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(54) **SAFETY GAFF**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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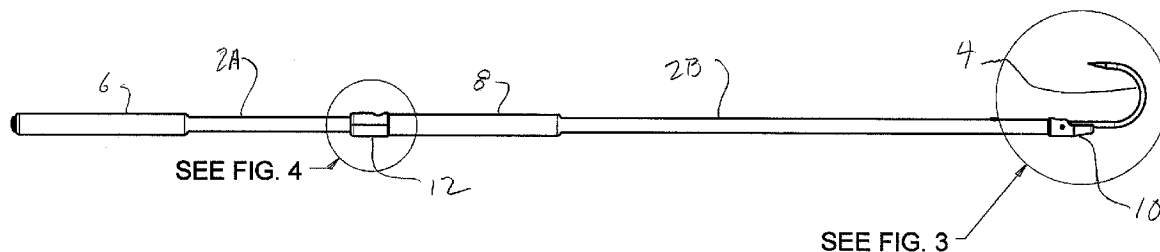
An elongated handle has a pointed fish hook rotatably affixed to one end of the handle, the hook having two operating dispositions, a first disposition wherein the hook is open for gaffing purposes and a second disposition wherein the hook folded back against the handle to block the hook point for safety. A mechanism releasably secures the hook at either disposition. A button actuated mechanism releases the hook from either disposition so that the hook can be moved from one operating disposition to the other. Preferably the gaff further includes a bias for urging the hook toward its open, gaffing disposition.

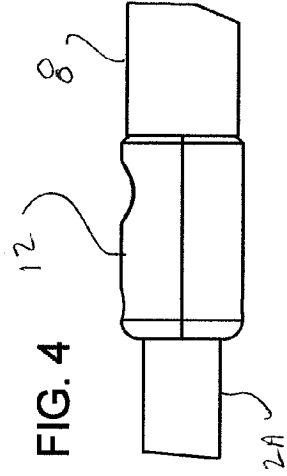
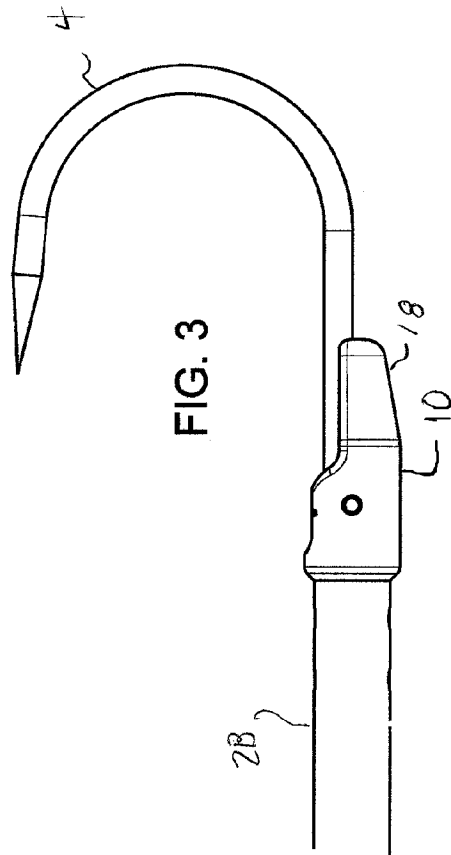
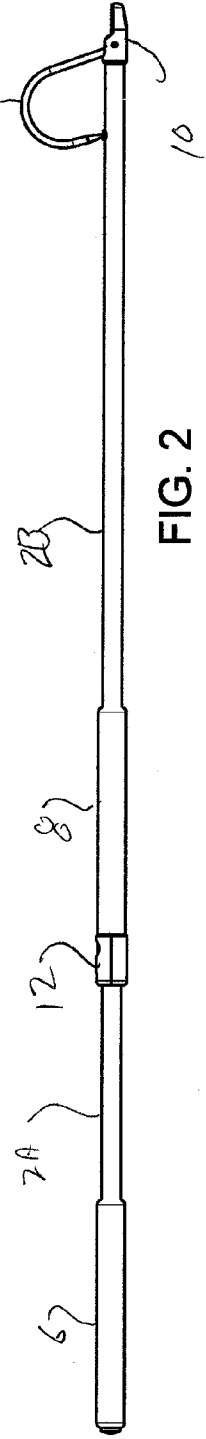
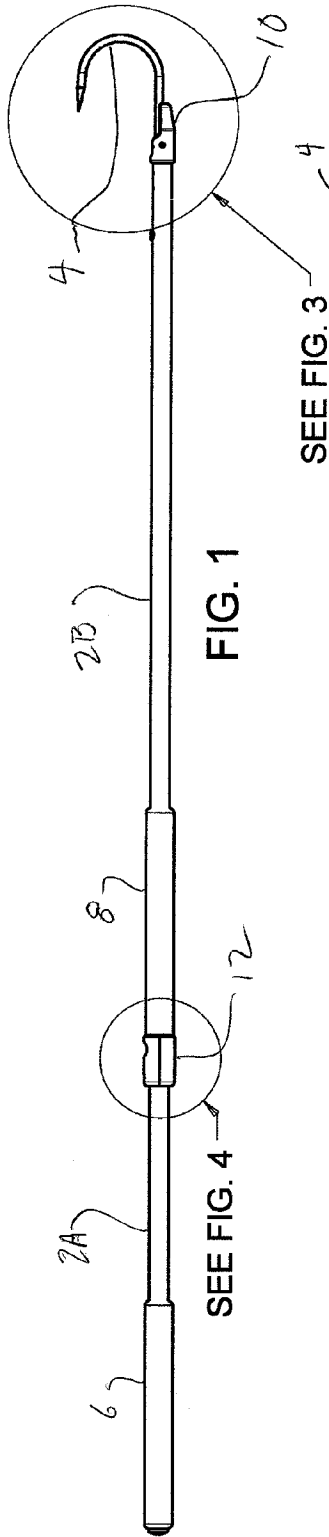
(21) Appl. No.: **12/281,471**

