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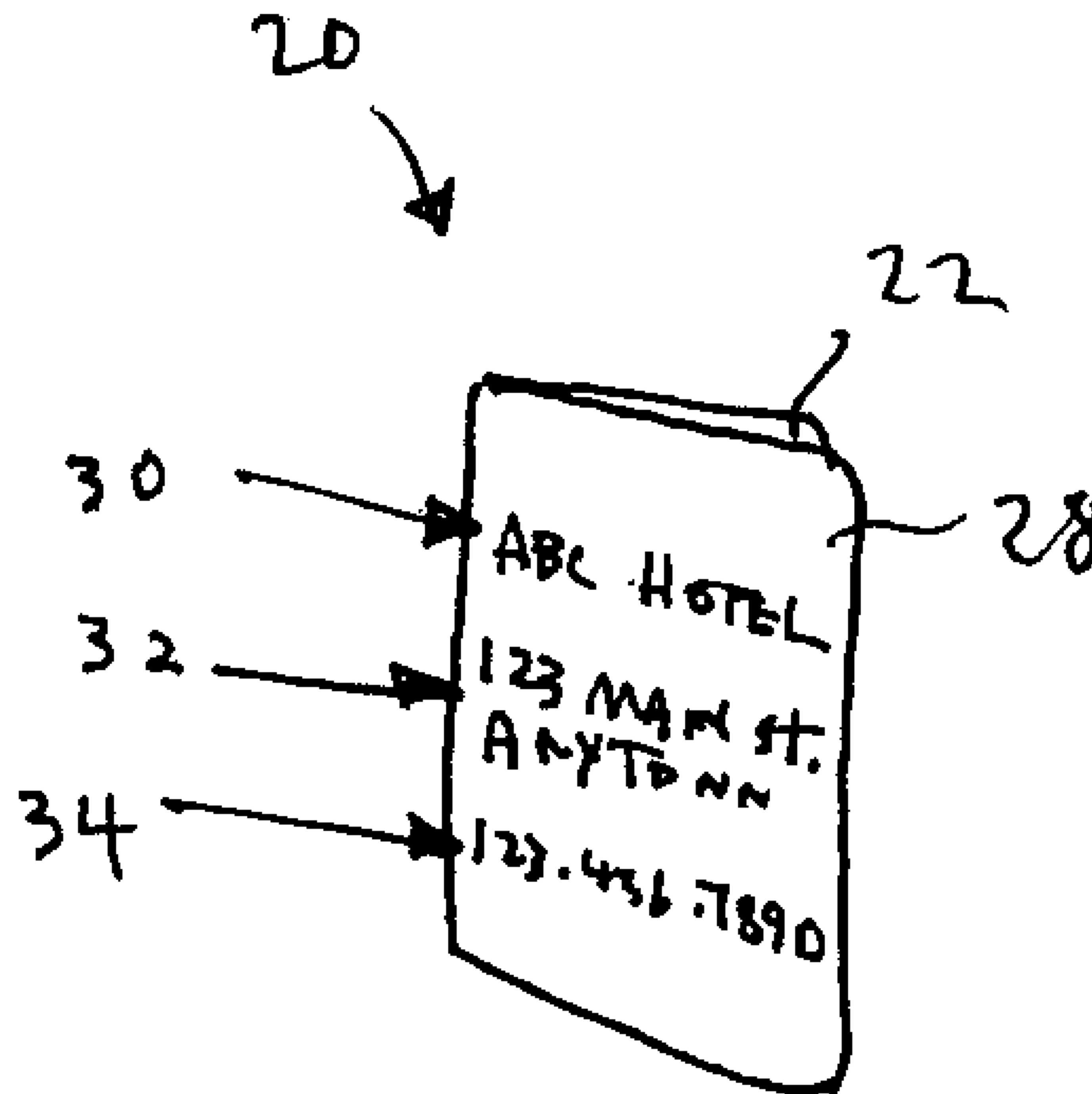
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(54) Title: KEYCARD HOLDER



KEYCARD HOLDER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to the field of hotels and the like.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] In modern hotels, it is known to secure each guestroom with a lock actuable by a card reader, and to issue to each guest assigned to that guestroom a respective card ("keycard") adapted to actuate the lock.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] A holder for a keycard forms one aspect of the invention. This holder comprises a sheet and a part. The sheet has a first set of concertina folds and a second set of concertina folds, the second set of concertina folds being transverse to the first set such that the sheet can, from a fully-folded configuration, be unfolded at least substantially flat in a single movement when diagonally opposite corners of the sheet are pulled apart from one another. The part is adapted to receive said keycard in use and is operatively hingedly connected to the sheet such that the part can be overlaid upon the sheet to contain said keycard in use in the manner of a folder.

[0004] According to other aspects of the invention: the part can define one panel of a folder; one of the diagonally opposite corners of the sheet can be secured to an other panel of the folder; the sheet can be at least substantially wholly contained between the one and the other panel of the folder when the sheet is in the fully-folded configuration and the one and the other panel of the folder are folded upon one another; the sheet can be paper; and the folder can be cardboard.

[0005] According to another aspect of the invention, the part can be adapted to receive said keycard in use by means of a pocket which receives said keycard in use.

[0006] According to another aspect of the invention, the part has an area defined thereon for receiving a room identifier, the area being defined by a frangible portion of the part, which frangible portion can be formed within the periphery of the part or extend from the periphery of the part.

[0007] According to another aspect of the invention, the sheet can have a rectangular configuration, the first and second sets of folds can be mutually perpendicular and parallel to the respective edges of said sheet, said first set of folds can be an odd number of folds and said second set of folds can be an even number of folds.

[0008] According to another aspect of the invention; the one panel can be adapted to receive said keycard in use by means of a pocket which receives said keycard in use; the one panel can have an area defined thereon for receiving a room identifier, the area being defined by a frangible portion of the one panel, which frangible portion can be formed within the periphery of the one panel or extend from the periphery from the one panel.

[0009] According to another aspect of the invention, the holder for a keycard can comprise a folder and a sheet. The folder has one panel adapted to receive said keycard in use and has another panel. The sheet has a first set of concertina folds and a second set of concertina folds, the second set of concertina folds being transverse to the first set such that the sheet can, from a fully-folded configuration, be unfolded at least substantially flat in a single movement when diagonally opposite corners of the sheet are pulled apart from one another. One of the diagonally opposite corners is secured to the other panel and the one panel and the other panel are foldable upon one another to at least substantially wholly contain

therebetween the keycard and, when in the fully-folded configuration, the sheet.

[0010] According to another aspect of the invention, the one panel can be adapted to receive said keycard in use by means of a pocket which receives said keycard in use.

[0011] According to other aspects of the invention, the holder for a keycard can comprise a folder for receiving a keycard in use and having an area defined thereon for receiving a room identifier, the area being defined by a frangible portion of the folder.

[0012] A holder for a keycard forms another aspect of this invention. This holder comprises a main body portion and a pair of protrusions. The main body portion defines a slot and has a central panel and two further panels, the further panels extending from opposite edges of the central panel, one of the further panels being folded in use to an operative position whereat the one panel and the central panel form a folder in receipt of said keycard, the other of the further panels being foldable upon the folder to hold said one panel in said operative position. The protrusions, which extend from opposite ends of the central panel, are, in use, folded upon said keycard and held thereagainst by said one panel.

[0013] According to another aspect of the invention, the holder can further comprise a tab protruding from the one further panel so as to be releasably engageable in the slot to secure the one further panel in the operative position.

[0014] Other advantages, features and characteristics of the present invention, as well as methods of operation and functions of the related elements of the structure, and the combination of parts and economies of manufacture, will become more apparent upon consideration of the following detailed description and the appended claims with reference to the accompanying drawings, the latter being briefly described hereinbelow.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0015]** FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a holder according to a first exemplary embodiment of the invention, in a closed configuration, in use;
- [0016]** FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the structure of FIG. 1, in an open configuration to show a sheet in a fully-folded configuration and a keycard stored in a pocket;
- [0017]** FIG. 3 is a partially exploded view of the structure of FIG. 2;
- [0018]** FIG. 4 is a view similar to FIG. 3, with a frangible portion separated therefrom;
- [0019]** FIG. 5 is an enlarged rear view of encircled area 5 of FIG. 4;
- [0020]** FIG. 6 is an enlarged rear view of the structure of FIG. 2;
- [0021]** FIG. 7 is a view similar to FIG. 2, with the sheet partially unfolded;
- [0022]** FIG. 8 is a view similar to FIG. 7, further unfolded;
- [0023]** FIG. 9 is a view similar to FIG. 7, with the sheet fully unfolded;

- [0024]** FIG. 10 is a view similar to FIG. 2 of a further exemplary embodiment;
- [0025]** FIG. 11 is a view similar to FIG. 4 of the structure of FIG. 9;
- [0026]** FIG. 12 is a plan view of a further exemplary embodiment;
- [0027]** FIG. 13 is a view of the structure of FIG. 12; with a keycard disposed upon the central panel and protrusions folded over the keycard;
- [0028]** FIG. 14 is a view of the structure of FIG. 13 in use.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0029] In FIG. 2, a holder according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention and designated with general reference numeral 20 is shown in use with a keycard 21. The holder 20 will be seen to comprise a part 22 and a paper sheet 24. For greater certainty, the keycard 21 is of conventional structure, sized and dimensioned to approximate a standard credit card and incorporating a magnetic strip or technology of similar functionality (not shown), and in any event, forms no part of the invention.

