the cash drawer of Fig. 11 in a concealed configuration.

[0039] Fig. 1 shows a cash drawer 2 comprising a housing 4 and a pivotable lid 6, coin cups 8 and note compartments 10. Further provided is a selectively con-

cealable, retractable note compartment 12. A hinge 16 connects the lid 6 to the housing 4.

[0040] Fig. 1 does not show the entire depth of the cash drawer 2. Part of the back of cash drawer 2 extends into the check out desk 14 to which the cash drawer 2 is mounted. This is indicated by the dashed outline of cash drawer 1 in Fig. 1. Thus hinge 16 does not extend along the back edge of housing 4 but rather extends along the top of housing 4 spaced forwardly from this back edge.

[0041] An internal wall 18 extends vertically below the hinge 16, and it will be appreciated that there is a space provided inside housing 4 between this internal wall 18 and the back wall of cash drawer 2. This space is enclosed by the housing 4 and the internal wall 18 and is concealed so that to the casual observer it appears that the internal wall 18 is part of the back wall of housing 4.

[0042] Turning now to Figures 2 and 3, these Figures shows a rear view of the mechanism employed to move moveable note compartment 12 from its non-concealed position shown in Fig. 1 to its concealed position shown in Figure 5.

[0043] The mechanism is mounted on a carrier plate 20 that is connected to or formed from the same piece of sheet material as the internal wall 18. The mechanism lies behind the internal wall 18, between that wall and the back wall of the housing 4.

[0044] As can be seen from Fig. 2, the moveable note compartment 12 has a front wall 22 and a back wall 24. In the position shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the back wall 24 of the moveable note compartment 12 is located in the same plane as the internal wall 18. Thus when the moveable note compartment 12 is not concealed from the observer, the back wall 24 appears to be part of the internal wall 18, thus supporting the impression that the internal wall 18 and the back wall 24 are part of the back wall of the housing 4.

[0045] An aperture 26 is provided in the carrier plate 20, and as shown in Figure 2, one end 27 of a transfer member 28 extends upwardly through the aperture 26. In the configuration of cash drawer 2 shown in Figs. 1 and 2, the end 27 lies adjacent to a solenoid 32 having a movable plunger 33.

[0046] Springs 34 attached to the carrier plate 20 and the back wall 24 of the retractable compartment 12 bias the note compartment 12 towards the back of cash drawer 2, i.e. towards its retracted position. A release lock 36 with an actuating arm 38 is mounted in the internal wall 18 adjacent the aperture 26.

[0047] The transfer member 28 extends below the carrier plate 20 and is mounted for reciprocating movement. As can be seen from Fig. 3, the transfer member 28 comprises two aligned slots 40, and rivets 42 mounted to the carrier plate 20 extend downwardly through the slots 40 so as to guide the reciprocating movement of transfer member 28.

[0048] The transfer member 28 further comprises a ramped slot 44. An actuating pin 46 is fixed to the base of the retractable note compartment 12 and extends through ramped slot 44 so as to moved by ramped slot 44 when the transfer member 28 is moved. A detent 47 (such as a notch) may be provided at one end of the slot 44 to prevent the pin 46 from inadvertently entering the slot 44 should the drawer be accidentally knocked.

[0049] Guide slots 48 are provided in the carrier plate 20. The actuating pin 46 also extends through the central one of these slots 48 such that movement of the actuating pin 46 is guided by central slot 48. Rivets 50 extend through left and right slots 48 and are fixedly connected to the base of the retractable note compartment 12. Movement of the rivets 50 and thus the note compartment is thus guided by left and right slots 48.

[0050] Having described the structure of the cash drawer shown in Figs. 1 to 5, its operation will now be described in more detail.

[0051] When an operator or cashier working at the preferred cash drawer shown in Figs. 1 to 3 considers it necessary to conceal money located in the moveable note compartment 12, for example to hide large amounts of money from view until a supervisor can collect the money or if a robbery is thought to be imminent, the operator or cashier provides a signal to the cash drawer indicating that the moveable note compartment is to be retracted and thus concealed. This can be done, for example, by pushing a button (not shown) specially provided for this purpose on the cash drawer or on the cash register. Such a button can, for example, be provided as part of a standard feature of the cash drawer, for example as part of a standard key lock.

[0052] The solenoid 32 is activated as a result of this signal to conceal moveable note compartment 12. In particular, the plunger 33 engages and pushes transfer member 28 away from solenoid 32, that is to the left in the view shown in Fig. 3. This overcomes the detent 47, allowing the slot 44 to relative to the pin 46. The engagement of the slot 44 with the actuating pin 46 causes the pin 46 to move rearwardly, towards the back of the cash drawer 2, guided by guide groove 48 in the carrier plate 20. Thus the moveable note compartment 12 which is attached to the pin 46 also moves towards the back of cash drawer 2 into the concealed space defined by the back wall of housing 4 and inside wall 14, guided by the guide slots 48. The springs 34 assist this movement, and ensure that the compartment remains in this position.

[0053] After actuation of the solenoid 32, the moveable note compartment 12 is thus in the concealed position shown in Figs. 4 and 5. As can be seen from Fig. 4, the only part of the moveable note compartment 12 visible in this configuration is its front wall 22. This front wall lies in the same plane as internal wall 18 and appears to be an extension of the internal wall 18. Thus moveable note compartment 12 is hidden from view in the concealed space at the back of housing 4. A person attempting to remove monies from cash drawer 2 accordingly only has access to coin cups 8 and note compartments 10, which ideally only hold low denomination notes.

[0054] To return the compartment 12 to its visible po-

sition, a user must turn release lock 36.

[0055] As can be seen from Figure 5, the arm 38 of the release lock is in contact with the vertical part 27 of transfer member 28 when the moveable note compartment 12 is in the concealed position. When the release lock 36 is turned, the arm 38 moves the release member 28 towards the solenoid 32, thereby moving the moveable note compartment 12 from the concealed position shown in Figs. 4 and 5 to the visible position shown in Figs. 1 and 2, in which further notes can be added or the contents of moveable note compartment can be removed.

[0056] The movement of the compartment 12 is merely the reverse of that described above, although the force applied must overcome the force of the springs 34.

[0057] It can be seen from Fig. 4 that, in normal use the release lock 36 is not visible, as it is located behind the coin cups 8. When the coin cups 8 are removed as shown in Figure 6, release lock 36 becomes accessible and moveable note compartment 12 can accordingly be returned to the position shown in Figs. 1 and 2 using an appropriate key. Ideally this key is held in a location away from the cash drawer so that it is not immediately accessible and so that moneys concealed in cash drawer 2 can only be accessed after an emergency is over. In this case check out staff are not able to access moveable note compartment 12 once concealed and cannot therefore be forced to grant access to moveable note compartment 12.

