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(54) **SAFE GAMING, PERSONAL SELECTION OF SELF-LIMITING OPTION**

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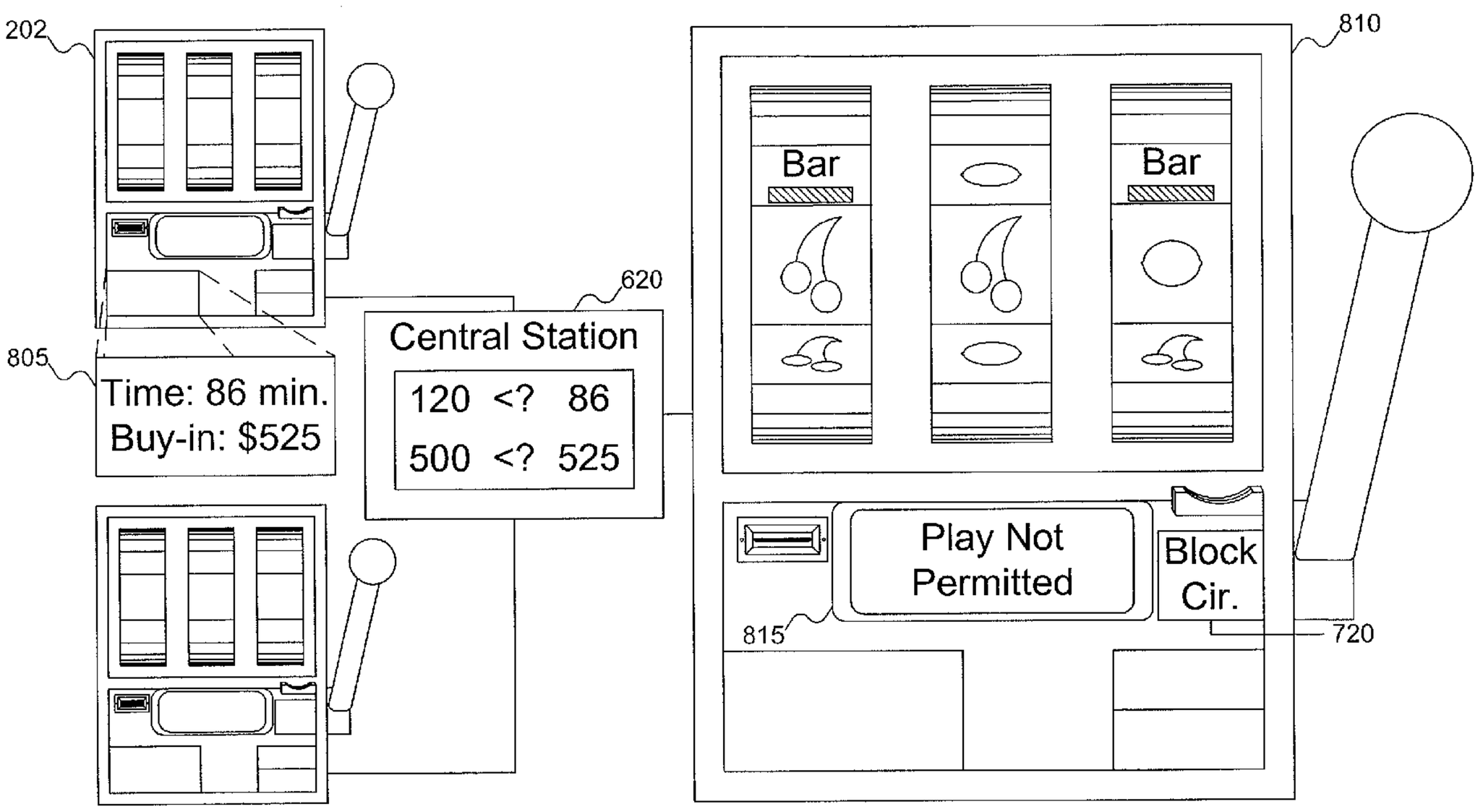
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

To self-limit play, a player selects a trigger event and an associated action. During play, the game is monitored for the trigger event. If the trigger event occurs, the associated action is performed.



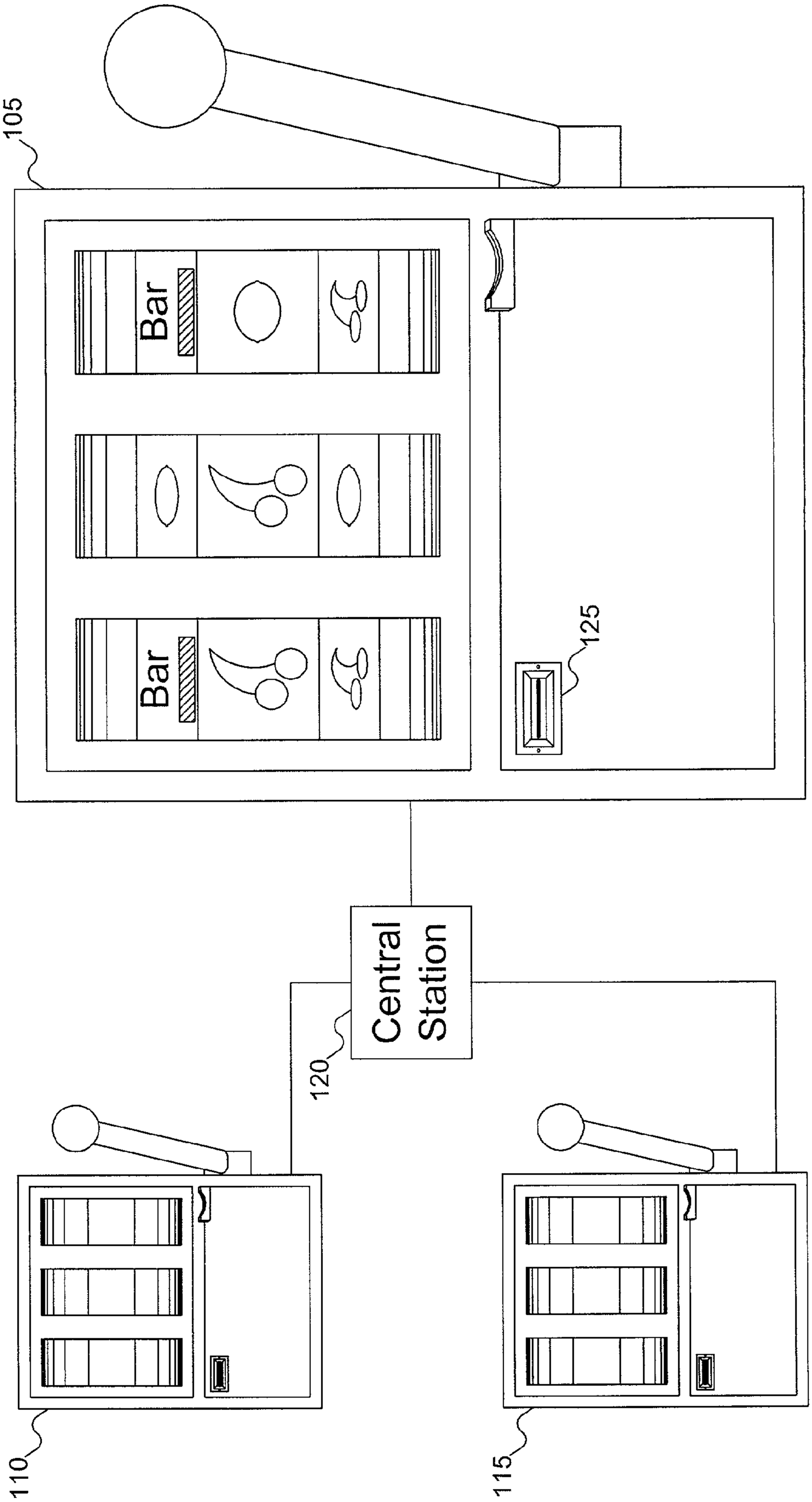


FIG. 1
(Prior Art)