[0030] The part 22 defines one panel of a cardboard folder 26; sheet 24 is associated with an other panel 28 of the folder 26. This folder 26 bears on the outer surface thereof information germane to patrons of the hotel, namely, name 30, address 32 and telephone 34 coordinates.

[0031] The part 22 is adapted to receive said keycard 21 in use by means of a pocket 36 which receives said keycard 21 in use, as shown in FIG. 2 (the lower portion of the keycard 21 being shown in phantom outline). In the exemplary embodiment illustrated, the one panel 22 forms part of a larger

element which is folded upon itself and adhesively secured along two seams 38 to form the pocket 36. Also, as seen in FIG. 6, the part 22 has an area 40 defined thereon for receiving a room identifier. The room identifier may be applied, for example, by pen, pencil, adhesive sticker, typewriter, inkjet, laser, embossing, etc. As shown by the sequence of FIG. 3 and FIG. 4, this area 40 is defined by a disc-shaped frangible portion 42 formed within the periphery of the part 22 and defined by perforations 44 formed in the panel 22. [FIGS. 10 and 11 show an alternative arrangement, which is substantially identical to the embodiment of FIGS. 1, 3, but wherein the frangible portion 42' extends from the periphery of the part 22.]

[0032] As shown by the sequence of FIGS. 3, 7, 8 and 9, the sheet 24 can, from a fully-folded configuration (shown in FIG. 3), be unfolded flat (as per FIG. 9) in a single movement when diagonally opposite corners 46,48 of the sheet 24 are pulled apart from one another. Similarly, the sheet 24 can relatively easily be folded up again with a single reverse movement. The sheet 24 bears information germane to patrons of the hotel, which could take the form of maps, advertisement of local attractions, etc.

[0033] One 46 of the diagonally opposite corners 46,48 of the sheet 24 is secured to the other panel 28 of the folder 26 such that the sheet 24 is at least substantially wholly contained between the one 22 and the other 28 panel of the folder when the sheet 24 is in the fully-folded configuration and the one 22 and the other 28 panel of the folder 26 are folded against one another, as shown in FIG. 1.

[0034] To provide this functionality, the sheet 24 of the exemplary embodiment has, with reference to FIG. 8, a rectangular configuration, a first set (an odd number, specifically) of concertina folds 50 and a second set (an even number, specifically 2) of concertina folds 52, said first and second sets of folds being mutually perpendicular and parallel to the respective edges of

said sheet (i.e. the second set of concertina folds is transverse to the first set).

[0035] The foregoing structure provides a keycard holder of significant usefulness. On check-in, the guest may be presented with an appropriate keycard received by the holder, and the room number (or other indicia) annotated on the frangible portion thereof. The guest may, at a convenient time, remove the frangible portion, and store same in a purse or wallet, so that if the holder/keycard is lost, the finder thereof will have no means of knowing the room which can be accessed via the keycard. By so removing the room-identifying frangible portion, the guest may then safely keep the keycard and the holder together, thereby to have ready recourse to the information contained on the folder and on the sheet.

[0036] Whereas in the exemplary embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 1 - 11 and described hereinbefore, the folder is cardboard and the sheet is paper, this is not necessary. For example, FIG. 12 shows an embodiment wherein the sheet 24, panels 22,28 and pocket-forming portion 22A are formed integrally out of a single sheet of material, such as stiff paper. [In this case, as would readily be understood by persons of ordinary skill, to construct the holder, portion 22A would be folded behind the panel 22 as shown in the illustration and adhesively secured in place to form the pocket, and panel 28 would be folded behind sheet 24 as shown in the illustration to form the folder.] As well, other foldable materials [i.e. a material that takes folds at which it can be easily unfolded (without the folds disappearing) and refolded] may be used for the sheet and/or folder, such as plastic. It is also conceivable that the material utilized may be stiff except at the folds, e.g. cards interconnected by paper or cloth.

[0037] Further, wherein in each illustration, the sheet is wholly contained between the one and the other panel of the folder when the sheet is in the fully-folded configuration and the one and the other panel of the folder are

folded against one another, this is not necessary, and the fully-folded sheet could extend beyond the panels when in the configuration shown in FIG. 1

[0038] As well, whereas in each of the embodiments of FIGS. 1-11, a pocket 36, open along one edge, is employed to receive said keycard 21, other variants could be employed. One such embodiment is illustrated in FIGS. 13-15 and designated with general reference numeral 100. This embodiment 100 includes a main body portion 102, protrusions 114 and a tab 116. The main body portion 102 defines a slot 104 and has a central panel 106 and two further panels 108,110, the further panels 108,110 extending from opposite edges of the central panel 106. One 108 of the further panels is folded in use to an operative position whereat one panel 108 and central panel 106 form a folder 112 in receipt of said keycard 21, as shown in FIG 15, wherein the keycard 21 is shown in phantom outline. The other 110 of the further panels is foldable upon the folder 112 to hold said one panel 108 in said operative position. The protrusions 114 extend from opposite ends of the central panel 106, and in use, are folded upon said keycard 21, as shown in FIG. 14, and held thereagainst by panel 108. The tab 116 protrudes from panel 108 so as to be releasably engageable in the slot 104 to secure panel 108 in its operative position, as shown in FIG. 15. In this embodiment, panel 110 serves the function of panel 28 of the embodiment of FIGS. 1-12, and accordingly carries sheet 24, and panels 106, 108 generally correspond to part 22 of FIGS. 1-12, with frangible portion 42 being defined in panel 106.

[0039] However, yet further modifications are possible and contemplated. For example, a pair of slits (not shown) could be provided in the one panel 22, spaced-apart from one another a distance so as to permit diagonally-opposite corners of the card to be introduced therein. Similarly, adhesive material (not shown) could be employed to releasably adhere the card to folder 26.

[0040] Additionally, whereas in the embodiments described, the folder bears contact coordinates for the hotel, this is also not necessary.

[0041] As well, whereas the sheet of FIGS. 1-11 is indicated to be adhesively secured to the folder, this is not necessary, as evidenced by FIG. 12, wherein the sheet is secured to the folder by integral forming. Other forms of securement are also possible, for example, staples, brads, spikes, etc.

[0042] Additionally, whereas in each of the embodiments illustrated, a concertina-folded sheet is employed, and arranged so as to unfold in a particular direction, i.e. down and to the right as shown in the sequence of FIGS. 3, 7, 8, 9, this is not necessary. Concertina-type sheets could be arranged and secured to extend in any diagonal direction, i.e. down and to the left, up and to the left and up and to the right, with reference to FIG. 3. As well, other forms of folded sheets could be substituted for the concertina-type, and the sheet could be omitted altogether.

[0043] Further, whereas a frangible portion, defined by a perforation in the folder, is shown for the room identifier, other variants of this are possible. For example, only, the area for room identification could be defined on a sticker which is releasably secured to the folder, or on a separate paper, cardboard or plastic element which is releasably secured to the folder.

[0044] Accordingly, it should be understood that the scope of the invention is to be limited only by the accompanying claims, purposively construed.

CLAIMS

1. A holder for a keycard, the holder comprising:

a sheet having a first set of concertina folds and a second set of concertina folds, the second set of concertina folds being transverse to the first set such that the sheet can, from a fully-folded configuration, be unfolded at least substantially flat in a single movement when diagonally opposite corners of the sheet are pulled apart from one another; and

a part adapted to receive said keycard in use and operatively hingedly connected to the sheet such that the part can be overlaid upon the sheet to contain said keycard in use in the manner of a folder.
2. A holder according to claim 1, wherein the part defines one panel of a folder.
3. A holder according to claim 2, wherein one of the diagonally opposite corners of the sheet is secured to an other panel of the folder.
4. A holder according to claim 3, wherein the sheet is wholly contained between the one and the other panel of the folder when the sheet is in the fully-folded configuration and the one and the other panel of the folder are operatively folded against one another.
5. A holder according to claim 1, wherein the part is adapted to receive said keycard in use by means of a pocket which receives said keycard in use.

6. A holder according to claim 1, wherein the part has an area defined thereon for receiving a room identifier, the area being defined by a frangible portion of the part.
7. A holder according to claim 6, wherein the frangible portion is formed within the periphery of the part.
8. A holder according to claim 6, wherein the frangible portion extends from the periphery from the part.
9. A holder according to claim 1, wherein the sheet has a rectangular configuration, said first and second sets of folds are mutually perpendicular and parallel to the respective edges of said sheet, said first set of folds is an odd number of folds and said second set of folds is an even number of folds.
10. A holder according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the sheet is paper and the folder is cardboard.
11. A holder according to claim 2, wherein the one panel is adapted to receive said keycard in use by means of a pocket which receives said keycard in use.
12. A holder according to claim 2, wherein the one panel has an area defined thereon for receiving a room identifier, the area being defined by a frangible portion of the one panel.
13. A holder according to claim 12, wherein the frangible portion is formed within the periphery of the one panel.
14. A holder according to claim 12, wherein the frangible portion extends from the periphery from the one panel.