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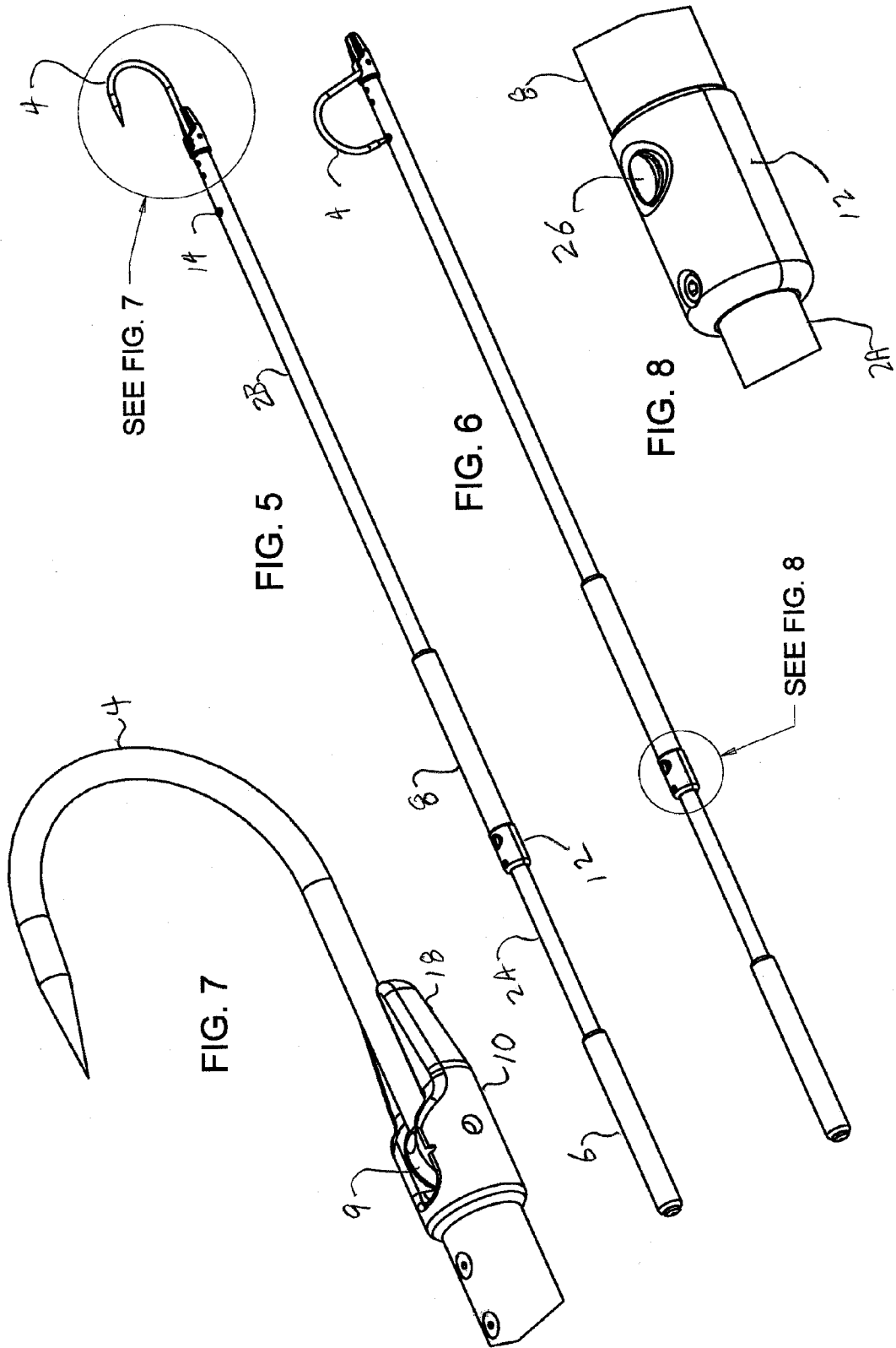
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SEE FIG. 4