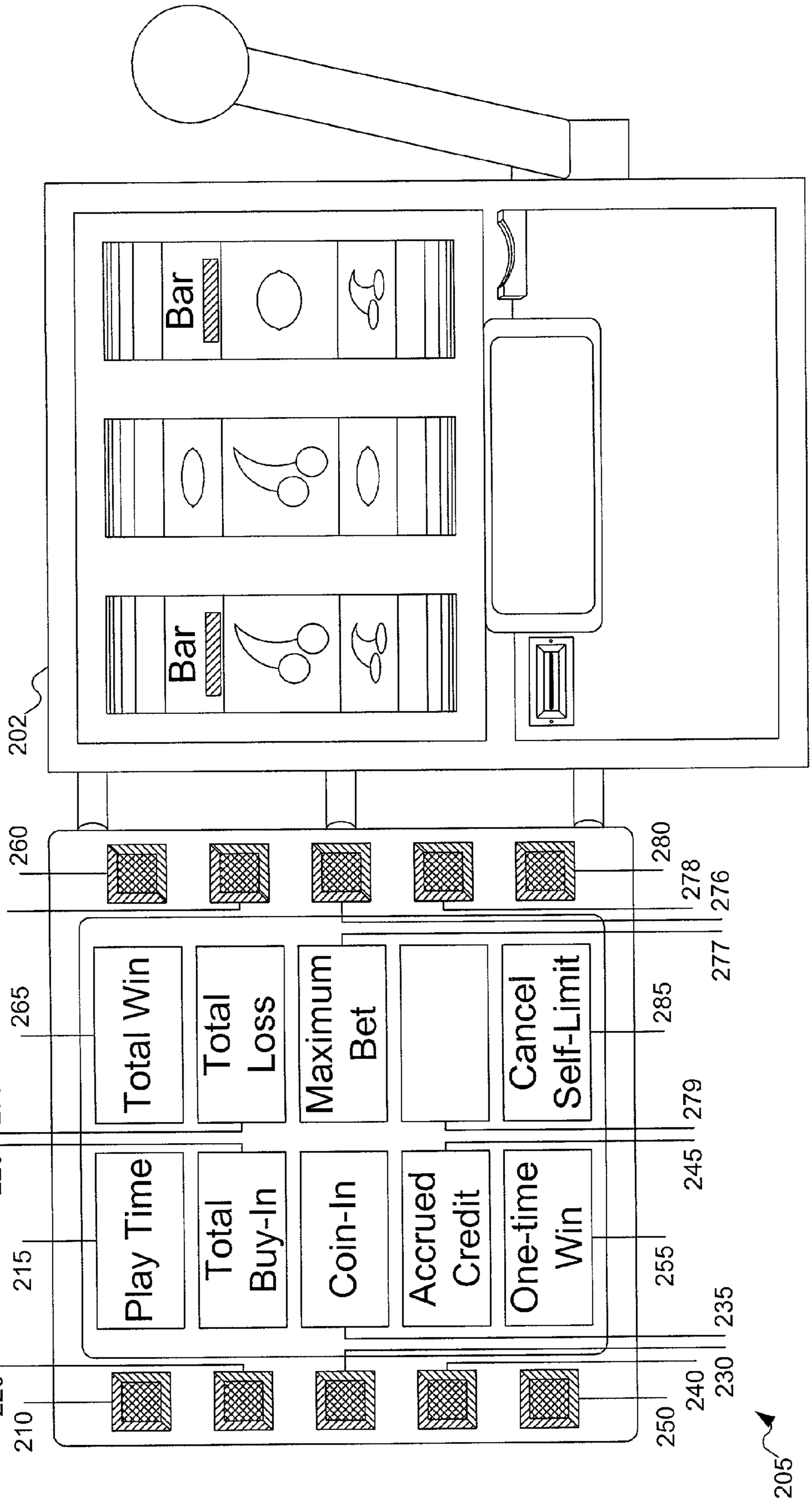

202
Bar
Bar
Bar
260
270
280
278
276
277
265
285
275
279
225
245
215
255
235
220
240
230
210
250
205
Total Win
Total Loss
Maximum Bet
Cancel Self-Limit
Play Time
Total Buy-In
Coin-In
Accrued Credit
One-time Win

FIG. 2

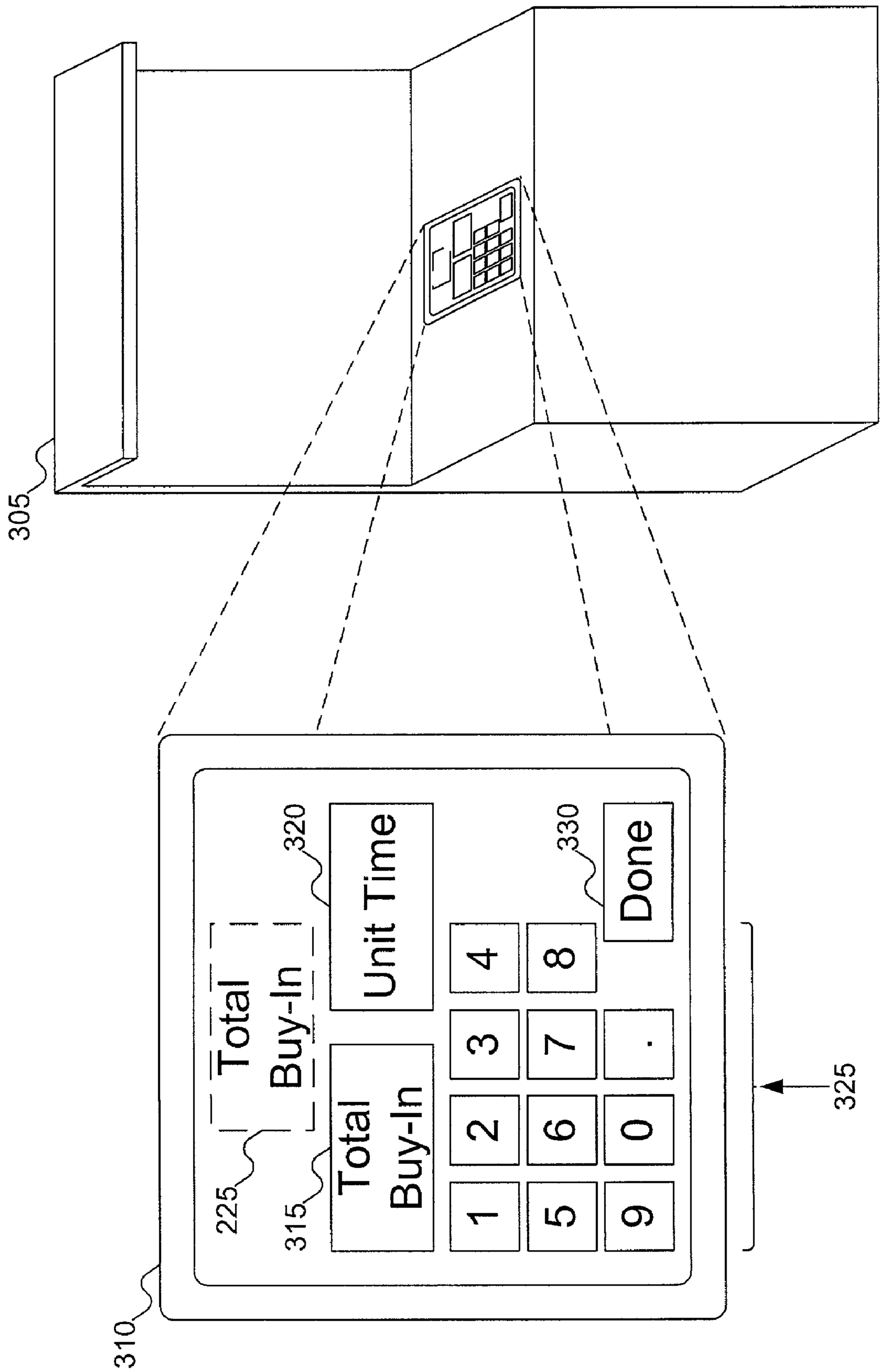

305
310
225
315
320
330
325
Total
Buy-In
Unit Time
Done
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0
.

FIG. 3

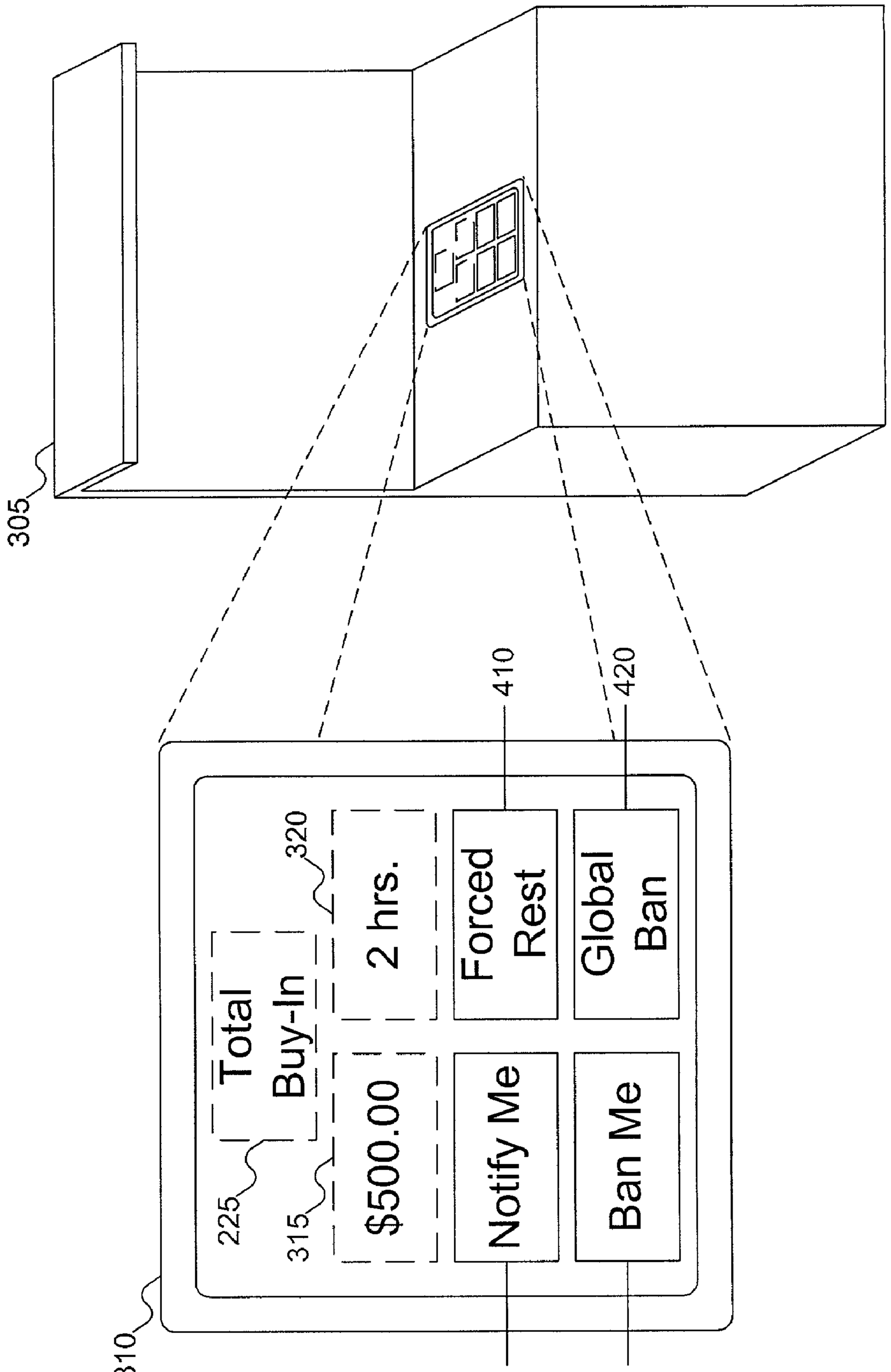

305
310
225
315
320
Total
Buy-In
$500.00
2 hrs.
Notify Me
Ban Me
Forced Rest
Global Ban
405
410
415
420

