



## VASCULAR PROSTHETIC DELIVERY DEVICE AND METHOD OF USE

### RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/623,235, filed on April 12, 2012. The entire teaching of the above application is incorporated herein by reference.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

An aortic aneurysm is an enlargement or bulge in a section of the aorta, which can be life-threatening. Treatment of aortic aneurysms remain a challenge. Endovascular repair has become a viable alternative to open repair of an aortic aneurysm. An endovascular approach results in insertion of an endovascular graft to exclude the aneurysm sac from blood flow. Once in place, the endovascular graft is expanded to create a new path for blood flow. The endovascular graft remains inside the aorta permanently through the use of a metal stent creating a tight fit and seal against the wall of the aorta. Currently, endovascular delivery devices have limitations on the precise control that the physician has in placement of the graft at the site of the aneurysm. Thus, there is a need to develop new and improved delivery devices and methods of using delivery devices to treat aortic aneurysms.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention is generally directed to a delivery device for implanting a vascular prosthesis, and to a method of use of the delivery device.

In one embodiment, the delivery device includes a guidewire catheter having a proximal end and a distal end, and a delivery assembly extending about the guidewire catheter. The delivery assembly includes a handle body, a delivery catheter, a push rod, a proximal handle and a locking mechanism. The handle body has a major longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end. The delivery catheter has a distal end extending from within the distal end of the handle body and about

the guidewire catheter. The push rod extends about the guidewire catheter and within the delivery catheter. The push rod is fixed to the guidewire catheter at a proximal end of the guidewire catheter proximal to the handle body. The proximal handle extends about the handle body and is axially fixed to the delivery catheter, wherein the proximal handle is selectively fixed to the push rod, and wherein the proximal handle is rotatable about the handle body and rotation of the proximal handle about the handle body translates to longitudinal movement of the delivery catheter and, selectively, of the push rod relative to the handle body. The locking mechanism at the handle body selectively engages the proximal handle with the push rod.

In an embodiment, the delivery device includes an actuator at the proximal handle that selectively disengages the proximal handle from the handle body, whereby rotation of the proximal handle is independent of longitudinal movement of the delivery catheter relative to the handle body. In another embodiment, the proximal handle includes an end that defines teeth that move transversely to a major longitudinal axis of the handle body when the proximal handle is rotated about the handle body. In this embodiment, the delivery device further includes a gear rack extending along the major longitudinal axis of the handle body, a linking gear engaging the teeth of the proximal handle end, the linking gear being rotatable about an axis transverse to the axis of rotation of the proximal handle, and a pinion gear. The pinion gear engages the gear rack and the linking gear, whereby rotation of the proximal handle about the handle body translates to the longitudinal movement of the delivery catheter and, selectively, of the push rod relative to the handle body. The actuator selectively disengages the linking gear from the pinion gear, thereby selectively disengaging rotation of the proximal handle from longitudinal movement of the proximal handle along the handle body.

In still another embodiment, the actuator of the delivery device includes an actuator housing, a push-button, a pinion gear extension, a ball bearing and a frustoconical center-pin. The actuator housing extends about the handle body and is rotatably linked to the proximal handle, whereby the actuator housing is movable along the handle body without rotating about the handle body while the proximal

handle rotates about the handle body. The push-button is located at the actuator housing. The pinion gear extension defines a coaxial opening that is coaxial with the pinion gear and defines at least one lateral opening that extends laterally from the coaxial opening. The ball-bearing sits at least partially within the lateral opening and locks the relative rotation of the linking gear and the pinion gear when displaced to extend radially beyond the pinion gear extension. The frustoconical center-pin is biased radially outward from the major longitudinal axis of the handle body and abuts the push-button, whereby the frustoconical center-pin displaces the ball bearing radially outward through the lateral opening and locks the relative rotation of the linking gear and the pinion gear by the outward bias, thereby causing longitudinal movement of the proximal handle along the handle body when the proximal handle is rotated about the handle body and, when the push-button is depressed, selectively disengages the linking gear from pinion gear, thereby selectively disengaging rotation of the proximal handle from the longitudinal movement of the proximal handle along the handle body.

Another embodiment of the delivery device of the invention includes a distal grip at the distal end of the handle body, and the locking mechanism includes a shifting knob, a drive shaft, a drive gear and a first locking component. The shifting knob is located at the distal grip and is rotatable about the handle body and defines teeth along the inside of the shifting knob that move transversely to the major longitudinal axis of the handle body when the shifting knob is rotated about the handle body. The locking mechanism has at least two fixed positions relative to the handle body. The drive shaft has a proximal end and a distal end, wherein the distal end defines teeth that engage directly or indirectly, the teeth of the shifting knob, and extend along a major longitudinal axis of the driveshaft. The drive gear is along the drive shaft and defines teeth that engage, directly or indirectly, the teeth along the drive shaft, whereby the shifting knob is engaged with the drive gear at all positions of the shifting knob. The first locking component extends about the push rod and is linked to the proximal handle and the drive gear, whereby, in a first position of the shifting knob, the first locking component engages the proximal handle with the push rod, and rotation of the shifting knob from the first position to

a second position causes rotation of the drive shaft which, in turn, causes rotation of the drive gear and disengagement of the first locking component from the push rod, thereby allowing independent movement of the delivery catheter along the longitudinal axis of the handle body relative to the push rod when the proximal handle is moved along major longitudinal axis of the handle body.

In another embodiment of the invention, the locking mechanism further includes a second locking component. The second locking component extends about the push rod, is fixed to the handle body, and is linked to the shifting knob through the drive shaft, whereby rotation of the shifting knob from the first position to the second position causes engagement between the handle body and the push rod, thereby preventing longitudinal movement of the push rod relative to the handle body when the proximal handle is moved along the major longitudinal axis.

In yet another embodiment, the delivery device of the invention includes an apex delivery device that includes an apex clasp assembly and proximal clasp assembly. The apex clasp assembly includes a distal capture component at a distal end of the guidewire catheter, a proximal capture component in mateable relation to the distal capture component, and an apex release catheter having a proximal end, wherein the apex release catheter extends about the guidewire catheter and is fixed to the proximal capture component. The proximal clasp assembly includes a fixed component at the proximal end of the guidewire catheter and an outer coupling at the proximal end at the apex release catheter in mateable relation with the fixed component of the proximal clasp assembly, whereby movement of the outer coupling relative to the fixed component from a first position to a second position will cause relative movement of the proximal capture component relative to the distal capture component of the apex clasp assembly.

In still another embodiment, the invention includes the delivery device that includes a gear rack, a handle extending about the gear rack and defining teeth at an end of the handle, the handle being rotatable about the gear rack, a pinion gear that is rotatable about an axis that intersects with the axis of rotation of the handle and engages the gear rack, a linking gear that selectively rotates with rotation of the pinion gear, an actuator that selectively engages the pinion gear with the linking

gear, and a delivery catheter fixed to the handle, whereby rotation of the handle selectively moves a delivery catheter relative to the gear rack upon engagement of the pinion gear with the linking gear by the actuator.

In yet another embodiment, the invention is a method for delivering a vascular prosthesis to a treatment site of a subject. The method includes advancing the vascular prosthesis, while mounted at a proximal end of the prosthesis to an apex delivery device fixed to a distal end of a guidewire catheter, to a position distal to a vascular treatment site of the subject. A proximal handle is rotated in a first direction about a handle body, having a distal end, of a delivery device through which the guidewire catheter extends. The guidewire catheter is disposed within a push rod that also extends through the handle body, wherein the guidewire catheter is fixed to the push rod, whereby rotation of the proximal handle causes longitudinal movement of the guidewire catheter and the push rod along the handle body to thereby at least partially advance the prosthesis to the treatment site, the prosthesis being advanced from within an outer catheter extending from a distal end of the handle body and about the prosthesis. The position of a first locking component securing the proximal handle to the push rod is shifted from a first position to a second position, wherein the first locking component disengages the proximal handle from the push rod and a second locking component engages the push rod with the handle body. The proximal handle is then rotated in a second direction, whereby a delivery catheter, having a distal end and extending about the push rod, is withdrawn along the push rod, and a delivery sheath extending from the distal end of the delivery catheter is at least partially retracted from about the prosthesis. The proximal end of the prosthesis is then released from the apex delivery device. The second locking component is shifted to disengage the push rod from the handle body, and the push rod and the guidewire catheter are withdrawn from within the prosthesis, thereby delivering the vascular prosthesis to the treatment site.

The delivery device and method of its use of the invention have many advantages. For example, rotation of the proximal handle to thereby advance the push rod and a vascular prosthesis at the end of the push rod provides increased control over movement of the vascular prosthesis during implantation at a treatment

site. Further, selective engagement of the proximal handle and the push rod enables disengagement of the proximal handle from the push rod to thereby provide for controlled retraction of a delivery sheath from the vascular prosthesis by rotation of the proximal handle in an opposite direction to that which is employed to advance the vascular prosthesis to the treatment site. In addition, an actuator of the delivery device enables selective disengagement of the proximal handle from the handle body, whereby the proximal handle can be moved along the handle body without rotation of the proximal handle, thereby providing another degree of freedom of movement of the vascular prosthesis during advancement of the vascular prosthesis to the treatment site and during retraction of the delivery sheath from the prosthesis once the prosthesis has been advanced to the treatment site. The delivery device of the invention also has the advantage of causing engagement of the push rod with the handle body upon disengagement of the proximal handle from the push rod, thereby enabling withdrawal of the delivery sheath from the vascular prosthesis without entrainment of the vascular prosthesis while the delivery sheath is being retracted from the vascular prosthesis by movement of the proximal handle. Further, the apex delivery device is controllable at a proximal end of the push rod and guidewire catheter, thereby enabling selective release of a proximal end of the vascular prosthesis at the treatment site while remaining components of the delivery device remain stationary. In addition, the push rod can be disengaged from both the handle body and the proximal handle, thereby enabling retraction of the push rod, guidewire catheter and apex delivery device from within the vascular prosthesis once it has been implanted at the delivery device, thereby minimizing potential disruption of the vascular prosthesis once it has been implanted.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the delivery device of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a shifting knob, driveshaft and actuator, of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the shifting knob and driveshaft of the embodiment shown in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a shifting knob, distal handle, distal handle nose, and a cross-sectional view, in part, of a handle body and delivery catheter of another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 5 is a partial cutaway section of the portion of the embodiment of the delivery device of the invention shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a partial cutaway section of a detail of a portion of the handle body, intermediate gear, reduction gear and connecting gear, all of which link the shifting knob with the driveshaft of the embodiment of the invention shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 7 is a partial cutaway view of the embodiment of FIG. 4, showing a cross-sectional view of the distal handle and a base to which outer catheter is connected at distal handle nose.