15. A holder for a keycard, the holder comprising:

a folder having one panel adapted to receive said keycard in use and having an other panel; and

a sheet having a first set of concertina folds and a second set of concertina folds, the second set of concertina folds being transverse to the first set such that the sheet can, from a fully-folded configuration, be unfolded at least substantially flat in a single movement when diagonally opposite corners of the sheet are pulled apart from one another, one of the diagonally opposite corners being secured to the other panel,

the one panel and the other panel being foldable upon one another to at least substantially wholly contain therebetween the keycard and, when in the fully-folded configuration, the sheet.

16. A holder according to claim 15, wherein the one panel is adapted to receive said keycard in use by means of a pocket which receives said keycard in use.

17. A holder for a keycard, the holder comprising:

a folder for receiving a keycard in use and having an area defined thereon for receiving a room identifier, the area being defined by a frangible portion of the folder.

18. A holder for a keycard, the holder comprising:

a main body portion defining a slot and having a central panel and two further panels, the further panels extending from opposite edges of the central panel, one of the further panels being folded in use to an operative position whereat the one panel and the central panel form a folder in receipt of said keycard, the other of the further panels being foldable upon the folder to hold said one panel in said operative position; and

protrusions extending from opposite ends of the central panel, said protrusions, in use, being folded upon said keycard and held thereagainst by said one panel.

19. A holder according to claim 18, further comprising a tab protruding from the one further panel so as to be releasably engageable in the slot to secure the one further panel in the operative position.

