Dec. 22, 1936. R. E. TOWNSEND, JR 2,065,036

KEY PROTECTOR

Filed April 19, 1935

Fig. 1.

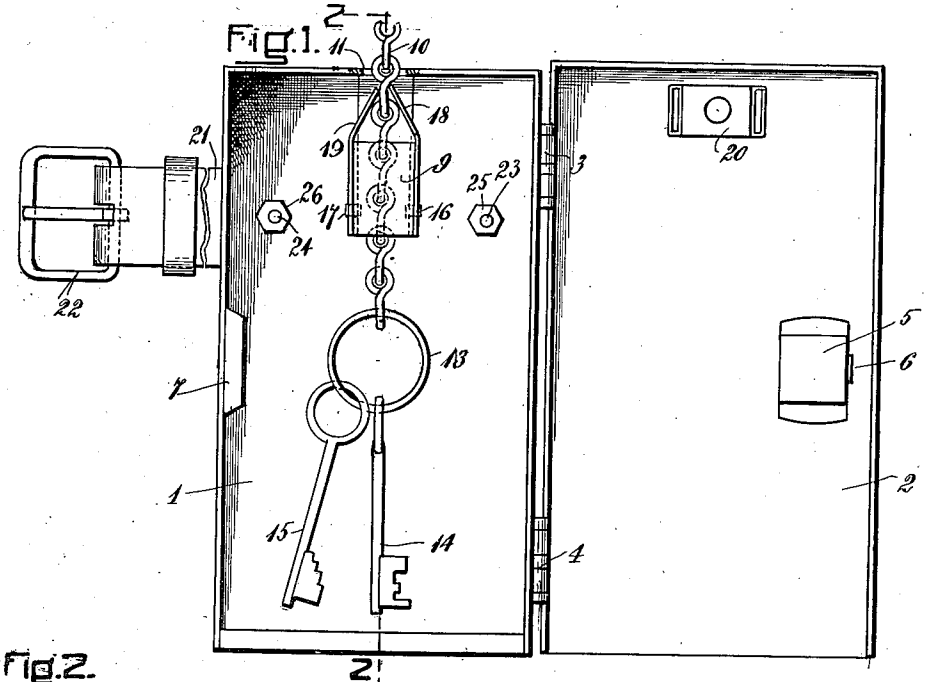


Fig. 2.

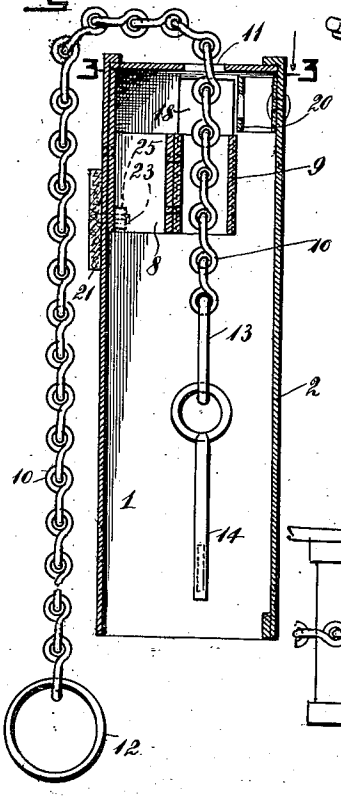


Fig. 3.

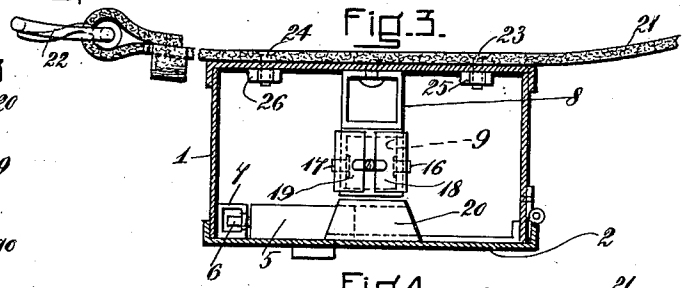


Fig. 4.