FIG. 8 is a partial cutaway, of the embodiment of FIG. 4 showing constricting rings extending about a delivery catheter.

FIG. 9 is another embodiment of a partial cutaway of the delivery device of FIG. 1 showing an actuator and a push button at the proximal end of a slot defined by the handle body.

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of first locking component, and second locking component, and their relation to the drive shaft of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 11 is another representation of a first locking component and a second locking component, and a first locking component housing and a second locking component housing stabilizing the spatial relation between the first locking component and the second locking component, respectively, relative to the drive shaft of the embodiment of FIG. 1.

FIG. 12A is another perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 1, showing displacement of the proximal handle and the actuator along the handle body consequent to rotating of the proximal handle about the handle body or depressing the push button of the actuator to thereby allow longitudinal movement of the actuator and the proximal handle without rotation of the proximal handle.

FIG. 12B is another perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 1, wherein a proximal handle has been advanced along the handle body of the delivery system.

FIG. 13 is a detail of the proximal handle and the actuator at the handle body of the embodiment of the invention shown in FIG. 1, without the actuator housing.

FIG. 14 is a perspective view of the detail of FIG. 13, without the push button of the actuator shown in FIG. 13.

FIG. 15 is a partial cutaway of the embodiment of FIG. 1 showing the relation of the pinion and the linking gear assemblies relative to the first locking component housing and the relationship of the first locking component housing to the delivery catheter within the housing.

FIG. 16 is a perspective view of the first locking component housing and the second locking component housing within a cutaway view of the handle body, along with a perspective view of the linking gear assembly and the pinion gear assembly of the actuator.

FIG. 17 is a side view of the representation of the invention, as shown in FIG. 16.

FIG. 18 is a partial cutaway of the distal end of handle body and second locking component shown in FIGs. 16 and 17.

FIG. 19 is a perspective view of a partial cutaway of the actuator shown in FIG. 17.

FIG. 20 is a perspective view of a rack and proximal handle of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, and an alternate embodiment of the actuator of the invention, lacking a linking gear assembly.

FIG. 21 is a perspective view, partially transparent, of the embodiment of the pinion gear assembly of FIG. 20.

FIG. 22 is another view of the embodiment represented in FIG. 21.

FIG. 23 is a perspective view of the embodiment shown in FIGs. 21 and 22, lacking the upper pinion gear shown in those figures.

FIG. 24 is another embodiment of the representation shown in FIG. 23.

FIG. 25 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a proximal clasp assembly of one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 26 is a partial cutaway of the proximal clasp assembly shown in FIG. 25.

FIGs. 27A-27C are perspective sectional views of the distal end of the delivery device shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 28A is a perspective view of the shifting knob in the first position, wherein the push rod is fixed to the proximal handle and the prosthesis is undeployed.

FIG. 28B is a detailed perspective view of proximal clasp assembly in a first position, whereby the apex clasp assembly is unopened.

FIG. 28C is a detailed perspective view of the shifting knob in the first position.

FIG. 29A is a perspective view of the delivery device of FIGs. 28A-28C showing advancement of the delivery sheath containing the prosthesis when the shifting knob is in a second position, wherein the push rod is fixed to the handle body.

FIG. 29B is a detailed perspective view of advancement of the delivery sheath of FIG. 29A.

FIG. 30A is a perspective view of the delivery device of FIGs. 29A, 29B showing advancement of the delivery sheath.

FIG. 30B is a detailed perspective view of the shifting knob of FIG. 30A in a second position.

FIG. 31A is a perspective view of the delivery device of FIGs. 30A, 30B, wherein the delivery sheath has been partially retracted from the prosthesis.

FIG. 31B is a representation of an apex clasp assembly of one embodiment of the invention in a closed position.

FIG. 32A is a perspective view of the delivery device of FIG. 31A, wherein the apex clasp assembly is opened by actuation of the proximal clasp assembly to thereby release the apices of the proximal stent of the prosthesis shown in FIG. 32C.

FIG. 32B is a representation of the proximal clasp assembly of FIGs. 25, 26, whereby an apex clasp assembly, not shown, has been opened.

FIG. 32C is a representation of the apex clasp assembly of one embodiment of the invention, in an open position.

FIG. 33A is a perspective view of the delivery device of FIG. 32A, wherein the shifting knob has been moved to the third position, whereby the push rod has been released from the proximal handle and the handle body and, wherein the push rod has been retracted from the fully deployed prosthesis.

FIG. 33B is a perspective view of the shifting knob in the third position as shown in FIG. 33A.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

While this invention has been particularly shown and described with references to example embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention encompassed by the appended claims.

One embodiment, of the delivery device 10 of the invention is shown in FIG.

1. Delivery device 10 includes guidewire catheter 12 (FIGs. 10, 11) having a proximal end and a distal end. “Proximal,” as a term employed herein with reference to the delivery device and its components, means relatively close to the surgeon operating the delivery device. “Distal,” as a term employed herein with reference to the delivery device and its components, means relatively distal from the surgeon operating the delivery device. “Proximal,” as a term employed herein with reference to the prosthesis, stent-graft and components, means relatively close to the heart of the patient. “Distal,” as a term employed herein with reference to the prosthesis, stent-graft and components, means relatively distal from the heart of the patient. Returning to FIG. 1, delivery device 10 includes delivery assembly 18 that extends about the guidewire catheter (not shown). Delivery assembly 18 includes handle body 20 having major longitudinal axis 22, proximal end 24 and distal end 26. Delivery catheter 28 (FIG. 9) has distal end 30 (FIG. 27A) extending from within distal end 26 of handle body 20 and about the guidewire catheter (not shown). Push rod 32 extends about guidewire catheter 12 and within delivery catheter 28 (FIGs. 10, 11). Push rod 32 is fixed to guidewire catheter 12 at proximal end 34 of push rod 32 proximal to the handle body at pin 192 (FIG. 25). Referring back to FIG. 1, proximal handle 36 extends about handle body 20 and is axially fixed to

delivery catheter 28. Proximal handle 36 is selectively fixed to push rod 32, wherein proximal handle 36 is rotatable about handle body 20 and rotation of proximal handle 36 about handle body 20 translates to longitudinal movement of delivery catheter 28 along longitudinal axis 22 and, selectively, of push rod 32 relative to handle body 20, as can be seen by comparing FIGs. 12A with FIG. 12B. First locking mechanism 38 (FIG. 15) at handle body 20 selectively engages proximal handle 36 (FIGs. 12A and 12B) with push rod 32.

Distal handle 40 extends about handle body 20 at distal end 26 of handle body 20 and is distal to shifting knob 42 of first locking mechanism 38 ((FIG. 15)). Distal handle nose 44 (FIG. 1) extends distally from distal handle 40 and includes flush port 46 for providing fluid communication between a solution source (not shown) and interior components of delivery device 10, as necessary, to hydrate contact between components of delivery device 10 and a vascular prosthesis (not shown) within a subject during implantation of the vascular prosthesis in the subject. Outer catheter 48 extends from distal handle nose 44 (FIG. 1).

Actuator 80 is linked to proximal handle 36, whereby proximal handle 36 can rotate about handle body 20 while push-button 82 at housing 81 of actuator 80 remains aligned with slot 84 defined by handle body 20. Depression of push-button 82 of actuator 80 selectively disengages proximal handle 36 from handle body 20, whereby rotation of proximal handle 20 is independent of longitudinal movement of delivery catheter 12 relative to handle body 20 along longitudinal axis 22.

As can be seen in FIG. 2, shifting knob 42 is linked to drive gear 86 by drive shaft 88. Drive shaft 88 has proximal end 90 and distal end 92, and runs along the interior of the handle body 20 (not shown). As can be seen in FIG. 3, shifting knob 42 is linked to drive shaft 88, in one embodiment, by intermediate gear 94A, whereby rotation of shifting knob 42 about handle body 20 causes rotation of drive shaft 88 by virtue of linkage between shifting knob 42 and drive shaft 88 by intermediate gear 94A. In this embodiment, shifting knob 42 is linked to drive shaft 88 indirectly, as opposed to direct linkage. “Direct linkage” would be direct contact with each other. Shifting knob 42 is rotatably linked to distal handle 40, which is fixed to distal end 26 of handle body 20, as shown in FIG. 1.

In another embodiment, shown in FIGs. 4 and 5, linkage between shifting knob 42 and drive shaft 88 includes a gear reduction at intermediate gear 94B that is linked to coaxial reduction gear 96 which, in turn, is linked to connecting gear 98 that is coaxially linked to drive shaft 88. By virtue of the gear reduction, the rate of rotation of shifting knob 42 relative to drive shaft 88 can be controlled by the relative dimensions of reduction gear 96 and connecting gear 98 (FIGs. 5, 6, 7). Typically, the rotation ratio, or reduction ratio, of shifting knob 42:drive shaft 88 is in a ratio of between about 1:2 and about 1:6. The relationship between reduction gear 96 and connecting gear 98 can be seen in greater detail in FIG. 6.