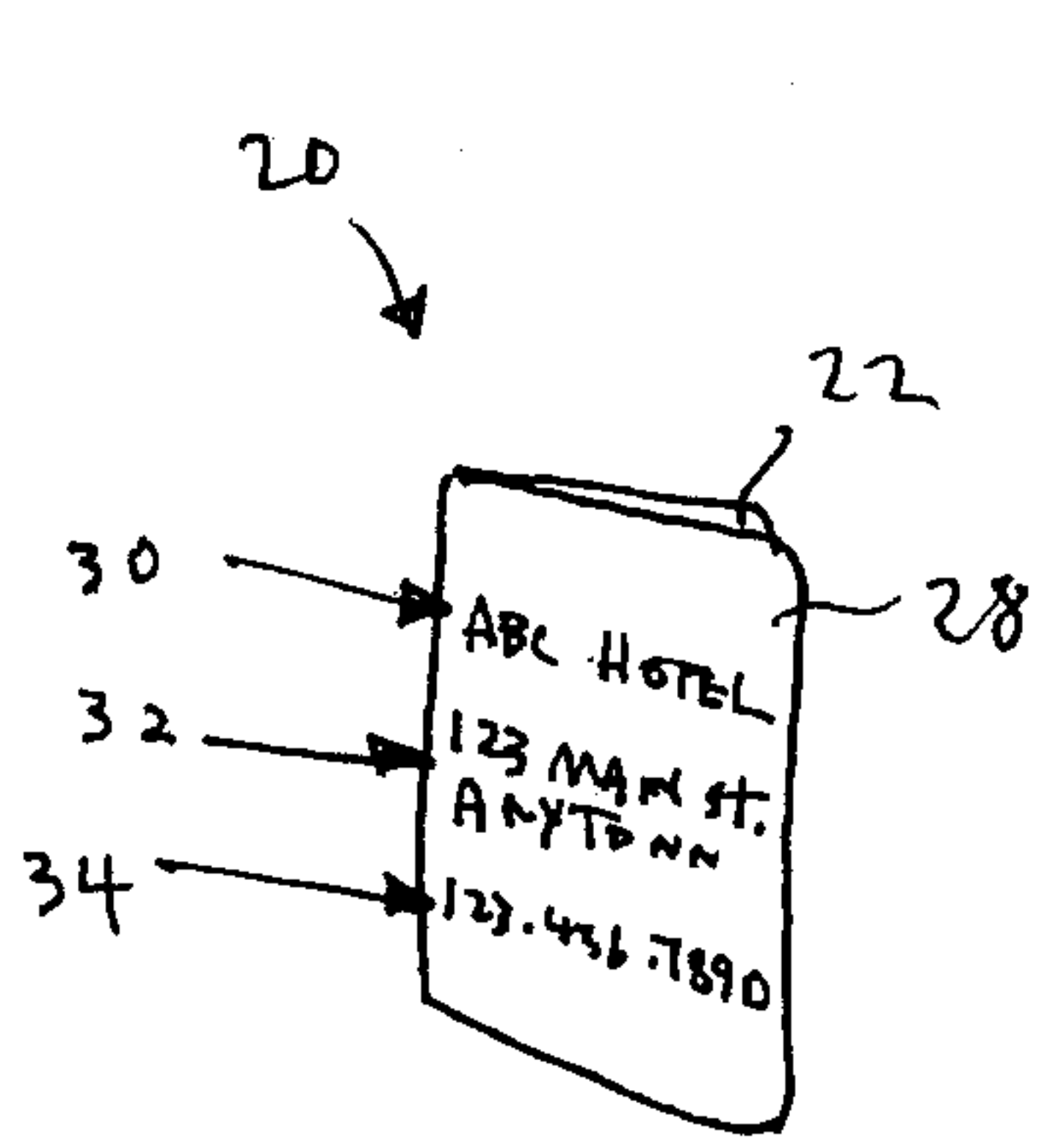


FIG. 1

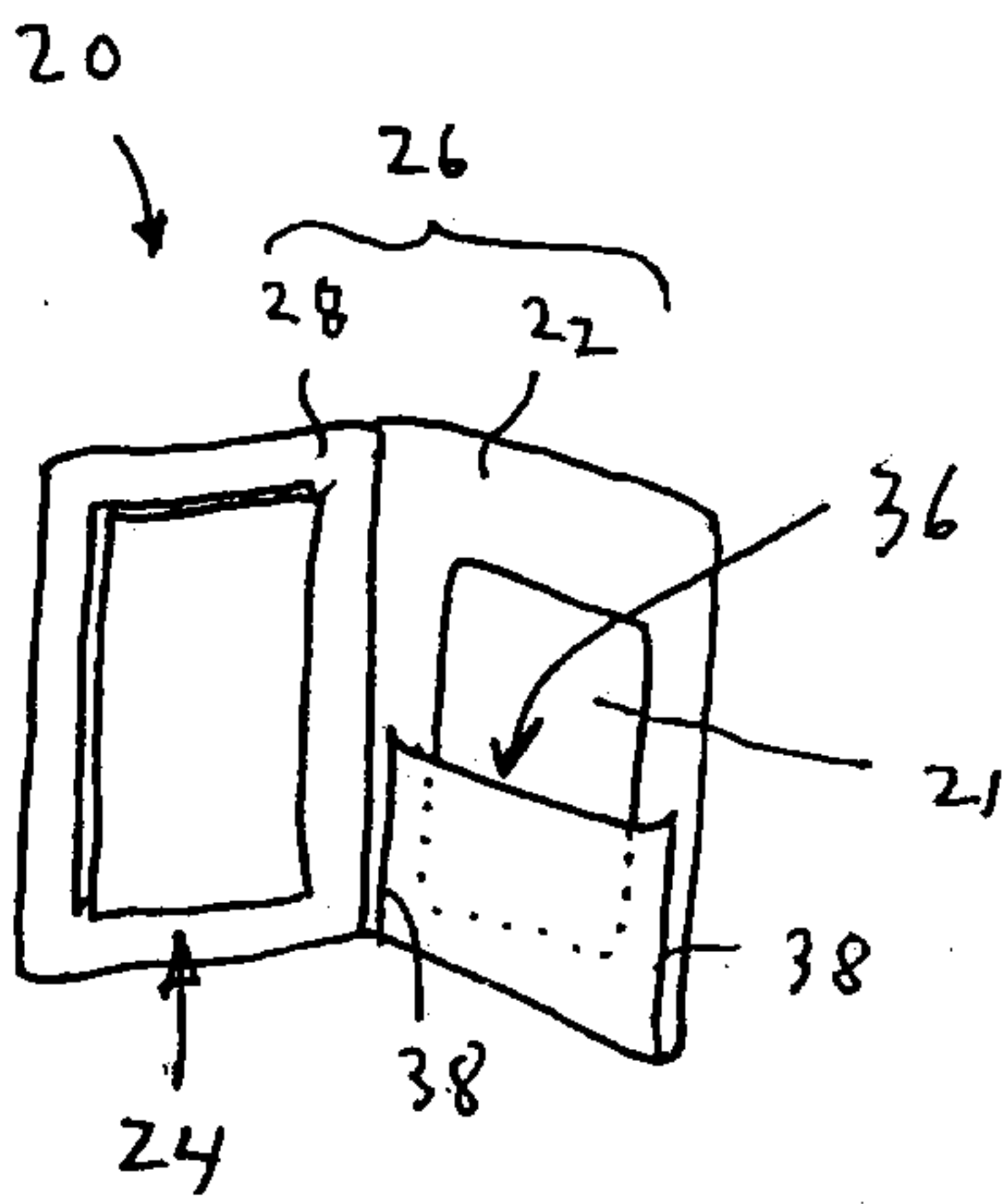


FIG. 2

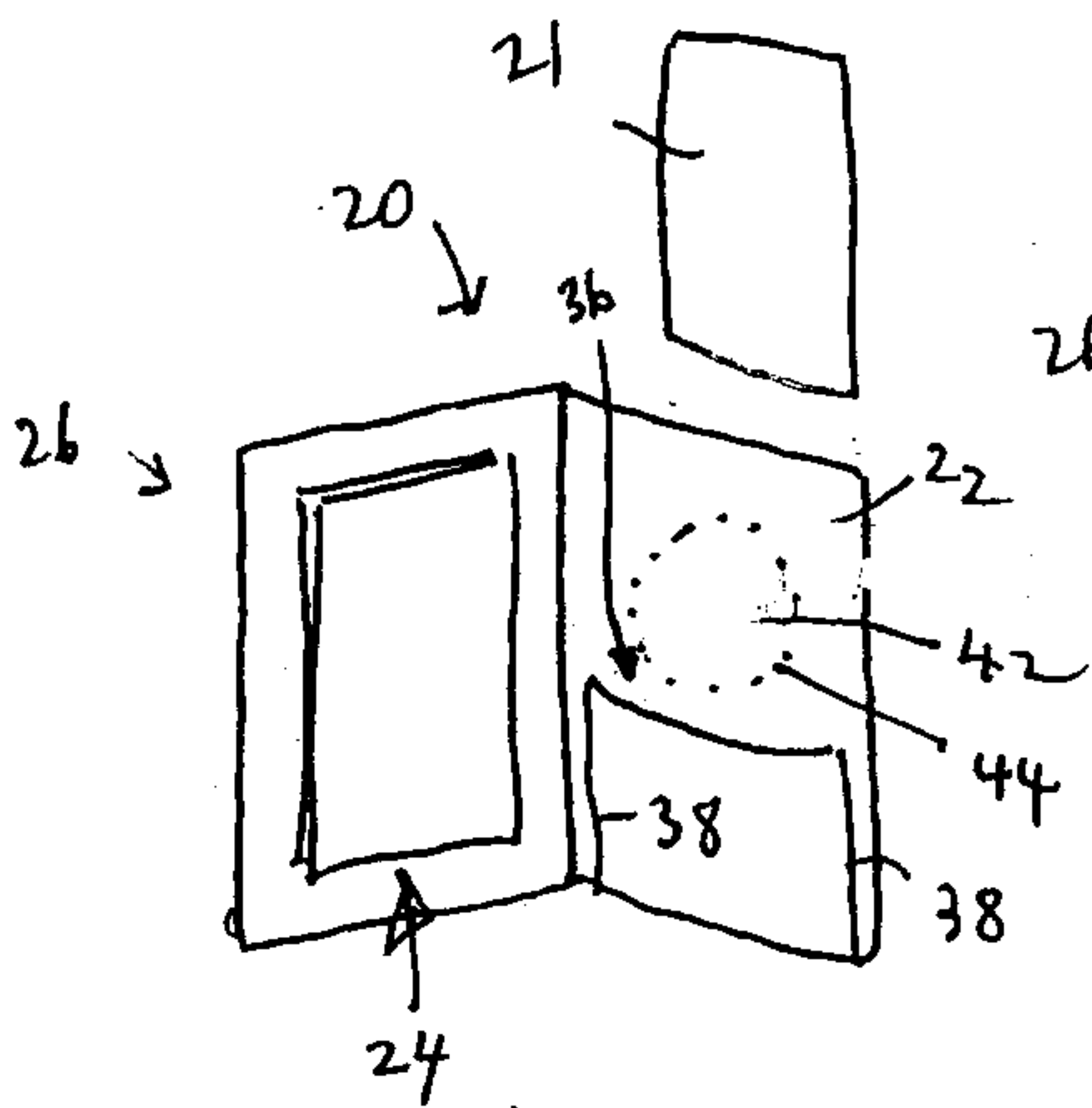