[0058] Release lock 36 is preferably a spring biased lock that returns arm 38 to the position shown in Figures 2 and 5, so that arm 38 cannot accidentally be left in a position where it obstructs the movement of release member 28.

[0059] Figs. 7-10 show a second preferred cash drawer 60 in accordance with the invention. The cash drawer comprises a housing 62, a lid 64, coin cups 66 and note compartments 68. In contrast to the cash drawer illustrated in Figs. 1 to 6, the lid 64 of the preferred cash drawer shown in Fig. 7 is connected to the housing 62 along substantially the back edge of the housing 62. It will thus be appreciated that substantially all of the interior of housing 62 would be visible in the cash drawer 60 in Fig. 7 if the coin cups 66 and the note compartments 68 were removed from the cash drawer 60. Thus the cash drawer 60 does not have a hidden space at its back.

[0060] However, a selectively concealable compartment 70 is provided at the back of housing 62 that comprises a hingedly connected lid 72. This compartment 70 can be used in the same way as any other note compartment 68, and comprises a lid 72 which is connected to the rear of the concealable compartment 70 by a spring hinge 74 which biases the lid 72 towards its open position, so that lid 72 follows the opening and closing movement of the cash drawer lid 64. A locking pin 76 projects from one end of the lid 72, for purposes to be described further below.

[0061] Fig. 8 shows the coin cup 66 and note compartment 68 insert of cash drawer 60. A locking plate 78 is mounted to the side of the insert that is adjacent the concealed compartment 70.

[0062] Fig. 9 shows locking plate 78 in more detail. Locking plate 78 comprises slots 80 which slidably receive rivets 82 mounted to the insert. This allows the locking plate 78 to slide relative to rivets 82 over the length of slots 80. The locking plate 78 further comprises a retaining hook 84 projecting from its upper edge and an extension 86 projecting at a lower end of its front edge.

[0063] When the contents of compartment 70 are to be visible the locking plate 78 is positioned as shown in Fig. 9. In this position, the hook 84 cannot engage with the pin 76 on the lid 72. Thus the compartment lid 72 will follow the opening and closing motion of lid 64 under the bias of hinge 74 and concealable compartment 70 can be used as a normal note compartment for receiving and paying out money.

[0064] When it is desired to conceal compartment 70, the drawer lid 64 is closed and an activation signal is provided, for example in a manner similar to the manner described in relation to the embodiment of Figs. 1 to 6 so as to move the locking plate 78 towards the back of cash drawer 60 (that is to the left in Fig. 9), for example by a solenoid pushing against extension 86 in a manner similar to the activation mechanism used in the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 1 to 6. This moves the hook 84 into engagement with the pin 76, to close the compartment.

[0065] When lid 64 is opened following this movement of locking member 78 to the locking position, pin 76 remains engaged by the retaining hook 84, and the lid 72 thus remains in a closed position in which it conceals the compartment 70.

[0066] Lid 72 can be designed to appear to be a simple oddments tray carrying items useful for operating checkout desks and cash registers, for example pens.

[0067] To release lid 72, locking plate 78 is moved further forward (that is to the right of Fig. 9), to disengage the hook 84 away from the pin 76. This movement of locking plate 78 can be achieved trough a separate release mechanism such as the one shown in the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 1 to 6, so that only a key holder entitled to access moneys filed in the concealable compartment 70 can gain access to the concealable compartment 70 with the appropriate key.

[0068] It will be appreciated that changes and modifications may be made to the embodiment disclosed above without departing from the scope of the invention. For example, in a further embodiment, only a part of the compartment, for example a wall of the compartment, may move in order to conceal its contents. The mechanisms described herein may be used to move the movable part of the compartment.

[0069] In the embodiment of Figures 7 to 10, the locking plate 78 may be arranged in any convenient position, e.g. inside or even below the insert. Moreover, the particular retaining mechanism shown could be replaced by

any suitable catch mechanism, for example a selectively operable pin, e.g. a solenoid plunger. In yet further embodiments, the retaining mechanism could be constituted by a selectively operable magnetic catch, e.g. a selectively operable electromagnetic catch.

[0070] Furthermore, instead of providing a concealable compartment that can be translated into a concealed part of a cash drawer, as is the case in the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 1 to 6, the concealable compartment could be pivotably mounted in or adjacent an aperture in an inside wall of the cash drawer. In regular use this alternative compartment could be tilted forwardly towards the operator of the cash register, so that the access aperture of the compartment can be accessed by the operator. When the compartment is to be concealed, the compartment is tilted backwardly, so as to conceal the access opening in a concealed space. All an observer can see is the front wall of the concealed compartment. An embodiment of a pivotably mounted concealable compartment will now be described in detail with reference to Figures 11 to 13.

[0071] Fig. 11 shows a cash drawer 102 comprising a housing 104 and a pivotable lid 106 connected to the housing by a hinge 116 (Fig. 12). Further provided is a selectively concealable, pivotable compartment 112. The cash drawer 102 may also comprise coin cups and note compartments as described above with reference to the embodiments shown in Figs. 1 to 10.

[0072] The cash drawer 102 and concealable compartment 112 are provided on a base plate 120. An internal wall 118 of the housing 104 extends downwardly from the hinge 116 to the base plate 120. The internal wall 118 does not extend along the entire rear wall of the drawer 102, but leaves an aperture 119 for receiving the concealable compartment 112.

[0073] As shown in Figs. 12 and 13, a space is provided between the internal wall 118 and the back wall of the cash drawer 102. The space is enclosed by a cover section 125 of the housing 104. Preferably, the cash drawer 102 is fitted into a cash desk in the same manner as already described with reference to the embodiment shown in Fig. 1, such that the cover section 125 is concealed and internal wall 118 appears to be part of the back wall of the cash drawer 102.

[0074] As can be seen from Fig. 11, the concealable compartment 112 is pivotably mounted to brackets 127 (only one of which is shown) about a pivot 126. As shown in Figs. 12 and 13, the concealable compartment 112 can rotate about pivot 126 between a non-concealed position (Fig. 12) and a concealed position (Fig. 13). Cover 125 prevents access to the concealable compartment 112 when the latter is in its concealed position.

[0075] The concealable compartment 112 comprises a front wall 122 and a back wall 124 such that when the concealable compartment 112 is in the concealed position, front wall 122 lies in the same plane as the internal wall 118 of the housing 104. Thus when the moveable compartment is in the concealed position, front wall 122 appears to be part of the internal wall 118.

[0076] The concealable compartment 112 is resiliently biased toward the concealed position by a spring 128 mounted between the concealable compartment 112 and the bracket 127.