As can be seen in greater detail in FIG. 7, delivery catheter 28 extends through handle body 20, distal handle 40 and distal handle nose 44. Referring back to FIG. 5, outer catheter 48 is linked to base 102, whereby outer catheter 48 is rotatable independently of handle body 20. As shown in FIG. 8, constricting rings 104 extend along the delivery catheter 28 within handle body 20. As shown in FIGs. 8 and 9, constricting rings 104 have an outside diameter greater than the width of slot 84, whereby constricting rings 104 will prevent application of longitudinal compressive force by proximal handle 36 on delivery catheter 28 from causing delivery catheter 28 to buckle and thereby move through slot 84 and outside of handle body 20. Constricting rings 104 also have an inside diameter slightly less than the outside diameter of delivery catheter 28, whereby constricting rings 104 will have an interference fit with delivery catheter 28, so that constricting rings 104 can move longitudinally along delivery catheter 28 if directed, but otherwise will remain in place relative to delivery catheter 28. Gear rack 106 extends longitudinally within handle body 20. Pin 108 at distal end of handle body 20 extends from distal end 26 of handle body 20 and is selectively slotted within slots 110,112,114 of shifting knob 42. Shifting knob 42 is longitudinally moveable along handle body 20 and is rotatable about handle body 20 sufficient to allow rotation of shifting knob 42 to move placement of pin 108 within any of slots 110,112,114 of shifting knob 42, which thereby causes rotation of intermediate gear 94. As a consequence, drive shaft 88 rotates about longitudinal axis 116 of drive shaft 88. Shifting knob 42 is a biased against pin 108 by spring 118 (FIG. 7).

As can be seen in FIG. 9, gear rack 106 and drive shaft 88 extend the length of slot 84. FIG. 10 shows the relation between drive shaft 88, push rod 32 and first locking mechanism 38. Push rod 32 extends through first locking mechanism 38 which, in turn, is engaged with drive shaft 88 at drive gear 86 of first locking mechanism 38. First locking mechanism 38 is fixed relative to proximal handle (not shown) at distal bearings 120 through which push rod 32 extends. Distal bearings 120 are linked to first locking component housing 150 by pins 122. First locking component 124 of first locking mechanism 38 is fixed relative to distal bearings 120 at distal end 126 and linked to drive gear 86 at proximal end 128, whereby rotation of drive shaft 88 and consequent rotation of drive gear 86 will further coil, or reduce coil, of first locking component 124, resulting in engagement or disengagement, respectively, of locking mechanism 38 and, consequently, proximal handle (not shown), with push rod 32. When first locking mechanism 38 is engaged with push rod 32, longitudinal movement of proximal handle (not shown) along drive shaft 88 and, thus, handle body 20, will cause longitudinal movement of push rod 32 along drive shaft 88 and handle body 20, as can be seen by comparing FIGs. 12A and 12B.

Referring back to FIGs. 10, 11, drive shaft 88 is rotatably fixed to handle body 20 (FIG. 9) at driveshaft bearing 130, which is part of second proximal locking component housing 152 at proximal end 90 of drive shaft 88. Second locking mechanism 132 includes translating gear 134 that is engaged with drive shaft 88 at proximal end 90 of the drive shaft 88 and is rotatably engaged with mechanism bearings 136 (FIG. 11), including proximal bearing 138 (FIG. 10) and distal bearing 140 (FIG. 10) which, in turn, are fixed relative to handle body 20 at pins 142. Proximal bearing 138 is radially and axially fixed to handle body 20. Distal bearing 140 is axially fixed to handle body 20. Second locking component 144 of second locking mechanism 132 is engaged with one of proximal bearing 138 at proximal end 146 of second locking component 144, and engaged with translating gear 134 at distal end 148 of second locking component 144, whereby rotation of drive shaft 88 and, consequently, rotation of translating gear 134 will tighten and engage, or loosen and disengage, second locking component 144 with push rod 32. When engaged with push rod 32, second locking component 144 causes push rod 32 to be fixed in

location relative to handle body (not shown). When loosened and disengaged from push rod 32, push rod 32 is longitudinally movable relative to handle body (not shown). The orientation of first locking component 124 and second locking component 144 are reversed, whereby rotation of drive shaft 88 in one direction will, simultaneously, cause engagement and disengagement of first locking component 124 and second locking component 144 with push rod 32, respectively.

Disengagement of first locking component 124 from push rod 32 is caused by movement of shifting knob 42 from a first position defined by pin 108 at slot 110 of shifting knob 42 to second position 112, defined by pin 108 at second slot 112 of shifting knob 42 (FIG. 9). The same movement from the first to second position of shifting knob 42 will simultaneously cause engagement of second locking component 144 with push rod 32, whereby push rod 32 will be fixed in position relative to handle body 20 at second locking component 144 regardless of movement of proximal handle 36 along longitudinal axis 116 of handle body 20. Referring back to FIGs. 8 and 9, positioning shifting knob 42, so that pin 108 is at intermediate slot 114 between the first slot 110 and second slot 112 of shifting knob 42, will cause both first locking component 124 and second locking component 144 to be disengaged from push rod 32.

As can be seen in FIG. 11, first locking component housing 150 fixes lateral movement of first locking component 124 and drive shaft 88, and second locking component housing 152 fixes the position of second locking component 144 and bearings 138,140 relative to proximal end 90 of drive shaft 88, respectively. Further, as can also be seen in FIG. 11, apex release catheter 154 extends within push rod 32 and guidewire catheter 12 extends within apex release catheter 154.

FIGs. 12A and 12B indicate relative movement of actuator 80 and proximal handle 36 along handle body 20. Rotation of proximal handle 36 about handle body 20, when push button 82 is in a first position, as shown in FIGs. 12A and 12B, will cause longitudinal movement of proximal handle 20 and actuator 80 along handle body 20. Upon depression of push button 82 to a second position essentially flush with actuator housing 81, rotation of proximal handle 36 will not cause longitudinal movement of proximal handle 36 or actuator along handle body 20. Rather,

proximal handle 36 and actuator 80 will be movable along handle body 20 without rotation of proximal handle 36 about handle body 20.

As can be seen in FIGs. 13-15, teeth 156 of proximal handle 36 engage upper linking gear 160 of linking gear assembly 158. Linking gear assembly 158 is engaged with pinion gear assembly 164. Lower linking gear 162 of linking gear assembly 158 engages upper pinion gear 166 of pinion gear assembly 164. Pinion gear assembly 164 is linked to first locking component housing 150 (FIG. 11) through slot 84. Linking gear assembly 158 and pinion gear assembly 164 are components of actuator 80, referenced with respect to FIG. 1. FIG. 16 is a perspective view of actuator 80 of FIG. 1 (without housing 81 or pushbutton 82), of first locking component housing 150 and second locking component housing 152.

As can be seen in FIG. 17, upper pinion gear 166 is coaxial with lower pinion gear 168 which, in turn, engages gear rack 106. Referring back to FIGs. 16 and 17, delivery catheter 28 is linked to first locking component housing 150 and, thus, will move longitudinally along housing 150, with movement of proximal handle 36 and actuator 80 as shown in FIG. 1 regardless of whether first locking component 124 is engaged with push rod 32. Therefore, when upper pinion gear 166 engages lower pinion gear 168, rotation of proximal handle 36 (as shown in FIG. 1) about handle body 20 will cause rotation of linking gear assembly 158 (FIG. 13) and, consequently, rotation of pinion gear assembly 164 (FIG. 13) and movement of pinion gear assembly 164 (FIG. 13) along gear rack 106 (FIGs. 16 and 17), and movement of proximal handle 36 (FIG. 1) and actuator 80 (FIG. 17) along handle body 20. Further, while first locking component 124 is engaged with push rod 32, rotation of proximal handle 36 will cause longitudinal movement of push rod 32 along handle body 20. In all cases, movement of proximal handle 36 and actuator 80 along handle body 20 will always occur together, and will cause movement of delivery catheter 28 longitudinally along handle body 20.

However, as will be further explained below, depression of center pin 170 disengages upper pinion gear 166 from lower pinion gear 168. When upper pinion gear 166 is disengaged from lower pinion gear 168, rotation of proximal handle 36 about handle body 20 does not cause longitudinal movement of the proximal handle

36 and actuator 80 along handle body 20. Further, longitudinal movement of proximal handle 36 and actuator 80 along handle body 20 can be obtained simply by moving proximal handle 36 and actuator 80 along handle body 20 without rotation of proximal handle 36 about handle body 20 (FIGs. 1,12A and 12B).

FIG. 18 shows placement of the second locking component housing 152 within proximal end 24 of handle body 20 and second locking component 144 extending between bearings 138,140. As stated above, rotation of translating gear 134 by virtue of rotation of drive shaft 88 (FIGs. 10, 11) will cause engagement or disengagement of second locking component 144 with push rod 32 extending through second locking component 144 and, consequently, engagement and disengagement of push rod 32 with proximal end 24 of handle body 20.

FIG. 19 is another perspective view of linking gear assembly 158 and pinion gear assembly 164 of actuator 80 (FIG. 1).

As an alternative embodiment, shown in FIG. 20, push button 82 rests atop center-pin 170, which extends through upper pinion gear 166. As can also be seen in FIGs. 20 and 21, lower pinion gear 168 is engaged with gear rack 106 and includes pinion gear extension 169 that is axially aligned with lower pinion gear 168 that is axially aligned with upper pinion gear 166. Lower portion 172 of pinion gear 168 extends into opening 174 (FIG. 11) defined by first locking component housing 150 (FIG. 11), thereby fixing the position of pinion gear assembly 164 relative to first locking component housing 150 (FIG. 11), distal bearing 120 (FIG. 11), first locking component 124 and drive gear 86, all of which are shown, in a previous embodiment, in FIG. 11.

FIG. 21 is a perspective view showing engagement of lower pinion gear 168 with gear rack 106 and frustoconical portion 176 of center-pin 170. As can be seen in FIGs. 22 and 23, ball bearings 178 extend through openings 180 defined by pinion gear extension 169 and, when center pin 170 is in an extended position, as shown in FIG. 22, frustoconical portion 176 of center pin 170 forces ball bearings 178 outwardly and into interfering relation with openings 182 (FIG. 21) defined by upper pinion gear 166 (FIGs. 21 and 22) thereby engaging upper pinion gear 166 with lower pinion gear 168. When center pin 170 is actuated by depressing button

82 (FIG. 1), as shown in FIG. 23, ball bearings 178 are forced inward by rotation of upper pinion gear 166 (FIG. 22) relative to lower pinion gear 168 (FIG. 22), whereby upper pinion gear 166 is no longer engaged with lower pinion gear 168. Center-pin 170 is biased in an outward position, whereby upper pinion gear 166 is directed into engagement with lower pinion gear 168 by spring 184 located at the base of center pin 170 (not shown in FIG. 22 or 23).