SEE FIG. 3



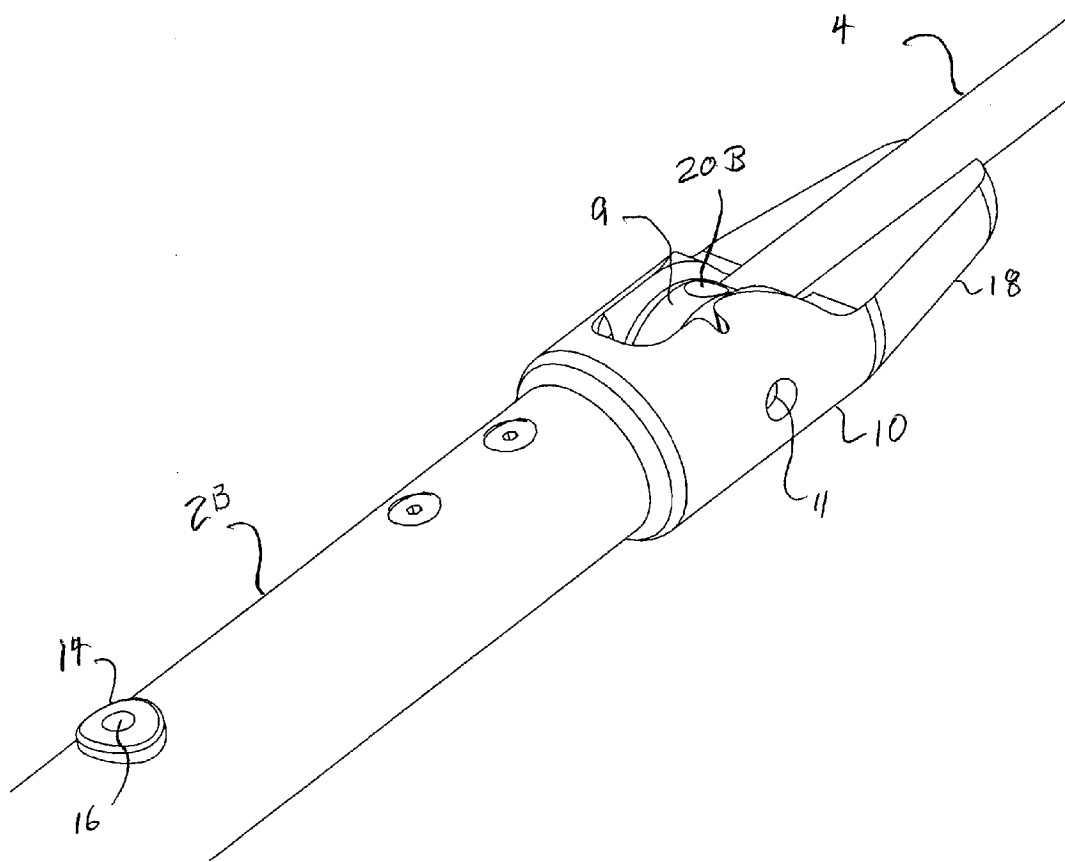


FIG. 9

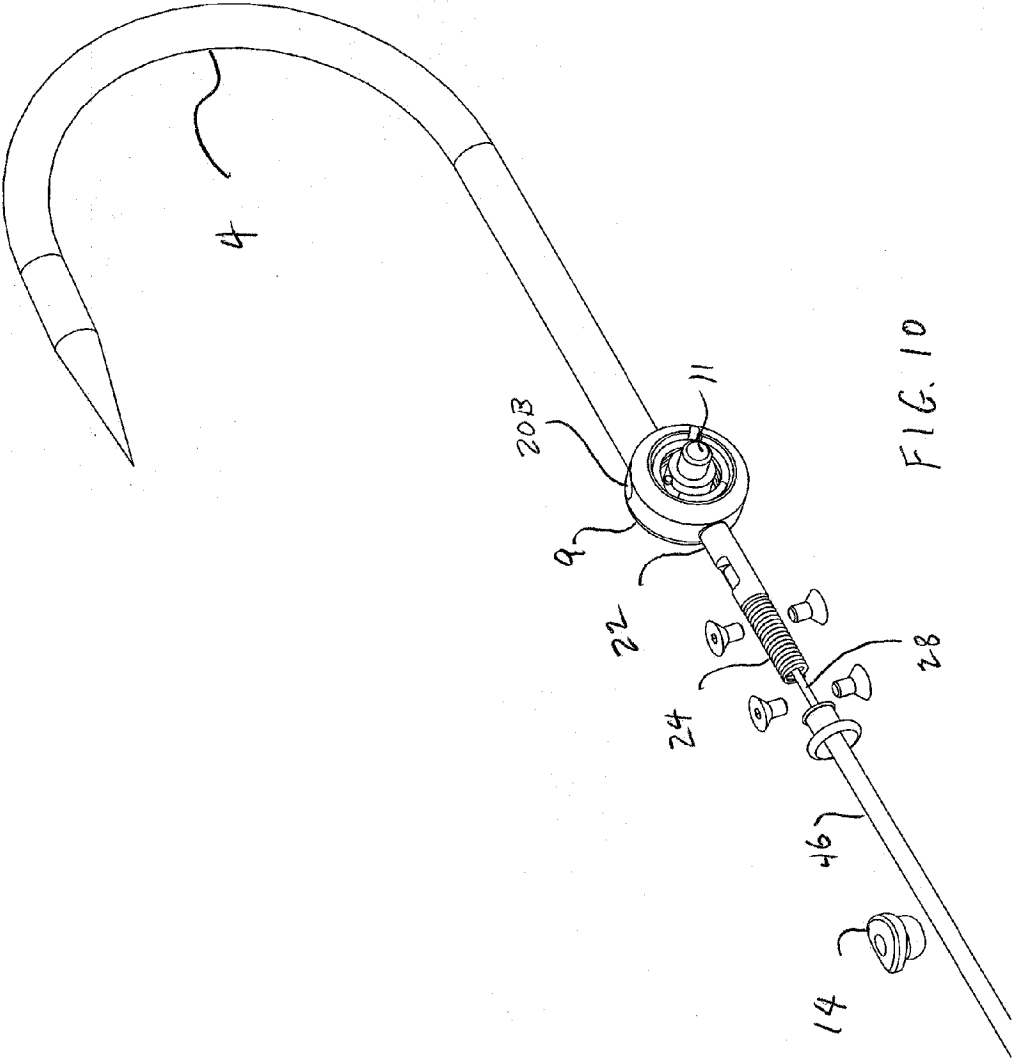


FIG. 10