[0077] Also provided is a solenoid 132 mounted to the base plate 120. The solenoid comprises a movable plunger 133 configured to engage along the back wall 124 of the concealable compartment 112 when the plunger 133 is in an extended position and the concealable compartment is in its non-concealed position. A key operated release lock 136 is mounted in the internal wall 118 adjacent the aperture 119. The release lock 136 includes a lug (not shown) configured to engage a pivoting actuating arm 138 upon operation of the lock 136.

[0078] Having described the structure of the cash drawer 102 shown in Figs. 11 to 13, its operation will now be described in more detail.

[0079] When an operator or cashier working at the cash drawer 102 considers it necessary to conceal money located in the concealable compartment 112, the operator or cashier provides a signal to the cash drawer 102 indicating that the concealable compartment 112 is to be tilted to the concealed position, as shown in Fig. 13. This can be done, for example, by pushing a button (not shown) specifically provided for this purpose on the cash drawer or on the cash register. Such a button can, for example, be provided as part of a standard feature of the cash drawer 102, for example as part of a standard key lock.

[0080] The solenoid 132 is activated as a result of this signal to conceal the concealable compartment 112. In particular, the plunger 133 is retracted into the solenoid 132 such that it no longer engages with the back wall 124 of the concealable compartment, thereby allowing the concealable compartment to tilt backwardly from the non-concealed position shown in Fig. 12 to the concealed position shown in Fig. 13 about the pivot 126 under the force exerted by the spring 128.

[0081] To return the concealable compartment 112 to the non-concealed position, a user must turn the release lock 136. As can be seen from Fig. 11, the L-shaped actuating arm 138 is configured such that it is adjacent to the back wall 124 of the concealable compartment 112 when it is in the concealed position. As the release lock 136 is turned, the lug engages the pivoting actuating arm 138 and rotates the arm 138 about a pivot 140. As the arm 138 rotates it exerts a force on the back wall 124 of concealable compartment 112 which overcomes the force exerted by the spring 128, thus tilting the concealable compartment 112 into the non-concealed position shown in Figs. 11 and 12. The plunger 133 is resiliently biased toward the extended position shown in Fig. 11 such that it will abut the side of the concealable compartment 112 until the latter is returned to its non-concealed position. Once the concealable compartment 112 is returned to the non-concealed position by turning release lock 136, the plunger returns to the extended position,

engaging along the back wall 124 of the concealable compartment 112 thus maintaining the concealable compartment 112 in the non-concealed position.

[0082] The release lock 136 is preferably a spring biased lock that returns the arm 138 to the position shown in Fig. 11, so that the arm 138 cannot accidentally be left in a position where it obstructs the movement of the concealable compartment 112 from the non-concealed position to the concealed position.

[0083] It will further be appreciated that the compartment may be mounted for pivotal movement about some other axis, for example a vertical axis.

Claims

1. A cash drawer (2; 60; 102) having an internal compartment (12; 70; 112), and comprising means for selectively concealing the inside of the said compartment (12; 70; 112), or at least a part thereof, such that the contents of said compartment (12; 70; 112), or said at least part thereof, cannot be seen when the drawer (2; 60; 102) is open.

2. A cash drawer (2; 60; 102) as claimed in claim 1, wherein said compartment (12; 70; 112), or a part thereof, is movable to a position in which the contents are concealed.

3. A cash drawer (2; 102) as claimed in claim 2 comprising a concealed space, and means to selectively retract said compartment (12; 112) into said concealed space.

4. A cash drawer (2; 102) as claimed in claim 3, wherein said retracting means is arranged to translate, tilt and/or pivot said compartment (12; 112) into said concealed space.

5. A cash drawer (2; 102) as claimed in claim 3 or 4, comprising spring means (34; 128) for biasing said compartment (12; 112) towards its concealed position.

6. A cash drawer (102) as claimed in any claims 3 to 5, wherein said retracting means comprises a solenoid (132).

7. A cash drawer (102) as claimed in claims 5 and 6 wherein said solenoid (132) initiates the retraction which is then effected by said spring means (128).

8. A cash drawer (102) as claimed in any of claims 3 to 7 further comprising a detent (133) arranged to retain the compartment (112) in its non-concealed position.

9. A cash drawer (102) as claimed in claims 7 and 8 wherein said solenoid (132) releases said detent (133).

10. A cash drawer (102) as claimed in any of claims 3 to 9 wherein said compartment (112)is pivotally mounted.

11. A cash drawer (2) as claimed in any of claims 3 to 9, wherein said retracting means comprises a linkage for moving said compartment (12) between its retracted and non-retracted positions.

12. A cash drawer (2) as claimed in claim 11, wherein said linkage comprises a reciprocatable actuating member.

13. A cash drawer (2) as claimed in claim 12, wherein said reciprocatable actuating member comprises a slot (44) which engages with a pin (46), said pin preferably mounted to said compartment (12).

14. A cash drawer (2) as claimed in claim 13, wherein said slot (44) comprises a section extending in a direction having a component orthogonal to the direction of movement of said linkage.

15. A cash drawer (2; 102)as claimed in any of claims 3 to 14, further comprising guide means (48) for guiding said compartment (12; 112) to move in a reciprocating motion.

16. A cash drawer (2; 102) as claimed in any of claims 3 to 15, further comprising release means (36, 38; 136, 138) arranged to move, or permit movement of, said compartment (12; 112) to its non-concealed position.

17. A cash drawer (2; 102) as claimed in claim 16, wherein said release means is biased towards a deactivated position in which said release means does not obstruct movement of the compartment (12; 112) to its concealed position.

18. A cash drawer (2; 102) as claimed in any of claims 3 to 17, arranged so that said compartment (12; 112) can only move into said concealed space when said cash drawer (2; 102) is closed.

19. A cash drawer (60) as claimed in claim 1, wherein said compartment (70) comprises a cover (72) for selectively covering said compartment (70) or at least part thereof so as to conceal the contents.

20. A cash drawer (60) as claimed in claim 19, wherein said cover (72) is a pivotable cover.

21. A cash drawer (60) as claimed in claim 20, wherein said cover (72) is biased towards a position in which

it does not cover said compartment (70).

22. A cash drawer (60) as claimed in claim 19, 20 or 21, further comprising retaining means for retaining said cover (72) in a position in which it covers said compartment (70).

23. A cash drawer (60) as claimed in claim 22 wherein said retaining means comprises a mechanical or magnetic catch.

24. A cash drawer (60) as claimed in claims 22 or 23, further comprising release means for releasing the retaining means.

25. A cash drawer (2; 60; 102) as claimed in claim 16, 17 or 24, wherein said release means is concealed inside said cash drawer (2; 60; 102).

26. A cash drawer (2; 60; 102) as claimed in any preceding claim comprising a user operated actuator that initiates operation of the concealment means.