As can be seen in FIG. 32C, nose cone 50 is fixed to guidewire catheter 12 at a distal end 16 of the guidewire catheter 12. Vascular prosthetic component 58 is disposed within delivery device 10 proximal to nose cone 50 (FIG. 27A).

FIGs. 25 and 26 show perspective and cut-away views, respectively, of the proximal clasp assembly 184 component of the invention. As can be seen in FIG. 25, outer coupling 186 is slideable along proximal end 34 of push rod 32. Fixed component 188 is fixed to the proximal end of the guidewire catheter by pin 192. Outer coupling 186 and fixed component 188 are in mating relation at juncture 190. Spring 194 within outer coupling 186 biases outer coupling 186 against fixed component 188. Proximal clasp assembly 184 is moved from a first position, shown in FIGs. 25, 28B to a second position, shown by applying pressure to tongues 196 on either side of outer coupling 186, and directing outer coupling 186 distally in sufficient degree to allow rotation of outer coupling 186 ninety (90) degrees and then retracting outer coupling 186 so that tongues 196 of outer coupling 186 align between tongues 198 of fixed component 188, as shown in FIG. 32B. Movement of outer coupling 186 from the first position, shown in FIG. 25, to the position shown in FIG. 32B, causes opening of apex clasp assembly 52, whereby proximal capture component 54 is retracted from a first position that is in mating relation to the distal capture component 56 of apex clasp assembly 52 shown in FIG. 31B, to a second position, shown in FIG. 32C, wherein proximal capture component 54 is no longer in mating relation with distal capture component 56. Proximal movement of outer coupling 186 of proximal clasp assembly 184 (FIGs. 25, 28B, 32B) relative to a fixed component 188 to separate proximal capture component 54 (FIG. 31B) from distal capture component 56 (FIGs. 31B, 32C) releases apices 68 of stent 66 at proximal end 60 of vascular prosthetic component 58.

FIGs. 27A-27C are cross sectional views of a portion of delivery device 10 of the invention showing a vascular prosthetic component 58 in an undeployed state within a distal end 202 of delivery device 10. Specifically, as shown in FIG. 27A, vascular prosthetic component 58 is within delivery sheath 200. Distal end 62 of vascular prosthetic component 58 abuts buttress 204. Buttress 204, in turn, is mated to push rod 32 at distal end 206, proximal end 60 of vascular prosthetic component 58 captured at apices 68 of proximal stent 66 with apex clasp assembly 52 when apex clasp assembly 52 is in a closed position, as shown in FIG. 27A. Apex clasp assembly 52 includes distal capture component 56 at distal end 16 of guidewire catheter 12, and proximal capture component 54 is in mateable relation to distal capture component 56, and attached to distal end 210 of apex release catheter 154. Apex release catheter 154 extends about guidewire catheter 12, and both apex release catheter 154 and guidewire catheter 12 extend through vascular prosthetic component 58 and push rod 32 to proximal clasp assembly 184 (FIG. 26). Delivery sheath 200 is fixed at its proximal end to delivery catheter 28 at distal end 30 and extends about vascular prosthetic component 58 to apex clasp assembly 52, as can be seen in FIG. 27C. Returning to FIG. 27, nose cone 50 is fixed at guidewire catheter 12 distally to distal capture component 56 of apex clasp assembly 52. Outer catheter 48 extends from distal handle nose 44 (FIG. 1), and about delivery catheter 28 and delivery sheath 200, to nose cone 50.

As shown in FIGs. 28A-33B, a method for delivering a vascular prosthesis to a treatment site of the subject employing a delivery device of the invention includes advancing vascular prosthesis 58, while prosthesis 58 is mounted to apex clasp assembly 52 at proximal end 60 of the prosthesis 58. Proximal apex clasp assembly 184 is in a first position shown in FIG. 28B, whereby apex clasp assembly 52 is closed (FIG. 31B). Apices of vascular prosthesis 58 are secured at apex clasp assembly 52 when proximal clasp assembly 184 is in the first position. Apex clasp assembly 52 is, in turn, fixed to distal end 16 of guidewire catheter 12, shifting knob 42 is in a first position when pin 108 is in slot 110 (FIG. 28C), causing push rod 32 to move with longitudinal movement of proximal handle 36. Prosthesis 58 is advanced to a position distal to a vascular treatment site of the subject by rotation of

proximal handle 36 in a first direction about handle body 20, having distal end 26, of delivery device 10 through which guidewire catheter 12 extends. Guidewire catheter 12 is disposed within push rod 32 that also extends through handle body 20, wherein guidewire catheter 12 is fixed to push rod 32, such as at a proximal end of guidewire catheter 12 or push rod 32 by pin 192 (FIG. 25), whereby rotation of proximal handle 36 causes longitudinal movement of guidewire catheter 12 and push rod 32 along handle body 20 to thereby at least partially advance prosthesis 58 from outer catheter 48 as can be seen in FIGs. 29A-29B. Optionally, push button 82 of actuator 80 can be depressed to disengage rotation of proximal handle 36 from longitudinal movement of proximal handle 36 along handle body 20, to thereby allow manual advancement of vascular prosthesis 58 to the vascular treatment site of the subject without rotation of proximal handle 36 about handle body 20.

Shifting knob 42 is shifted from a first position, wherein first locking component 124 (FIGs. 10, 11) secures proximal handle 36 to push rod 32, to a second position, whereby first locking component 124 (FIGs. 10, 11) disengages proximal handle 36 from push rod 32 and second locking component 144 (FIGs. 10, 11) engages push rod 32 with handle body 20 at proximal end 24 of handle body 20.

As can be seen in FIGs. 31A and 31B, proximal handle 36 can then be rotated in a second direction, while actuator push button 82 is not depressed, whereby delivery catheter 28, having a distal end 30 (FIG. 24A) and extending about push rod 32, is withdrawn along push rod 32, and delivery sheath 200 extending from distal end of the delivery catheter (FIGs. 4 through 9) is at least partially retracted from about prosthesis 52. Optionally, push-button 82 of actuator 80 can be depressed, thereby disengaging rotation of proximal handle 36 from handle body 20, to thereby fully retract of delivery sheath 200 from vascular prosthesis 58 without rotation of proximal handle 36 about handle body 20, as can be seen in FIG. 32A.

Proximal clasp assembly 184 is then actuated by compressing outer coupling 186 and moving outer coupling 186 first distally, then rotating outer coupling 186 ninety degrees, and thereafter retracting outer coupling 186 to a second position, shown in FIG. 32B, thereby retracting apex release catheter 154 within push rod 32 (FIGs. 10, 11) and retracting proximal capture component 54 from distal capture

component 56. Apices 68 of stent 66 at the proximal end 60 of vascular prosthesis 58 are released from apex clasp assembly 52, and prosthesis 58 is thereby released from the delivery device 10, as can be seen in FIG. 32C. Shifting knob 42 is then moved from the second position to the third position, wherein pin 108 is located in slot 114 between first slot 110 and second slot 112, as can be seen in FIG. 33B, thereby disengaging push rod 32 from handle body 20. Push rod 32 and guidewire catheter 12 are then withdrawn from vascular prosthesis 58 by pulling push rod 32 through handle body 20, thereby completing delivery of vascular prosthesis 58 to the treatment site, as can be seen in FIG. 33A.

While this invention has been particularly shown and described with references to example embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention encompassed by the appended claims

The relevant portion of all references cited herein and U.S. Patent No. 8,070,790 and U.S. Patent Application Nos. 12/459,387 (Publication No. 20100030255) and 12/723,431 (Publication No. 20100234932) are incorporated by reference in their entirety.

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A delivery device, comprising:
  - a) a guidewire catheter having a proximal end and a distal end; and
  - b) a delivery assembly extending about the guidewire catheter, including:
    - i) a handle body, having a major longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end,
    - ii) a delivery catheter having a distal end extending from within the distal end of the handle body and about the guidewire catheter,
    - iii) a push rod extending about the guidewire catheter and within the delivery catheter, the push rod being fixed to the guidewire catheter at the proximal end of the guidewire catheter proximal to the handle body,
    - iv) a proximal handle extending about the handle body and axially fixed to the delivery catheter, the proximal handle being selectively fixed to the push rod, wherein the proximal handle is rotatable about the handle body and rotation of the proximal handle about the handle body translates to longitudinal movement of the delivery catheter and, selectively, of the push rod relative to the handle body, and
    - v) a locking mechanism at the handle body that selectively engages the proximal handle with the push rod.
2. The delivery device of claim 1, further including an actuator at the proximal handle that selectively disengages the proximal handle from the handle body, whereby rotation of the proximal handle is independent of longitudinal movement of the delivery catheter relative to the handle body.

3. The delivery device of claim 2, wherein the proximal handle includes an end that defines teeth that move transversely to a major longitudinal axis of the handle body when the proximal handle is rotated about the handle body, and further including,
  - a) a gear rack extending along the major longitudinal axis of the handle body;
  - b) a linking gear engaging the teeth of the proximal handle end, the linking gear being rotatable about an axis transverse to the axis of rotation of the proximal handle; and
  - c) a pinion gear that engages the gear rack and the linking gear, whereby rotation of the proximal handle about the handle body translates to the longitudinal movement of the delivery catheter and, selectively, of the push rod relative to the handle body, whereby the actuator selectively disengages the linking gear from the pinion gear, thereby selectively disengaging rotation of the proximal handle from longitudinal movement of the proximal handle along the handle body.
4. The delivery device of claim 3, wherein the actuator includes,
  - a) an actuator housing that extends about the handle body and is rotatably linked to the proximal handle, whereby the actuator housing is movable along the handle body without rotating about the handle body while the proximal handle rotates about the handle body;
  - b) a push-button at the actuator housing;
  - c) a pinion gear extension that defines a coaxial opening that is coaxial with the pinion gear and defines at least one lateral opening that extends laterally from the coaxial opening;
  - d) a ball-bearing that sits at least partially within the lateral opening and locks the relative rotation of the linking gear and the pinion gear when displaced to extend radially beyond the pinion gear extension; and

- e) a frustoconical center-pin that is biased radially outward from the major longitudinal axis of the handle body and abuts the push-button, whereby the frustoconical center-pin displaces the ball bearing radially outward through the lateral opening and locks the relative rotation of the linking gear and the pinion gear by the outward bias, thereby causing longitudinal movement of the proximal handle along the handle body when the proximal handle is rotated about the handle body and, when the push-button is depressed, selectively disengages the linking gear from the pinion gear, thereby selectively disengaging rotation of the proximal handle from longitudinal movement of the proximal handle along the handle body.