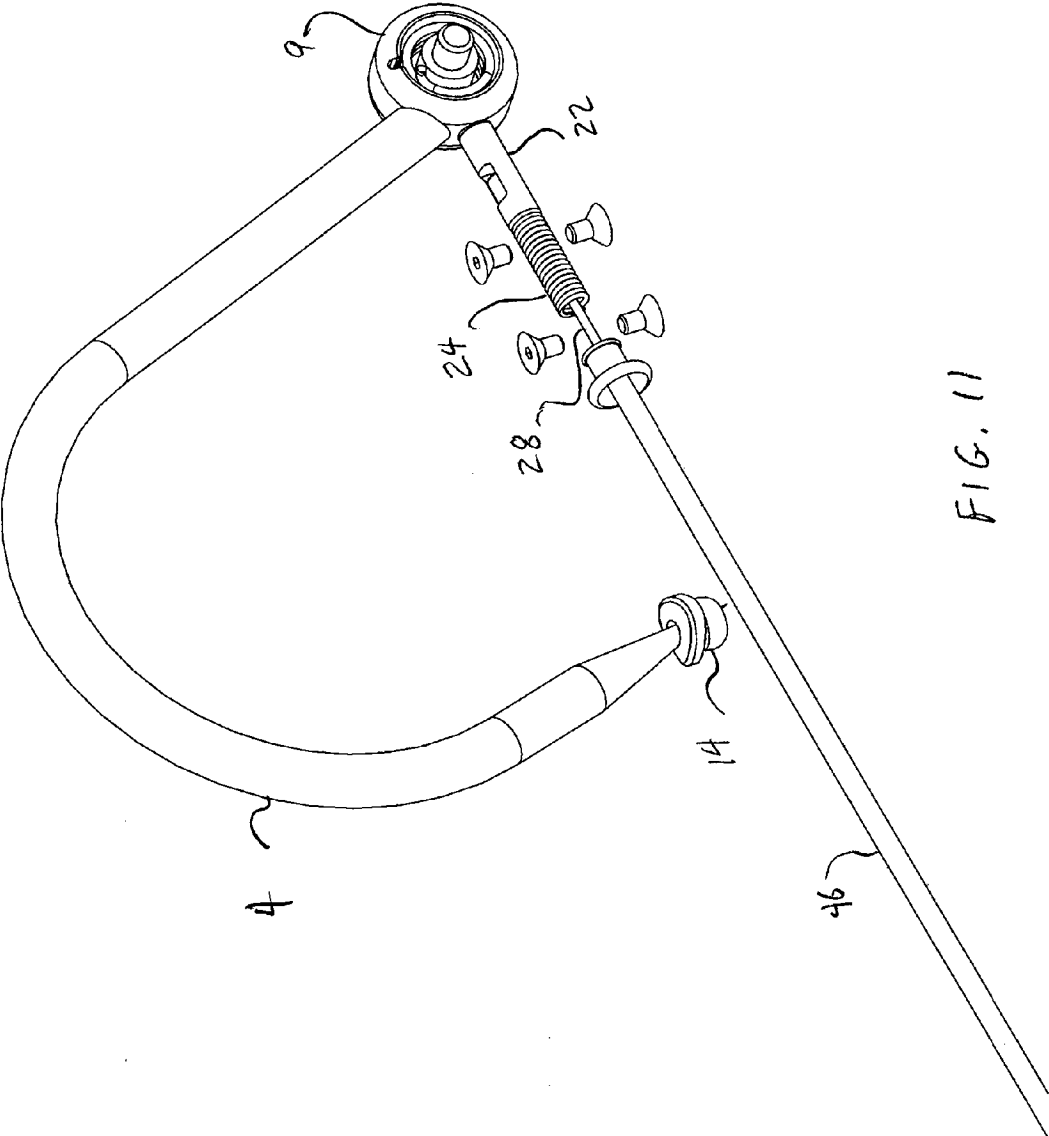


FIG. 11

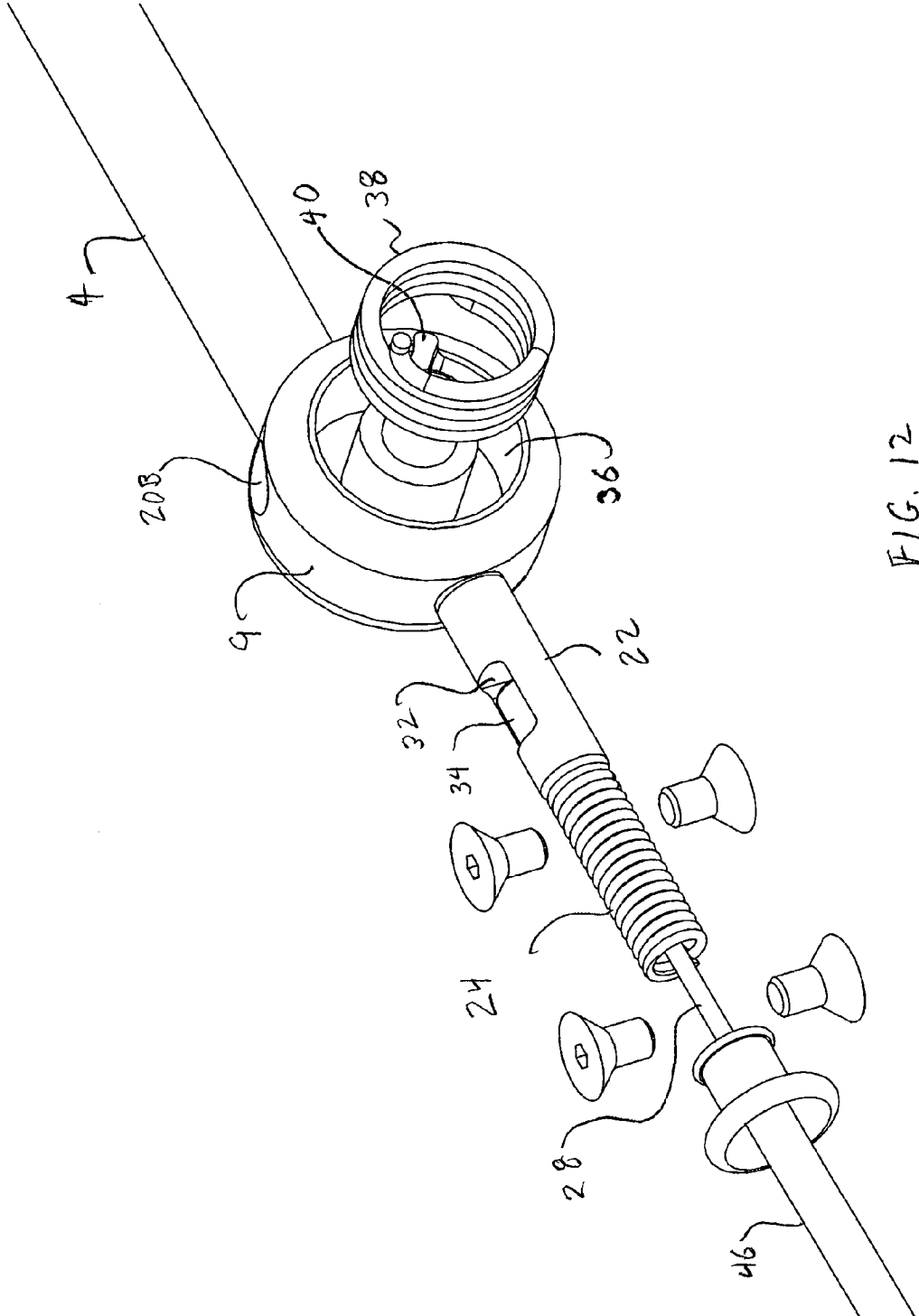


FIG. 12

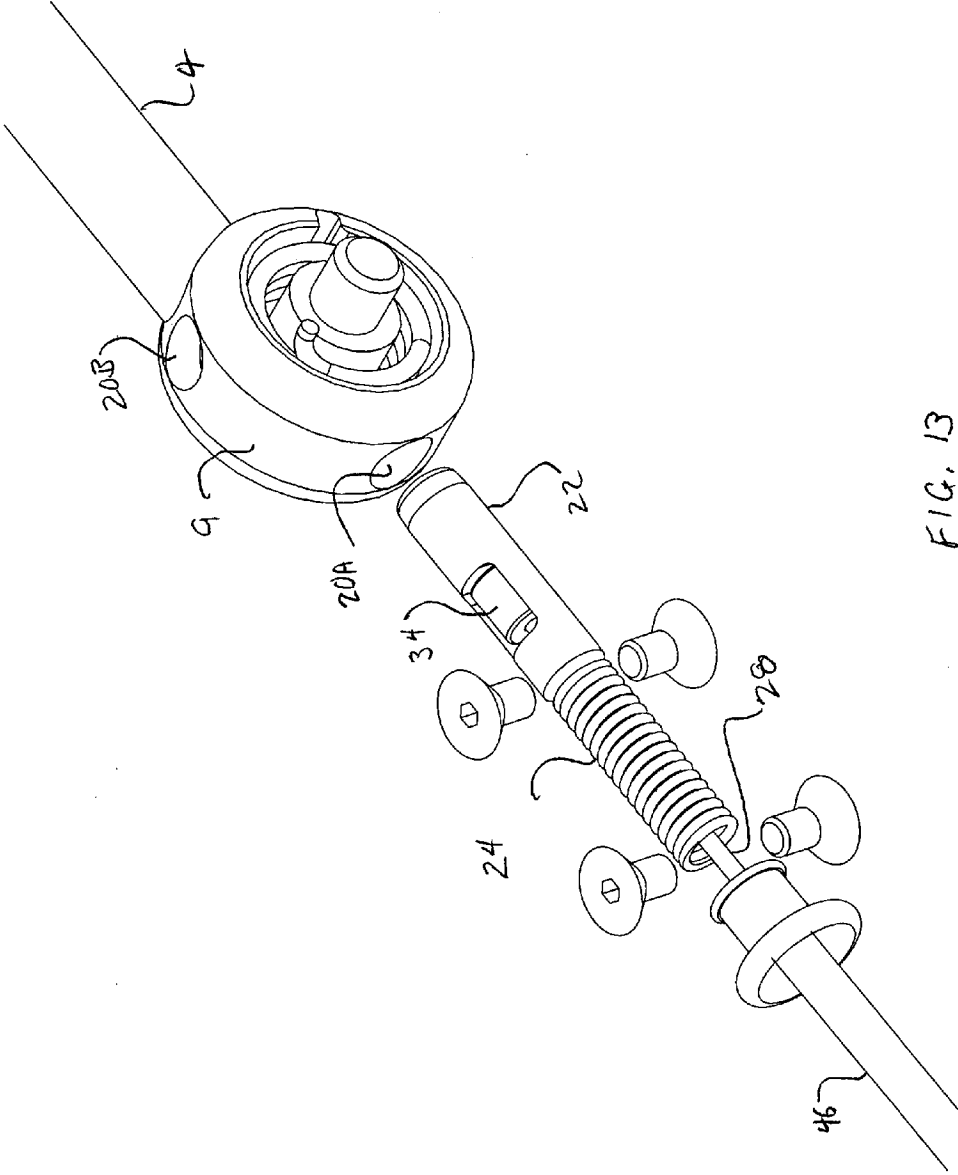