FIG. 4

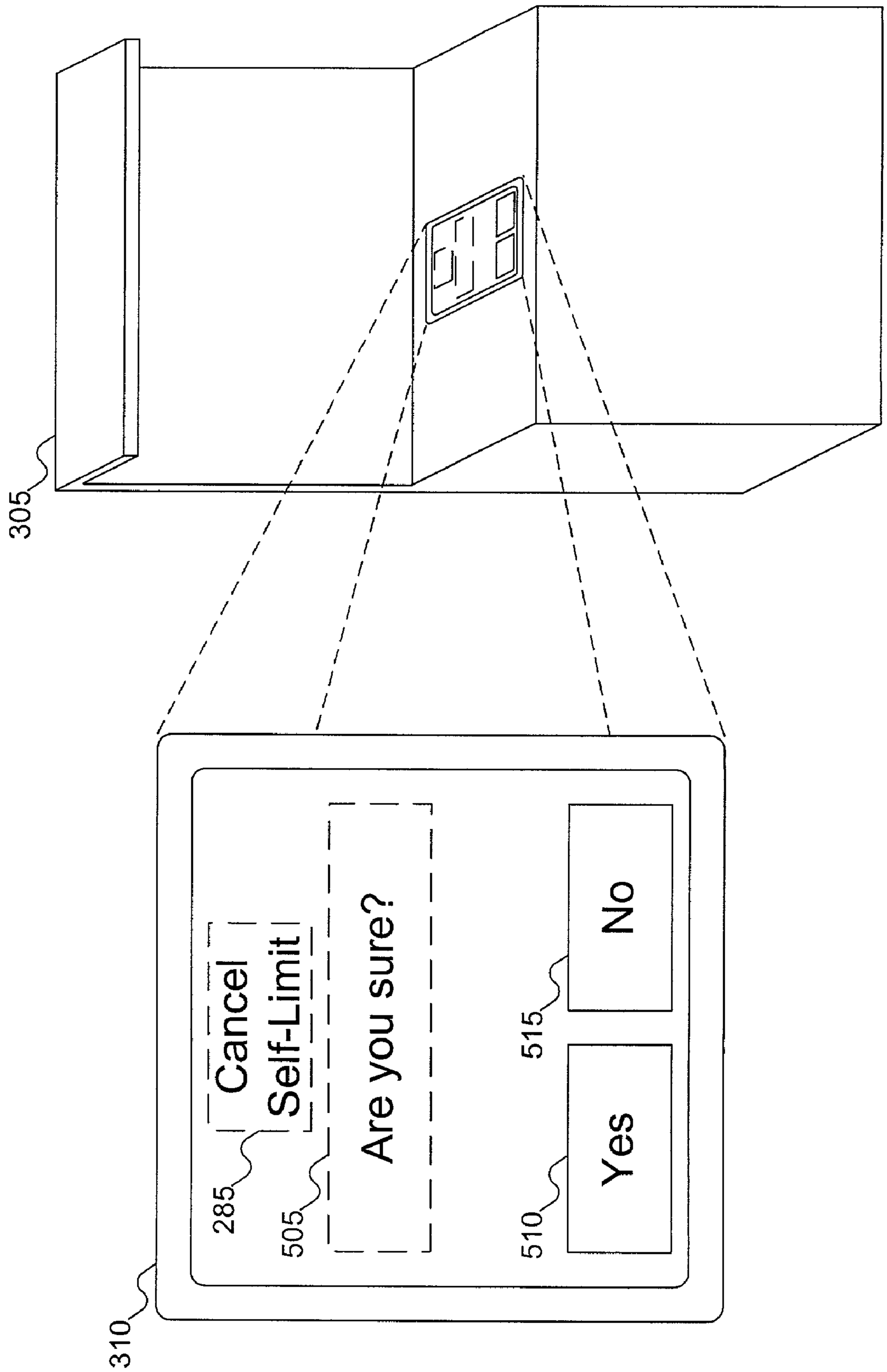


FIG. 5

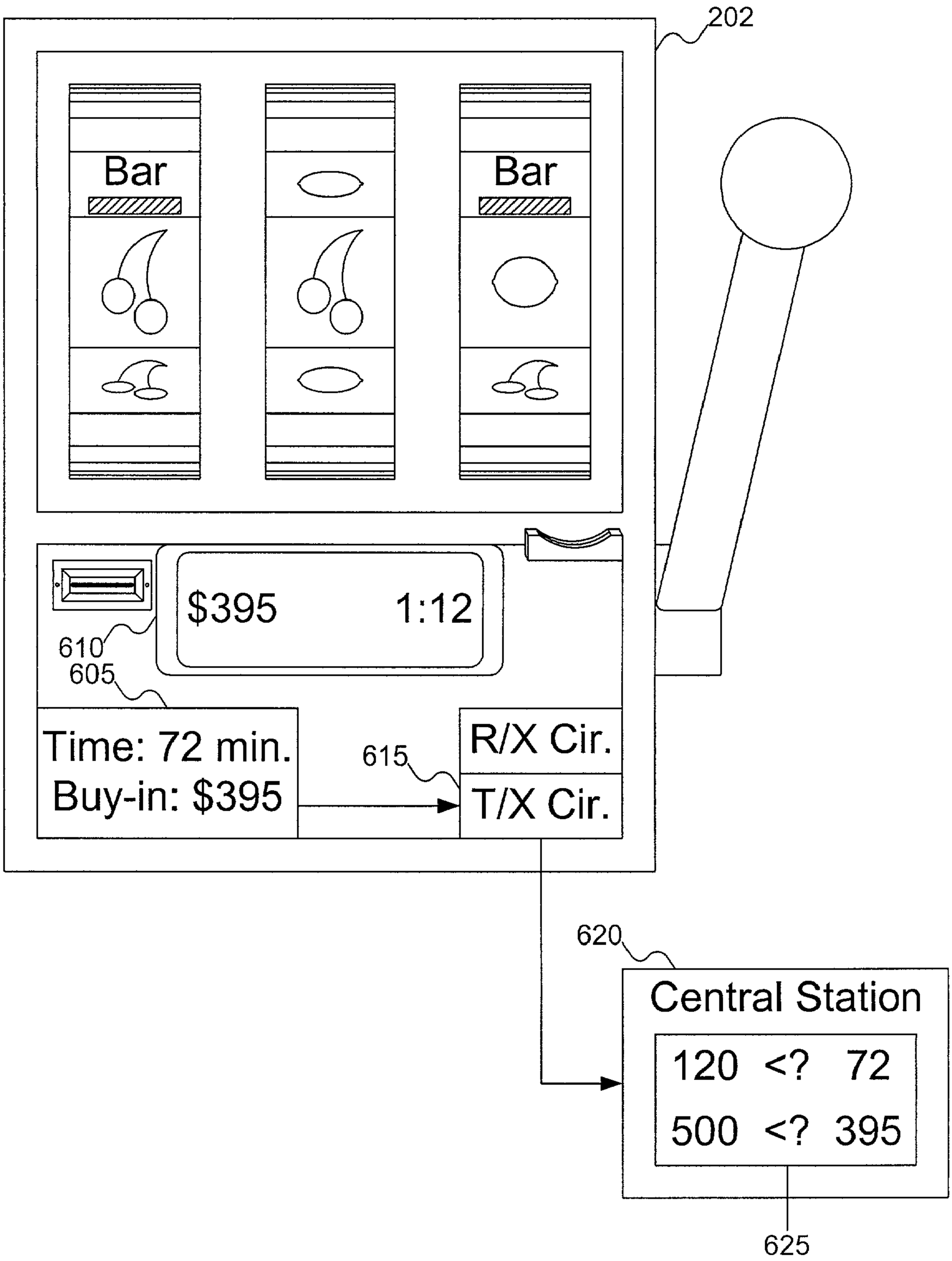

202
Bar
Bar
$395
1:12
610
605
Time: 72 min.
Buy-in: $395
615
R/X Cir.
T/X Cir.
620
Central Station
120 <? 72
500 <? 395
625