5. The delivery device of claim 4, wherein further including a distal grip at the distal end of the handle body, and wherein the locking mechanism includes:

- a) a shifting knob at the distal grip that is rotatable about the handle body and defines teeth along the inside of the shifting knob that move transversely to the major longitudinal axis of the handle body when the shifting knob is rotated about the handle body, and wherein the locking mechanism has at least two fixed positions relative to the handle body;
- b) a drive shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, wherein the distal end defines teeth that engage the teeth of the shifting knob, and extend along a major longitudinal axis of the drive shaft;
- c) a drive gear along the drive shaft and that defines teeth that engage the teeth along the drive shaft, whereby the shifting knob is engaged with the drive gear at all positions of the shifting knob; and
- d) a first locking component extending about the push rod, the locking component being linked to the proximal handle and the drive gear, whereby, in a first position of the shifting knob, the first locking component engages the proximal handle with the push rod, and rotation of the shifting knob from the first position to a second

position causes rotation of the drive shaft which, in turn, causes rotation of the drive gear and disengagement of the first locking component from the push rod, thereby allowing independent movement of the delivery catheter along the longitudinal axis of the handle body relative to the push rod when the proximal handle is moved along the major longitudinal axis of the handle body.

6. The delivery device of claim 5, wherein the locking mechanism further includes a second locking component, the second locking component extending about the push rod, fixed to the handle body and linked to the shifting knob through the drive shaft, whereby rotation of the shifting knob from the first position to the second position causes engagement between the handle body and the push rod, thereby preventing longitudinal movement of the push rod relative to the handle body when the proximal handle is moved along the major longitudinal axis.
7. The delivery device of claim 6, further including an apex delivery device, including:
  - a) an apex clasp assembly having,
    - i) a distal capture component at a distal end of the guidewire catheter,
    - ii) a proximal capture component in mateable relation to the distal capture component, and
    - iii) an apex release catheter having a proximal end, the apex release catheter extending about the guidewire catheter and fixed to the proximal capture component; and
  - b) a proximal clasp assembly, having
    - i) a fixed component at the proximal end of the guidewire catheter, and
    - ii) an outer coupling at the proximal end of the apex release catheter and in mateable relation with the fixed component of

the proximal clasp assembly, whereby movement of the outer coupling relative to the fixed component from a first position to a second position will cause relative movement of the proximal capture component relative to the distal capture component of the apex clasp assembly.

8. The delivery device of claim 7, wherein the shifting knob includes a third position, wherein the first locking component and the second locking component are disengaged from the push rod, whereby the push rod can be moved longitudinally relative to the handle body and the proximal handle by longitudinal movement of the push rod, thereby moving the guidewire catheter independently of the proximal handle and the handle body.
9. The delivery device of claim 8, wherein the push rod can be rotated radially.
10. The delivery device of claim 8, wherein the handle body defines a slot through which the actuator extends, and further including a plurality of constricting rings extending about the delivery catheter within the handle body, the constricting rings having an outside diameter greater than that of the slot, whereby the rings will prevent application of longitudinal compressive force by the proximal handle on the delivery catheter from causing the delivery catheter to buckle and thereby move through the slot and outside the handle body.
11. The delivery device of claim 10, wherein the constricting rings define an inside diameter that is smaller than the outside diameter of the delivery catheter, thereby forming an interference fit between them, and whereby the constricting rings can move longitudinally along the delivery catheter.
12. The delivery device of claim 10, further including an outer catheter fixed to and extending from the distal end of the handle body.

13. The delivery device of claim 12, wherein the outer catheter is rotatable relative to the handle body.
14. The delivery device of claim 13, further including a delivery sheath extending distally from the distal end of the delivery catheter.
15. The delivery device of claim 14, further including a vascular prosthesis radially constrained within the delivery sheath, and releasably fixed at a proximal end of the prosthesis to the apex delivery device.
16. The delivery device of claim 15, further including at least one stent at the proximal end of the prosthesis, whereby the proximal end of the prosthesis is releasably fixed to the apex delivery device at the stent.
17. A delivery device, comprising,
  - a) a gear rack;
  - b) a handle extending about the gear rack and defining teeth at an end of the handle, the handle being rotatable about the gear rack;
  - c) a pinion gear rotatable about an axis that intersects with the axis of rotation of the handle and engages the gear rack;
  - d) a linking gear that selectively rotates with rotation of the pinion gear;
  - e) an actuator that selectively engages the pinion gear with the linking gear; and
  - f) a delivery catheter fixed to the handle, whereby rotation of the handle selectively moves the delivery catheter relative to the gear rack upon engagement of the pinion gear with the linking gear by the actuator.
18. A method for delivering a vascular prosthesis to a treatment site of a subject, comprising the steps of:

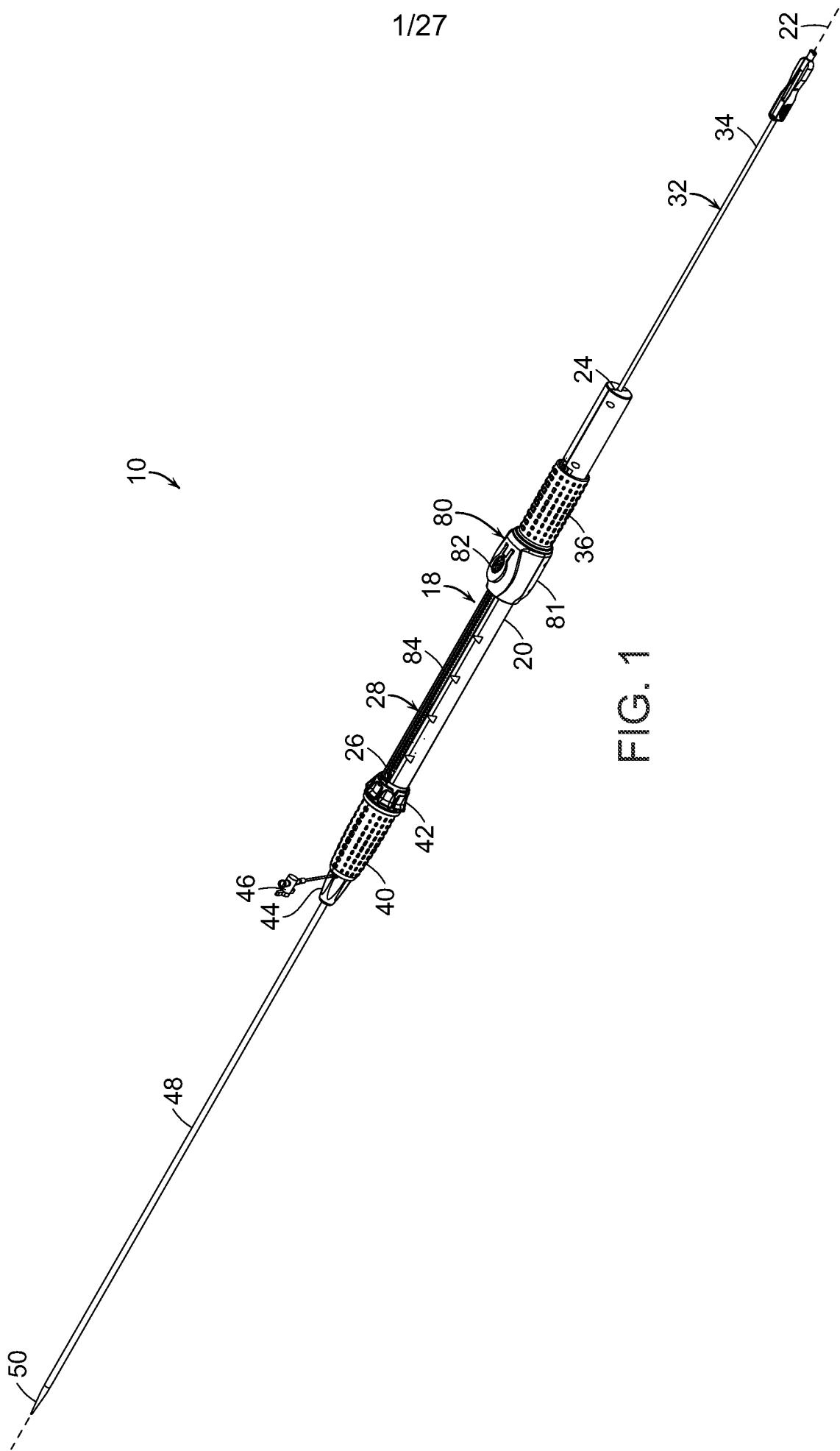
- a) advancing the vascular prosthesis, while the vascular prosthesis is mounted at a proximal end of the prosthesis to an apex delivery device that is fixed to a distal end of a guidewire catheter, to a position distal to a vascular treatment site of the subject;
- b) rotating a proximal handle in a first direction about a handle body, having a distal end, of a delivery device through which the guidewire catheter extends, the guidewire catheter disposed within a push rod that also extends through the handle body, wherein the guidewire catheter is fixed to the push rod, whereby rotation of the proximal handle causes longitudinal movement of the guidewire catheter and the push rod along the handle body to thereby at least partially advance the prosthesis to the treatment site, the prosthesis being advanced from within an outer catheter extending from a distal end of the handle body and about the prosthesis;
- c) shifting the position of a first locking component securing the proximal handle to the push rod from a first position to a second position, whereby the first locking component disengages the proximal handle from the push rod and a second locking component engages the push rod with the handle body;
- d) rotating the proximal handle in a second direction, whereby a delivery catheter having a distal end, the delivery catheter extending about the push rod, is withdrawn along the push rod, and a delivery sheath extending from the distal end of the delivery catheter is at least partially retracted from about the prosthesis;
- e) releasing the proximal end of the prosthesis from the apex delivery device;
- f) shifting the second locking component to disengage the push rod from the handle body; and
- g) withdrawing the push rod and the guidewire catheter from within the prosthesis, thereby delivering the vascular prosthesis to the treatment site.

