

March 17, 1936.

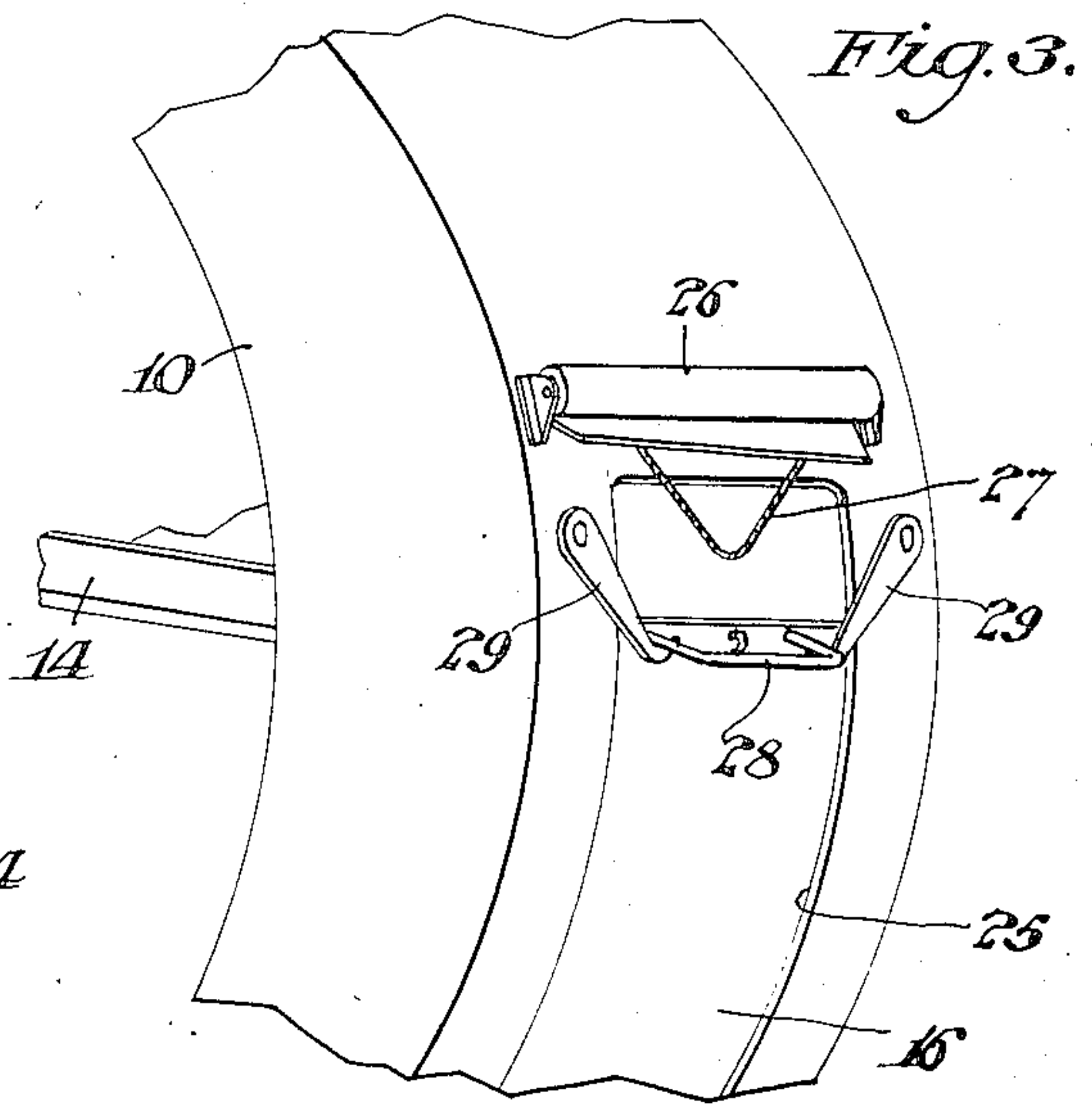