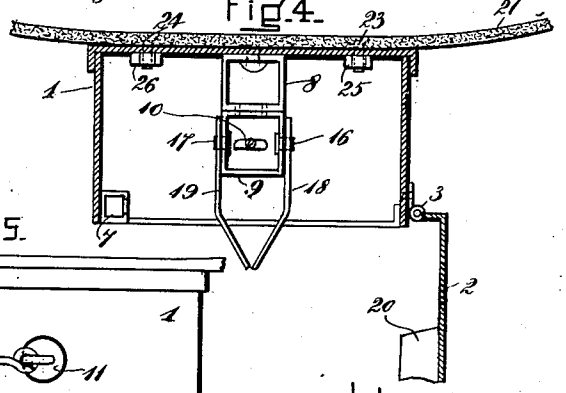
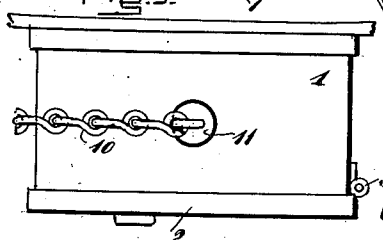


Fig. 5.



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KEY PROTECTOR

Robert E. Townsend, Jr., Boston, Mass.

Application April 19, 1935, Serial No. 17,217

4 Claims. (Cl. 59—96)

My invention relates to a device for the use of prison guards, turnkeys, or other prison attendants who have occasion to carry with them keys to cell doors, or doors for egress from larger places of prison confinement, and the object of my invention is to provide a means for carrying such keys whereby they may be protected against sudden seizure and improper use by unruly prisoners.

My device may be best understood by reference to the accompanying drawing in which—

Fig. 1 is a front view of my device with the cover of the key protecting box open to show the keys drawn into the box and the means for retaining them against withdrawal.

Fig. 2 is a vertical cross-sectional view on line 2—2 of Fig. 1, with the cover closed.

Fig. 3 is a horizontal cross-sectional view on line 3—3 of Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 is a horizontal cross-sectional view similar to Fig. 3 excepting that the cover is shown as opened and the spring clamps for holding the key chain against withdrawal are shown as turned out of operative position.

Fig. 5 is a top view.

Referring now more particularly to the drawing 1 is a strong steel box, open at the bottom and provided with a cover 2 hinged to one side thereof by hinges 3 and 4. The cover 2 carries a suitable lock 5 the bolt 6 of which may enter a bolt socket member 7 attached to the side of box 1. As may be observed from the drawing the box 1 is very narrow and will not admit the human hand through the bottom thereof.

A rectangular frame 8 is riveted to the interior of the back wall of the box 1, and to the front of this rectangular frame 8 there is riveted or welded a like rectangular frame 9 forming a channel for the passage of a key chain 10 which passes also through a hole 11 in the top of the box 1 above the frame 9.

The chain 10 may be of any convenient length and carries at one end the ring 12 and at the other end a key ring 13 which may carry one or more keys such as keys 14 and 15.

Pivotally mounted upon opposite sides of the frame 9, by means of loose rivets 16 and 17 respectively, are strong flexible spring-steel clamps 18 and 19 which, when swung upward into the positon shown in Fig. 1, closely engage the sides of the chain 10. The clamps 18 and 19 may be forced apart by the pressure of the chain upon the under sides of their inwardly inclined ends when the chain is pulled upward, but a downward pull upon the chain is firmly resisted by the clamps 18 and 19. Hence the chain may at any time be freely moved upward but cannot be pulled downward unless freed from the clamps 18 and 19 by moving at least one of them into the position shown in Fig. 4. To ensure that when the cover 2 is closed and locked the clamps 18 and 19 shall be in proper, upright, operative position I preferably provide on the inside of the cover 2 an offset member 20 which will, upon the closing of the cover 2, and if the clamps 18 and 19 are accidentally not quite fully returned into proper upright position, force them into such position.