19. The method of claim 18, further including the step of disengaging the proximal handle from the handle body, whereby the proximal handle is slidable along the handle body independently of rotation of the proximal handle.
20. The method of claim 19, wherein the proximal handle is disengaged from the handle body while advancing the prosthesis to the treatment site.
21. The method of claim 20, wherein the proximal handle is disengaged from the handle body while retracting the delivery sheath from about the prosthesis.
22. The method of claim 18, wherein the apex delivery device is an apex clasp assembly, whereby apices of a stent of the prosthesis are held by the apex clasp assembly until released.
23. The method of claim 22, wherein the prosthesis is released from the apex clasp assembly by retracting an apex release catheter extending about the guidewire catheter, the apex release catheter being fixed to a proximal capture component of the apex clasp assembly, whereby the proximal capture component of the apex clasp assembly is separated from a distal capture component of the apex clasp assembly, thereby releasing the apices of the stent of the prosthesis from between the proximal and distal capture components.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein rotation of the proximal handle is disengaged from movement of the proximal handle along the handle body by activating an actuator at the proximal handle.
25. The method of claim 24, wherein shifting the position of the first locking component to disengage the proximal handle from the push rod is obtained

by rotating a shifting knob having teeth extending about the handle body from a first position to a second position.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein rotating the shifting knob from the first position to the second position simultaneously causes the second locking component to engage the push rod with the handle body.
27. The method of claim 26, wherein the shifting knob is proximate to or at the distal end of the handle body.
28. The method of claim 27, wherein the shifting knob is linked to the proximal handle by a drive shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, wherein the distal end defines teeth that engage, directly or indirectly, teeth of the shifting knob that defines a row of teeth at the proximal end along a major longitudinal axis of the drive shaft.
29. The method of claim 28, wherein the drive shaft engages a drive gear at the proximal end of the drive shaft, whereby the shifting knob is engaged with the drive gear at all positions of the shifting knob.
30. The method of claim 29, wherein the drive gear is engaged with the drive shaft at all positions of the proximal handle along the handle body.

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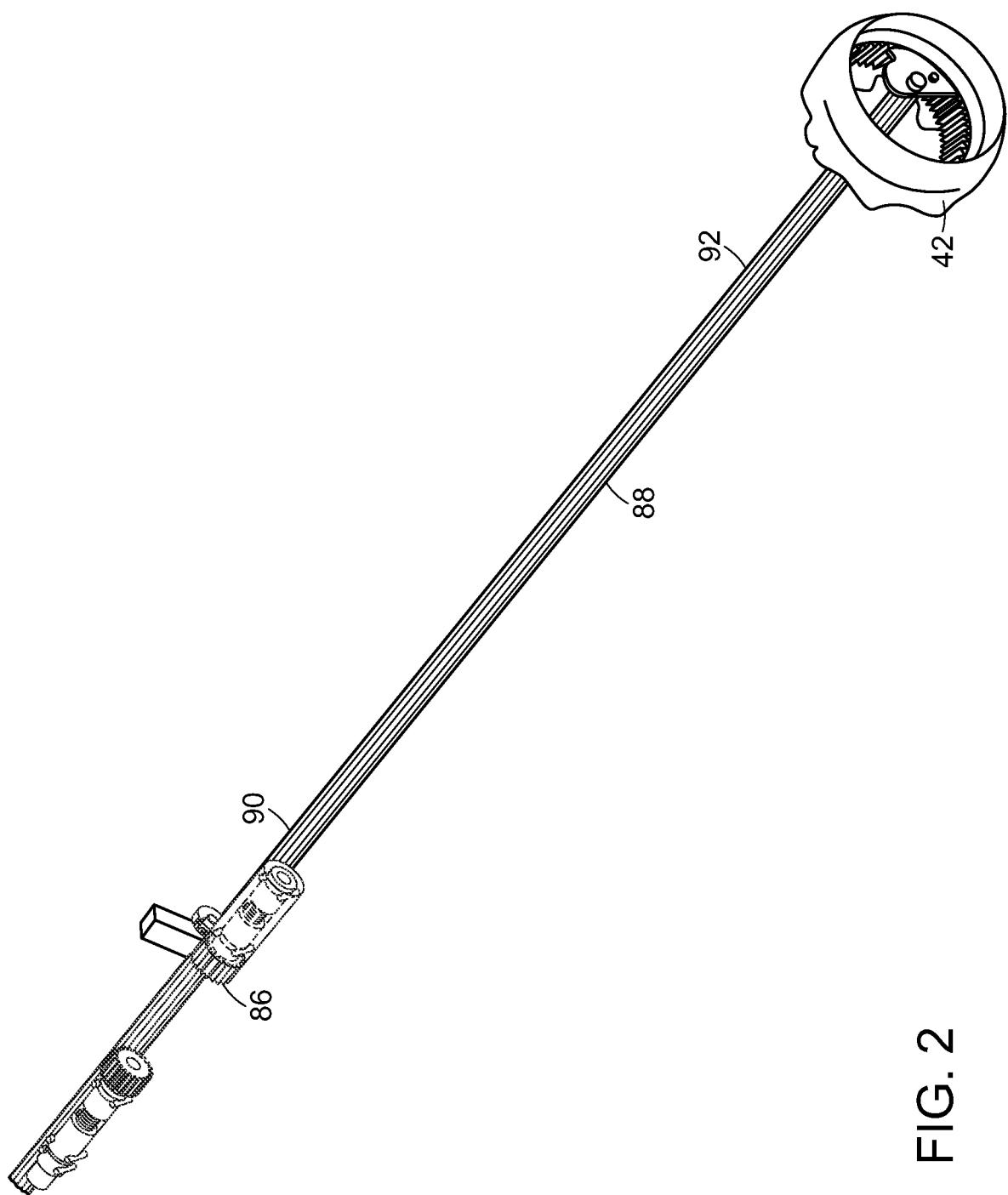
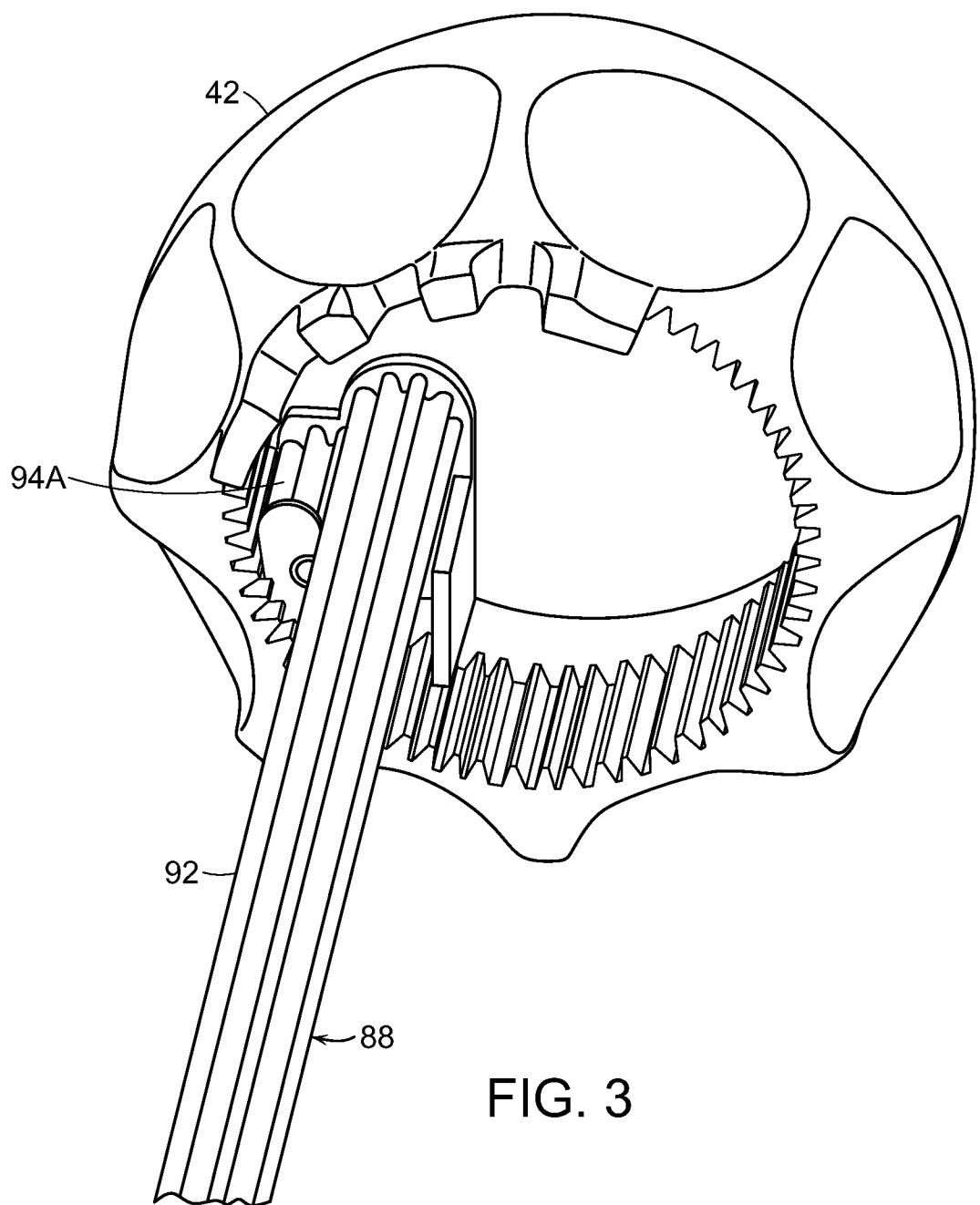
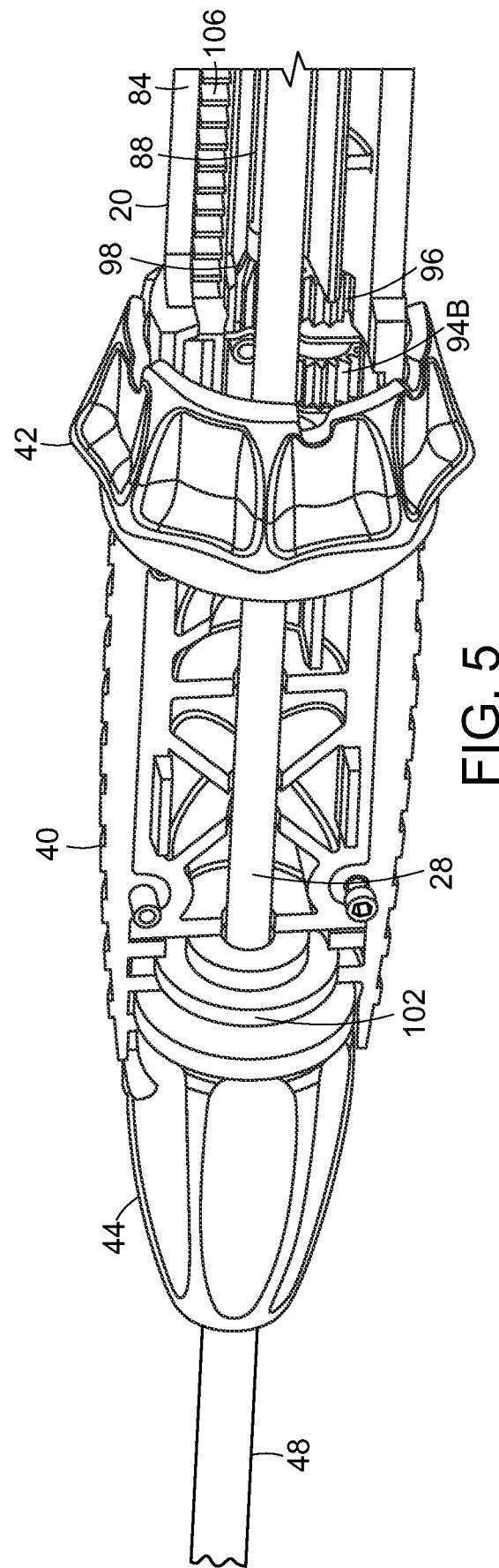
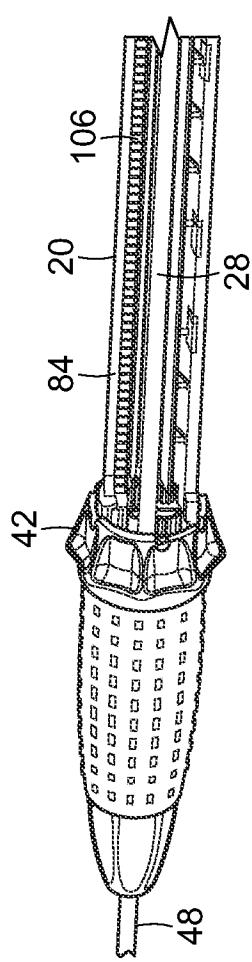


