

Jan. 29, 1957

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2,779,083

LIP AND MOUTH ADJUSTER

Filed Feb. 9, 1955

FIG. 1.

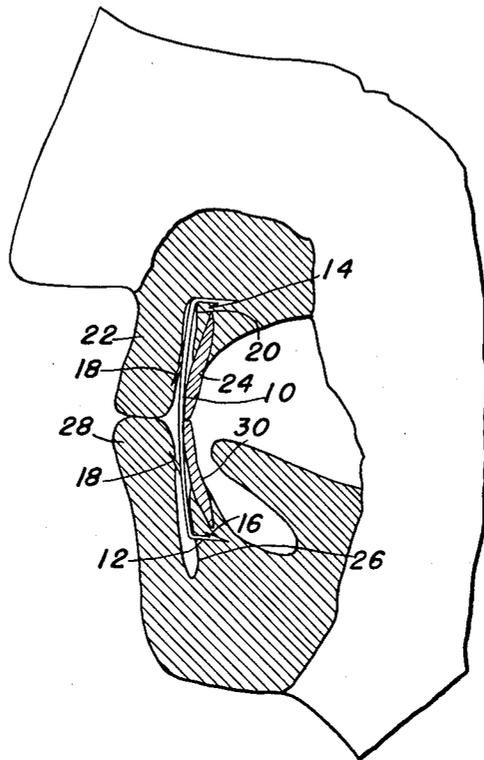


FIG. 2.

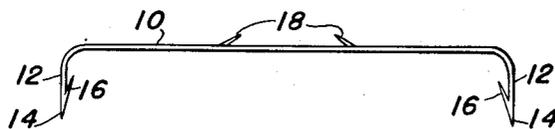
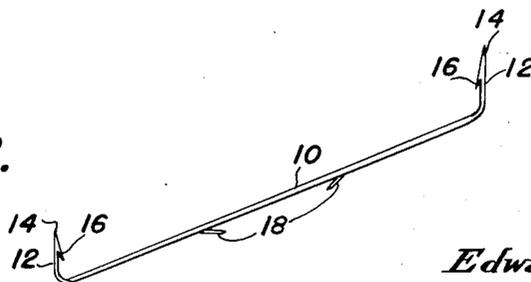


FIG. 3.



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2,779,083

LIP AND MOUTH ADJUSTER

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Application February 9, 1955, Serial No. 487,157

6 Claims. (Cl. 27—21)

This invention relates to devices adapted for use by embalmers and undertakers for holding the jaws and mouth of a corpse closed, and also for holding the lips closed and in natural position. More specifically, the invention relates to an improved device of this nature which may be readily and quickly applied without the aid of special tools, and which is of minimum complexity and bulk.

Similar devices are known and commonly used, but are subject to limitations such as difficulty of application, undue size and rigidity, and inherent causation of unnecessary perforations and lacerations, which tend to result in discoloration and leakage of embalming fluid.

It is a principal object of the present invention to provide an improved lip and mouth adjusting device of simplified construction, easily applied and adapted to hold the jaws and lips of a corpse in proper and natural appearing relationship.

Another object of the invention is to provide a lip and mouth closing appliance of small size, invisible in use, and flexible enough to conform to mouth and tooth configuration, so as to obviate unsightly and unnatural bulges or other distortions.

Still another object is to provide a device of the character described adapted to function with minimum penetration of jaw and lip tissue.

Another object is to provide a lip and mouth adjuster readily manufactured from corrosion resistant wire, inexpensive, and of suitable durability for handling, application and use. Further objects will be in part evident and in part pointed out hereinafter.

The invention and the novel features thereof may best be made clear from the following description and the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a side view of the device of the invention, illustrating its operative relationship to the jaws and lips of a corpse;

Figure 2 is a side elevational view of the device on enlarged scale, and

Figure 3 is an inverted perspective view of the device.

Referring to the drawings in detail, an exemplary embodiment of the invention comprises a continuous length of wire or the like formed generally into U-shape, comprising a straight and longitudinally extending body portion 10 and an end portion 12 at each end thereof, the end portions being correspondingly turned into substantial parallelism, each being disposed preferably at right angles with respect to the body portion. The outer end 14 of each end portion 12 is pointed, and adjacent thereto the end portions are provided with barbs 16, which are disposed on the inner sides of the end portions and point rearwardly toward the body portion 10.