FIG. 3

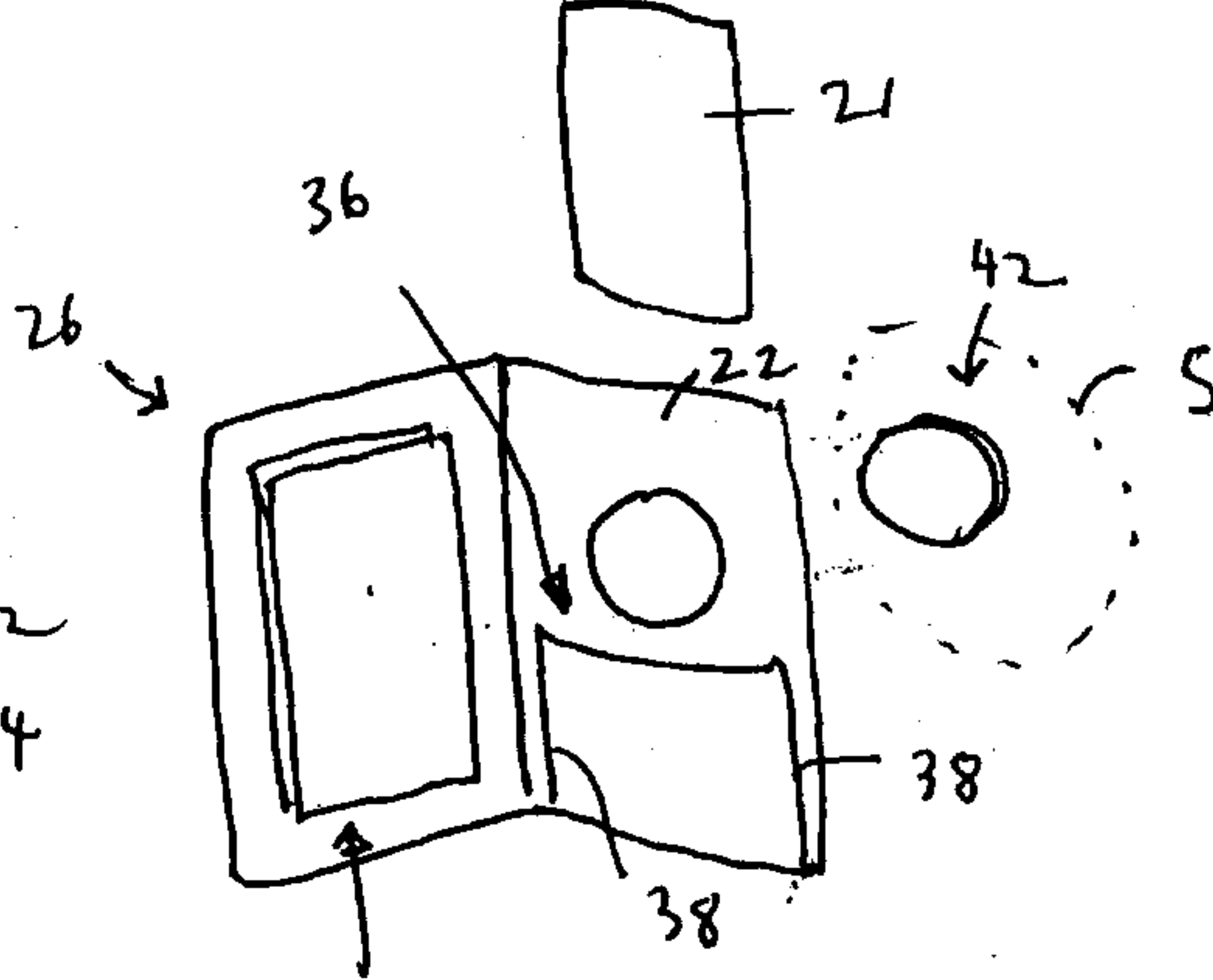


FIG. 4

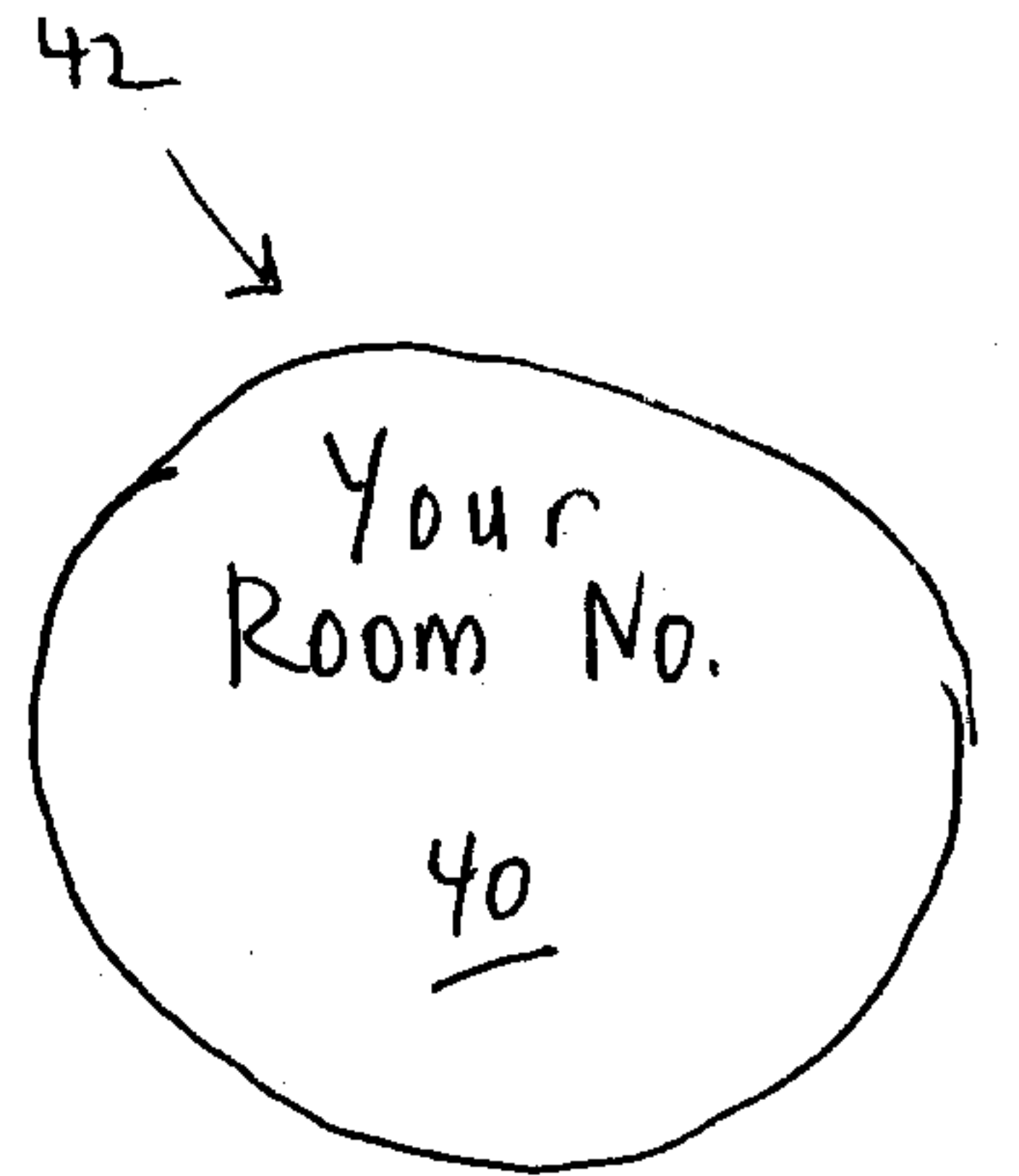


FIG. 5