FIG. 13

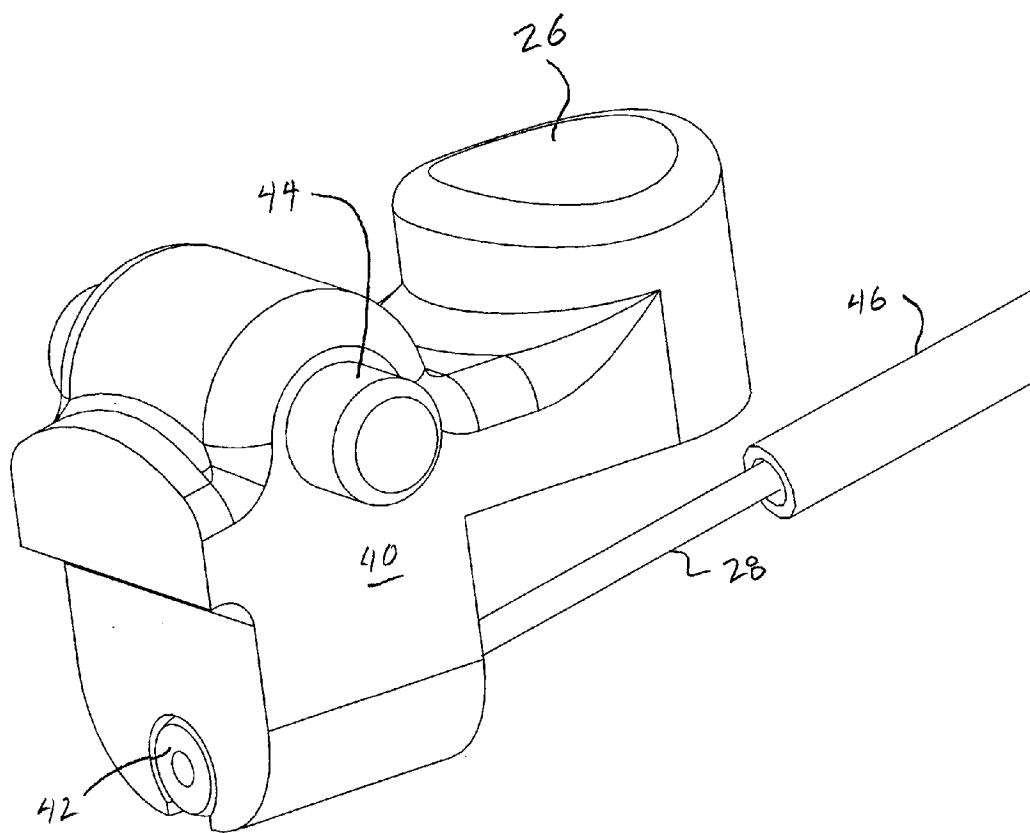


FIG. 14

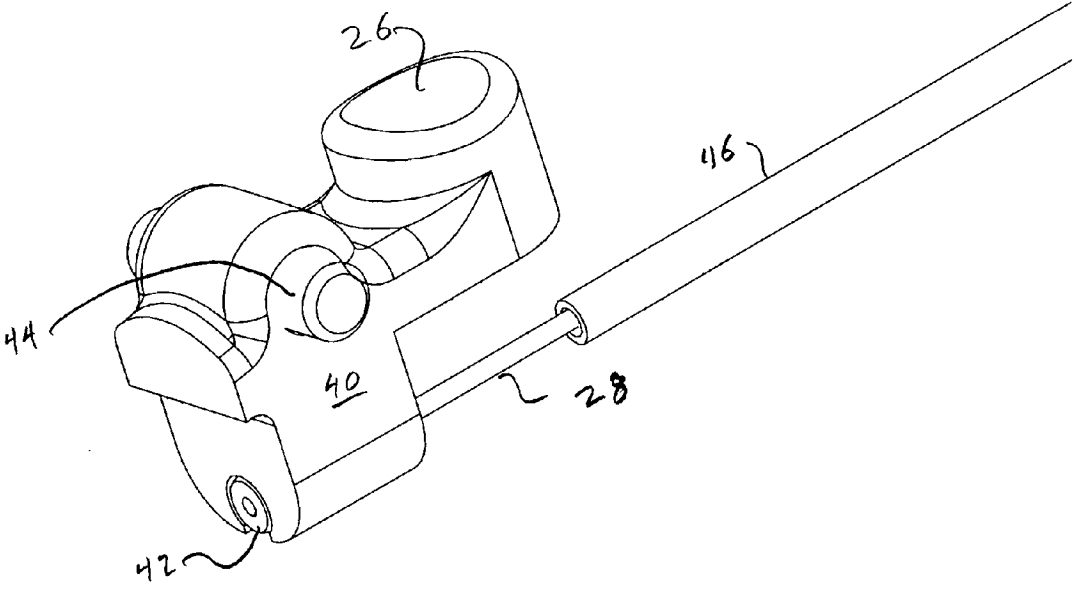


FIG. 15

