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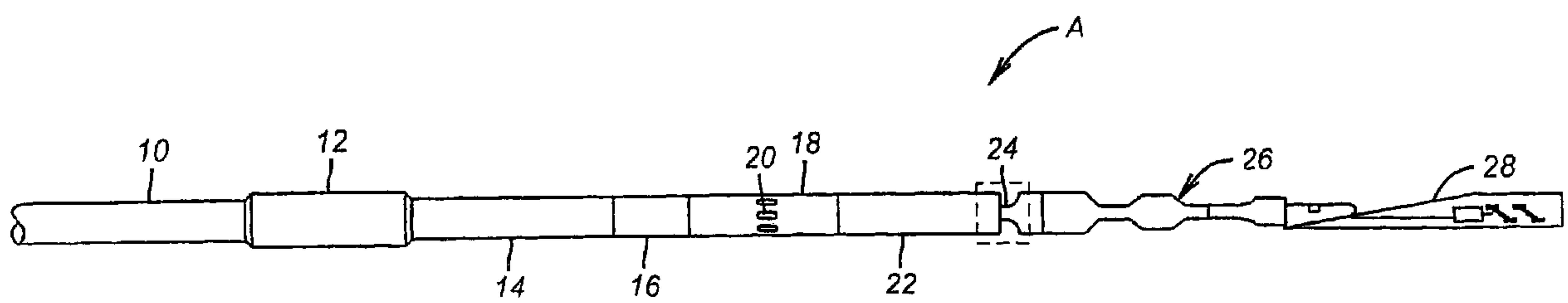

(57) Abrégé/Abstract:
A method of window milling comprises connecting a mill to a whipstock, running the mill and whipstock together through well tubing and out of a lower end of the well tubing, and anchoring the whipstock in a larger tubular below the well tubing and milling the window.

ABSTRACT

A method of window milling comprises connecting a mill to a whipstock, running the mill and whipstock together through well tubing and out of a lower end of the well tubing, and anchoring the whipstock in a larger tubular below the well tubing and milling the window.

WINDOW MILLING METHOD

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The field of this invention relates to window milling systems which can be accomplished through the production tubing in a single trip.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many times in the history of producing wells, a lateral opening must be milled in the casing in order to continue production from an existing well. In the past it has been advantageous to be able to set a whipstock and mill a window without removing the production tubing. These techniques involve the use of a retrievable whipstock which is insertable through tubing. A good example of a through tubing retrievable whipstock is U.S. Patent No. 5,909,770. In some instances in the past, a through tubing non-retrievable whipstock has been used in a multiple trip system for milling a window in a casing. In U.S. Patent Re 36,526 a through tubing non-retrievable whipstock is delivered through tubing and anchored in the casing. A separate trip is involved in delivering the mill or mills to mill the window in the casing.

In the past, whipstocks have been oriented downhole using measurement while drilling technology known as MWD. MWD tools required high flow rates for operation in orienting the whipstock appropriately. In the past, mills have been driven by downhole motors, generally of the progressing cavity type, involving a fixed stator and a rotating rotor driven by fluid flow through the stator.

One of the impediments in the past to running one-trip through tubing systems for milling windows, has been that use of applied pressure to set a whipstock anchor if delivered through the downhole motor would start the motor turning, which would prematurely break the mill loose from the whipstock prior to proper setting of the whipstock or it would alternatively rotate the whipstock. Accordingly, in developing the one-trip through tubing window milling system of the present invention, a motor lock has been developed for the downhole motor to prevent movement of the rotor as the anchor for the whipstock is being set. The apparatus and method of the present invention also envision hydraulically setting an anchor for the through tubing whipstock while having a way to retrieve the whipstock after the window is milled. The hydraulic anchoring assembly is preferred, particularly in deviated well applications due to the difficulties in properly actuating mechanically any anchor for the whipstock. The retrieval of the whipstock after the window milling necessarily involves release of the whipstock anchor to facilitate the removal of the whipstock through tubing. Accordingly, the present invention truly discloses a one-trip through tubing system for window milling whose details will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art from reading the detailed description of the preferred embodiment which appears below.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A one-trip through tubing window milling system is disclosed. The whipstock is delivered with the mill and downhole motor in a downhole assembly which further includes MWD equipment for proper whipstock orientation. The entire assembly is run through tubing and the MWD equipment orients the whipstock. A motor lock prevents the downhole motor from turning as fluid pressure is applied to properly anchor the whipstock below the production tubing. The motor lock is defeated and the milling commenced using the downhole motor. At the conclusion of the window milling, the bottom hole assembly, including the mill, is removed and a retrieving tool releases the whipstock for retrieval through the production tubing.