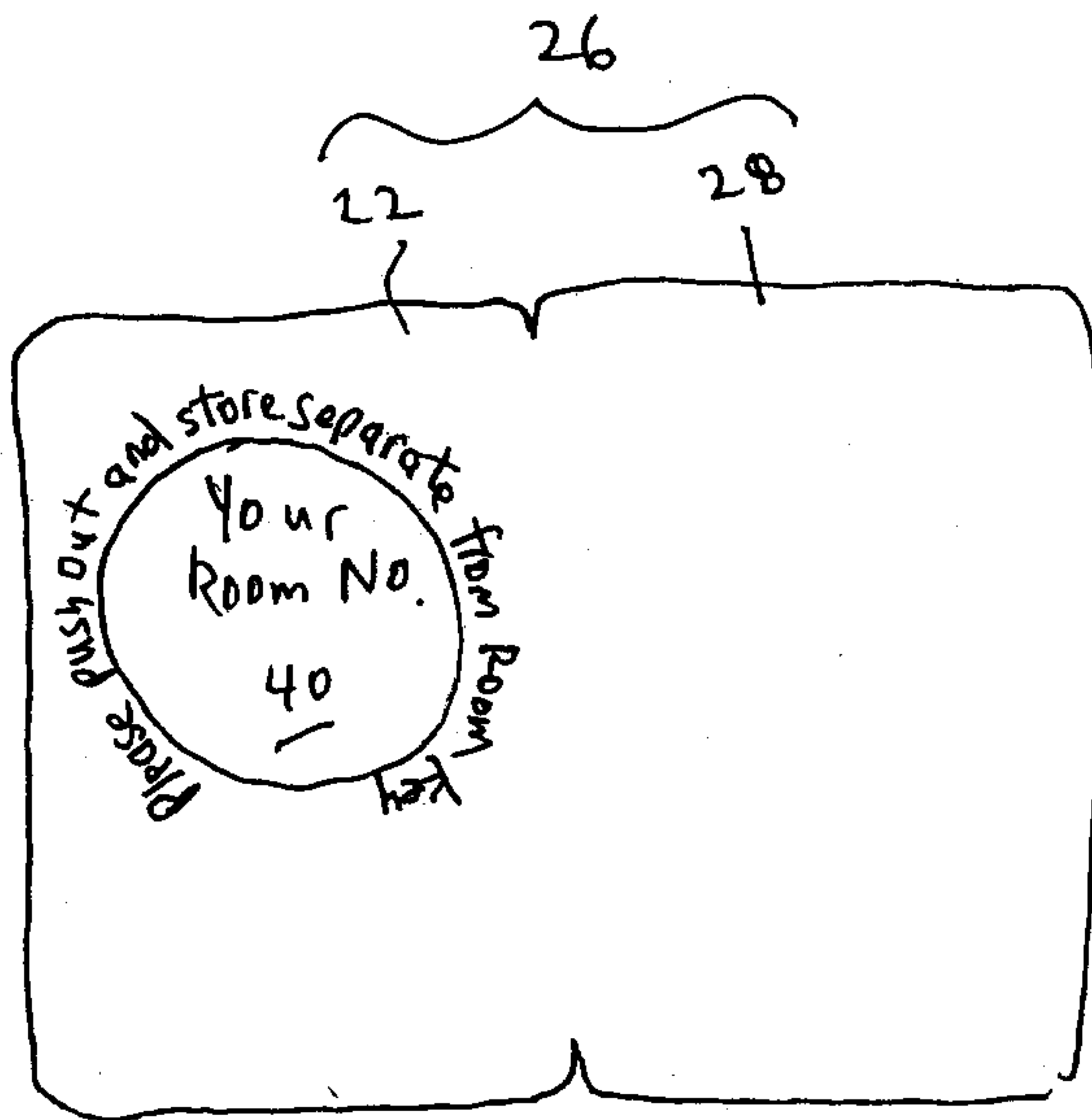


FIG. 6

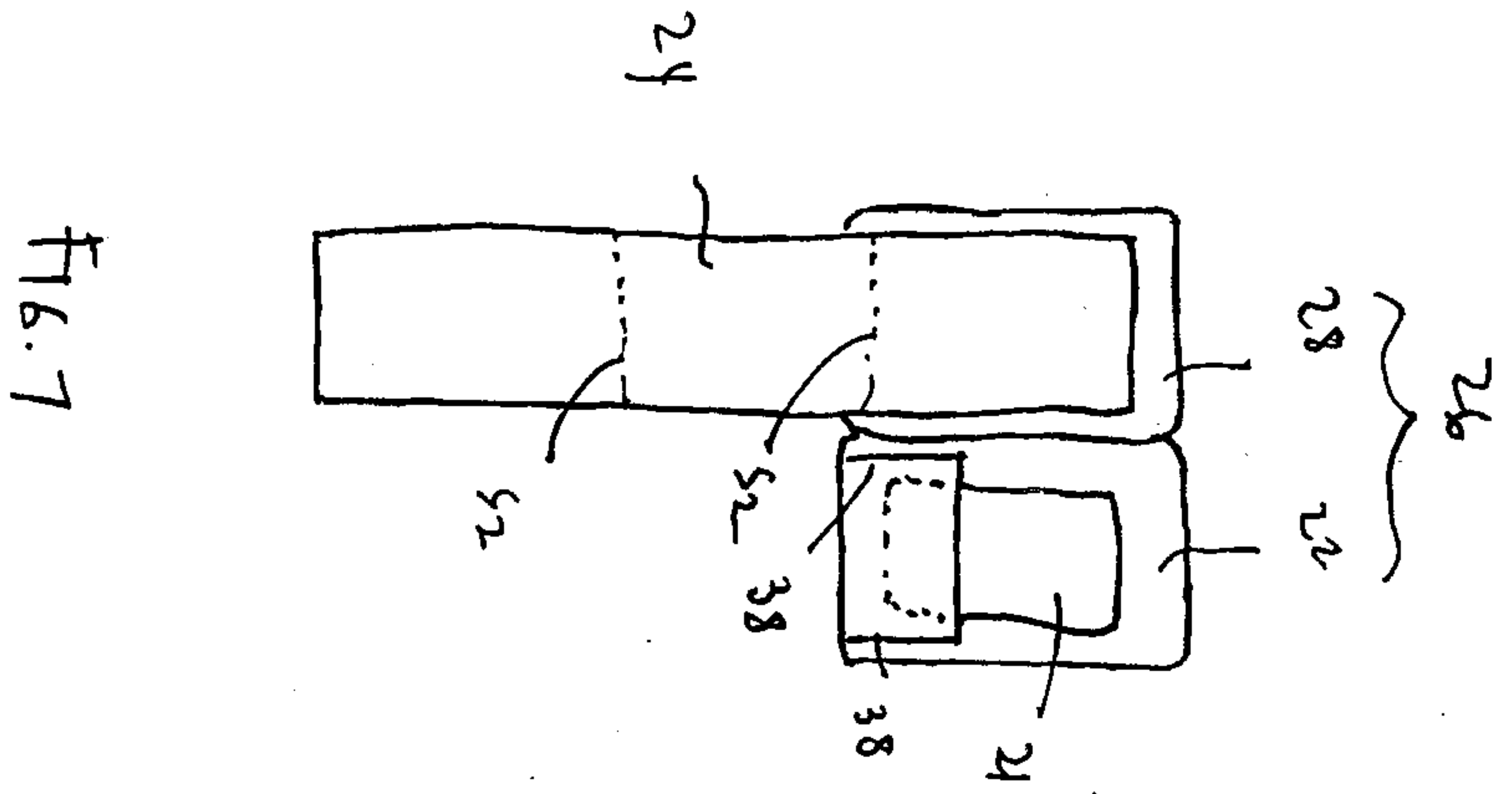


FIG. 7

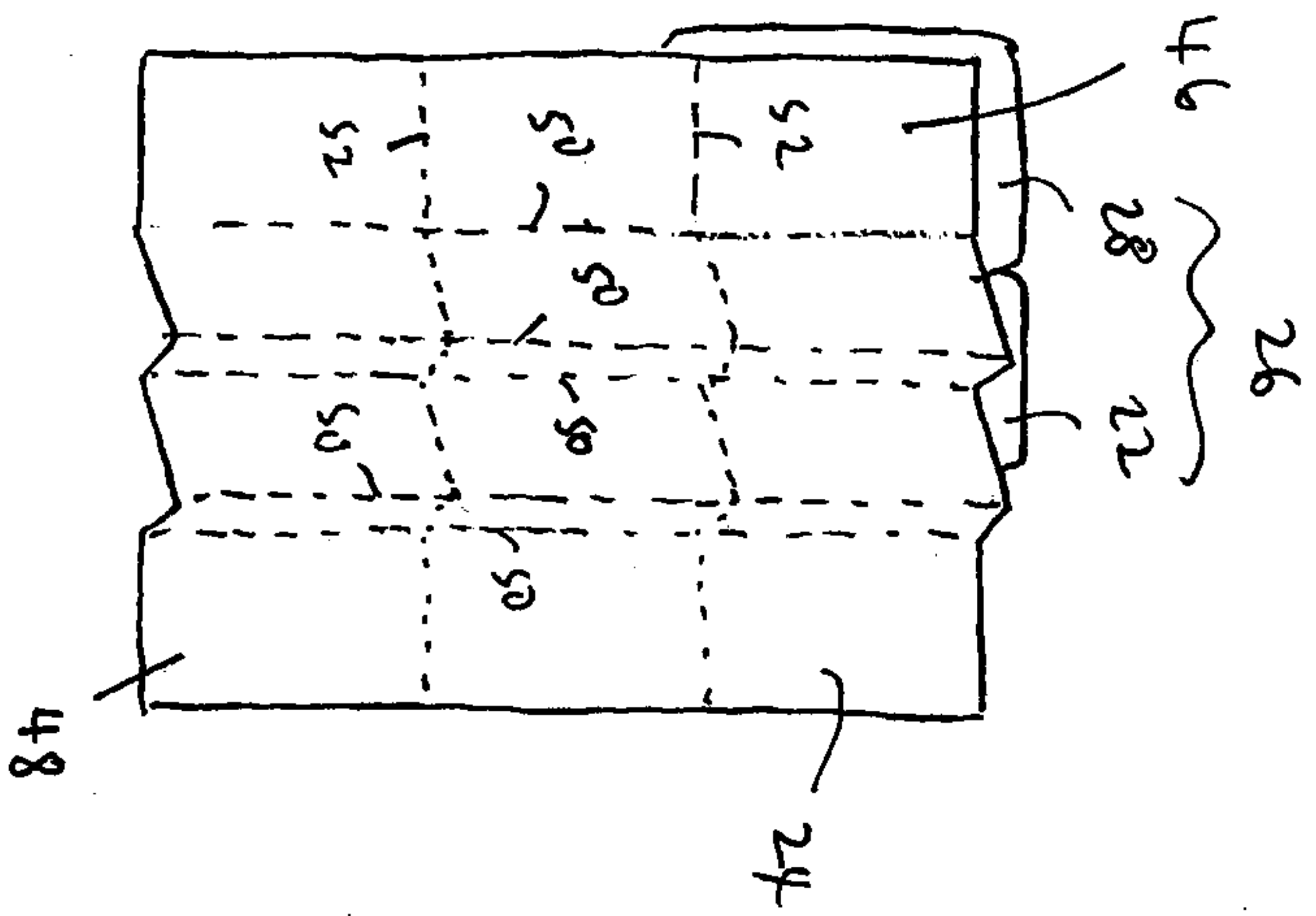


FIG. 8.