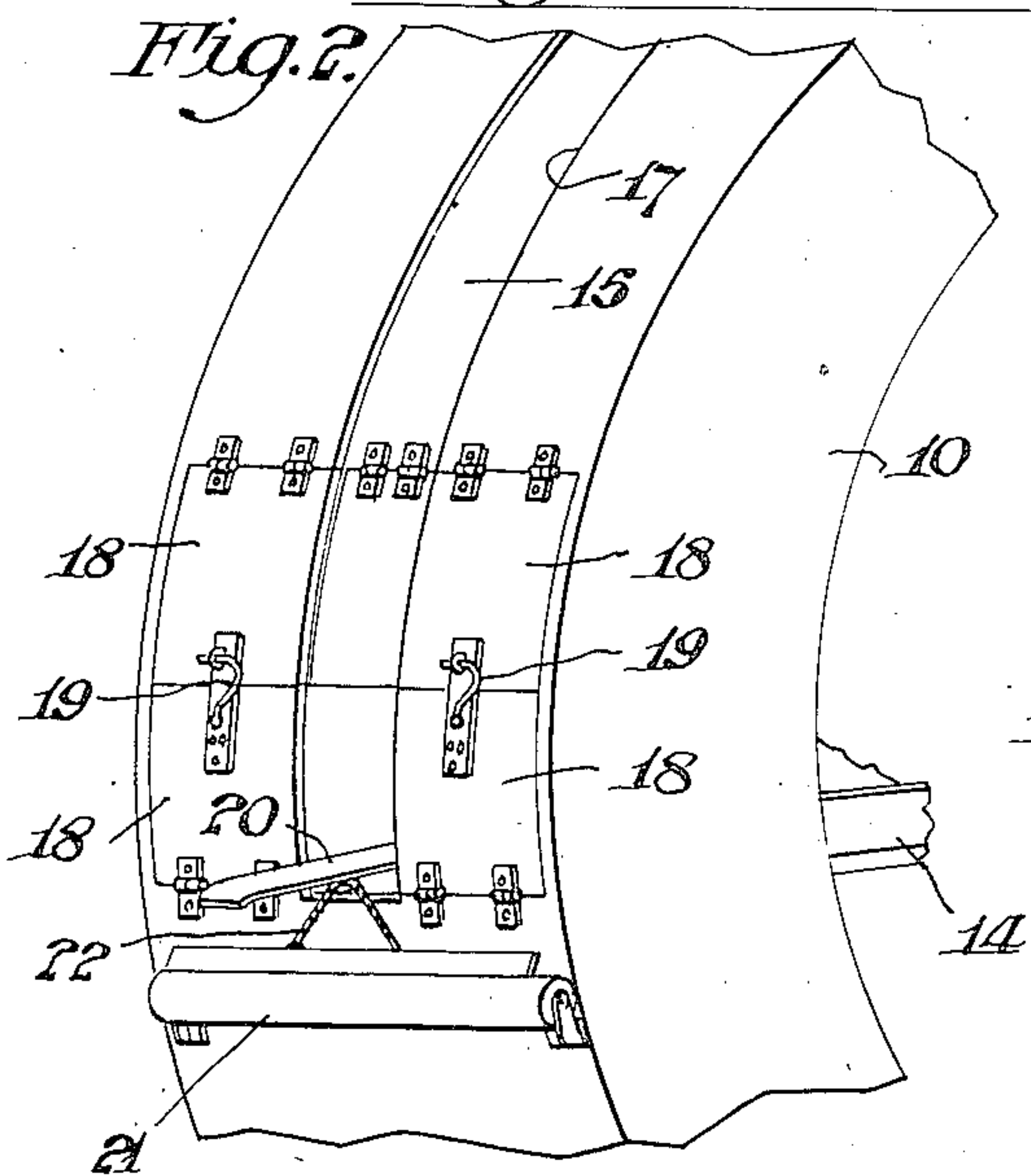
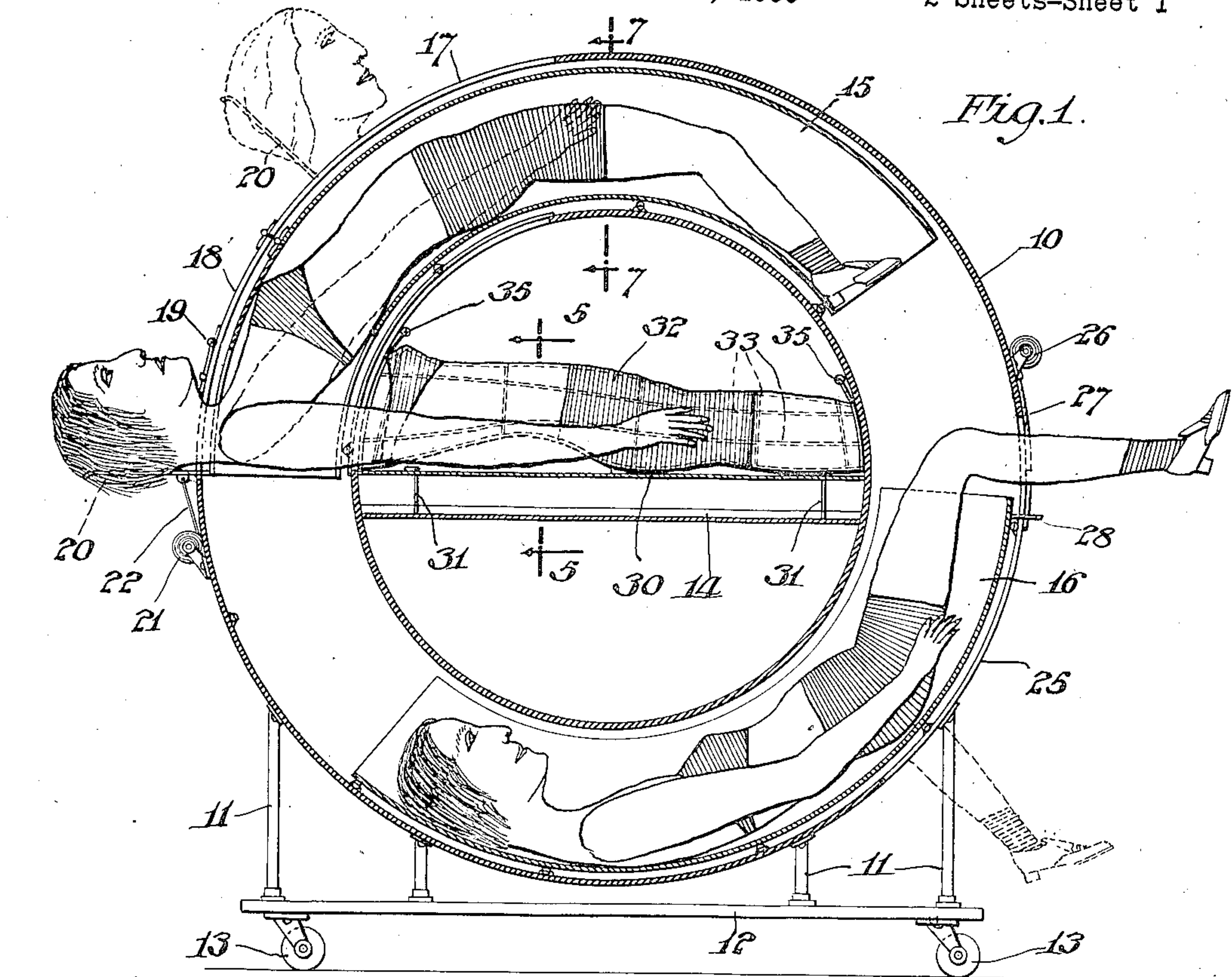
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2,034,407