Accordingly, in one aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of window milling comprising:

connecting a mill to a whipstock;

running said mill and whipstock together through well tubing and out of a lower end of said well tubing;

anchoring the whipstock in a larger tubular below said well tubing; and

milling the window.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a schematic of the bottom hole assembly for the apparatus and method of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a sectional view showing the motor lock in the engaged position;

Fig. 2a is the view of Fig. 2 in the unlocked position;

Fig. 3A is a sectional view of the whipstock anchoring system;

Fig. 3B is a sectional view of the piston actuator;

Fig. 4 is a sectional view showing the whipstock anchored in place prior to milling;

Fig. 5 is a sectional view showing the onset of milling;

Fig. 6 shows the insertion of the retrieval tool for removal of the whipstock after the window has been milled;

Fig. 7 is the view of Fig. 6 with the whipstock anchor defeated prior to removal of the whipstock through the production tubing; and

Figs. 8 and 9 are alternative locks to the preferred design shown in Figs. 2 and 2a.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to Fig. 1, the apparatus **A** may be delivered on coiled tubing **10** or in the alternative, rigid tubing. Connected to the lower end of the coiled tubing **10** is a motor head assembly **12**. The motor head assembly is a tool that combines several tools to reduce overall length, such as a connector and flapper valves. Below the motor head assembly **12** is an MWD tool **14**. In the preferred embodiment, the motor head assembly **12** can be one that is provided by Baker Oil Tools under Product Family No. H13203. The MWD tool **14** is of a type known in the art which uses mud pulse telemetry to relay back to the surface downhole parameters of inclination orientation as well as other properties. The MWD equipment can be omitted if the directed of the lateral is not important.

Located below the MWD tool **14** is an orienting tool **16**, one example of which is Baker Oil Tools Product No. 132-61. The orienting tool **16** offers the ability to orient a milling assembly during a through tubing operation. This tool is actuated using back pressure created by pumping through the retrieving tools or workover motor which can be mounted below. In operation, the internal pressure causes a piston in this tool to shift causing the housing to rotate. When the pressure is reduced, the tool resets allow the next orientation cycle. This tool has the capability of being prevented from free rotation in either direction.

Located below the orienting tool **16** is a whipstock valve **18.** One example of a whipstock valve **18** is Baker Oil Tools Product Family H15036. This type of equipment allows operation of MWD equipment in conjunction with a milling system to allow a one trip operation. In this particular application, it allows the MWD tool **14** to operate to orient a whipstock as will be explained below. This valve is actuated by hydraulic signals such as varying the flow rate. This valve is normally open to facilitate the operation of the MWD tool **14** and after the flow rate is raised considerably, the bypass valve **20** will close to permit setting of the whipstock anchor as will be described below.

Below the whipstock valve **18** is the mud motor **22.** This is a progressing cavity type motor in the preferred embodiment, one example of which is the line of work over motors available form the Inteq Division of Baker Hughes.

Located below the mud motor **22** is the lock **24** shown in more detail in Figure 2. Below lock **24** is the milling system **26** which is in turn connected to the whipstock **28**. The details of the whipstock **28** are shown in Figure 3.

The entire assembly of Figure 1 is made so that it will fit through the production tubing **30** which is in turn inside the casing **32** as illustrated schematically in Figure 4.

The operation of the lock 24 is best understood by looking at Figure 2. The mud motor **22** has a stator **34** inside of which is a rotor **36.** A thread **38** at the lower end of the rotor **36** is used to engage the splined extension **40.** The splined extension **40** is simply a round shaft having a series of longitudinal splines **42** at a lower end **44.**

Secured to the stator **34** is a bottom sub **44** which is attached at thread **46.** Top sub **48** is releasably secured to the bottom sub **44** with a shear pin or pins **50.** Top sub **48** also includes an o-ring seal **52** to provide a seal between itself and the bottom sub **44.** Further, the top sub **48** includes a circular groove **54.** The bottom sub **44** has a split c-ring **56.** In the run in position shown in Figure 2, the c-ring **56** is held to the bottom sub **44.** Ultimately, as shown in Fig. 2a, when there is relative movement between the bottom sub **44** and the top sub **48,** groove **54** comes into alignment with c-ring **56** to lock the relative positions between the bottom sub **44** and top sub **48** in a manner where the splines **42** are no longer retained by splines **58** on the top sub **48.**

This occurs because of pressure build up which breaks the shear pin **50** and longitudinally shifts the top sub **48** taking with it the splines **58**. Splines **58** move downwardly sufficiently so that when the c-ring **56** expands into groove **54**, the rotor **36** is free to rotate. Once the lock **24** shown in Figure 2 is shifted to its unlocked position with c-ring **56** and groove **54**, it cannot return to the original position shown in Figure 2. In the run in position shown in Figure 2, a torque pin **60** prevents relative rotation between the top sub **48** and the bottom sub **44** for transmission of rotational inputs to the whipstock **28** for its proper positioning. The presence of the torque pin **60** does not preclude the longitudinal shifting of the top sub **48** which is necessary to unlock the rotor **36** in the manner previously described. Alternative locks are shown in Figs. 8 and 9. Fig. 8 shows an offset boss to lock the rotor **36** to the stator **34**. Fig. 9 shows a shearable key on the bottom of the bearing housing extending into the upset of the drive sub.