FIG. 6

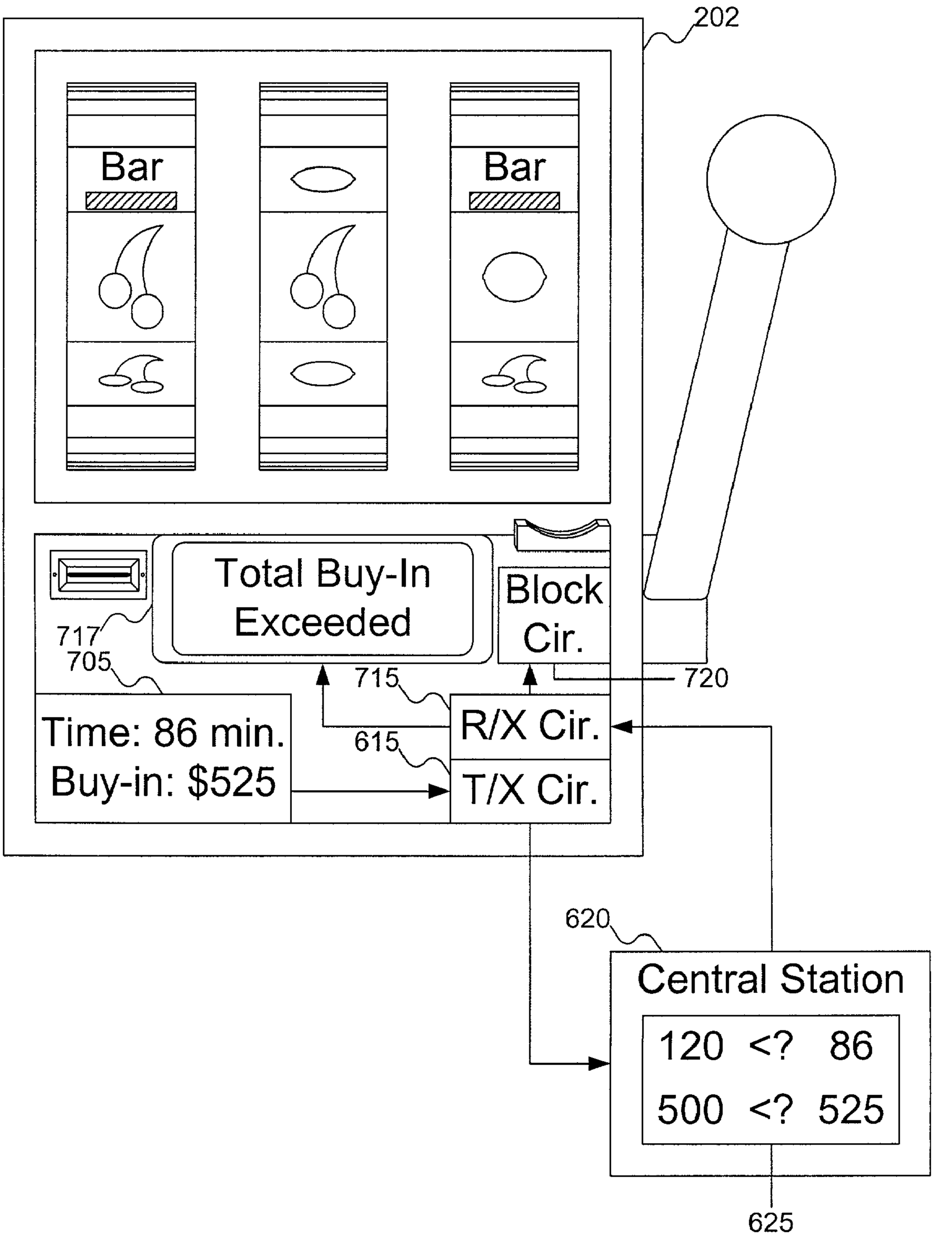

202
Bar
Bar
Total Buy-In Exceeded
Block Cir.
717
705
715
720
Time: 86 min.
Buy-in: $525
615
R/X Cir.
T/X Cir.
620
Central Station
120 <? 86
500 <? 525
625

FIG. 7

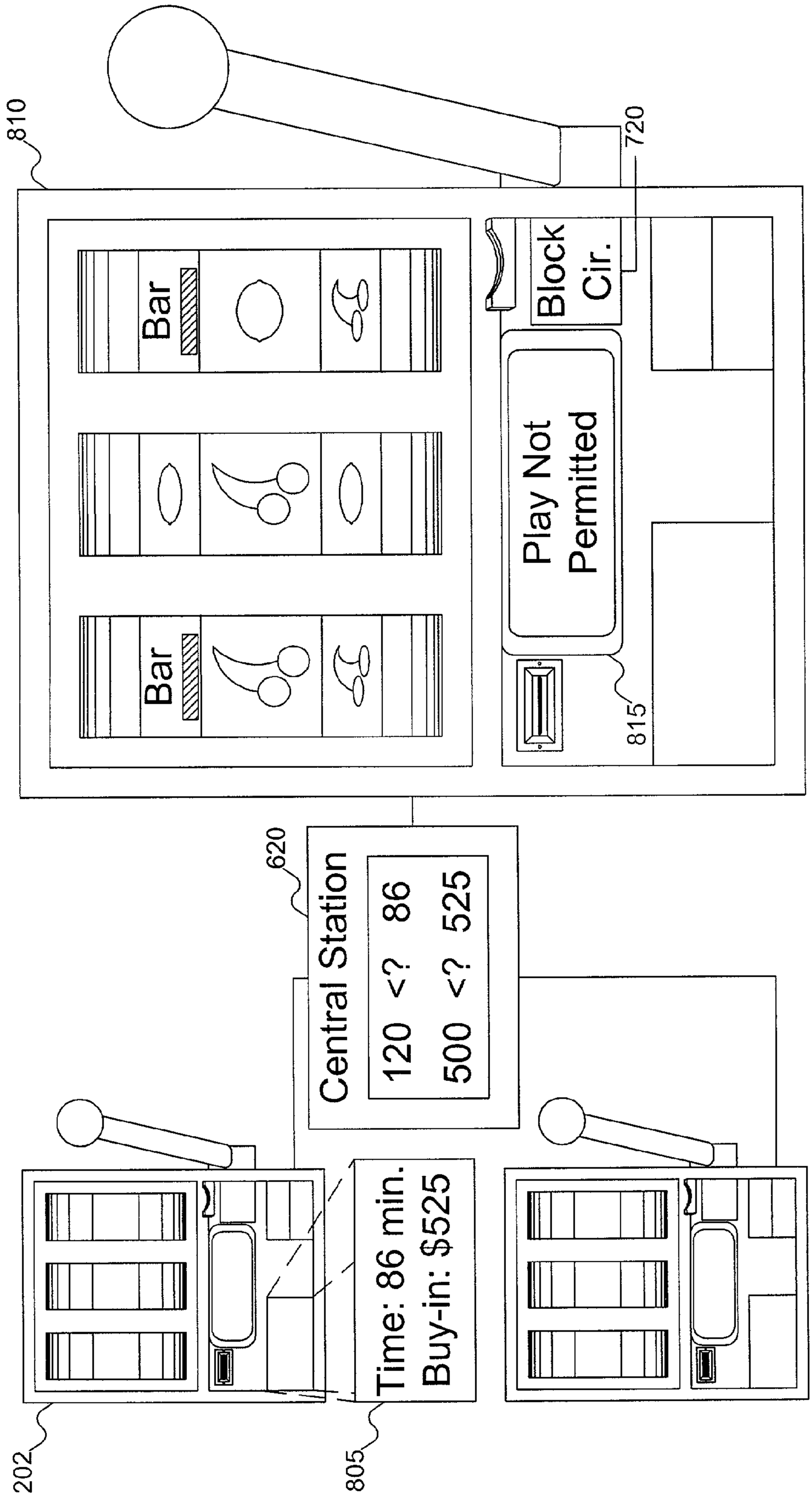

810
720
Bar
Bar
Bar
Block Cir.
Play Not Permitted
815
620
Central Station
120 <? 86
500 <? 525
Time: 86 min.
Buy-in: $525
202
805