THEATRICAL ILLUSION

Filed Feb. 26, 1935

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



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2 Sheets-Sheet 2

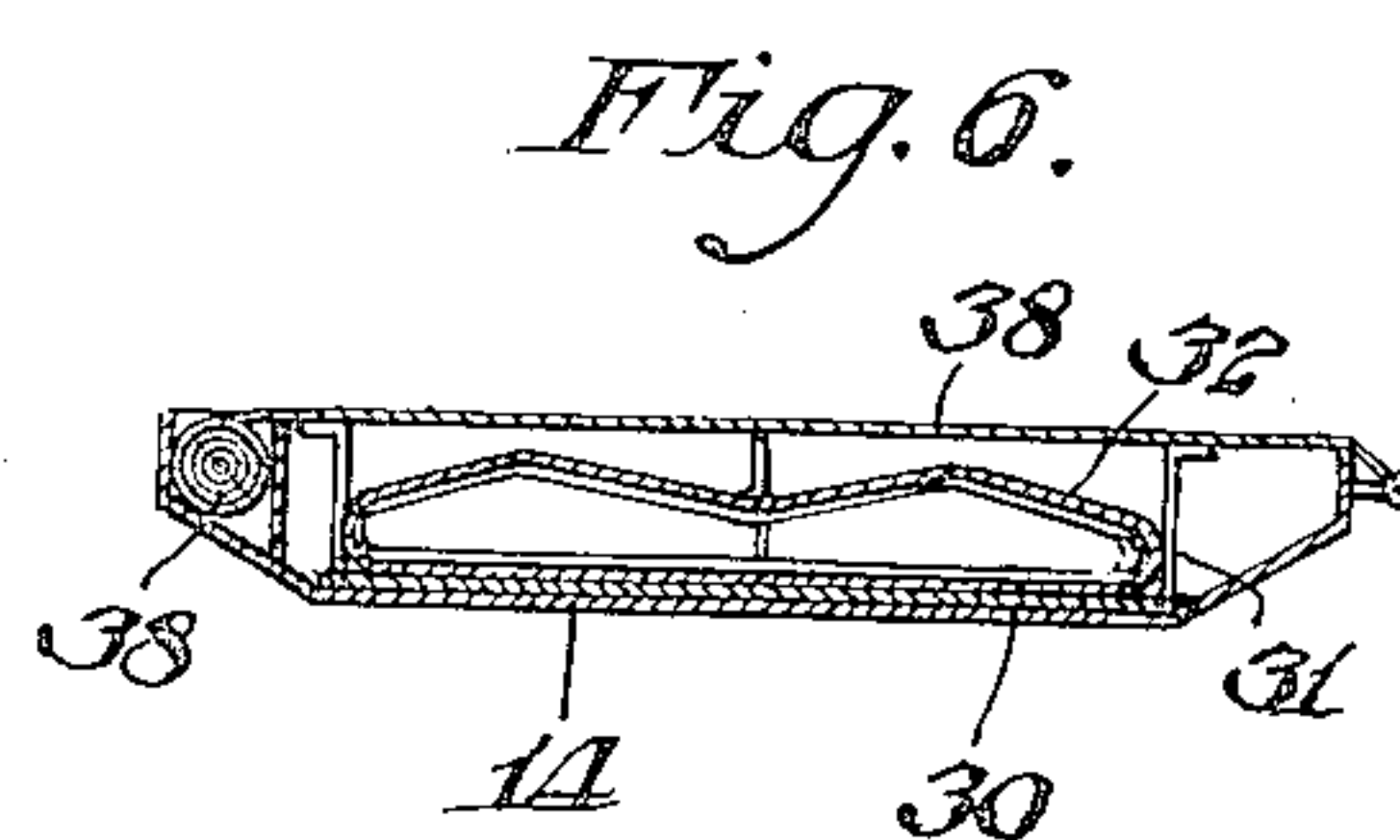
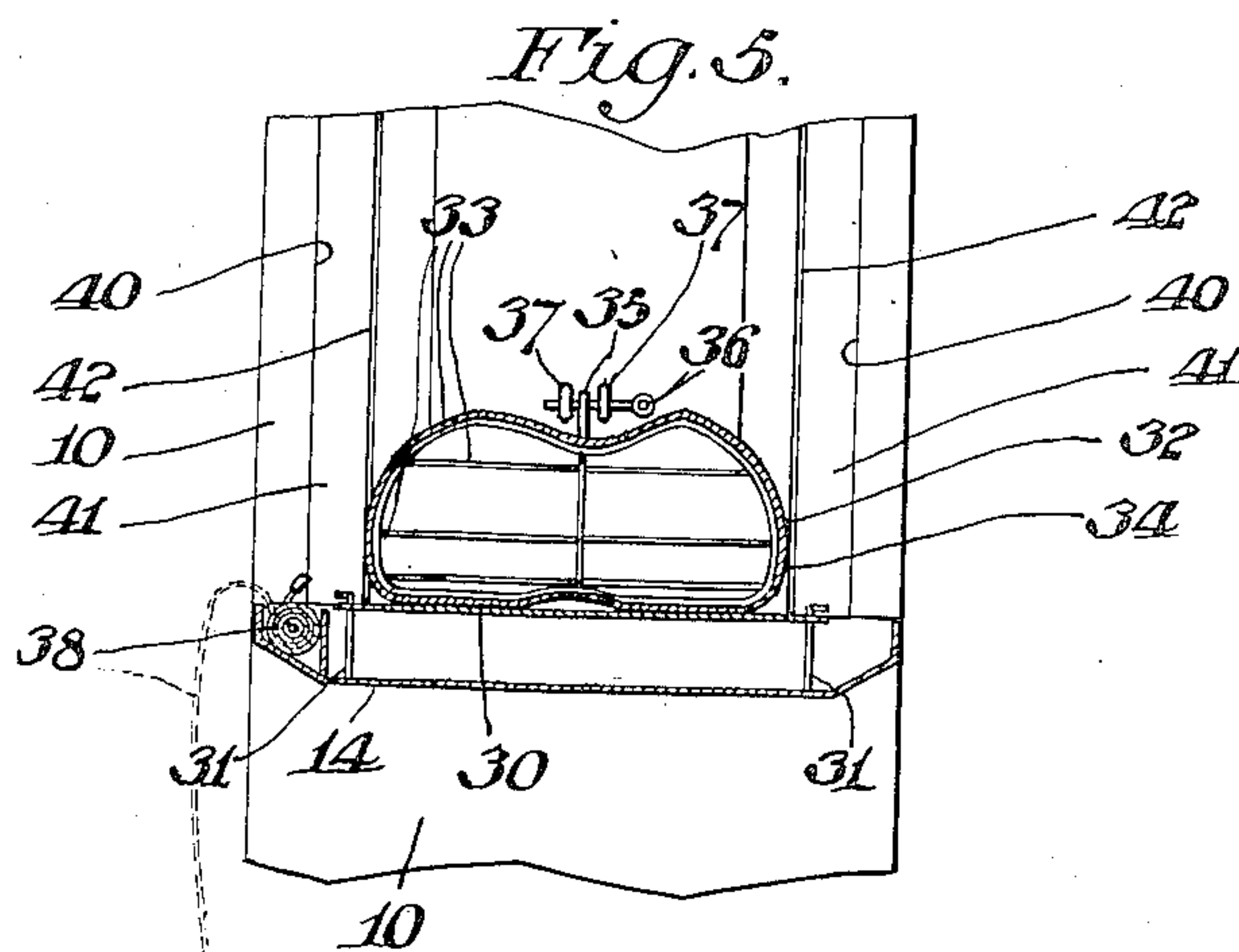
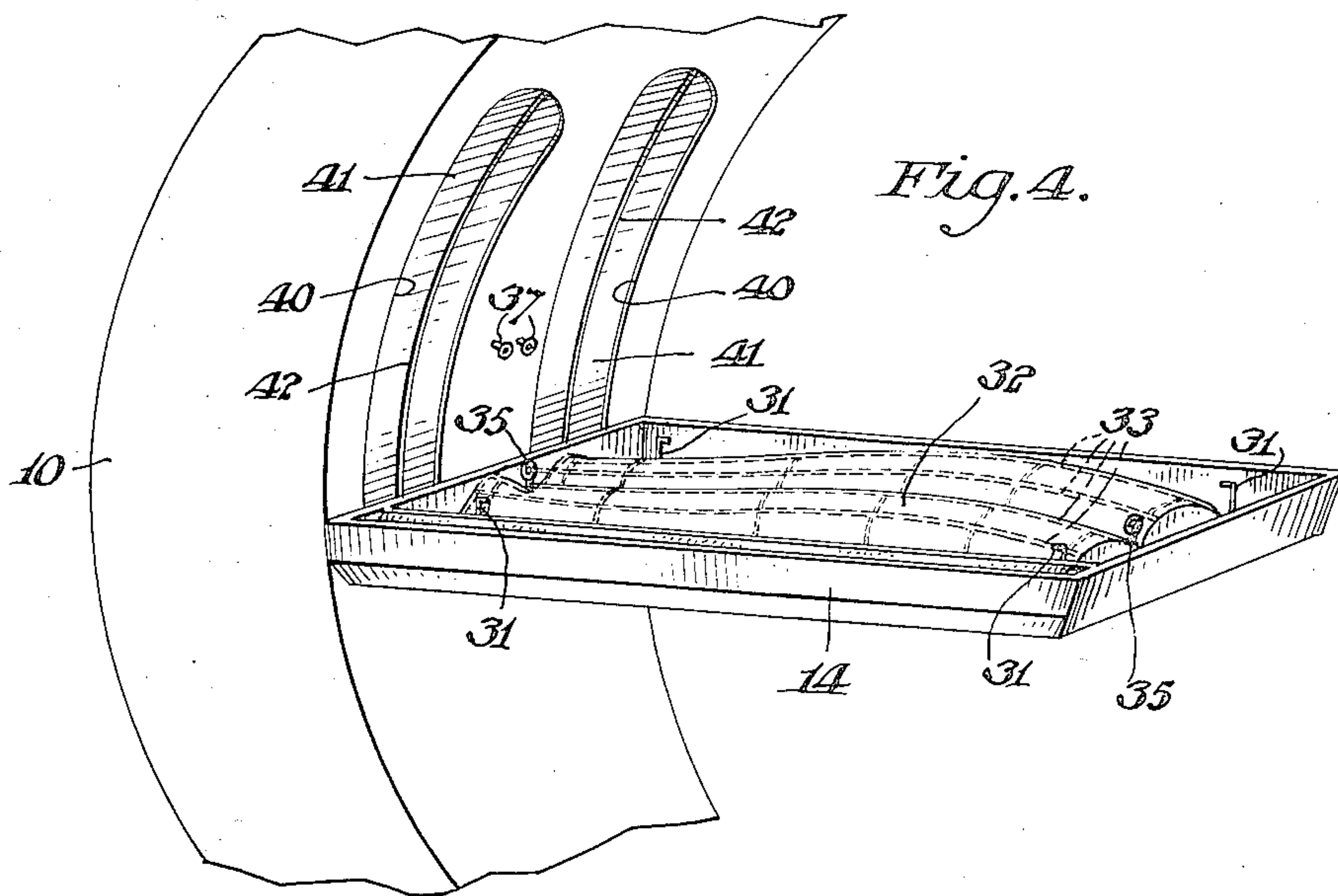