27. A cash drawer (2; 60; 102) as claimed in claim 26 wherein the actuator is a switch.

28. A cash drawer (2; 60; 102) as claimed in any preceding claim, further comprising a pivotable lid (6; 64; 106).

29. A cash drawer (2; 60; 102) as claimed in any of claims 1 to 27 wherein said cash drawer (2; 60; 102) is reciprocatable within a housing.

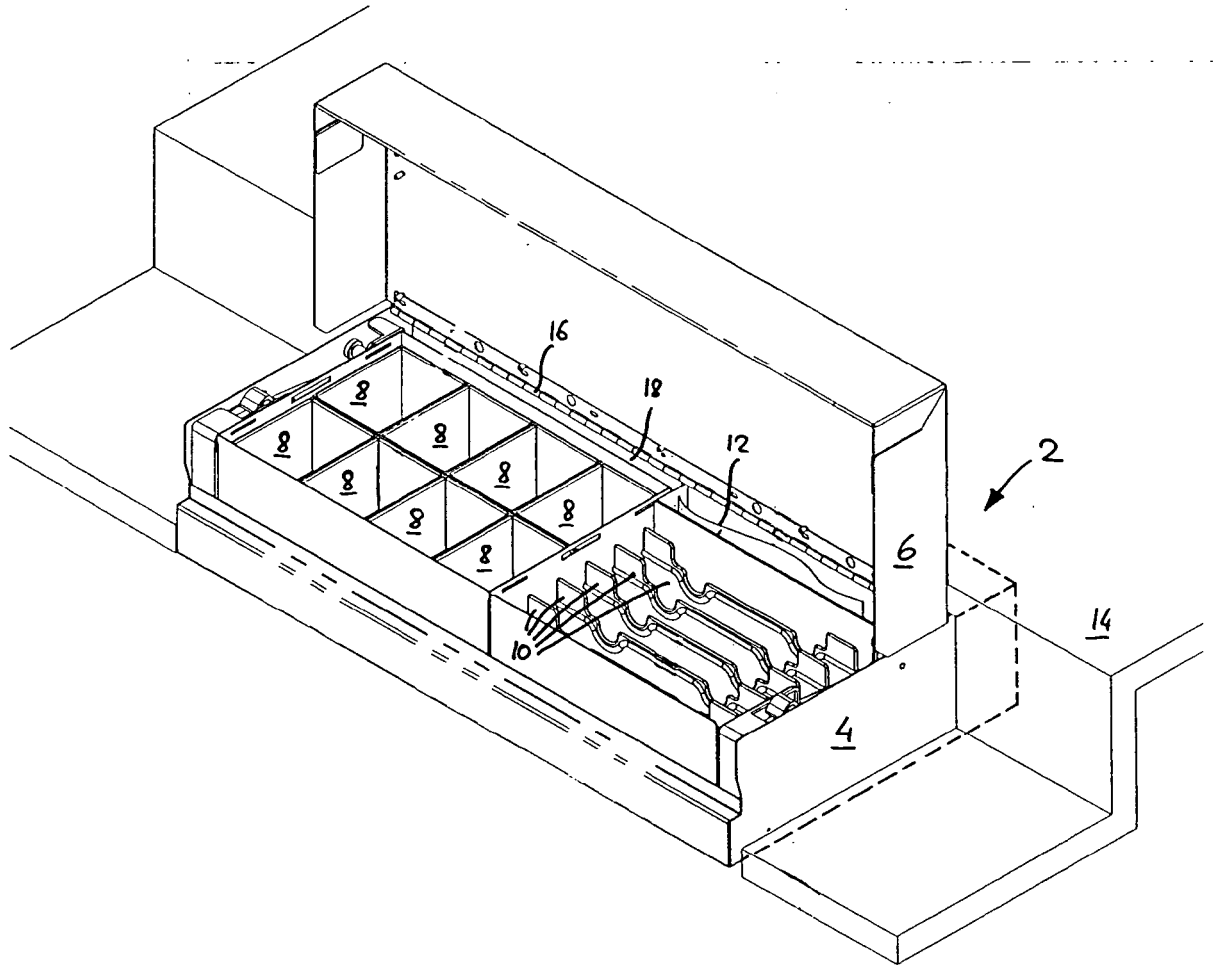

FIG. 1

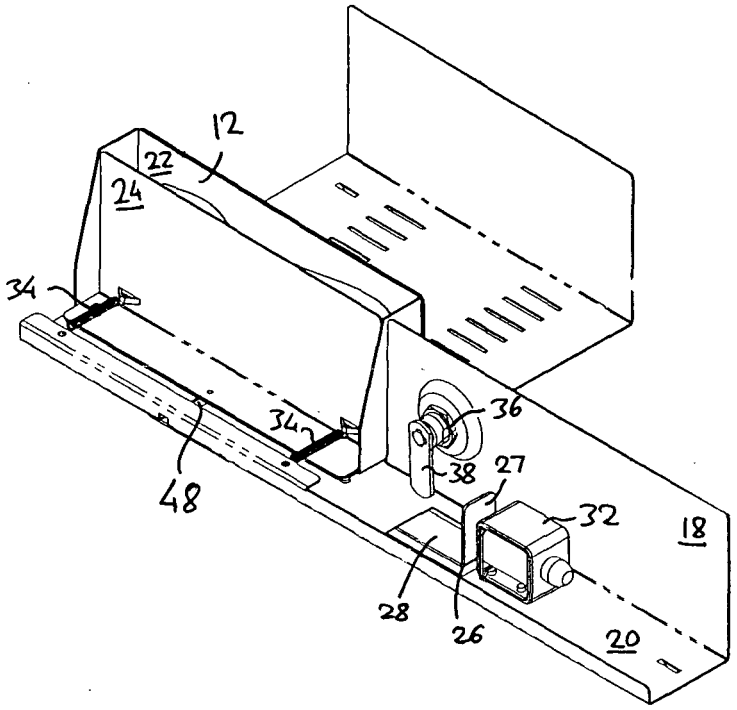
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FIG 2