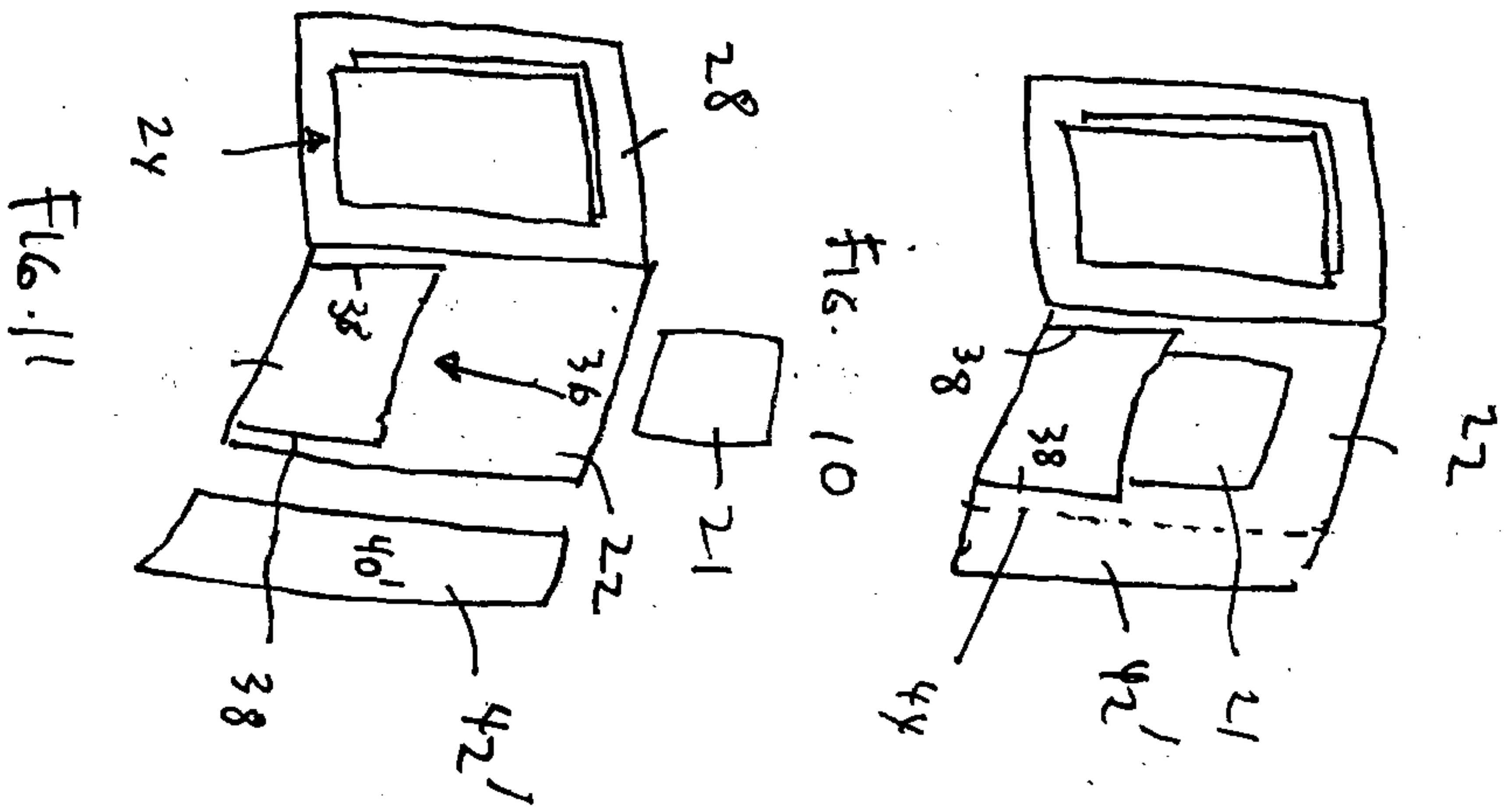


FIG. 9

FIG. 10

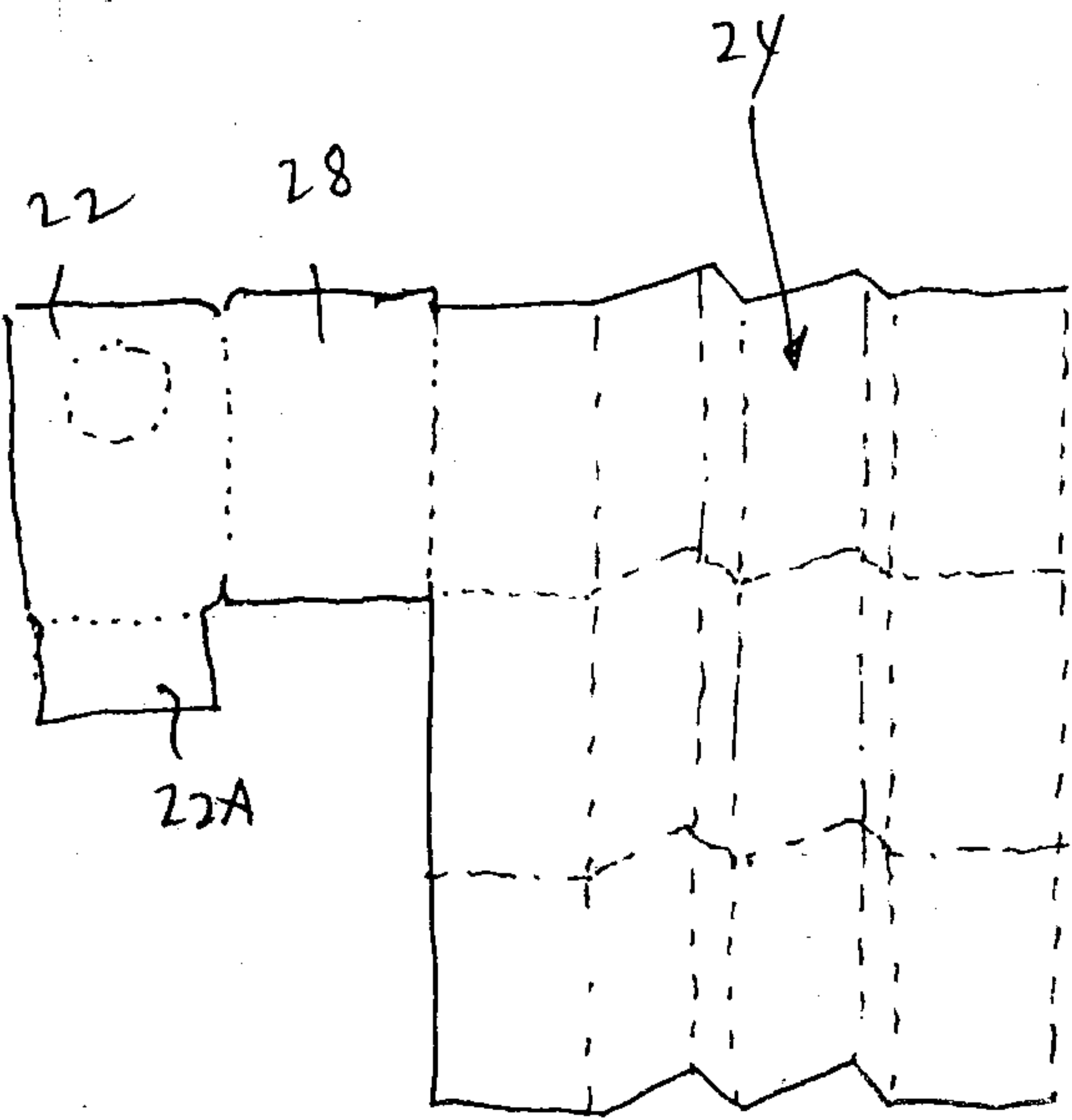


FIG. 12

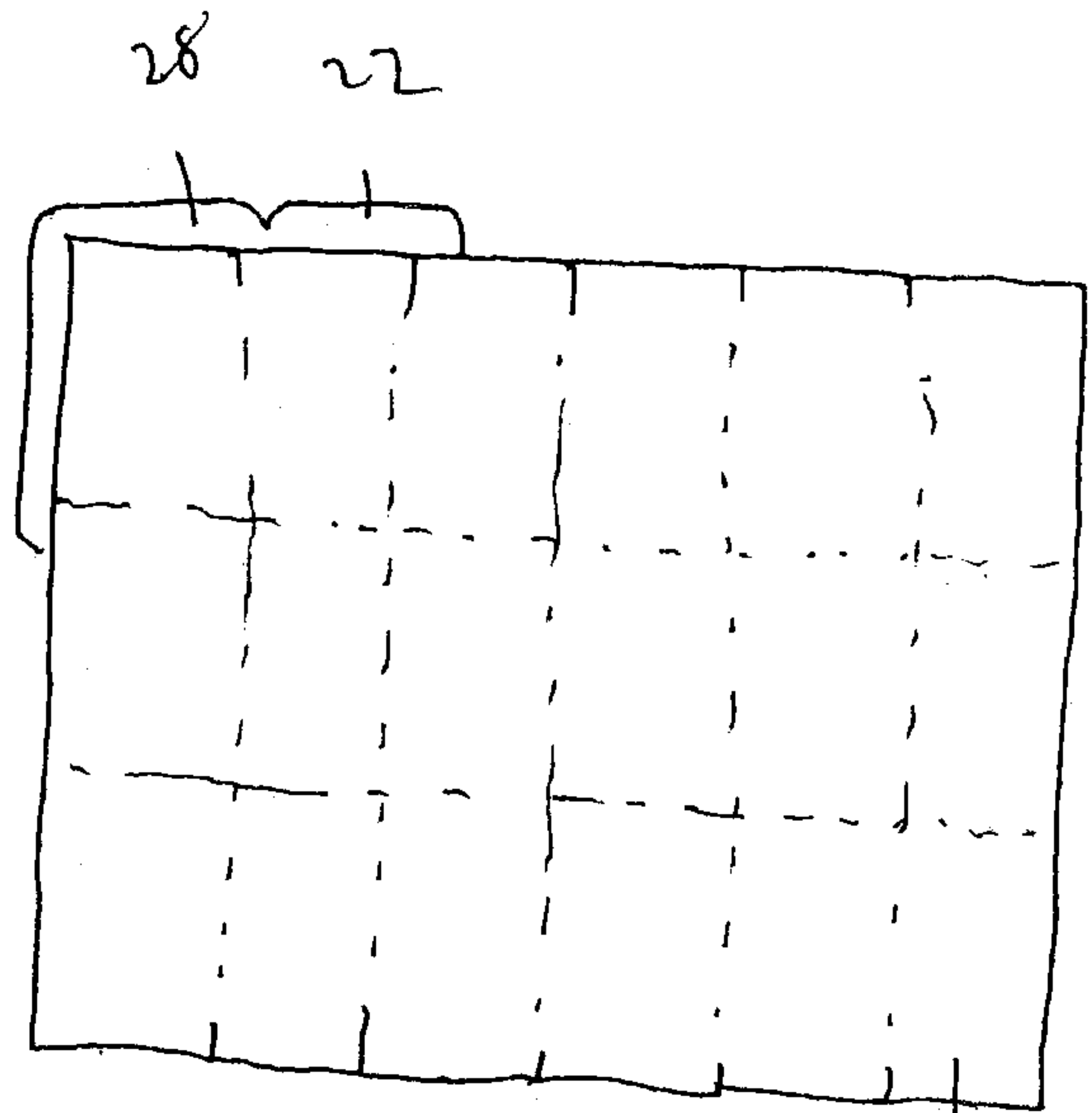
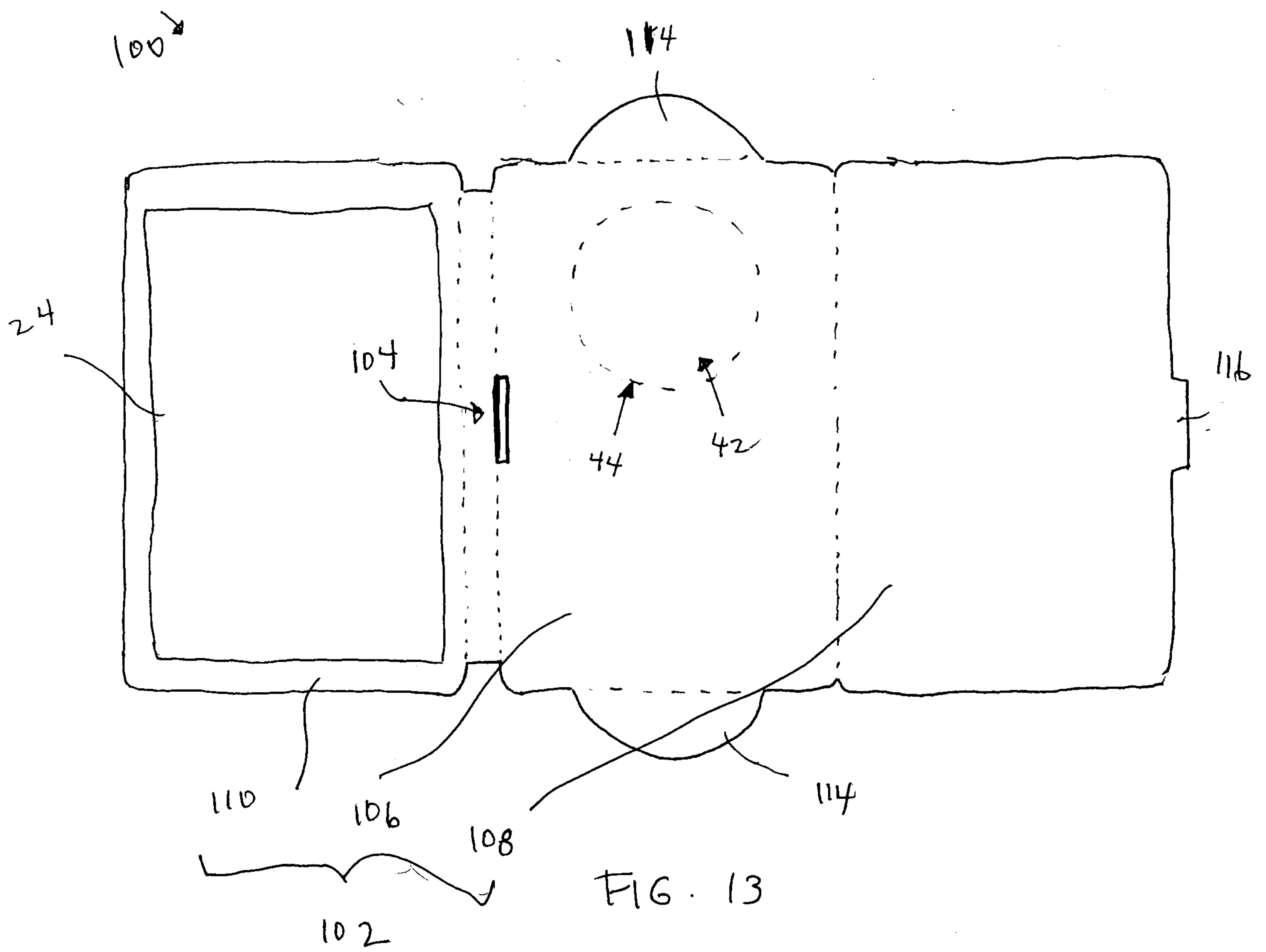