From body portion 10 extends a pair of oppositely directed prongs 18. The prongs are equally spaced from the center of the body portion, and extend from the body portion in direction generally opposite to that of the end portions 12. That is, the prongs 18 and end portions 12 lie in a common plane, although on opposite sides

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of the body portion 10. The prongs 18 are inclined with respect to the axis of the body portion, each by an angle of substantially 30°, and are pointed toward each other. The barbs 16 and prongs 18 may be separately constructed and suitably attached to the device by welding or brazing, but preferably are formed integrally with the end portions and body portion by a suitable stamping or comparable metal forming operation. As will be evident, the entire device may be readily formed on a mass production basis from continuous lengths of wire. A 20 gauge high grade nickel alloy wire is entirely suitable, and preferred because it inherently possesses the requisite flexibility. Additionally, the nickel wire is adequately corrosion resistant, and will not cause discoloration or weaken in use.

Function and utilization of the device will now be described. In completed form, as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, the device may be provided in various sizes, ranging in over-all length from one to two inches. The turned end portions may be, for example, ¼ inch long, and the raised or struck up portions of the barbs 16 relatively short, ¼₁₆ inch being adequate. To use the device, the pointed end 14 of one end portion 12 may be positioned in contact with the fleshy area 20 inside the upper lip 22 and above the upper teeth 24, and that end of the device then pushed into place. The pointed end portion will enter easily, finger pressure usually being adequate, and the barb will serve to anchor it securely in place. Next, the lower jaw may be closed, and the opposite end portion of the device then forced in similar manner into the fleshy area 26 inside the lower lip 28 and below the lower teeth 30, as illustrated in Figure 1. The body portion 10 of the device having some flexibility, it may thereupon be bent or shaped to conform to the shape and contour of the gums and teeth (or false teeth) of the corpse, so as to follow them closely and not protrude therefrom.

Finally, the upper lip 22 may be pulled to normal, natural appearing position and hooked in place onto the upper prong 18, and the lower lip 28 similarly positioned and secured in place by the lower prong 18. In such simple manner the jaws of the corpse may be securely and permanently closed, and the lips arranged and retained in life-like relationship. Application of the device is quick and sure, and requires no special tool or experience. The device itself being small and thin, no unsightly bulges or protuberances are caused thereby, and the minimum penetration of the jaw and lip tissues by the pointed ends and prongs minimizes the possibility of leakage or drainage of embalming fluid into the oral cavity. Usually, one device will be entirely adequate, although two devices may be employed if desired, one on each side of the jaw.

It will thus be seen that there has been provided by this invention a structure in which the various objects hereinbefore set forth, together with many practical advantages, are successfully achieved. As various possible embodiments may be made of the mechanical features of the above invention, all without departing from the scope thereof, it is to be understood that all matter hereinbefore set forth or shown in the accompanying drawings is to be interpreted as illustrative, and not in a limiting sense.

I claim:

1. A unitary device for clamping the jaws and lips of a corpse comprising a continuous length of corrosion resistant wire having a longitudinally extending body portion and similarly directed parallel turned end portions, a barb for engaging the flesh of the upper and lower jaw members at the outer end of each of said end portions, and a pair of oppositely directed prongs extending from said body portion on the side thereof opposite said end portions.

2. A device as defined in claim 1, wherein said prongs

are formed integrally with said body portion, and are inclined toward each other to engage the lips and hold them in closed position.

3. A device as defined in claim 2, wherein said prongs are inclined with respect to the axis of said body portion by substantially 30°.

4. A device as defined in claim 1, wherein said end portions are turned with respect to said body portion by substantially 90°.

5. A unitary device for clamping the jaws and lips of a corpse comprising a continuous length of flexible, corrosion resistant wire having a longitudinally extending body portion and similarly directed parallel end portions turned with respect to said body portion by substantially 90°, a pointed barb for engaging the flesh of the upper and lower jaw members integral with and at

the outer end of each of said end portions, and a pair of integral prongs extending from said body portion on the side thereof opposite said end portions, said prongs being inclined toward each other and inclined with respect to the axis of said body portion by substantially 30°.

6. A device as defined in claim 5, wherein said barbs extend from the inner sides of said end portions.

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