FIG. 2

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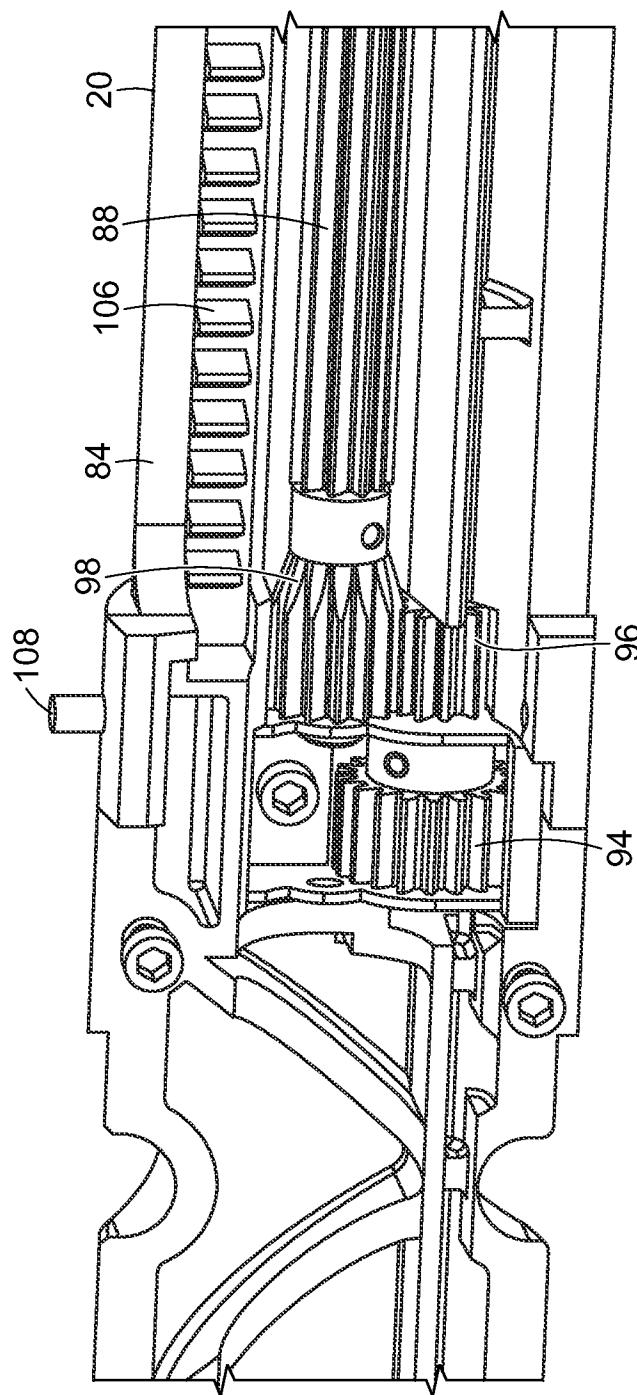