FIG. 8

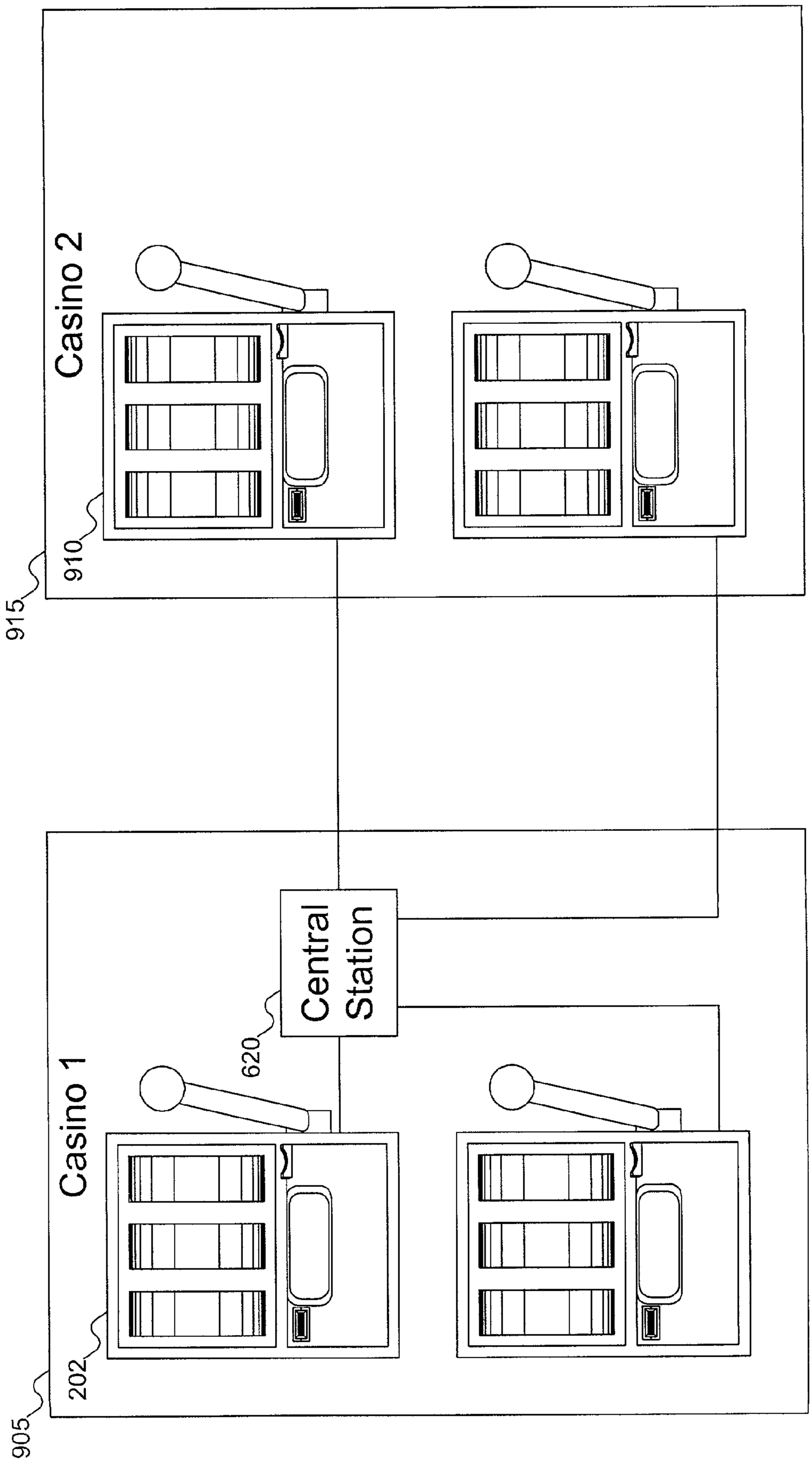


FIG. 9

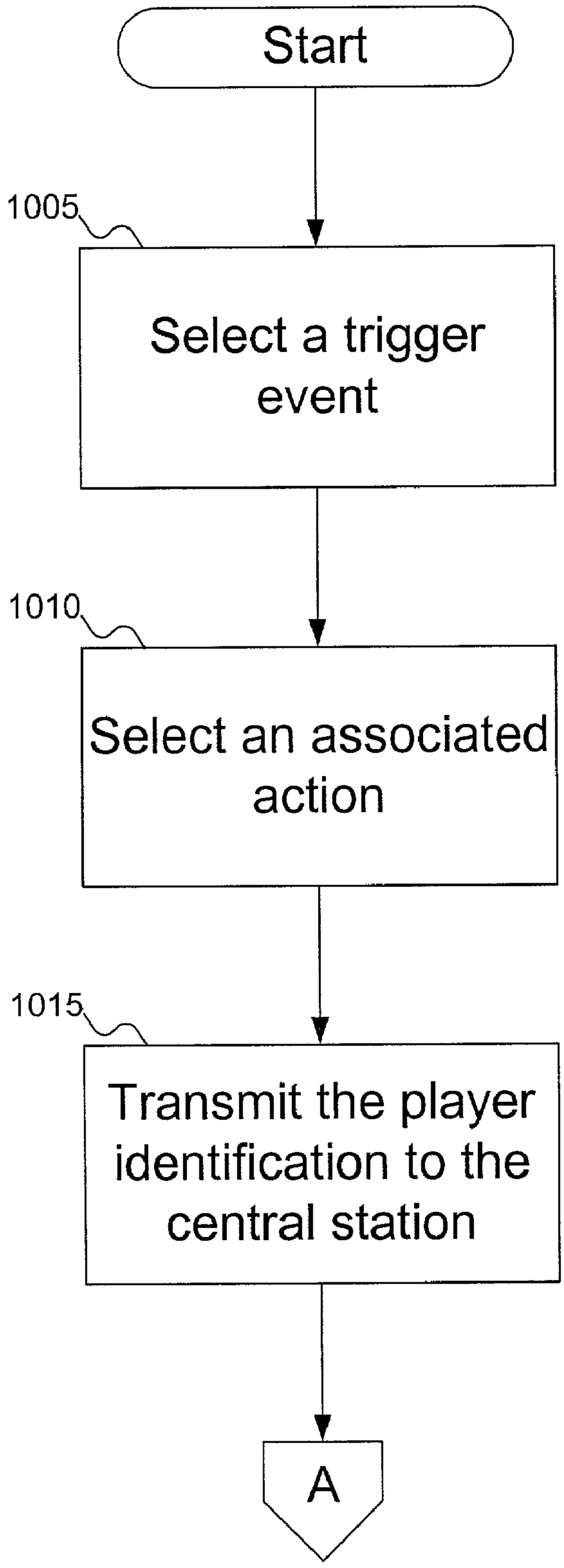

Start
1005
Select a trigger event
1010
Select an associated action
1015
Transmit the player identification to the central station
A

FIG. 10A

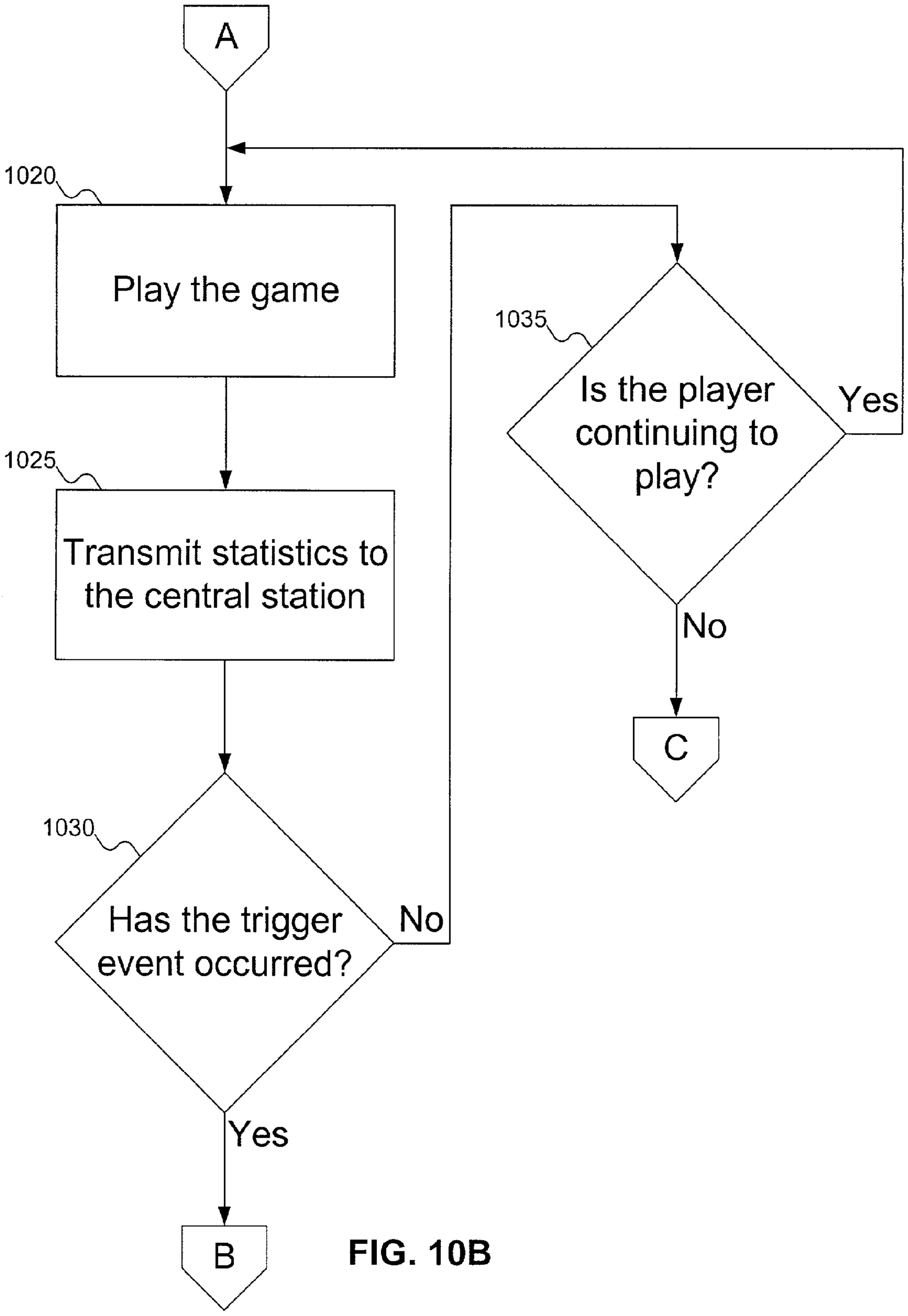

A
1020
Play the game
1025
Transmit statistics to the central station
1030
Has the trigger event occurred?
No
Yes
B
1035
Is the player continuing to play?
Yes
No
C