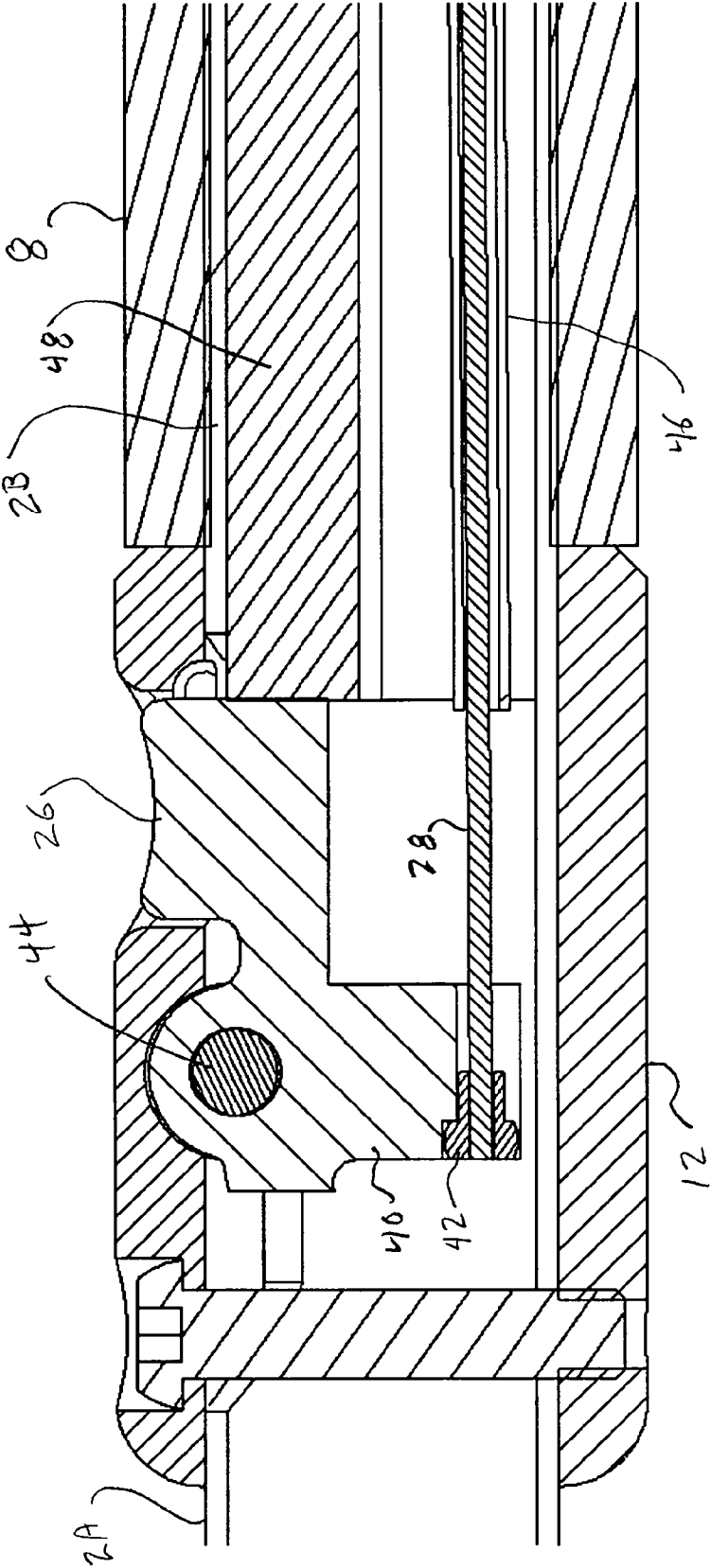
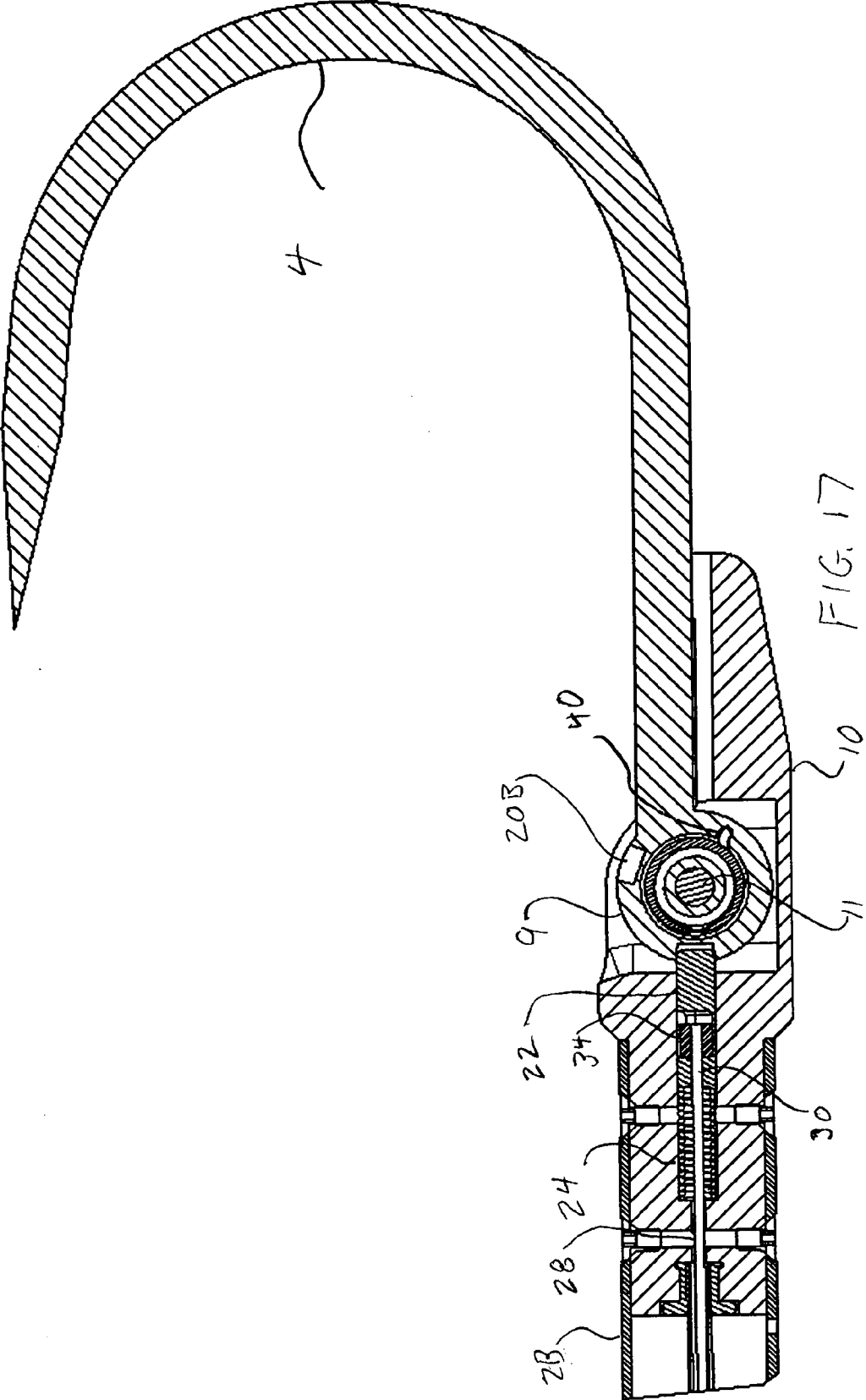
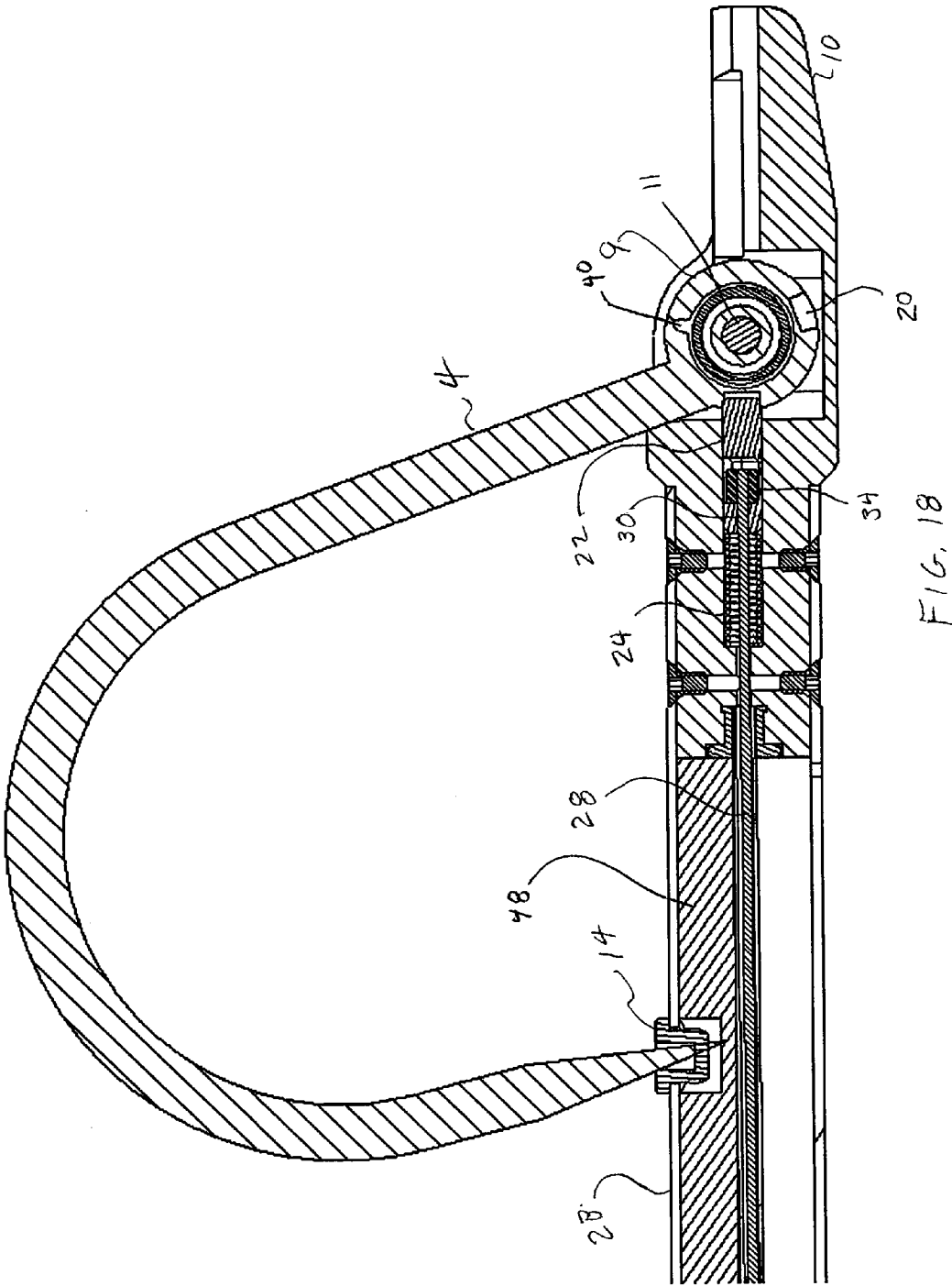