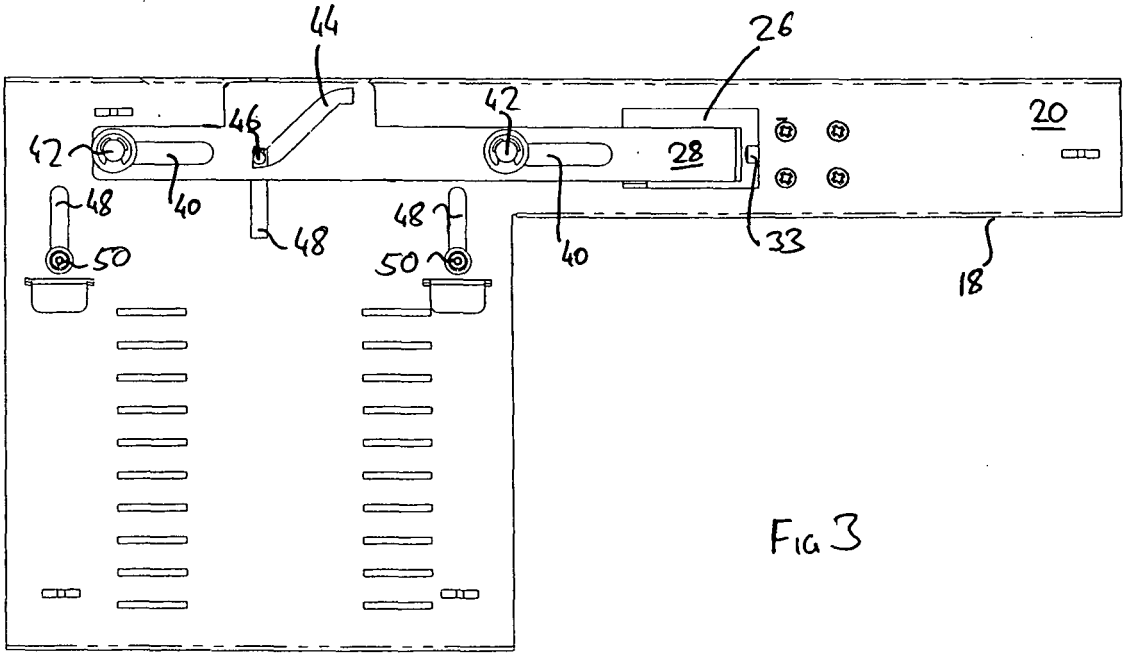
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FIG 3