FIG. 10B

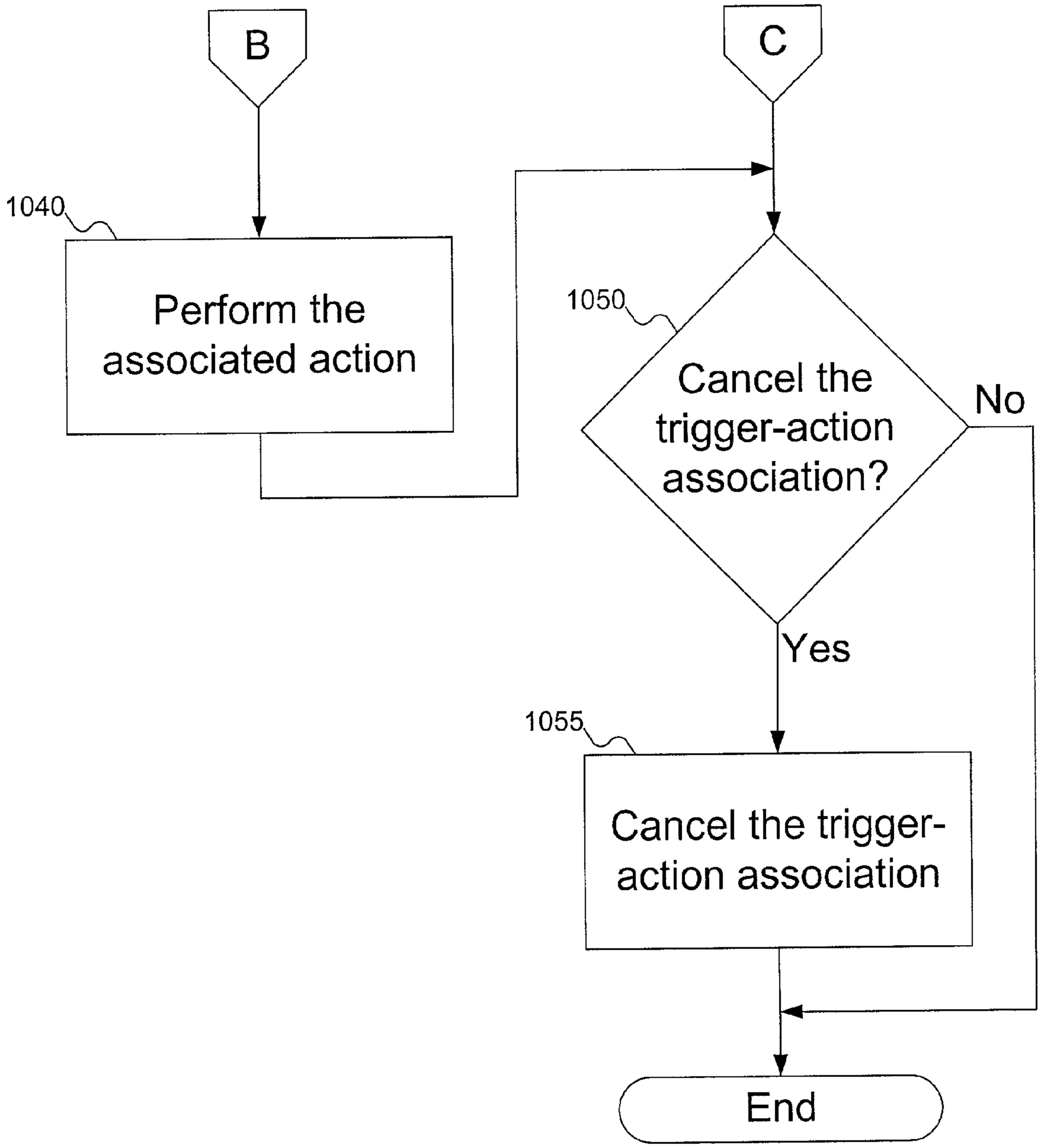

B
1040
Perform the associated action
C
1050
Cancel the trigger-action association?
No
Yes
1055
Cancel the trigger-action association
End

FIG. 10C

SAFE GAMING, PERSONAL SELECTION OF SELF-LIMITING OPTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention pertains to gaming, and more particularly to preventing players from abusing gaming.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Casino gaming has long been a very successful business. Despite having full knowledge that they have little chance of winning, the allure of the winning a lot of money draws millions of players a year. Whether they play blackjack, any of several varieties of poker, roulette, or slot machines, players dream of beating the house against the odds, and walking away with a big payoff.

[0003] In an effort to keep people coming back despite losing money, casinos have implemented a number of changes in recent years. Gone are the days when casinos were dimly lit rooms filled with dense smoke. Today, casinos are air conditioned, well ventilated, and brightly lit. New methods of increasing payouts, such as progressive jackpots, entice players to groups of machines, rather than individual, specific machines. And recognizing that players travel with their families, casinos provide entertainment to non-players, such as children, as well.

[0004] One technique casinos have been using of late to keep old players and lure new players is with identification cards. By signing up for an identification card with the casino, players can earn points toward bonuses, designed to encourage loyalty to a particular casino. The identification cards also provide a bonus to the casino: the casino gets information about the player's playing habits.

[0005] **FIG. 1** shows a schematic of several slot machines in a casino. Slot machines **105**, **110**, and **115** are all connected to central station **120**. The slot machines, like slot machine **105**, all provide slot **125** for players to insert an identification card. As players play on slot machines **105**, **110**, and **115**, assuming they insert their identification cards into slot **125**, the player's history can be stored for later analysis within central station **120** (for example, on a server).

[0006] But there is a risk associated with encouraging players to continue gaming. Gambling addiction is a recognized addiction: the player is unable to control his play. Using identification cards to entice players to continue gaming only exacerbates the problem for addicts, since they are encouraged to do the very activity that is dangerous to them.

[0007] In addition, it is very easy for a player to lose track of how much time he is spending gaming, or how much money has been risked. Even if the player is not addicted to gambling, players can find themselves having invested too much money or time in gaming without realizing it. For example, since casinos are brightly lit during all hours of the day, players do not have the light-based cues alerting them to the passage of time.

[0008] One of the jobs undertaken by casino employees is to remind players to play safely. Thus, if a casino employee notices that a particular individual has been playing a game for several hours, the employee can ask the player if he thinks he has played too much. But it is difficult for casino employees to monitor all players: the number of players is frequently changing, and in any event is too large to effectively monitor with employees.

[0009] Accordingly, a need remains for a way to allow players to monitor their own gaming habits and to limit their playing accordingly, to address these and other problems associated with the prior art.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The player is given choices for self-limiting play. First, the player selects a trigger event and an associated action to result when the trigger event occurs. Then, while the player plays, the game is monitored to see if the trigger event occurs. If the trigger event occurs, then the associated action is performed.

[0011] The foregoing and other features, objects, and advantages of the invention will become more readily apparent from the following detailed description, which proceeds with reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] **FIG. 1** shows a schematic of several slot machines in a casino.

[0013] **FIG. 2** shows an embodiment of a slot machine with an attached self-limiting selection device.

[0014] **FIG. 3** shows a kiosk for self-limiting of gaming using, for example, the slot machine of **FIG. 2**.

[0015] **FIG. 4** shows the kiosk of **FIG. 3**, further allowing self-limiting of gaming.

[0016] **FIG. 5** shows the kiosk of **FIG. 3**, further allowing cancellation of self-limiting of gaming.

[0017] **FIG. 6** shows the slot machine of **FIG. 2** equipped to track and transmit statistics about play.

[0018] **FIG. 7** shows the slot machine of **FIG. 2** limiting play according to the selected self-limit.

[0019] **FIG. 8** shows a second slot machine in the casino with the slot machine of **FIG. 2**, the second slot machine also limiting play according to the selected self-limit.

[0020] **FIG. 9** shows the second slot machine of **FIG. 8** in a second casino.

[0021] FIGS. **10**A-**10**C show a flowchart of the method of self-limiting gaming for use in the slot machine of **FIG. 2**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0022] **FIG. 2** shows an embodiment of a slot machine with an attached self-limiting selection device. In **FIG. 2**, slot machine **202** includes an attached self-limit selector **205**. Self-limit selector **205** is shown as including buttons **210**, **220**, **230**, **240**, **250**, **260**, **270**, **276**, **278** and **280** for selecting adjacent triggers **215**, **225**, **235**, **245**, **255**, **265**, **275**, **277**, **279**, and **285**. (Trigger **279** is shown as blank, but could be used for another trigger not listed here.) For example, if the player wants to self-limit based on play time (trigger

215), the player can press button **210**, if the player wants to self-limit based on total buy-in (trigger **225**), the player can press button **220**, and so on.

[**0023**] Also included in self-limit selector **205** is a cancel self-limit trigger (trigger **285**). This trigger can be used when the player has a previously established self-limit which he wishes to remove. By canceling the self-limit, the player can play without worrying about how much or how long he plays. However, in an alternative embodiment, the cancel self-limit trigger (trigger **285**) is not presented, to avoid players who need a self-limit being able to stop self-limiting early. In the alternative embodiment, players can only cancel a self-limit via an attendant.

[**0024**] There are several different ways players can self-limit. Each of these techniques is now explained briefly. First, a player can select to self-limit based on time (trigger **215**): for example, the player can indicate that he wants to be stopped after playing for two hours. A player can select to self-limit based on his total buy-in in a fixed amount of time (trigger **225**): for example, the player can indicate that he wants the game to stop if he inserts $200 into the game. (Buy-in is defined as the amount of money the player inserts into the game out of his pocket, without regard to any winnings or actual play.) The player can select to self-limit based on coin-in in a fixed amount of time (trigger **235**): for example, the player can indicate that he wants the game to stop if he "drops" $100 into the game. (Coin-in is defined as the amount of money actually spent playing the game.) Note that the terms "coinin" and "drops" suggest that actual coins are used. But a person skilled in the art will recognize that bills can be "dropped" into the machine, and count as "coin" for purposes of calculating the "coin-in" for the machine.