Referring now to Figures 3A and 3B, the anchoring procedure for the whipstock **28** will be described. The milling system **26** has a hose **62** connected to a piston **64**. Piston **64** is biased by spring **66**. Piston **64** is mounted in housing **68** and has seals **70** and **72**. Seal **70** and **72** define an enclosed chamber **74** which has variable volume on piston movement. Extending through chamber **74** is a drive rod **76** which extends to a linkage **78** shown in Figure 3A in the run-in position. A shear valve **80** is connected to a shear rod **82**. Shear rod **82** extends into retrieving slot **84**. The shear rod **82** is engagable in retrieving slot **84** by a retrieving tool **86** as shown in Figure 6. The piston **64** has a check valve **88** which allows flow from hose **62** to enter chamber **74** and increase its volume while at the same time compressing spring **66** as the piston **64** moves upwardly. Upward movement of the piston **64** takes with it the drive rod **76** which in turn puts an upward pull on the linkage **78**. This in turn drives the gripping bar **90** into the casing **32** wedging the whipstock **28** against the casing **32** as shown in Figure 4. The retrieving tool **86** ultimately moves the shear rod **82** which breaks the shear valve **80** which vents accumulated pressure in chamber **74** thus allowing spring **66** to bias the piston **64** to the right making chamber **74** have a smaller volume as fluid is expelled from the broken shear valve **80**. An upward pull on the retrieving tool **86** brings out the whipstock **28** after the window has been milled as will be described below.

The assembly shown in Figure 1 is run through the tubing **30** to get the whipstock **28** in the desired depth. Circulation is established through the MWD tool **14** which exits through the whipstock valve **18**. When the proper orientation has been achieved, the flow is increased to close the bypass valve **20** on the whipstock valve **18**. This allows for pressure buildup in hose **62** which in turn forces piston **64** against spring **66**. The final position of the piston **64** is held by the presence of the check valve **88**. Upward movement of the piston **64** pulls up the drive rod **76** which in turn actuates the linkage **78** to wedge the gripper bar **90** against the casing **32**. At this time the whipstock **28** is secured in the proper orientation. The same pressure buildup in hose **62** also acts to put a downward force on top sub **48** ultimately breaking the shear pin or pins **50** and allowing the top sub **48** to shift until the c-ring **56** expands into the groove **54** locking the lock **24** in the unlocked position. This in turn allows the rotor **36** to rotate as the splines **42** on spline extension **40** are no longer engaged to the splines **58** on the top sub **48**. The milling operation can now take place as illustrated in Figure 5. At the conclusion of the milling operation, the assembly shown in Figure 1, except for the now anchored whipstock **28**, is removed from the wellbore through the tubing **32**. Inserted through the tubing **32** is a retrieving tool **86**, which extends into the retrieving slot **84** as shown in Figure 6. An upward pull on the retrieving tool **86** when in retrieving slot **84**, results in up hole actuation of the shear rod **82** which breaks the shear valve **80**. This in turn allows the fluid in chamber **74** to escape. This in turn allows the spring **66** to bias the piston **64** in the downhole direction which in turn acts to collapse the linkage **78**. An upward pull on the retrieving tool **86** fully collapses the linkage to allow retrieval of the whipstock **28** through the tubing **30**.

Those skilled in art can appreciate that the preferred embodiment has been revealed and that there are other techniques available to accomplish the desired goals of the present invention. The lock **24** can be released by a pickup force to break the shear pin **50**. Alternatively, as previously described, hydraulic pressure can be used. Yet another alternative could involve using electrical current to be applied to a solenoid to place the lock **24** in the released position where the rotor **36** can rotate.

The assembly revealed in Figure 1 allows a whipstock **28** to be run, oriented and set when run below a motor and milling assembly on coil tubing or drill pipe. A one trip system for through tubing window milling is now made possible. Downhole motors in combination with coil tubing allow the window to be milled through tubing when rotating the drill string is not feasible. The lock **24** prevents free rotation of the mud motor **22** which is necessary when coil tubing is used as the work string to prevent running of the milling assembly when the whipstock is set. Without the lock **24**, the whipstock would rotate on application of fluid through the motor **22**. The lock **24** can be built into the downhole motor **22** or can be a separate assembly.

While the preferred embodiment has been set forth above, those skilled in art will appreciate that the scope of the invention is significantly broader and as outlined in the claims which appear below.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of window milling comprising:
connecting a mill to a whipstock;
running said mill and whipstock together through well tubing and out of a lower end of said well tubing;
anchoring the whipstock in a larger tubular below said well tubing; and
milling the window.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
orienting the whipstock prior to said anchoring.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
connecting a downhole motor to said mill before running said mill and whipstock through said well tubing.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
using a fluid driven motor as said downhole motor; and
releasably locking a rotor on said fluid driven motor.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
using fluid pressure to accomplish said anchoring.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
removing said mill through said well tubing;
inserting a retrieving tool through said well tubing; and
removing said whipstock through said well tubing.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
using a linkage connecting said whipstock and a gripping member as an anchor for said whipstock; and
actuating said linkage to an anchoring position with said fluid pressure.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising:
using said retrieving tool to relieve fluid pressure; and

relaxing said linkage due to said fluid pressure relieving.

9. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

using one of mechanical, fluid pressure and electrical power to unlock said rotor for rotation.

10. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

using a shiftable spline to selectively engage a spline on said rotor for said locking;

separating said splines; and

locking said splines in a separated position.

11. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

providing a piston in a housing;

connecting an actuator rod to said piston near one end and to said linkage near the other end; and

applying fluid pressure to move said piston and said actuator rod to expand said linkage.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

retaining pressure on said piston in a chamber of said housing;

providing a bias on said piston to oppose said retained pressure in said housing; and

using said retrieving tool to release said pressure from said chamber.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

providing a valve on said chamber and an operator for said valve extending into a retrieving slot in said whipstock;

moving said operator with said retrieving tool; and

allowing said piston to be biased as a result of said pressure releasing.

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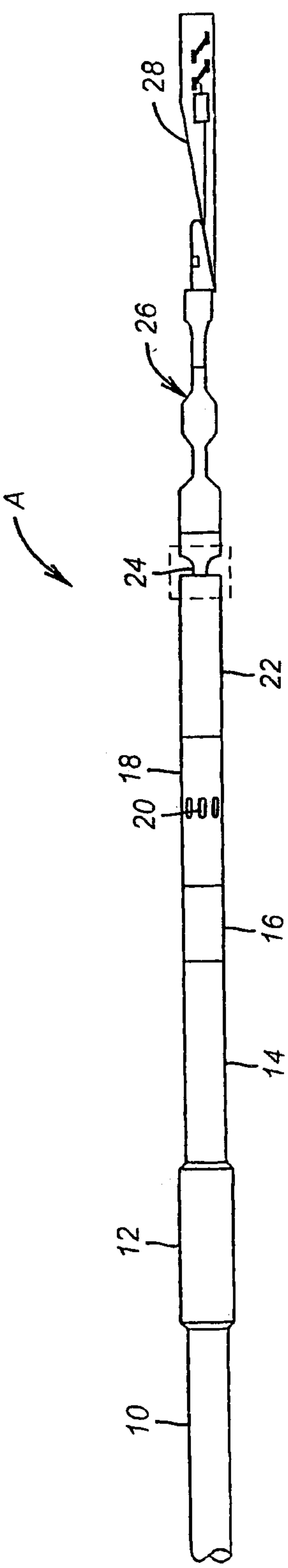