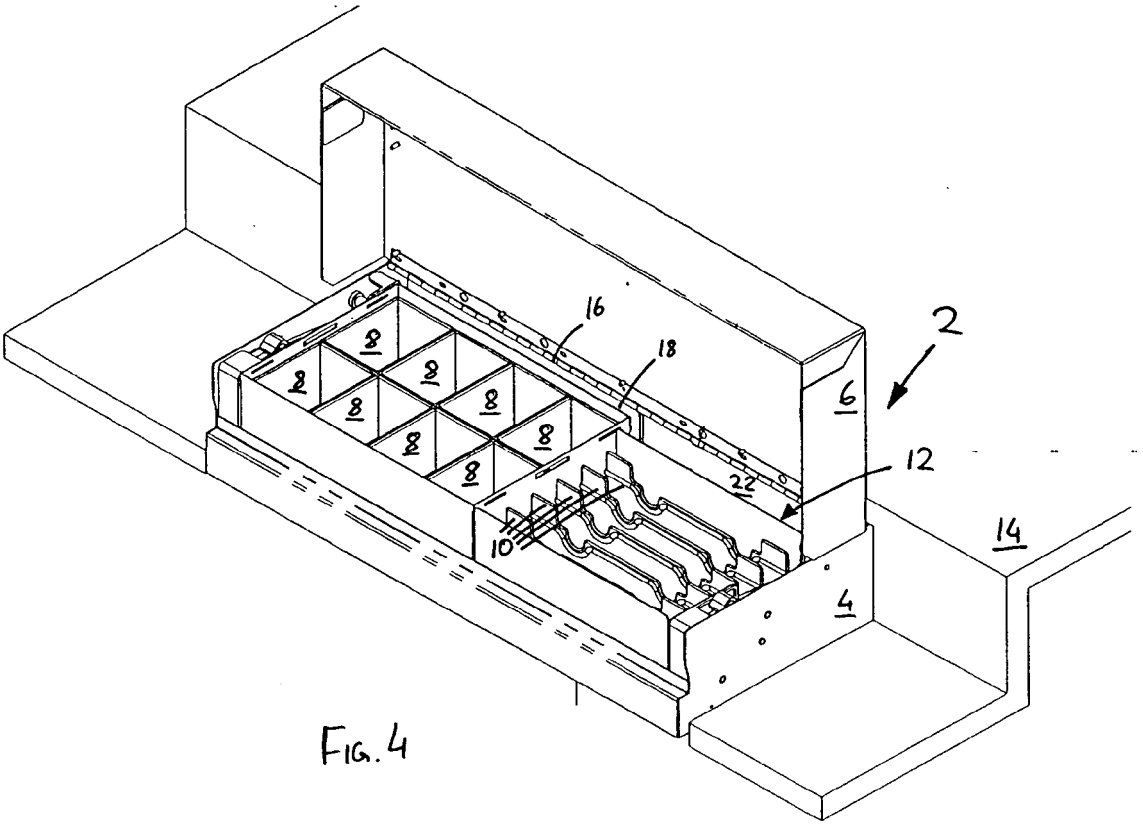

FIG. 4

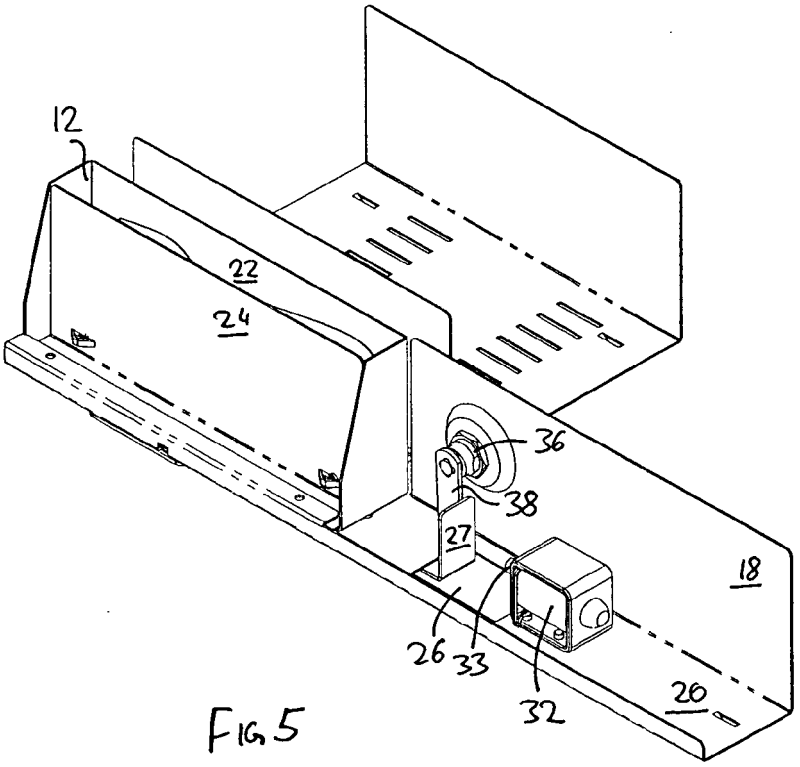

FIG 5

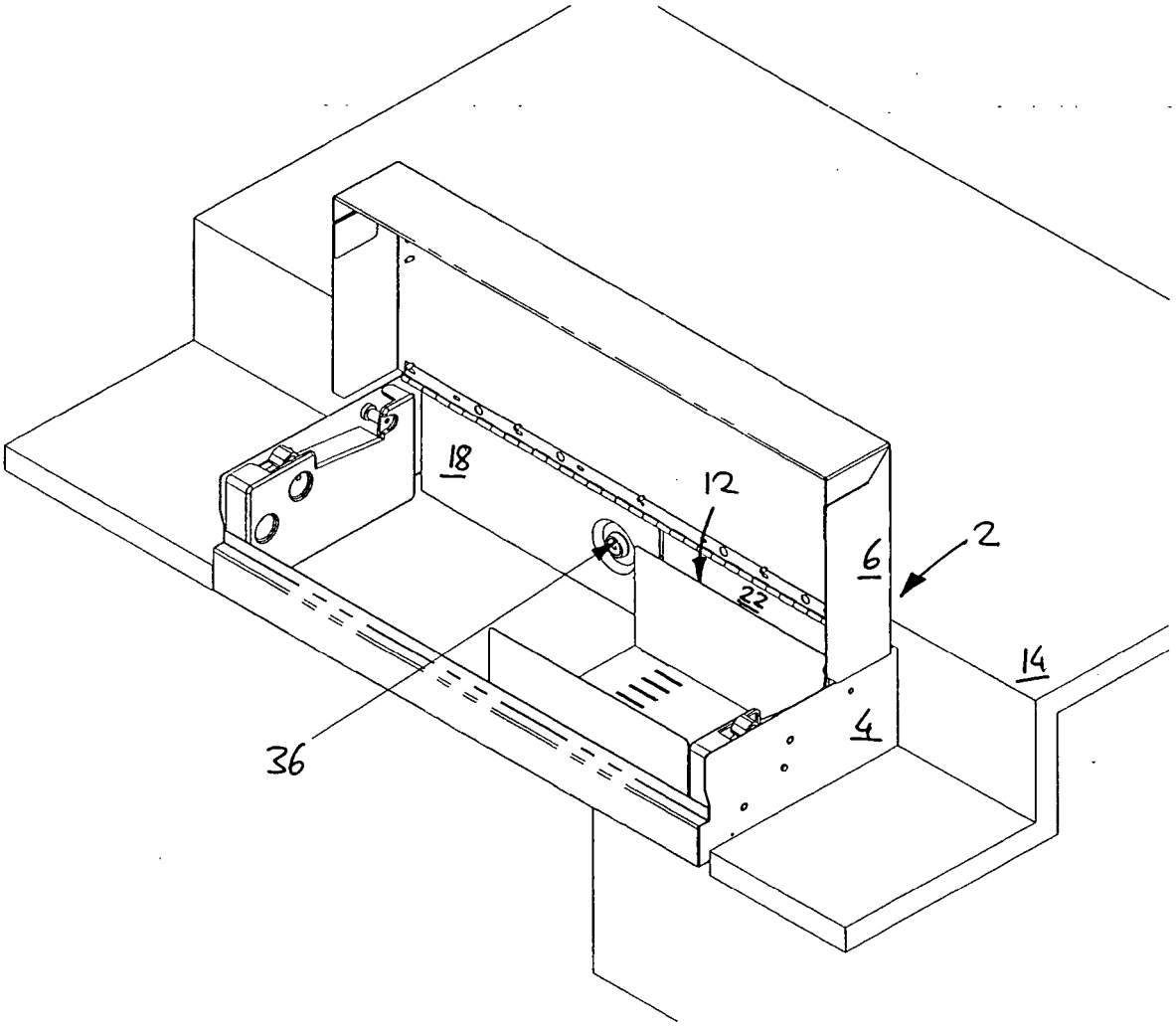

FIG. 6

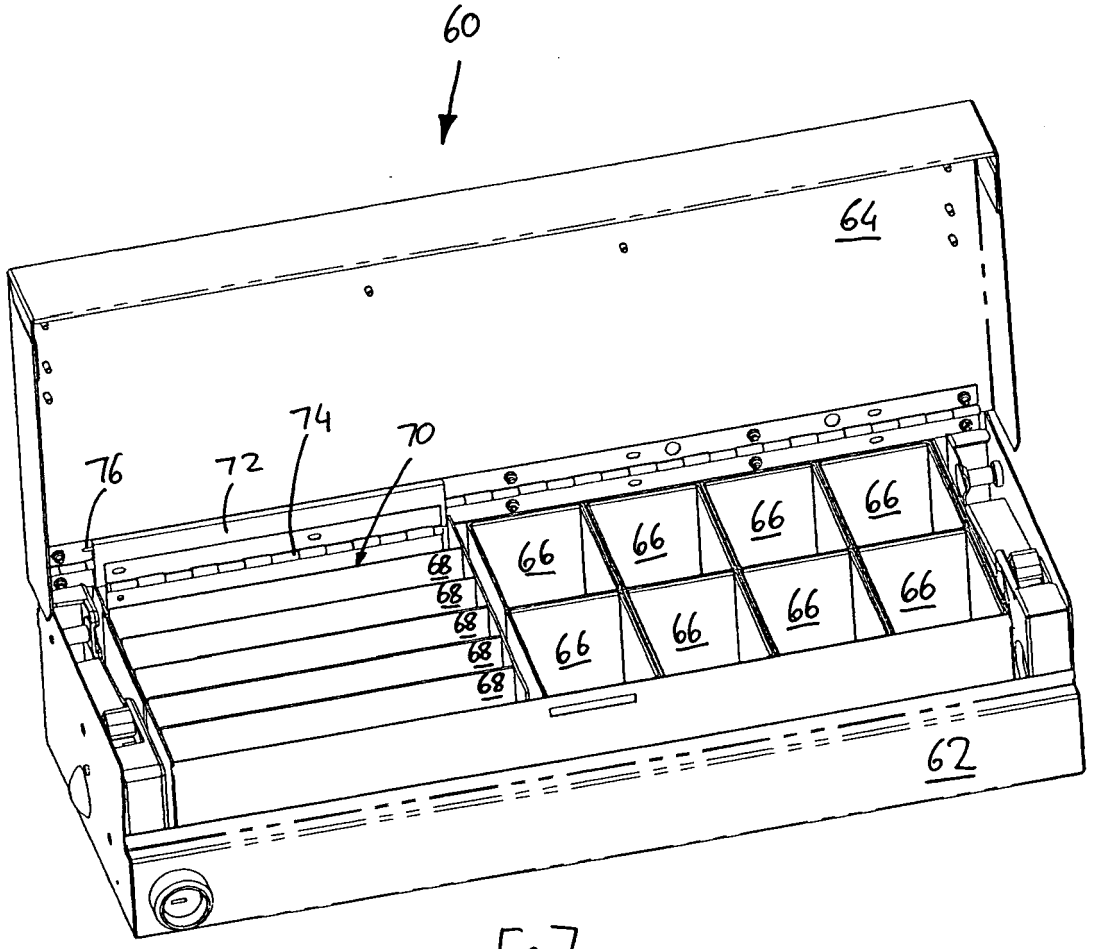

Fig. 7

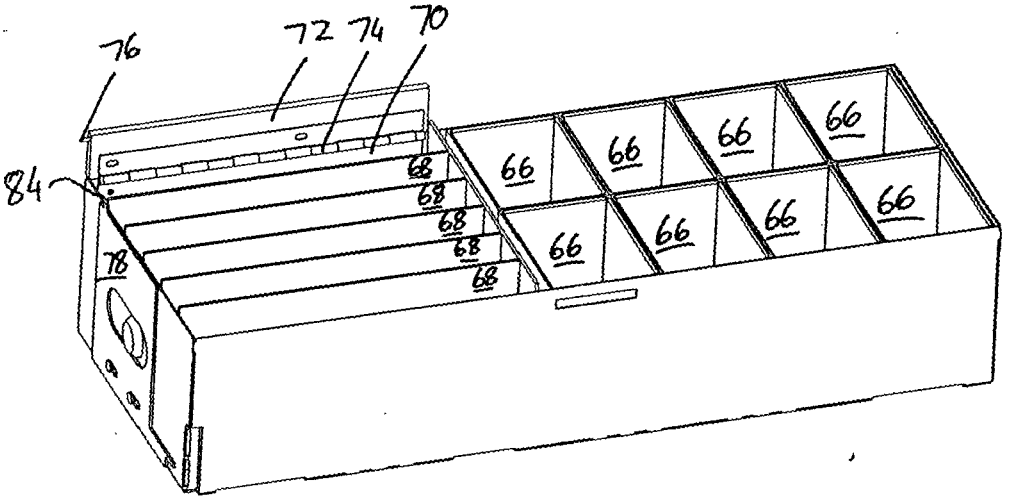

FIG. 8

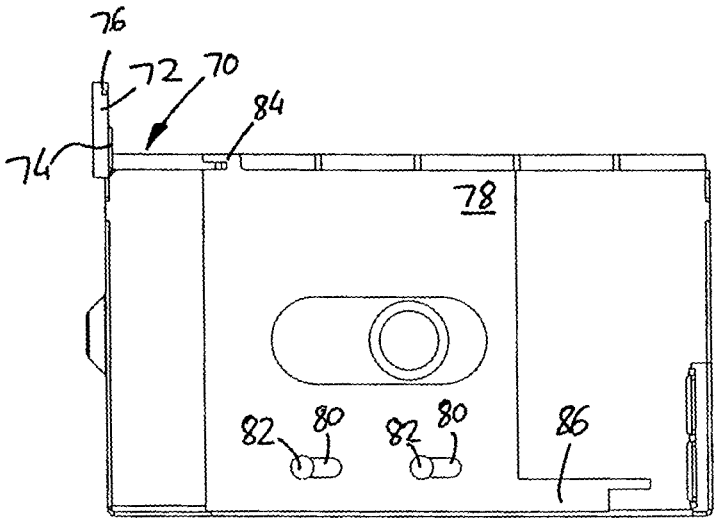

FIG. 9

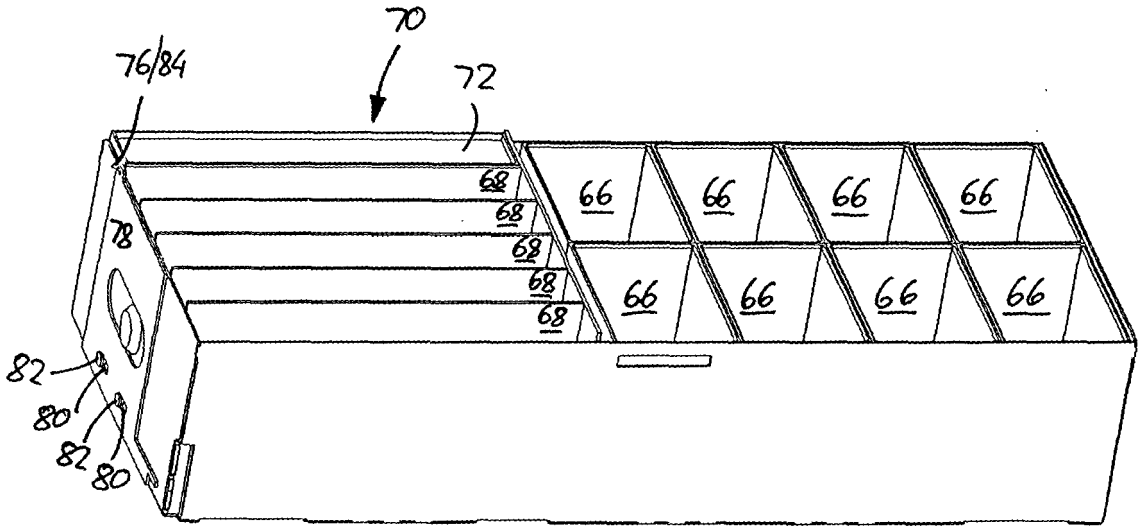

FIG. 10

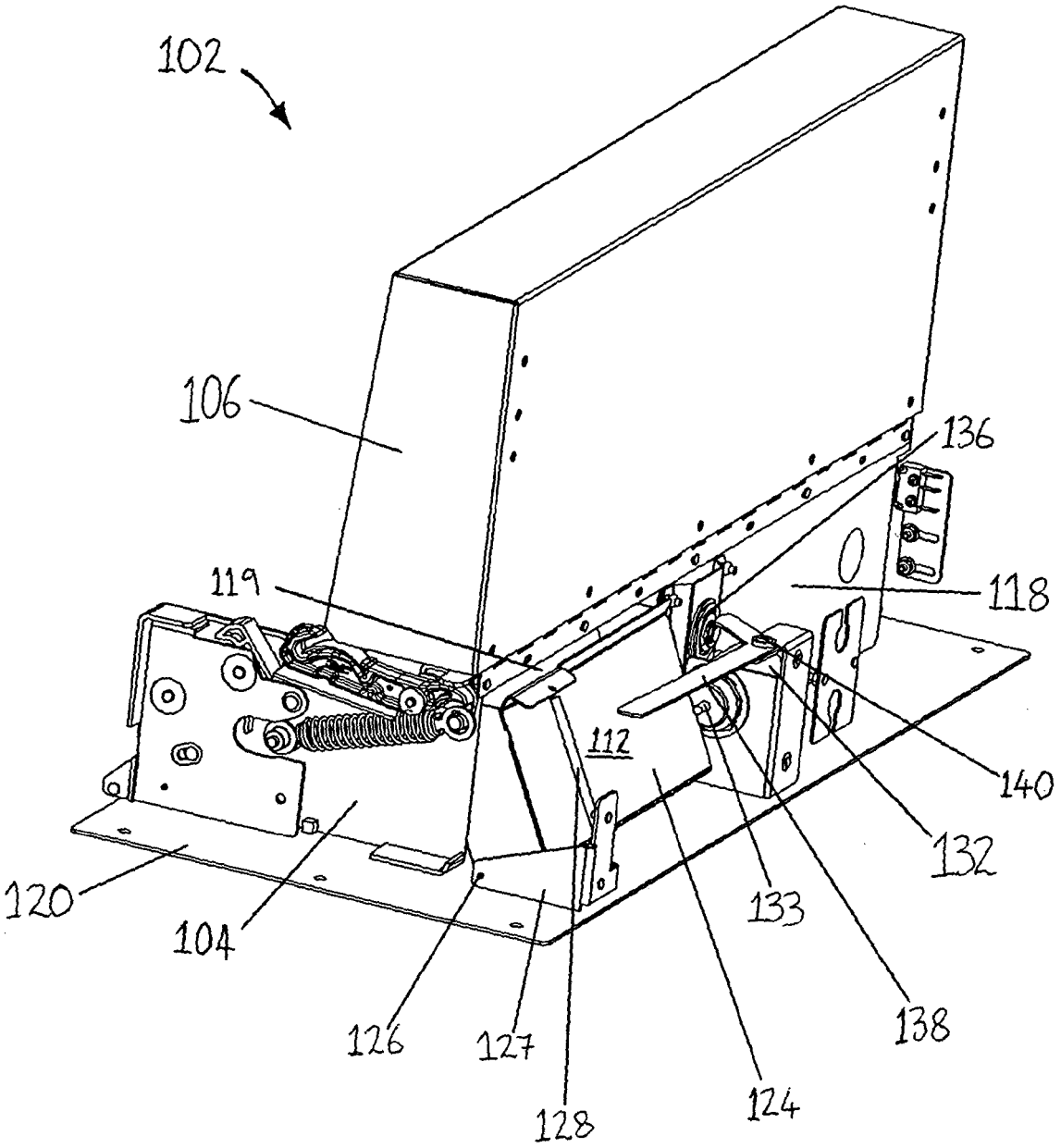

FIG. 11

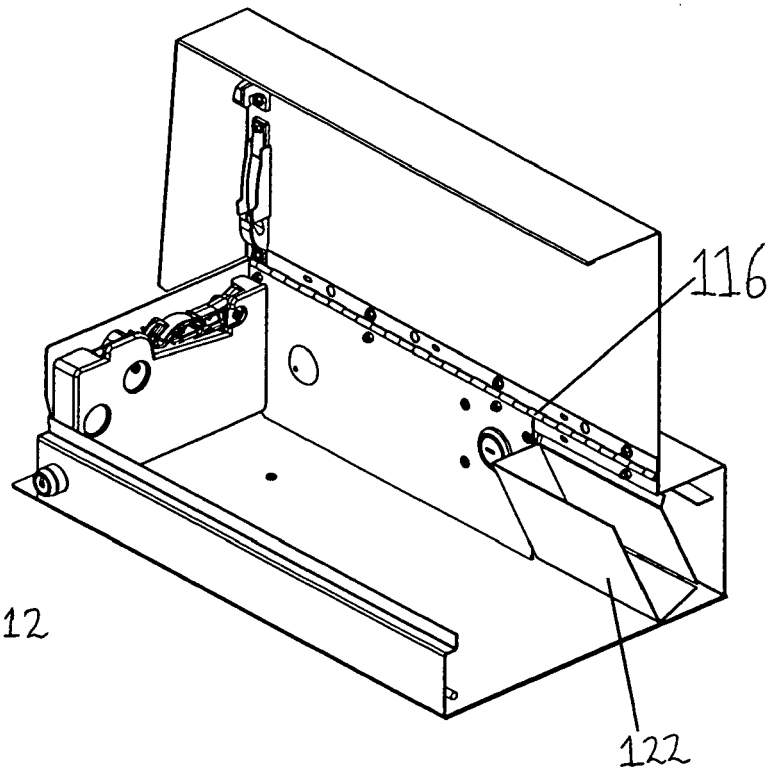