[**0025**] To help make clear the distinction between buy-in and coin-in, consider the following situation. A player sits down at a $1 slot machine (i.e., a slot machine that takes bets in increments of $1). The player inserts a $100 bill into the machine, establishing a credit of $100 in the machine. The player then plays 30 games at $1 apiece, and loses every game. The player then cashes out his remaining credit, receiving $70 back. The player's buy-in is $100, since he inserted a $100 bill into the machine. In contrast, the player's coin-in is $30, since he played 30 $1 games.

[**0026**] Although in the above example the player's buy-in was higher than the player's coin-in, a person skilled in the art will recognize that the opposite can also be true. For example, a player can insert $1 into a $1 slot machine and immediately win a $100 jackpot. The player can then play $29 more games without winning anything, and then cash out the remaining $71. In this case, the player's buy-in would be $1 since the player only inserted one $1 bill, but the player's coin-in would be $30 since he played 30 $1 games.

[**0027**] Returning to **FIG. 2**, the player can select to self-limit his play based on his accrued credit. Accrued credit is defined as buy-in+jackpot−coin-in−coin-out. There are two preferred ways accrued credit can be used to self-limit play, although a person skilled in the art will recognize other ways accrued credit can be used as a self-limit. The first way to self-limit play based on accrued credit is by comparing the accrued credit with a fixed limit. When the accrued credit exceeds the fixed limit, play is stopped. The disadvantage of this technique is that with a sufficient buy-in, play can be stopped before the player has played even one game.

[**0028**] The second way to use accrued credit to self-limit play is to stop play when the accrued credit drops to some fraction of its maximum value. For example, if the accrued credit reaches a maximum value of 1000 coins, play can be stopped when the accrued credit drops to 500 coins. (Of course, if the player continues to win and the accrued credit reaches, say, 1500 coins, then play would be stopped when the accrued credit drops to 750 coins.) There are two disadvantages to this use of accrued credit. First, play can continue for an arbitrary length of time, provided the accrued credit does not drop too low. Second, by cashing out, the player could reset the accrued credit counter and continue playing indefinitely.

[**0029**] A player can select to self-limit based on a one-time win (trigger **255**): for example, the player can indicate that he wants to be stopped if he wins a 100-coinjackpot. This self-limit, like accrued credit, has the problem that play can continue indefinitely, since there is no way to tell when a player will hit the trigger jackpot amount. A player can select to self-limit based on a total win (trigger **265**) or a total loss (trigger **275**). Under these triggers, when the total win level (i.e., jackpots−coin-in) or total loss level (i.e., coin-in−jackpots) is reached, play is stopped. Again, these triggers can allow for unlimited play, if the total win level or total loss level is not reached.

[**0030**] A player can select to self-limit based on a maximum bet (trigger **277**). For example, the player can indicate that he wants to be stopped if he tries to bet, say, more than $25 at one time. Such a self-limit can allow for unlimited play, if the player never tries to exceed the maximum bet.

[**0031**] All of the self-limits (triggers **215**, **225**, **235**, **245**, **255**, **265**, **275**, and **277**) can operate on timers. That is, after a certain amount of time, the statistics being tracked by the casino to help the player self-limit will be erased. For example, consider a self-limit using play time (trigger **215**). Assume the player set the time limit to three hours. The player then plays two hours and leaves the casino, not returning until the next day. If the casino does not erase the statistics, then the player will only be able to play 1 hour the next day. This is counterproductive for two reasons. First, the casino will lose business from the player, since it is capping his play time at a total of three hours within the casino over the player's life, until the self-limit is changed or canceled. Second, the player is not concerned with how much he plays over his life, but rather with how much he plays within a certain period of time.

[**0032**] There are several techniques that can be used to decide when to erase statistics. For example, the casino can erase the statistics at midnight, when a new day starts. Or the casino can erase the statistics after a window of, say, eight hours without any play by the player. Or the casino can track every game statistic generated by the player within a window of, say, eight hours, and can erase statistics that were generated outside the window. (The eight-hour duration of the windows presented above is arbitrary: larger or smaller windows can be used. Further, the window width can be determined by the casino or the player.) A person skilled in the art will recognize other techniques the casino can use to

determine when to erase statistics. For ease of reference, the remainder of this document assumes that statistics are erased at midnight each day.

[0033] Although in **FIG. 2** self-limit selector **205** is shown with buttons for selecting a trigger and as attached to slot machine **202**, other formats are available. For example, self-limit selector **205** can be at an attended station. By positioning self-limit selector **205** at an attended station, a casino employee can assist the player in selecting an appropriate self-limit. Or touch screen can be stationed at a kiosk, allowing players to self-limit without assistance. By using a station or kiosk, the impression that the selected self-limit applies to only a single game (which is an incorrect impression) can be avoided. Finally, self-limit selector can use a touch screen, instead of buttons.

[0034] **FIG. 3** shows self-limit selector **310** of **FIG. 2** as part of kiosk **305**. In **FIG. 3**, self-limit selector **310** uses a touch screen, so buttons are not needed. **FIG. 3** shows self-limit selector **310** after the player has selected to limit play based on total buy-in per unit time (trigger **225** from **FIG. 2**). Self-selector **310** of **FIG. 3** prompts the player to specify the total buy-in and the unit time interval to be used. Field **315** is used to store the total buy-in allowed, and field **320** is used to store the unit time interval. The player can touch field **315** and use keypad **325** (again implemented using touch screen technology) to enter the maximum total buy-in. The player can then touch field **320** and use keypad **325** to enter the unit time. When the player is finished, the player can press done button **330** to store the self-limit.

[0035] **FIG. 4** shows the kiosk of **FIG. 3**, further allowing self-limiting of gaming. Once the player has selected the desired trigger event, the player can select the appropriate action. Four actions are presented to the player: notification (action **405**), forced rest (action **410**), ban (action **415**), and global ban (action **420**). Notification (action **405**) is the least intrusive alternative: the player is notified, preferably via a message displayed on a screen on the game, that the trigger event has occurred. The player can continue to play, if desired, without any repercussions. Forced rest (action **410**) stops play of the game until the player has rested for some period of time. As with the trigger event, the player can specify the duration of the forced rest period, or the casino can establish a predefined rest period. Ban (action **415**) blocks the player from playing in the casino until the ban is removed. As discussed above with reference to **FIG. 2**, the player can removed the ban in a manner similar to canceling the self-limit, but preferably removing the ban requires the involvement of a casino employee. Finally, global ban (action **420**) not only bans the player from playing within the casino, but also from playing in other casinos that share statistics with the casino.

[0036] Although the actions described above (notification, forced rest, banning, and global banning) are explained in the context of slot machines, they can be applied to other gaming alternatives, such as table games, bingo, sports betting, etc. For example, when a player sits down at a blackjack table, the dealer can ask the player for his identification card. A swipe of the identification card lets the dealer access information about the player, such as that the player might be in a forced rest period (in which case the dealer should refuse to let the player participate in the game). The dealer can also use the identification card to add statistics to the player information, such as buy-in at the table.

[0037] Banning and global banning can also be applied beyond the scope of playing a machine or a game. For example, some casinos use turnstiles to control admission to the casino (such as casinos in Missouri, where the tax on casinos is based on the number of people in the casino during a cruise). To enter the casino, the player must use his identification card at the turnstile. If a player is banned from the casino, he can be prevented from even entering the casino, since once his identification card is scanned, the system can identify the player as a banned player.

[0038] **FIG. 5** shows the kiosk of **FIG. 3**, further allowing cancellation of self-limiting of gaming. In **FIG. 5**, the player has selected to cancel the self-limit. Self-limit selector **310**, again using the touch screen, presents the player with field **505**, querying the player to make sure he wants to cancel the self-limit. If the player touches field **510**, the self-limit is canceled. Otherwise, if the player touches field **515**, the self-limit is retained.

[0039] **FIG. 6** shows the slot machine of **FIG. 2** equipped to track and transmit statistics about play. For simplicity, **FIG. 6** does not show self-limit selector **205** of **FIG. 2** attached to slot machine **202**. In **FIG. 6**, the player has chosen to self-limit play based on total buy-in per unit time. Memory **605** stores the current statistics of the game. As can be seen, in memory **605** the player has been gaming for one hour, 12 minutes, and has so far bought in $395.

[0040] As shown in **FIG. 6**, slot machine **202** can include display **610**. Display **610** allows the player to track on his own the statistics that the microprocessor (not shown in **FIG. 6**) within slot machine **202** is tracking.

[0041] As statistics are generated by slot machine **202** and stored in memory **605**, they can be forward to transmission circuit **615**. Transmission circuit **615** is in turn responsible for forwarding the statistics, along with player identification information, to central station **620**. By having each game forward statistics to central station **620**, the player can play several games over time, and statistics generated by each game can be cumulated to compare with the self-limit.

[0042] Central station **620** is similar to central station **120** of **FIG. 1**, except that central station **620** includes comparator **625**. Comparator **625** compares the statistics generated by slot machine **202** (cumulative with any other games played by the player) and compares the statistics with the self-limits established by the player.