FIG. 1

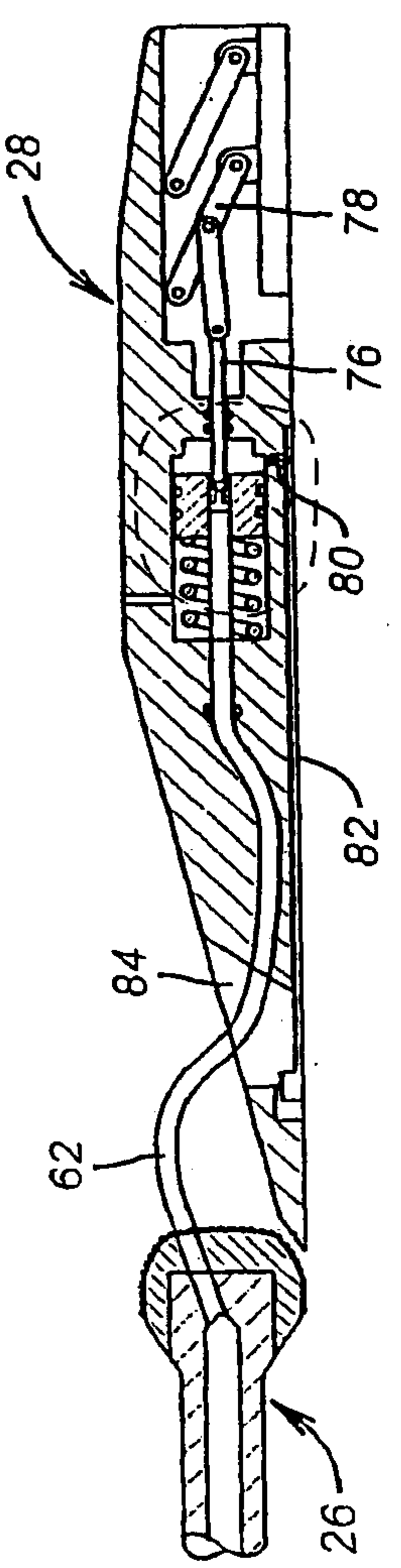

FIG. 3A

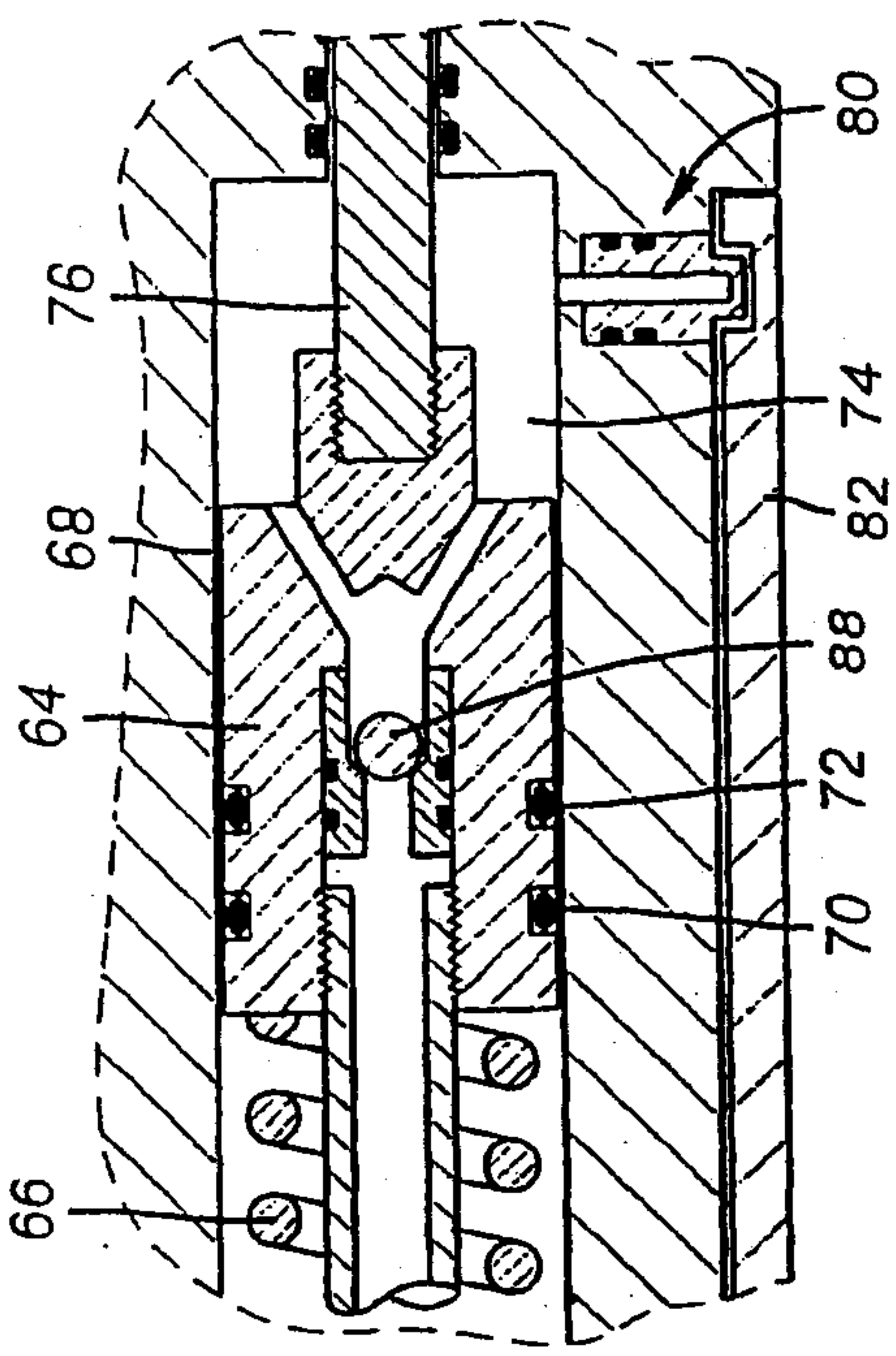

FIG. 3B

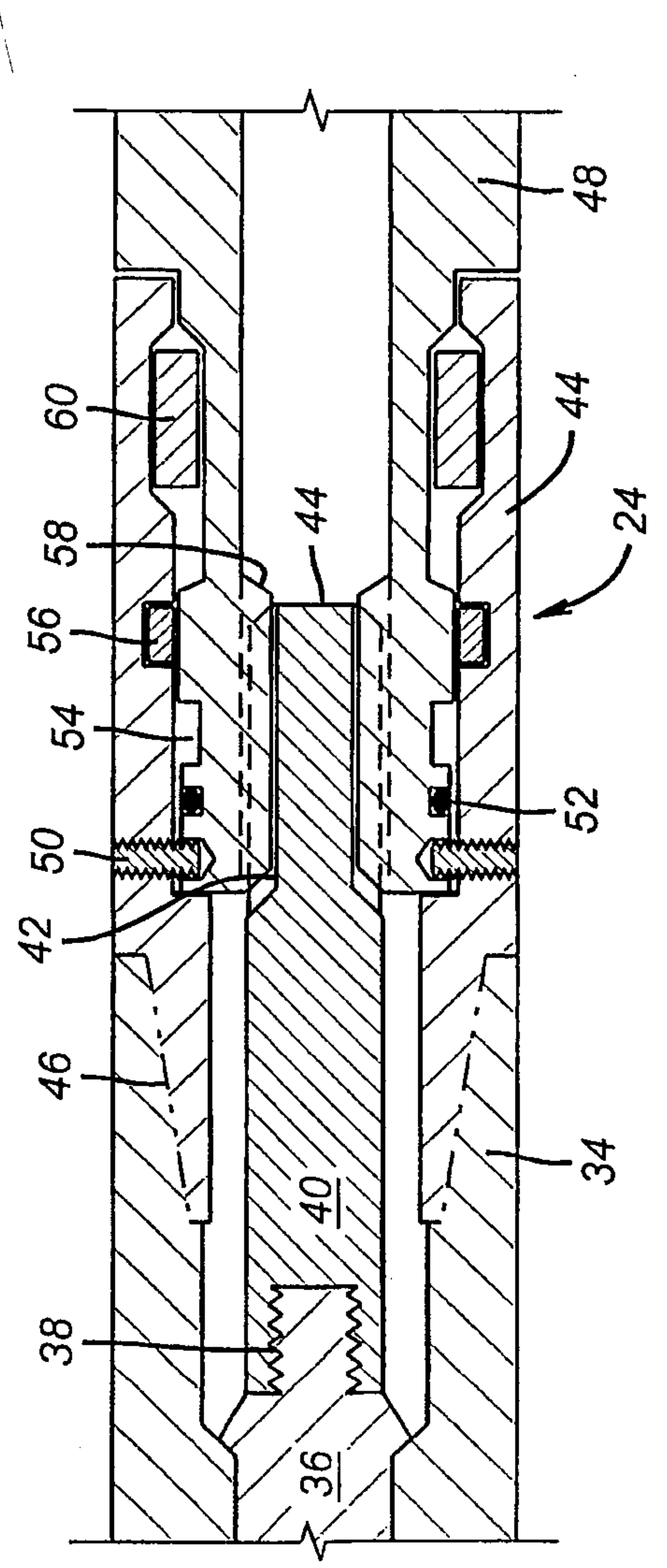