My device is intended to be strapped upon the body of the user and for that purpose I have shown a belt 21 provided with a buckle 22, which belt may be attached to the box 1 in any suitable manner such as by means of threaded studs 23 and 24 passing through the back of the box 1 and secured thereto by the nuts 25 and 26 respectively.

In using my device it will be readily understood that the cover 2 is unlocked and opened and by turning down one or both of the clamps 18 or 19 the chain is pulled downward through the box, preferably until the ring 12 is in contact therewith, and the keys are wholly outside of the box. The cover 2 is then locked and the key thereof left in the outer part of the prison premises while the user straps the box about his waist and proceeds into the prison to unlock certain cell doors, or the doors of other interior prison premises, the keys of which are carried upon the ring 13 which now hangs free of the box upon the lower end of the chain 10, which may be of sufficient length to enable the user to carry the ring 13 and its attached keys in a coat or trousers pocket.

Upon any suggestion of a violent attempt by a prisoner to possess himself of the keys the carrier of my device has but to seize the ring 12 and, with a single sweeping movement of the hand, pull the keys into the box, pulling preferably until the key ring 13 contacts the rectangular frame 9, through which the chain 10 passes, and thus limits the further elevation of the keys.

When thus withdrawn into the box the keys cannot be withdrawn without opening the cover 2 and releasing the spring clamps 18 or 19, and cannot be seized by the hand and wrenched and broken away from the key ring 13, and although a disorderly prisoner may possess some strong tool with which to break open the box and get access to the keys, nevertheless this would require some substantial interval of time during which

his attempt might be frustrated or other guards might intervene to prevent use of the keys to liberate other prisoners.

It will be readily apparent that my device may be considerably varied in form and arrangement without departing from the principle of my invention which is to provide a strong open-ended receptacle into which the keys may be withdrawn by a flexible element which is engaged by means which permit its free movement to draw the keys into the receptacle, but restrain movement in the opposite direction to effect their withdrawal.

It may well be noted that if a chain is pulled upwards through the clamping members 18 and 19 their contact therewith will give rise to a noisy rattle which provides a useful alarm that trouble is pending.

Having thus fully described my invention what I claim is—

1. In a device of the character specified the combination of a receptacle open at one end and adapted to receive a key and provided with an aperture at the top thereof for the passage of a chain, a chain passing through said aperture upwardly extending spring clamping means mounted within said receptacle and arranged to bear against said chain in a manner whereby said spring clamping means may yield in response to upward movement of said chain to permit its movement upwardly and firmly restrain any downward movement thereof, means to remove said spring clamping means from bearing against said chain, and means for attaching a key to the inner end of the chain.

2. In a device of the character specified the combination of a receptacle open at one end and adapted to receive a key and provided with an aperture at the top thereof for the passage of a chain, a chain passing through said aperture upwardly extending spring clamping means mounted within said receptacle and arranged to bear against said chain in a manner whereby said spring clamping means may yield in response to upward movement of said chain to permit its movement upwardly and firmly restrain any downward movement thereof, said spring clamping means being pivotally mounted in a manner whereby they may be swung into or out of operative engagement with said chain, and means for attaching a key to the inner end of the chain.

3. In a device of the character specified the combination of a strong receptacle provided with an opening of size sufficient to admit a key and a flexible member attached to said key, and a second opening of size sufficient to permit the passage of said flexible element only, said flexible element mounted within said second opening, means within said receptacle engaging said flexible element and adapted automatically to restrain said flexible element from movement in one direction and means for releasing said restraining means.

4. In a device of the character specified the combination of a strong receptacle provided with an opening of size sufficient to admit a key and flexible member attached at one end thereof to said key, said flexible member, means for drawing said key and the end of said flexible member thereto attached within said opening and means for automatically restraining that end of said flexible member to which said key is attached from withdrawal from said opening.

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