FIG. 16





SAFETY GAFF

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates in general to fishing gaffs (as defined below), and in particular to a fishing gaff having a hook that can be selectively folded back upon the gaff's handle thereby blocking the sharp point of the hook in order to prevent injury from inadvertent encounters with the hook point. As used herein the terms "fishing gaff" or "gaff" refer to a steel or comparably strong, generally U-shaped hook having a sharply pointed end, typically barbed, which hook is affixed to generally an elongated handle, and used for landing large fish.

[0002] There are obvious advantages to having a gaff with a hook that can be selectively and securely folded back upon the gaff handle to block the hook point. The most significant advantage is that when the hook is securely folded, the chances of someone accidentally being jabbed or scraped by the hook point are reduced to effectively zero. Other advantages include preventing the hook's point from catching on things other than human flesh.

[0003] Other advantages and attributes of this invention will be readily discernable upon a reading of the text hereinafter.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] An object of this invention is to provide a gaff with a hook that can be selectively and securely folded back upon the gaff handle to block the hook point.

[0005] A further object of this invention is to provide a gaff with a hook having two dispositions, open for gaffing purposes and closed for safety, and a mechanism for securing the hook at both disposition, a finger actuated mechanism for releasing the hook from either disposition, and a bias for urging the hook toward its open disposition.

[0006] These objects, and other objects expressed or implied in this document, are accomplished by a fishing gaff including an elongated handle; a pointed fish hook rotatably affixed to one end of the handle, the hook having two dispositions, a first disposition wherein the hook is open for gaffing purposes and a second disposition wherein the hook is folded back against the handle to block the hook point for safety; a mechanism for releasably locking the hook at either disposition; and a finger actuated mechanism for releasing the hook from either disposition. Preferably the gaff further includes a bias for urging the hook toward its open disposition.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] FIG. 1 is a side plan view of a gaff according to this invention with its hook in an open, unfolded disposition.

[0008] FIG. 2 is a side plan view of a gaff according to this invention with its hook in a closed, folded disposition.

[0009] FIG. 3 is a detail view of the hook of FIG. 1.

[0010] FIG. 4 is a detail view of a pushbutton assembly of FIG. 1.

[0011] FIG. 5 is a pictorial view of a gaff according to this invention with its hook in an open, unfolded disposition.

[0012] FIG. 6 is a pictorial view of a gaff according to this invention with its hook in a closed, folded disposition.

[0013] FIG. 7 is a detail view of the hook of FIG. 5.

[0014] FIG. 8 is a detail view of a pushbutton assembly of FIG. 6.

[0015] FIG. 9 is a detail view of the shaft head area.

[0016] FIG. 10 is a pictorial view of the shaft head area and an open hook minus certain parts for clarity.

[0017] FIG. 11 is a pictorial view of the shaft head area and a closed hook minus certain parts for clarity.

[0018] FIG. 12 is a detail view of the hook mechanism with the torsion spring exploded out of the spring hub.

[0019] FIG. 13 is a detail view of the hook mechanism with the hook locking pin pulled out of the hub by depression of the pushbutton.

[0020] FIGS. 14 and 15 are detail views of the pushbutton outside its housing in a depressed and un-depressed state, respectively.

[0021] FIG. 16 is a partial cross-sectional view of the pushbutton and surrounding components.

[0022] FIG. 17 is a partial cross-sectional view of an open hook and its associated mechanism.

[0023] FIG. 18 is a partial cross-sectional view of a closed hook and its associated mechanism.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0024] Referring to FIGS. 1-9, a fish gaff according to this invention is illustrated to include an elongated hollow shaft having preferably, but not necessarily, two linearly aligned segments, 2A and 2B, and a fish hook 4 pivotally affixed at a head of the shaft. The shaft also preferably includes two handle grips 6 and 8, a first grip at a foot of the shaft, an end of the shaft opposite the hook, and a second grip intermediate between the first grip and the fish hook. The fish hook is U-shaped with a base end (opposite the pointed end) rigidly affixed to a hook hub 9 that can pivot between a closed disposition (FIG. 2) and an open disposition (FIG. 1) on axle pins 11 rotatably seated in a hub housing 10 affixed to the head of the shaft. Intermediate the hook and the foot of the shaft is a pushbutton housing 12, which separates the preferable two segments of the shaft. Preferably as illustrated the pushbutton housing is immediately adjacent, foot side, of the second grip 8. As best illustrated in FIGS. 2, 6 and 9, when the hook is in its closed disposition, the hook's point is seated against a resilient, e.g. rubber, pad. Preferably the pad is a grommet 14 having a central hole 16 into which the point sticks. The pad or grommet is affixed in a strategically disposed hole defined by the hollow shaft forward segment 2B. As best seen in FIG. 9, the hub housing 10 includes a forward projecting shoulder 18 that nests the hook when open and braces the hook against forces the hook normally encounters when gaffing.

[0025] Referring to FIGS. 10-13 and 17-18, the hub is disc shaped with sufficient thickness to define two spaced radial holes, 20A and 20B, that are sized to receive non-bindingly a locking pin 22 that is axially disposed and biased, preferably by a compression spring 24, toward the rim of the hub. In operation, the pin is only axially movable with respect to the gaff shaft, and when the pin is disposed in either of the hub rim holes, 20A or 20B, the hub, and consequently the hook, is locked in place. The rim holes are strategically disposed to lock the hook in either of the open or closed dispositions but not in between. As will be explained below, the pin is selectively pulled out of the rim holes by a user pushing a button 26 disposed in the button housing 12, and the operative link between the pin 24 and the button 26 is a cable 28, and the pin defines an axial central hole 30 through which a fore end of

the cable extends and a swage chamber **32** to accommodate a swage **34** that is crimped to the fore end of the cable to secure the cable fore end to the pin.