FIG. 2

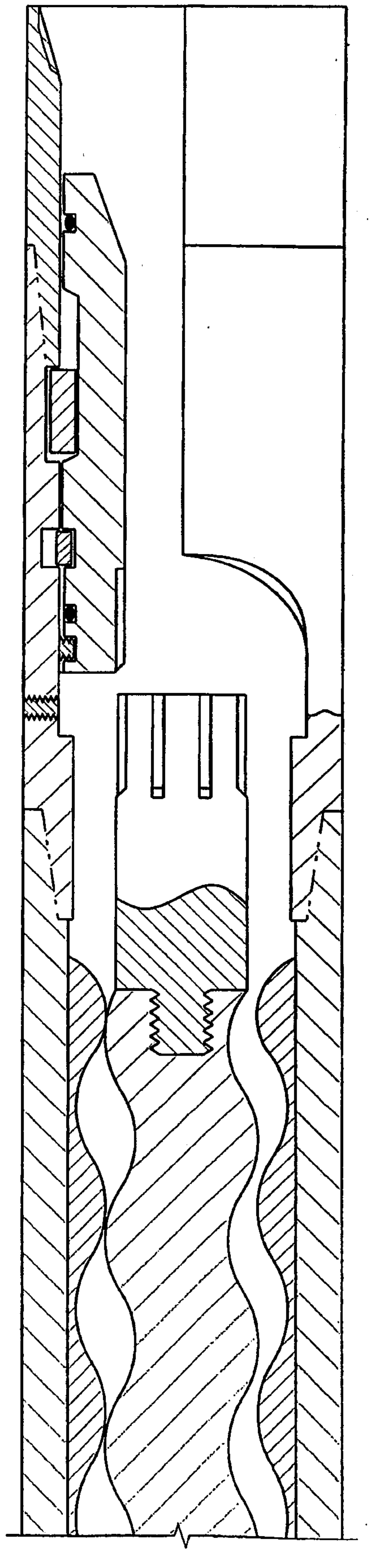

FIG. 2a

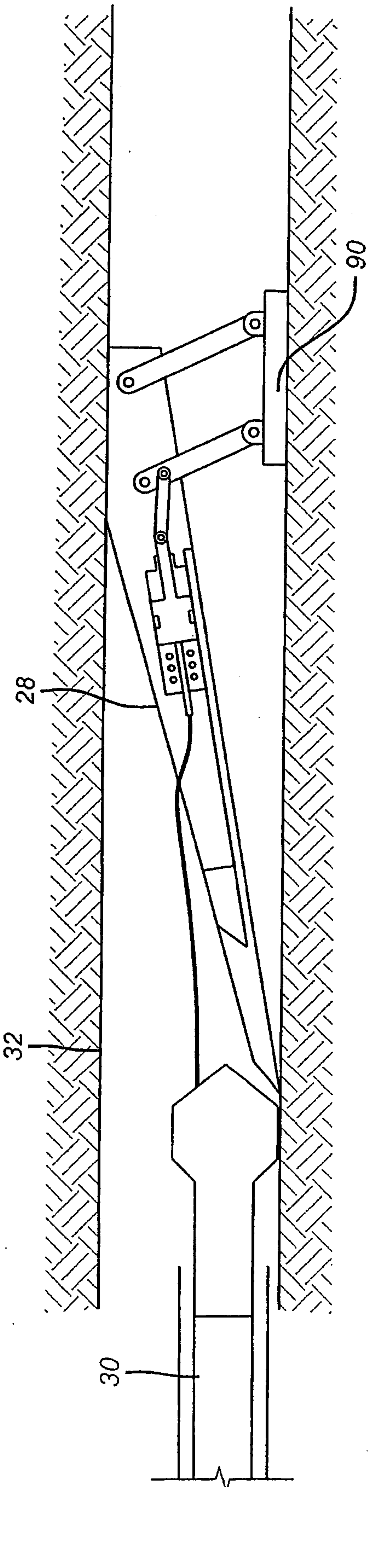

FIG. 4

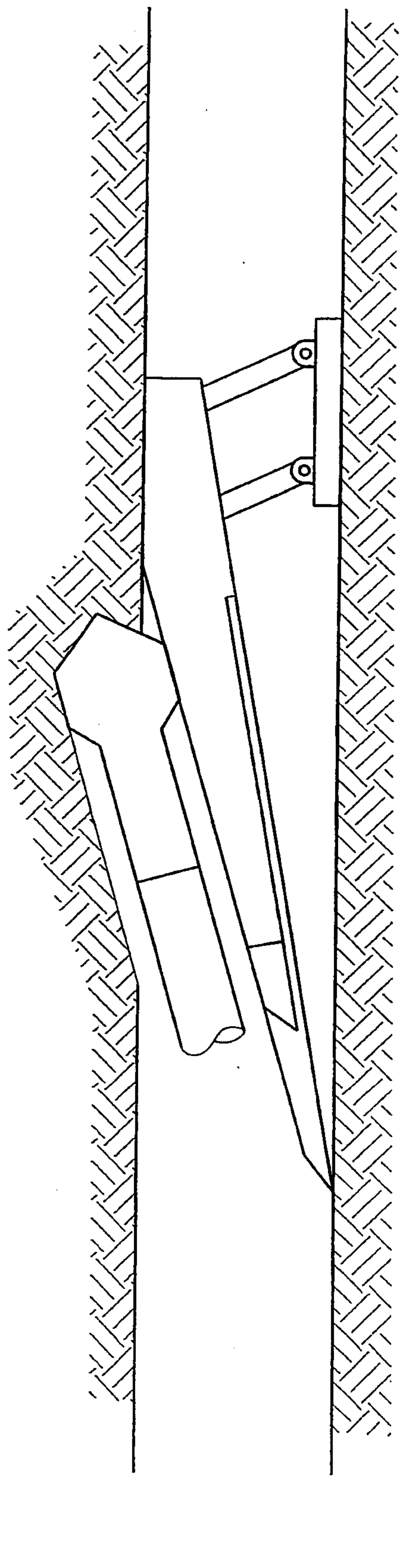