Fig. 7.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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THEATRICAL ILLUSION

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14 Claims. (Cl. 272—9)

This invention relates to theatrical illusions, and relates more particularly to apparatus for presenting an illusion of a startling and entertaining character, by means of which various portions of the body of a living person may ap-

5 apparently be separated from other portions thereof. The principal object of the invention is to provide apparatus for presenting on theatrical stages and the like, an illusion of separating or
10 dissociating various portions of the body of a living person, such as the head and legs, from the remaining portions of the body of said person.

The nature and characteristic features of the
15 invention will be more readily understood from the following description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings forming part hereof, in which:

Figure 1 is a view, partly in front elevation and
20 partly in section, of apparatus embodying the main features of the present invention, intended for use in creating the illusion of separating the head and leg portions of the body of a living person from the remaining portions thereof;

25 Fig. 2 is a fragmentary perspective view illustrating that portion of the housing of the apparatus from which the head of the supposed subject projects;

30 Fig. 3 is a similar view illustrating that portion of the housing from which the legs of the supposed subject project;

35 Fig. 4 is a similar view illustrating a portion of the housing and a shelf for supporting a dummy form used for simulating a portion of the body of the subject, this view showing more particularly means whereby the arms of a living person employed in effecting the illusion may be displayed in association with the dummy form;

40 Fig. 5 is a transverse section taken approximately on the line 5—5 of Fig. 1, illustrating a portion of the dummy form in the operative position, and the shelf or platform used for supporting said dummy form;

45 Fig. 6 is a similar view illustrating the dummy form in collapsed condition resting within the hollow interior of the shelf; and

50 Fig. 7 is a transverse section taken approximately on the line 7—7 of Fig. 1, illustrating a portion of the annular housing and one of the cradles mounted therein for supporting a person used in presenting the illusion.

It will, of course, be understood that the description and drawings herein contained are illustrative merely, and that various modifications and
55 changes may be made in the structure disclosed

without departing from the spirit of the invention.

Referring to the drawings, in the particular embodiment of the invention therein shown, 10 is a hollow annular housing, preferably supported
5 by columns 11 from a suitable platform 12, which in turn is provided with casters 13 whereby the apparatus may be conveniently moved about the stage on which the illusion is to be presented.

The central portion of the housing 10 is open, 10 and across this opening extends a shelf 14, the construction and arrangement of which will be hereinafter more fully described.

Within the annular housing 10 there are mounted two sector shaped cradles, 15 and 16, adapted
15 to support, in a manner to be hereinafter set forth, the persons used in effecting the illusion. Each of the cradles is independently movable within the annular chamber provided by the housing 10.

20 Within the cradle 15 are disposed the torso and legs of the person whose head is to be used to form part of the supposed subject to be operated upon in the performance of the illusion, while within the cradle 16 are disposed the head, torso, and
25 thigh portions of the person whose legs are to be used to form part of the supposed subject.

At one portion of the circumference of the outer wall of the housing 10 there is provided a slot 17 through which passes the neck of the per-
30 son whose head is used to form the head of the supposed subject, it being understood that the head of this person projects entirely beyond said outer wall, while the other portions of the body of this person, which are disposed within the
35 cradle 15, are concealed from the view of the spectators. There may also be provided hinged door portions 18 of the outer wall of the housing 10, which door portions are normally held in
40 closed position by hooks 19. These door portions 18 afford a means whereby the torso and legs of this person may be placed in the cradle 15.

The cradle 15 is also provided with a supporting member 20, upon which rests the head of the person carried by said cradle 15. The support-
45 ing member 20 extends through the slot 17, so that as the cradle 15 is moved to various positions within the housing 10, the head of the person carried by said cradle will be moved in unison therewith, and will be properly supported during
50 such movement.

For the purpose of covering the slot 17, as well as the door portions 18, when the cradle 15 is moved to various positions, there is provided a
55 spring roller curtain 21, having a loop connector

22 which may be hooked to the supporting member 20, so that the curtain will be unrolled and pulled over the outer surface of the housing 10 when the person carried by the cradle 15 is moved to various positions to create the illusion that the head of the subject has been separated from the remaining portions thereof.