FIG. 12

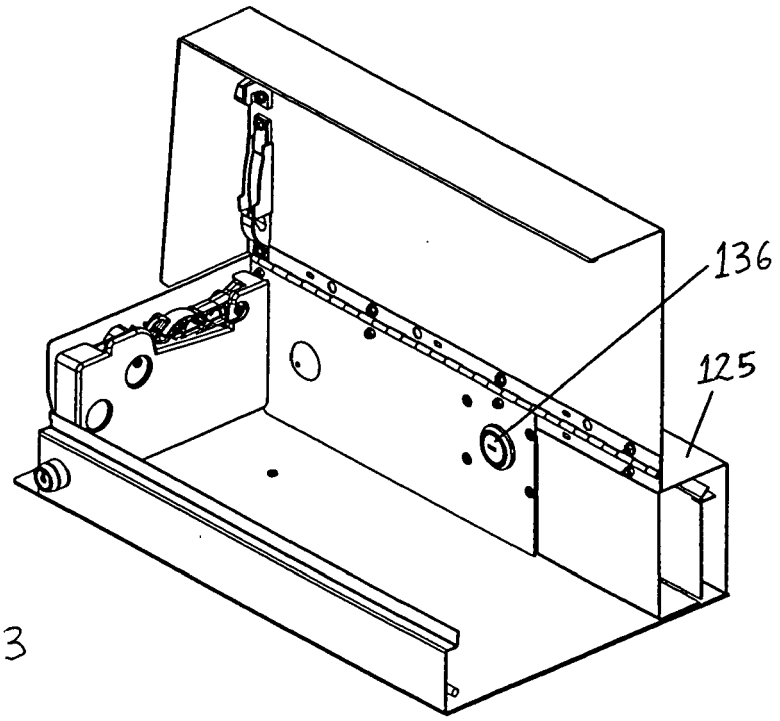

FIG. 13

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 06 25 5314

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X	FR 2 652 249 A1 (PARISSE PAUL) 29 March 1991 (1991-03-29) * page 1, line 29 - page 2, line 21 * * page 4, line 4 - page 8, line 36; figures 1-7 *	1-5, 10-12, 26,29	
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague	20 February 2007	Guivol, Ouri

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Application Number
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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague	20 February 2007	Guivol, Ouri

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X : particularly relevant if taken alone
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20-02-2007

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