[0026] Referring again to FIGS. **10-13** and **17-18**, the hook hub **9** defines an annular, concentric space **36** into which is disposed a torsion spring **38** one end of which is dogged in a transverse groove defined by the hub within the space **26**, the other end of which is dogged in a slot or hole defined by the hub housing **10**. The torsion spring is installed so as to bias the hub to align rim hole **20A** with the locking pin **22**. In other words the spring biases the hook to be in its open disposition.

[0027] Referring to FIGS. **8** and **14-16**, a pushbutton **26** is illustrated to preferably be an integral part of a L-shaped lever **40** one leg of which is connected to the cable **28** by crimped swage **42** lodged in a hole defined by the leg. The opposite leg is the pushbutton **26**, and the lever pivots at the junction of the legs via pin **44** that is rotatably seated in the housing **12**. FIGS. **14** and **15** illustrate the action on the cable when the button is pushed (FIG. **14**) and released or not pushed (FIG. **15**). As can be seen, when the button is pushed the cable is pulled rearward or in an aft direction. This pulls the pin **22** rearward releasing the hook hub, and the torsion spring causes the hook to rotate to its open disposition. To close the hook, the button is again pushed and the user then forces the hook to close until the hook point is seated in the grommet **14**, and the user releases the button which in turn releases the locking pin to seat in hole **20A**, thereby locking the hook in the closed position.

[0028] Referring to the Figures, the cable preferably has a sheath **46** that is used by inserts **48** in the hollow shaft to guide the cable and to prevent it from swinging against the shaft.

[0029] The foregoing description and drawings were given for illustrative purposes only, it being understood that the invention is not limited to the embodiments disclosed, but is intended to embrace any and all alternatives, equivalents, modifications and rearrangements of elements falling within the scope of the invention as defined by the following claims.

I claim:

1. A fishing gaff comprising:
 - (a) an elongated shaft;
 - (b) a pointed fish hook rotatably affixed to one end of the shaft, the hook having two dispositions, a first disposition wherein the hook is open for gaffing purposes and a second disposition wherein the hook is folded back against the shaft to block the hook point for safety;
 - (c) a mechanism for releasably locking the hook at both dispositions; and
 - (d) a finger actuated mechanism for releasing the hook from either disposition.
2. The fishing gaff according to claim **1** further comprising a bias for urging the hook toward its open disposition.
3. The fishing gaff according to claim **1** further comprising two shaft handle grips, a first grip at a foot of the shaft and a second grip intermediate between the first grip and the hook.
4. The fishing gaff according to claim **2** further comprising two shaft handle grips, a first grip at a foot of the shaft and a second grip intermediate between the first grip and the hook.
5. The fishing gaff according to claim **1** wherein the hook is U-shaped with a base end rigidly affixed to a hub that can pivot between the first disposition and the second disposition on axle pins rotatably seated in a hub housing affixed to the head of the shaft.

6. The fishing gaff according to claim **2** wherein the hook is U-shaped with a base end rigidly affixed to a hub that can pivot between the first disposition and the second disposition on axle pins rotatably seated in a hub housing affixed to the head of the shaft.

7. The fishing gaff according to claim **3** wherein the hook is U-shaped with a base end rigidly affixed to a hub that can pivot between the first disposition and the second disposition on axle pins rotatably seated in a hub housing affixed to the head of the shaft.

8. The fishing gaff according to claim **1** wherein the hook's point is seated against a resilient pad when the hook is in its second disposition.

9. The fishing gaff according to claim **8** wherein the pad comprises a grommet including a central hole into which the point sticks.

10. The fishing gaff according to claim **1** further comprising a forward projecting shoulder that braces the hook against forces the hook normally encounters when gaffing.

11. The fishing gaff according to claim **5** wherein the shaft is hollow and the hub is disc shaped and defines two spaced radial holes that are sized to receive non-bindingly a locking pin that is axially disposed and biased toward the rim of the hub, the pin being only axially movable within the hollow of the shaft and when the pin is disposed in either of the hub's radial holes, the hub, and consequently the hook, is locked in place, the radial holes being disposed to lock the hook in either the open or closed dispositions but not in between.

12. The fishing gaff according to claim **6** wherein the shaft is hollow and the hub is disc shaped and defines two spaced radial holes that are sized to receive non-bindingly a locking pin that is axially disposed and biased toward the rim of the hub, the pin being only axially movable within the hollow of the shaft and when the pin is disposed in either of the hub's radial holes, the hub, and consequently the hook, is locked in place, the radial holes being disposed to lock the hook in either the open or closed dispositions but not in between.

13. The fishing gaff according to claim **7** wherein the shaft is hollow and the hub is disc shaped and defines two spaced radial holes that are sized to receive non-bindingly a locking pin that is axially disposed and biased toward the rim of the hub, the pin being only axially movable within the hollow of the shaft and when the pin is disposed in either of the hub's radial holes, the hub, and consequently the hook, is locked in place, the radial holes being disposed to lock the hook in either the open or closed dispositions but not in between.

14. The fishing gaff according to claim **11** wherein the hub defines an annular, concentric space into which is disposed a torsion spring, the torsion spring biasing the hub to align its radial hole corresponding with the hook in its first disposition with the pin.

15. The fishing gaff according to claim **12** wherein the hub defines an annular, concentric space into which is disposed a torsion spring, the torsion spring biasing the hub to align its radial hole corresponding with the hook in its first disposition with the pin.

16. The fishing gaff according to claim **13** wherein the hub defines an annular, concentric space into which is disposed a torsion spring, the torsion spring biasing the hub to align its radial hole corresponding with the hook in its first disposition with the pin.

17. The fishing gaff according to claim **11** further comprising an axially running cable disposed in the hollow of the shaft and connected to the pin, when pulled rearward, i.e.

toward the foot of the shaft, the cable pulling the pin from the hub and releasing the hub to rotate in either direction.

18. The fishing gaff according to claim **12** further comprising an axially running cable disposed in the hollow of the shaft and connected to the pin, when pulled rearward, i.e. toward the foot of the shaft, the cable pulling the pin from the hub and releasing the hub to rotate in either direction.

19. The fishing gaff according to claim **17** further comprising a lever pivotally affixed to the shaft, a leg of the lever being connected to the cable, another leg of the lever terminating in a pushbutton accessible to a user's fingers, application of

some amount of force to the pushbutton applying sufficient rearward tension to the cable to release the pin from the hub.

20. The fishing gaff according to claim **18** further comprising an L-shaped lever pivotally affixed to the shaft, a leg of the lever being connected to the cable, another leg of the lever terminating in a pushbutton accessible to a user's fingers, application of some amount of force to the pushbutton applying sufficient rearward tension to the cable to release the pin from the hub.

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