The outer wall of the housing 10 is also provided with a slot 25, diametrically opposite the slot 17. The slot 25 is provided so that the legs of the person supported by the cradle 16 may project therethrough and be seen by the spectators, while the remaining portions of this person are concealed within the housing 10. There is also provided a spring roller curtain 26, having a loop connector 27 which may be hooked to the cradle 16, so that when said cradle is moved from its initial position the roller curtain 26 will be unrolled and pulled over the slot 25 to cover the same.

For the purpose of manipulating the cradle 16, the same may be provided with a handle member 28 extending through the slot 17, and, to prevent undesired movement of the cradle 16, there may be provided hook members 29, pivotally secured to the outer wall of the housing 10 and adapted to engage portions of the handle member 28.

The shelf 14, hereinbefore mentioned, comprises a shallow hollow body within which is mounted a plate 30, which may be raised to the operative position as shown in Fig. 5, to simulate the top surface of the shelf. Limiting hooks 31 are provided to position the plate member 30 at its proper level when the same is raised.

Mounted upon the plate member 30 is a dummy form 32, preferably made of suitably shaped longitudinally extending wires 33, disposed within and secured to a suitable envelope 34, preferably made of textile material. The dummy form 32 serves to simulate the torso and thigh portions of the supposed subject. This form 32 is provided with eye members 35 at the ends thereof, which are secured by pins 36 to eye members 37 carried by the inner circular wall of the housing 10, the arrangement being such that when the pins 36 are withdrawn the form will collapse and fall within the hollow interior of the shelf structure, the plate member 30 falling to the bottom thereof at the same time.

A roller curtain 38 is mounted in a portion of the shelf member 14, and is adapted to be drawn over the top of the same when the dummy form is collapsed, this curtain then serving to simulate the top surface of the shelf member.

The arms of the person disposed within the cradle 15 are preferably used in connection with the dummy form 32, and for this purpose the inner circular wall of the housing 10 is provided with elongated openings 40 (see Fig. 4), each of which is covered with elastic webbing 41 having a slit 42 therein running parallel to the side edges of said opening 40. With this arrangement, the arms of the person supported by the cradle 15 may be projected through the openings 40 in proper relationship with the dummy form which is supported by the shelf member 14.

By using the actual arms of the person carried by the cradle 15, said arms may be moved when desired to produce a natural effect, whereby the spectators may be convinced that the dummy form is an actual part of the subject.

The initial arrangement of the living head of the person carried by the cradle 15 projecting at one point in the circumference of the housing 10, the dummy form extending across the central

opening of the housing, the actual arms of the person carried by the cradle 15 resting upon the shelf member 14, and the legs of the living person carried by the cradle 16 projecting at another point in the circumference of the housing 10—all in proper association—greatly adds to the illusion which is desired.

In the presentation of the illusion, the two persons used are first arranged in the apparatus, this being done out of view of the spectators, and the dummy form is extended as shown in Fig. 1 of the drawings, so that the appearance to the spectators is that of a subject apparently comprising a single person whose head projects from one part of the circumference of the apparatus, whose legs project from the diametrically opposite portion thereof, and whose body and arms extend across the central opening. The apparatus, with the two persons so disposed therein, is then pushed into the view of the spectators.

As hereinbefore pointed out, the arms of the person supported by the cradle 15 may be moved in a natural manner when displayed in association with the dummy form, thereby convincing the spectators that the displayed head, legs, and dummy body form are all parts of a single living person. At the proper time these arms may be withdrawn from view, into the interior of the annular housing 10.

The dummy form 32 may be collapsed at any time desired, by the withdrawal of the pins 36, and the curtain 38 may be pulled across the top of the shelf 14, and if at the same time the arms of the person carried by the cradle 15 are withdrawn from view, into the interior of the housing 10, a startling effect will be obtained, namely, the appearance of a living head at one portion of the circumference of the housing, and living legs and feet at another portion thereof, without any connecting anatomical portions.

The head, as well as the feet, may be moved independently with respect to each other and with respect to the dummy form 32, whether said form be left in the expanded condition or collapsed.

If desired, the head and legs may be apparently severed from the remaining portions of the body, for which purpose apparatus of the type well known to professional magicians as the "guillotine" illusion may be used, or any of the various types of trick knives may be used for such purpose.

It will of course be understood that when the head or the legs of the supposed subject are moved to various positions around the circumference of the housing 10, this effect is accomplished by a manual shifting of the cradles 15 and 16, respectively, within the housing 10. As this shifting occurs, the curtains 21 and 26 will be pulled across the slots 17 and 25, respectively, so that the apparatus may be freely turned about and viewed from all sides.