FIG. 9 24



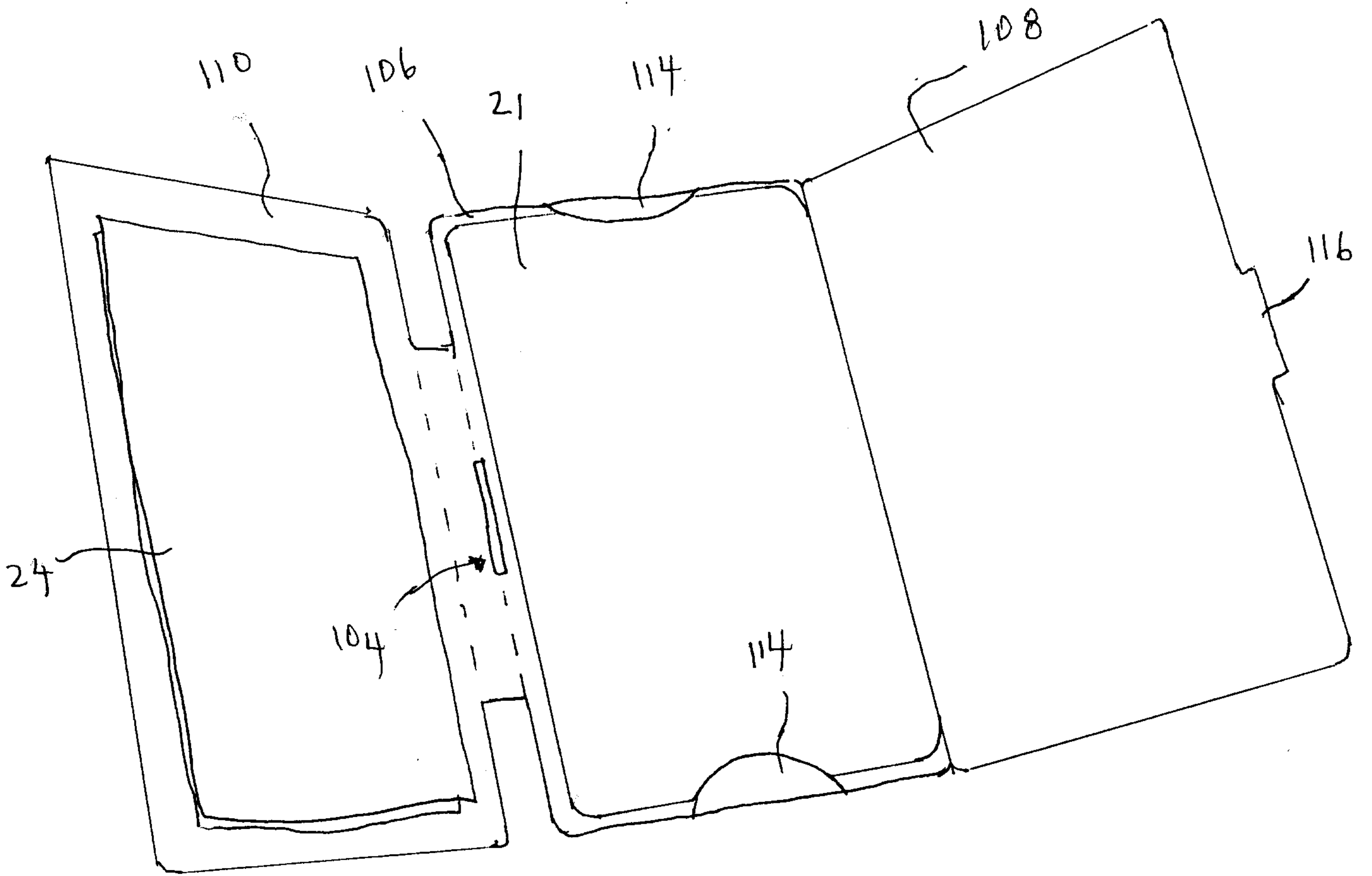


FIG. 14

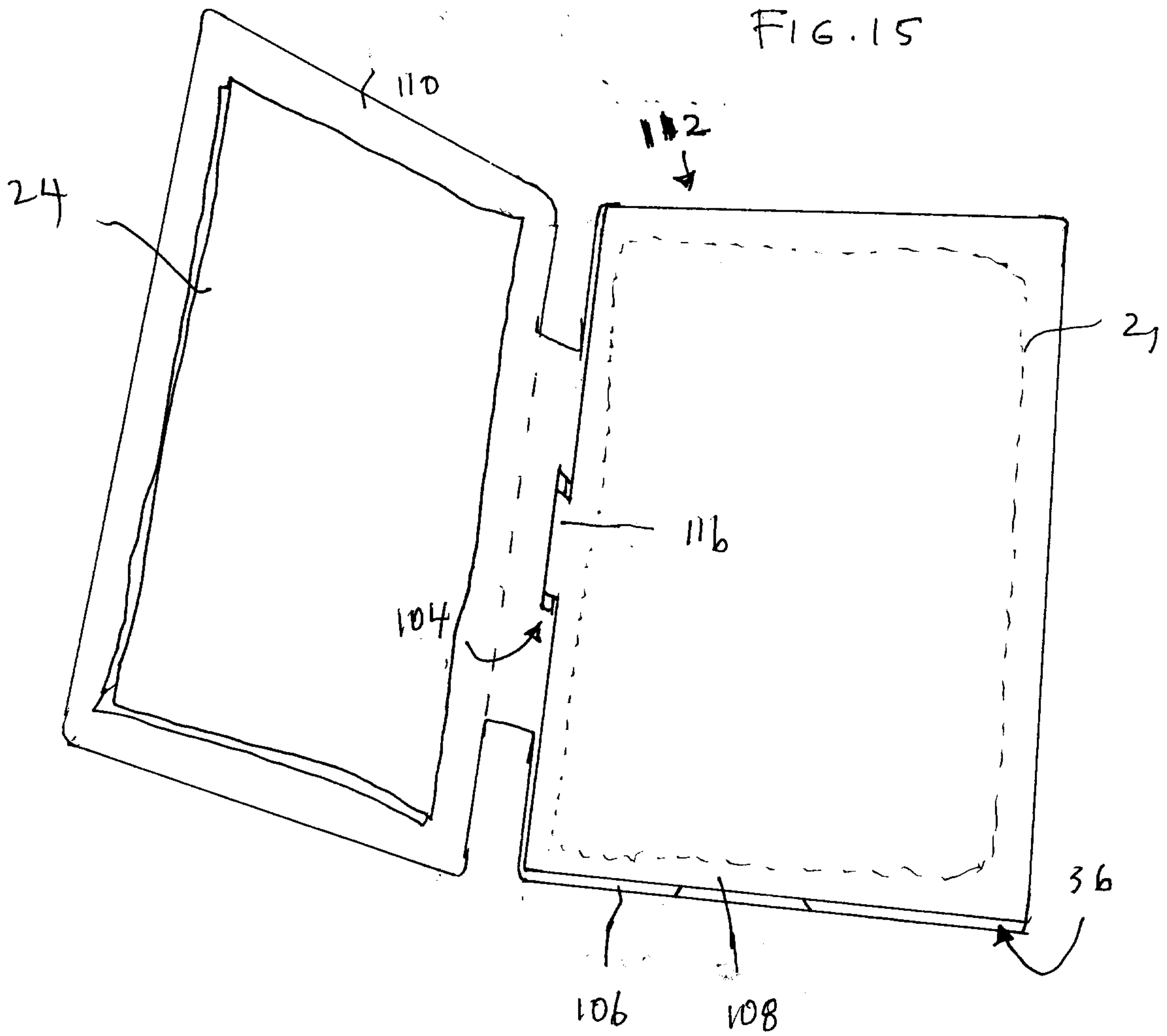


FIG. 15

20



22

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28

32



34