FIG. 5

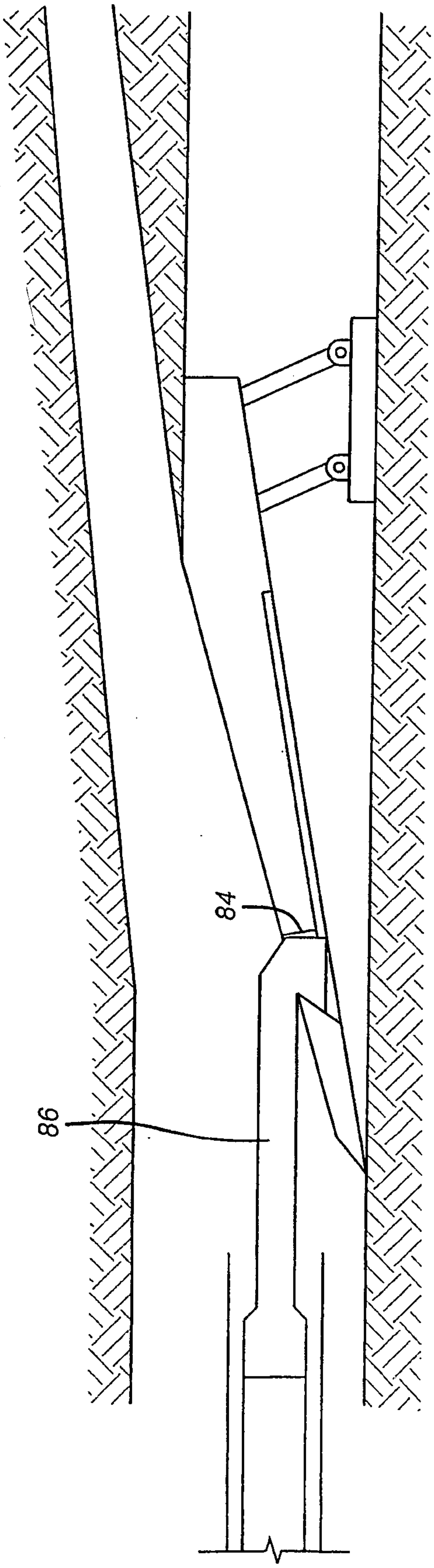

FIG. 6

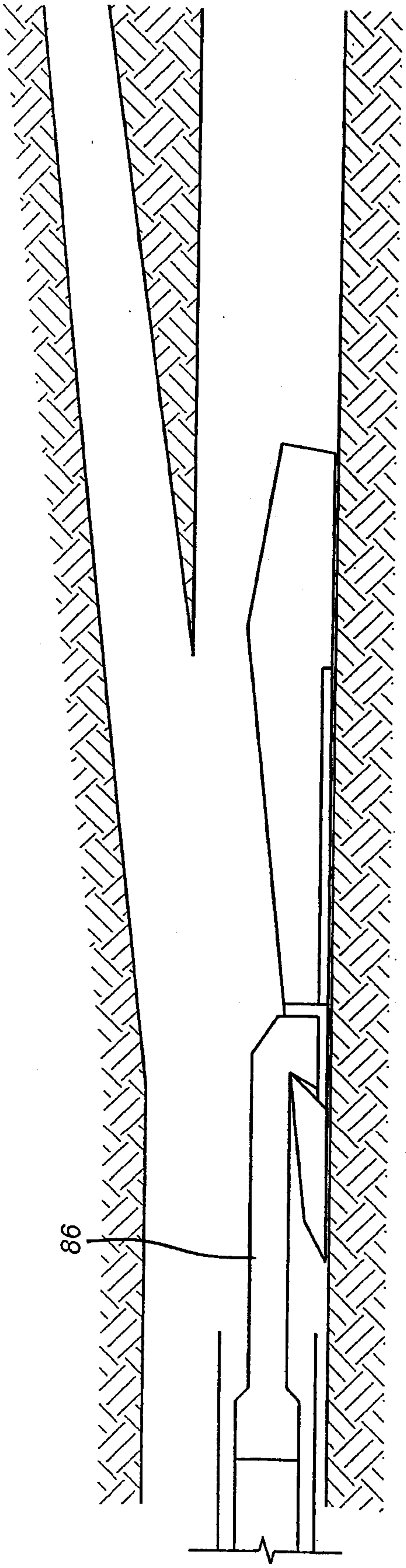

FIG. 7

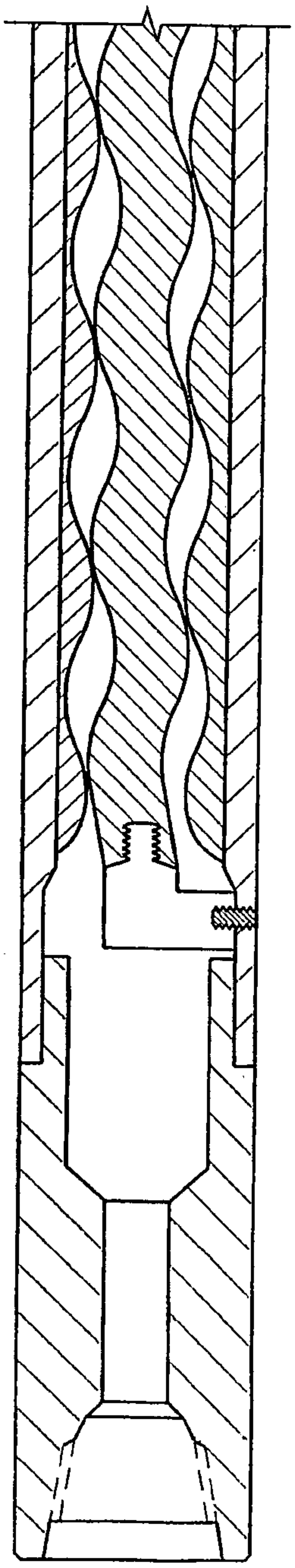

FIG. 8

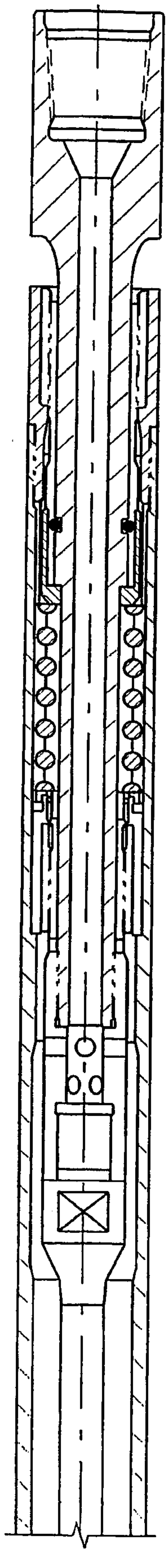

FIG. 9


A
10
12
20
18
24
26
28
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16
22