It may be desirable, in the presentation of the illusion, to withdraw the entire subject from the apparatus while the same is still upon the stage. In this event the dummy form 32 will be left expanded, and the head and leg portions returned to their initial positions. A sheet may then be temporarily held in front of the apparatus while the doors 18 are unfastened, and the person whose torso and legs are disposed within the cradle 15 may be withdrawn from the apparatus. Simultaneously the person who is supported by the cradle 16 may withdraw his legs into the housing 10, and at the same time the dummy

form 32 may be collapsed and hidden within the shelf 14, the curtain 38 meanwhile being drawn across the top of said shelf. When the covering sheet is removed, the apparatus will present the appearance of the person whose head, feet, and body had been displayed having been withdrawn from the apparatus, and in this manner the spectators will be convinced that but a single person was used in the presentation.

It will be seen that there is thus provided novel apparatus by means of which illusionary effects of an entertaining and startling character may be obtained.

I claim:

1. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing within which various portions of a living person are concealed, and means within said housing for shiftably supporting said person whereby the portions of said person which are not concealed within said housing may be shifted to various positions about said housing.

2. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing within which various portions of a plurality of living persons are concealed, and means within said housing for shiftably supporting said persons whereby the portions of said persons which are not concealed within said housing may be shifted to various positions about said housing.

3. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing within which various portions of a plurality of living persons are concealed, means within said housing for shiftably supporting said persons, and means associated with said housing for simulating a portion of a person.

4. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing within which various portions of a plurality of living persons are concealed, means within said housing for shiftably supporting said persons, means associated with said housing for simulating a portion of a person, and means for concealing said simulating means.

5. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing having an open central portion, and a cradle shiftably mounted in said housing adapted to receive and support a living person in position whereby portions of said person are concealed within said housing and other portions project beyond the outer wall of said housing, and the projecting portions of said person may be shifted to various positions about said housing.

6. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing having an open central portion, and a cradle shiftably mounted in said housing adapted to receive and support a living person, and the outer wall of the housing having a slot through which a portion of said person projects whereby said projecting portion of said person may be moved to various positions on the circumference of the housing when said cradle is shifted.

7. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing having an open central portion, and cradles shiftably mounted in said housing, each of said cradles being adapted to receive and support a living person, and the outer wall of the housing having slots through which portions of said persons project whereby said projecting portions of said persons may be moved to various positions on

the circumference of the housing when said cradles are shifted.

8. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing having an open central portion, cradles shiftably mounted in said housing, each of said cradles being adapted to receive and support a living person, the outer wall of the housing having slots through which portions of said persons project whereby said projecting portions of said persons may be moved to various positions on the circumference of the housing when said cradles are shifted, and curtains adapted to cover said slots when the cradles are in their shifted positions.

9. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing having an open central portion, cradles shiftably mounted in said housing, each of said cradles being adapted to receive and support a living person, the outer wall of the housing having slots through which portions of said persons project whereby said projecting portions of said persons may be moved to various positions on the circumference of the housing when said cradles are shifted, and a concealable dummy form supported in the open central portion of the housing.

10. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing having an open central portion, cradles shiftably mounted in said housing, each of said cradles being adapted to receive and support a living person, the outer wall of the housing having slots through which portions of said persons project whereby said projecting portions of said persons may be moved to various positions on the circumference of the housing when said cradles are shifted, a shelf extending across the open central portion of the housing, and a collapsible dummy form carried thereby and concealable therein when collapsed.

11. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing having an open central portion, cradles shiftably mounted in said housing, each of said cradles being adapted to receive and support a living person, the outer wall of the housing having slots through which portions of said persons project whereby said projecting portions of said persons may be moved to various positions on the circumference of the housing when said cradles are shifted, a shelf extending across the open central portion of the housing, a collapsible dummy form carried thereby and concealable therein when collapsed, and a curtain extendible over said shelf when the dummy form is collapsed.

12. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing having an open central portion, a cradle shiftably mounted in said housing, said cradle being adapted to receive and support a living person, the outer wall of the housing having a slot through which portions of said person project whereby said projecting portions of said person may be moved to various positions on the circumference of the housing when said cradle is shifted, a concealable dummy form supported in the open central portion of the housing, and the inner wall of the housing having openings through which the arms of the person carried by said cradle may project and be displayed in association with said dummy form and through which said arms may be withdrawn within the housing.

13. Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a hollow annular housing hav-

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