[0043] Although **FIG. 6** shows central station **620** determining whether the trigger event has occurred, a person skilled in the art will recognize that other configurations are possible. For example, when the player inserts his card in the slot in slot machine **202**, slot machine **202** can send a request to central station **620** for the player's statistics, the trigger event, and the associated action. Then, slot machine **202** can add to the statistics as the player plays. If the trigger event occurs, slot machine **202** can execute the associated action. Finally, when the player withdraws his card from the slot in slot machine **202**, slot machine **202** can transmit updated statistics back to central station **620**.

[0044] Where slot machine **202** monitor's the player's activities, there are several variations of the embodiment. In

one variation, slot machine **202** monitors the player's activities using its standard microprocessor. In another variation, a specialized circuit, (for example, built into a daughterboard for slot machine **202**) monitors the player's activities, freeing up the microprocessor for other activities. A person skilled in the art will recognize other ways in which slot machine **202** can monitor the player's activities.

[**0045**] Provided the trigger event does not occur (for example, in **FIG. 6**, the trigger event is $500 buy-in in two hours), the player can continue to play. But when the trigger event occurs, central station **620** executes the associated action. **FIG. 7** shows the slot machine of **FIG. 2** limiting play according to the selected self-limit. In **FIG. 7**, the player has selected to self-limit play to a total buy-in of $500 within two hours. But, in the 86 minutes since the player began playing, his buy-in has reached $525, as shown by the statistics in memory **705**. Since comparator **625** has determined that the trigger event has occurred, central station **620** sends a message to slot machine **202**. The message is received by receiver circuit **715** and displayed in display **717**.

[**0046**] Depending on the message received from central station **620**, receiver circuit **715** can also instruct blocking circuit **720** to block the player from further playing slot machine **202**. Blocking circuit **720** is not activated if the associated action is only a notification. But if the associated action is a forced rest, ban, or global ban, blocking circuit **720** simply refuses to let the player do anything but cash out any remaining credits and remove his identification card.

[**0047**] **FIG. 8** shows a second slot machine in the casino with the slot machine of **FIG. 2**, the second slot machine also limiting play according to the selected self-limit. In **FIG. 8**, the player has spent some time and money playing on slot machine **202**. As can be seen in memory **805**, the player has been playing for 1 hour and 26 minutes, and has a total buy-in of $525 in that time. Because the player has chosen to limit his total buy-in to $500 within two hours, the player's self-limit has prevented further play on slot machine **202**. As discussed above, the statistics generated by slot machine **202** are transmitted to central station **620**. The player tries to then play slot machine **810**, on the premise that one machine does not know what has transpired at another machine. When slot machine **810** communicates with central station **620**, central station **620** sends a message to slot machine **810**, indicating that player has reached the self-limit. Slot machine **810** then displays the message in display **815**, that the player has exceeded the limit. Finally, blocking circuit **720** blocks the player from further playing slot machine **810**.

[**0048**] Although **FIG. 8** shows the player attempting to play a second slot machine within the same casino, there is no reason to limit the invention to slot machines within the same casino. **FIG. 9** shows the second slot machine of **FIG. 8** in a second casino. In **FIG. 9**, slot machine **202** is in casino **905**. Slot machine **910** is in casino **915**. If the player attempts to play slot machine **910** in casino **915**, slot machine **910** communicates with central station **620** in casino **905**. The self-limits, as well as statistics generated within casino **905** can then be applied to the player in casino **915**.

[**0049**] Although **FIG. 9** shows slot machine **910** in casino **915** communicating with station **620** in casino **905**, a person skilled in the art will recognize that slot machine **910** can instead communicate with a central station (not shown in **FIG. 9**) in casino **915**. When the player attempts to play slot machine **910** in casino **915**, the second central station can query central station **620** for any player statistics. By using different central stations in different casinos, self-limits can be imposed both intra-casino and inter-casino, as desired.

[**0050**] Although typically casinos share player information only with other casinos within the corporate family, a person skilled in the art will recognize that this is an arbitrary limitation. By sharing player information with casinos in another corporate family, self-limits can be made more effective, as players will not be able to avoid the limits simply by heading to a casino in a different corporate family.

[**0051**] FIGS. **10A-10C** show a flowchart of the method of self-limiting gaming for use in the slot machine of **FIG. 2**. In **FIG. 10A**, at step **1005**, the player selects a trigger event. At step **1010**, the player selects an associated action to occur when the trigger event is reached. At step **1015**, the player prepares to play the machine (e.g., by inserting his identification card). The player identification is then transmitted to the central station. This allows the central station to load any statistics already generated by the player. At step **1020** (**FIG. 10B**), the player begins to play the game. At step **1025**, the game transmits play statistics to the central station. At step **1030**, the central station checks to see if the trigger event has occurred. If the trigger event has not occurred, then at step **1035** the game checks to see if the player is still playing the game. If the player is still playing the game, then processing returns to step **1020**.

[**0052**] If at step **1030** the trigger event occurred, then at step **1040** (**FIG. 10C**) the associated action (notification, forced rest, ban, or global ban) is performed. Then, if the trigger event occurred (at step **1030** in **FIG. 10B**) or if player has stopped playing (at step **1035** in **FIG. 10B**), then at step **1050** the system checks to see if the player has chosen to cancel the self-limit. If the player has chosen to cancel the self-limit, then at step **1055** the self-limit is canceled.

[**0053**] **FIG. 10C** is slightly incomplete in representing what happens if the associated action is notification. As described above, notification simply alerts the player that the self-limit has been reached. Notification does not force the player to stop playing. Accordingly, even if the associated action of notification is performed at step **1040** in **FIG. 10C**, the player can continue playing at step **1035** in **FIG. 10B**.

[**0054**] Although FIGS. **10A-10C** describe the central station monitoring the player's play, a person skilled in the art will recognize how FIGS. **10A-10C** can be modified to allow the game to monitor the player for self-limits. Specifically, when the player begins playing at step **1015** of **FIG. 10A**, the central station can transmit, at the machine's request, the player's statistics, trigger event, and associated action. Step **1025** can be eliminated, and the machine can check for the trigger event itself at step **1030**. Finally, a new step is necessary before step **1050**, so that the machine can transmit updated statistics to the central station.

[**0055**] A person skilled in the art will also recognize that the flowchart of FIGS. **10A-10C** consists of three groups of events, which do not have to occur at or near the same time. Specifically, the player can select the self-limit in steps **1005-1010** of **FIG. 10A** at one time, play the machine in steps **1015-1040** of FIGS. **10A-10C** at another time, and cancel the self-limits in steps **1050-1055** of **FIG. 10C** at a third time.

[0056] While the above discussion is centered on a player self-limiting play, a person skilled in the art will recognize that these limits can be invoked on behalf of a player without their involvement. For example, if a player knows he has a problem with gambling but nonetheless plays, the player's doctor (e.g., psychologist) can instruct the casino to limit play on the player's behalf. The casino is then responsible for setting the appropriate limits for the player. Of course, in this variation, the casino can request an authorization from the player to accept limit instructions from the player's doctor.

[0057] A person skilled in the art will also recognize that, although the above discussion utilizes a slot machine, the description is equally applicable to other games. The invention is also applicable to non-electronic games, such as blackjack, poker, craps, and the like, although the determination of the player's wins and losses in these games typically requires dealer involvement.

[0058] Having illustrated and described the principles of our invention in a preferred embodiment thereof, it should be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that the invention can be modified in arrangement and detail without departing from such principles. We claim all modifications coming within the spirit and scope of the accompanying claims.

We claim:

1. A method for self-limiting play of a game, the method comprising:

selecting a trigger event by a player;

selecting an action by the player;

playing the game; and

performing the action.

2. A method according to claim 1, further comprising monitoring the game for the trigger event.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein performing the action includes performing the action if the trigger event occurs.

4. A method according to claim 1, further comprising associating the action with the trigger event.

5. A method according to claim 4, further comprising removing the association between the action and the trigger event.

6. A method according to claim 1, further comprising transmitting a statistic about the game to a central station.

7. A method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving a statistic from a central station.

8. An apparatus for self-limiting play of a game, the apparatus comprising:

selecting means for selecting a trigger event and an associated action by a player;

the game;

monitoring means for monitoring the game for the trigger event; and

performance means for performing the associated action.

9. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the games offers the selecting means to the player.

10. An apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a kiosk offering the selecting means to the player.

11. An apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a station offering the selecting means to the player.

12. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the selecting means includes a microprocessor programmed to offer the player at least one trigger event and at least one action.

13. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the selecting means further includes a transmission circuit designed to transmit the trigger event and action to a central station.

14. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the trigger event is drawn from a set including a play time, a total buy-in per unit time, a total coin-in per unit time, an accrued credit limit, a one time win limit, a total loss limit, a total win limit, and a maximum bet.

15. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the associated action is drawn from a set including a notification, a ban, a global ban, and a forced rest period.

16. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the game includes the monitoring means.

17. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the monitoring means includes a comparator designed to compare a statistic of the game with the trigger event.

18. An apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising a memory designed to store the statistics of the game and the trigger event.

19. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the game includes the performance means.

20. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the performance means includes a message displayed to the player.

21. An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the performance means further includes a blocking circuit designed to prevent the player from playing the game after the trigger event has occurred.

22. An apparatus according to claim 20, wherein:

the action includes a global ban; and

the performance means further includes a transmission circuit designed to transmit a signal to a central station that the trigger event has occurred.

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