FIG. 6

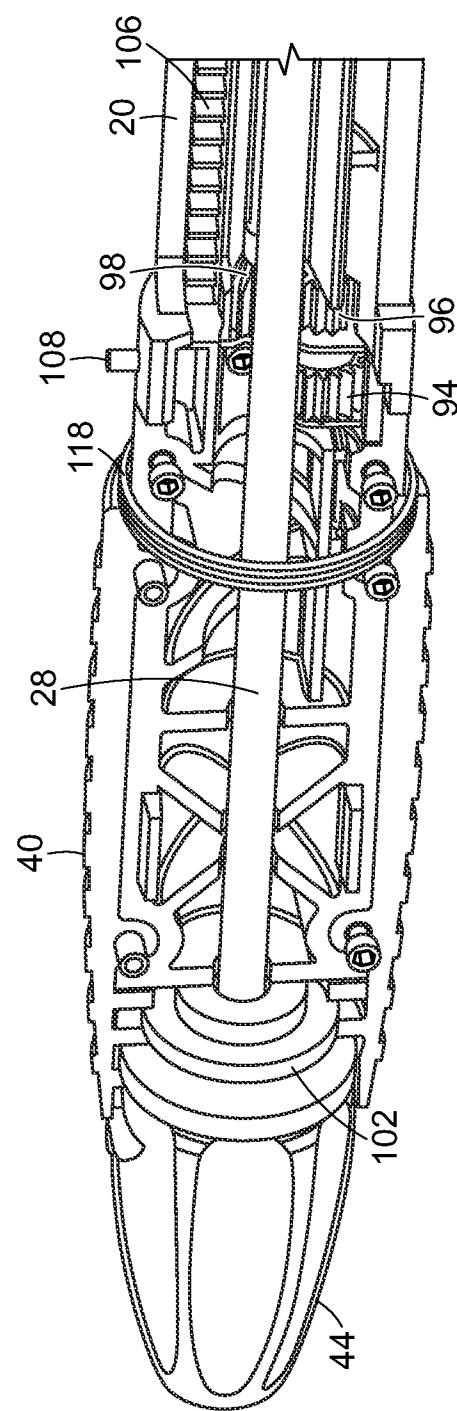


FIG. 7

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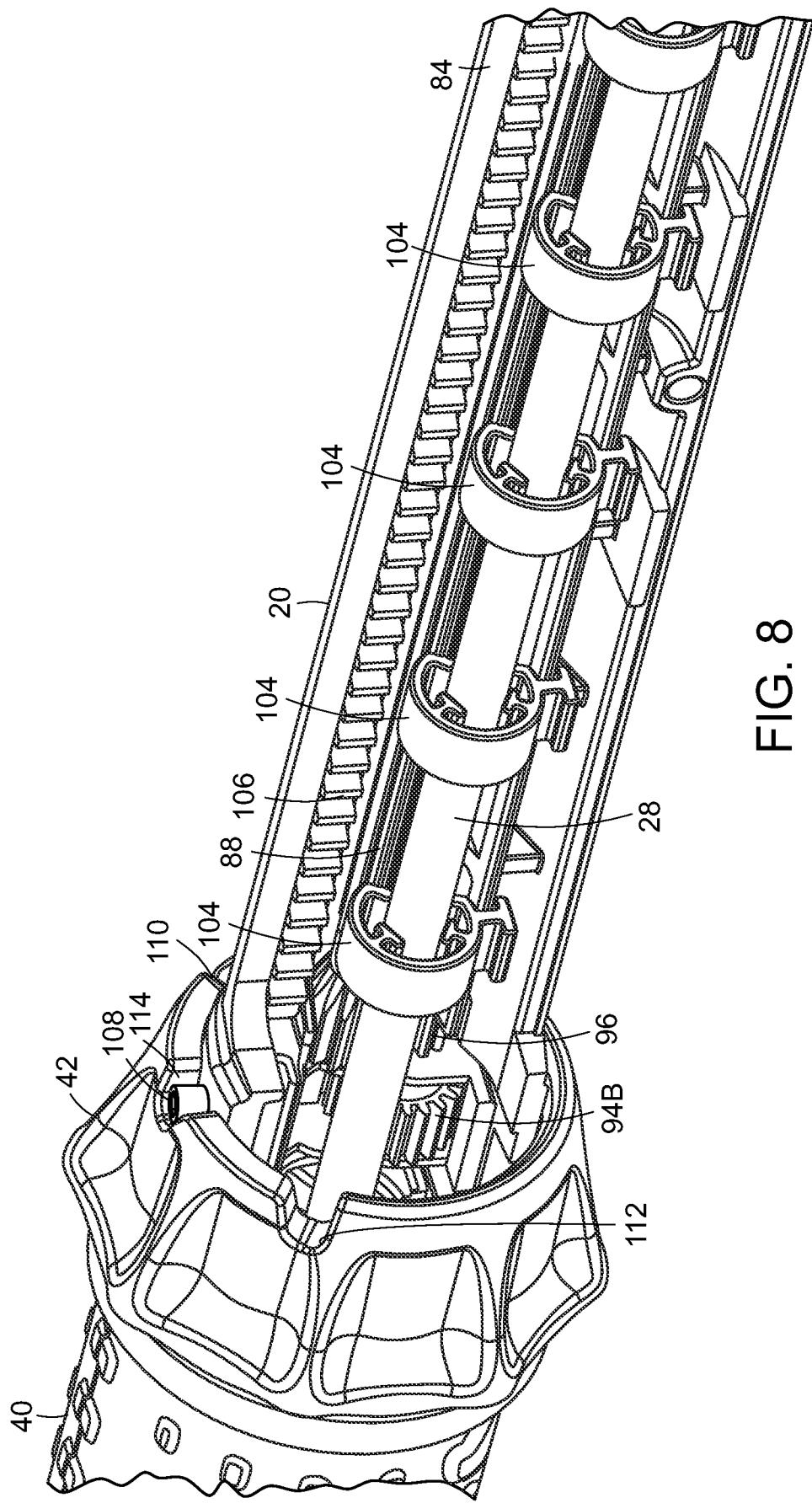


FIG. 8

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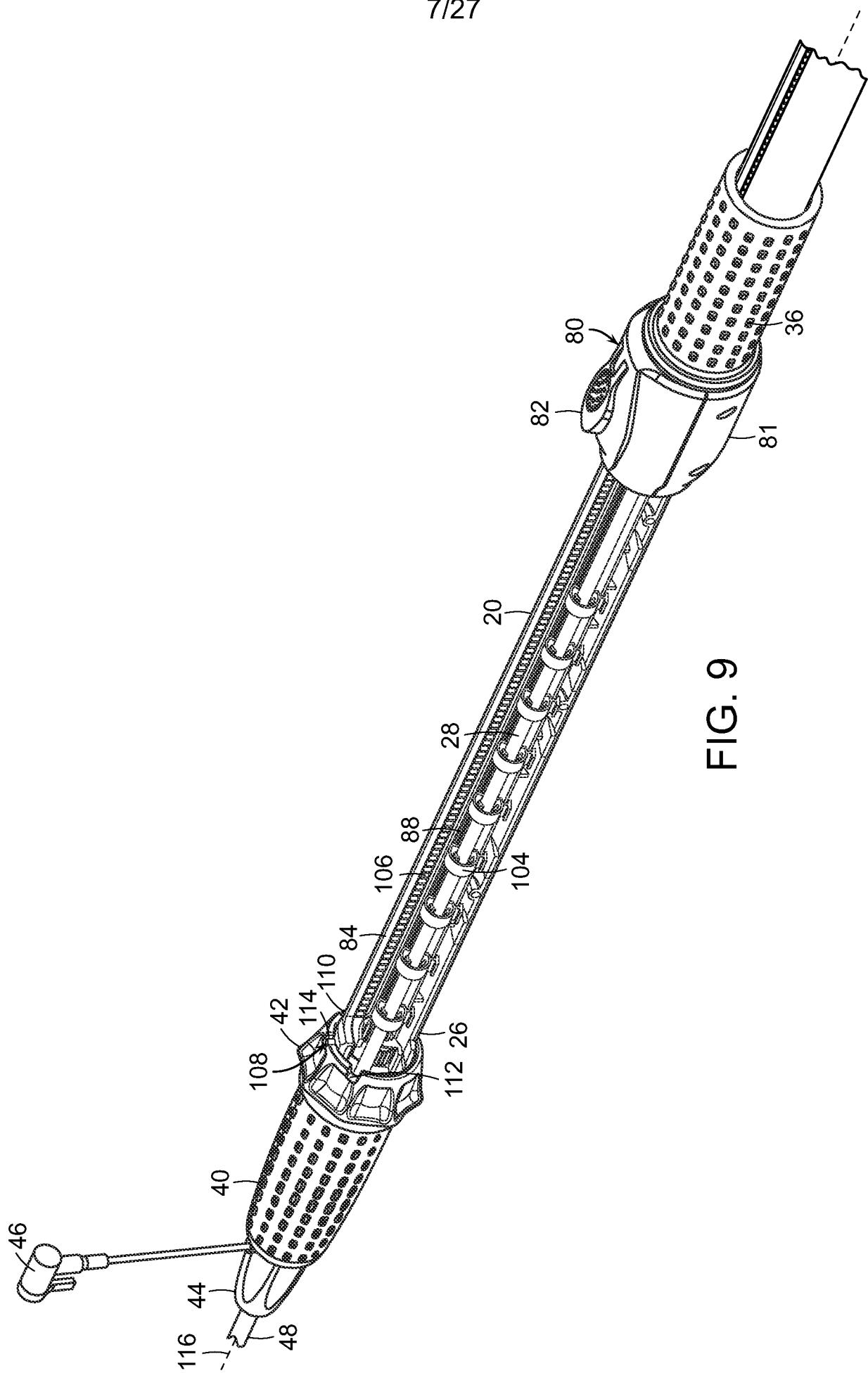
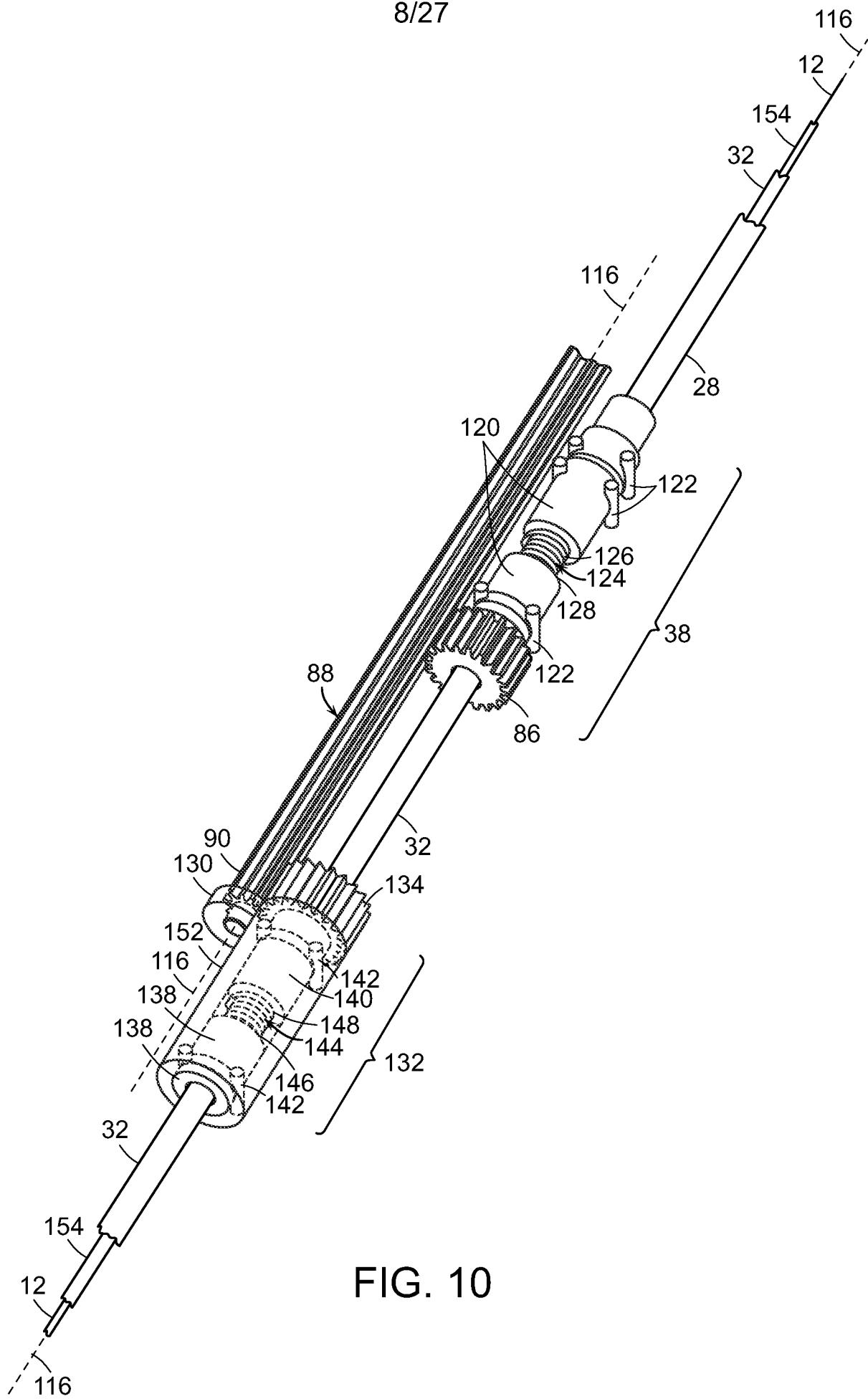
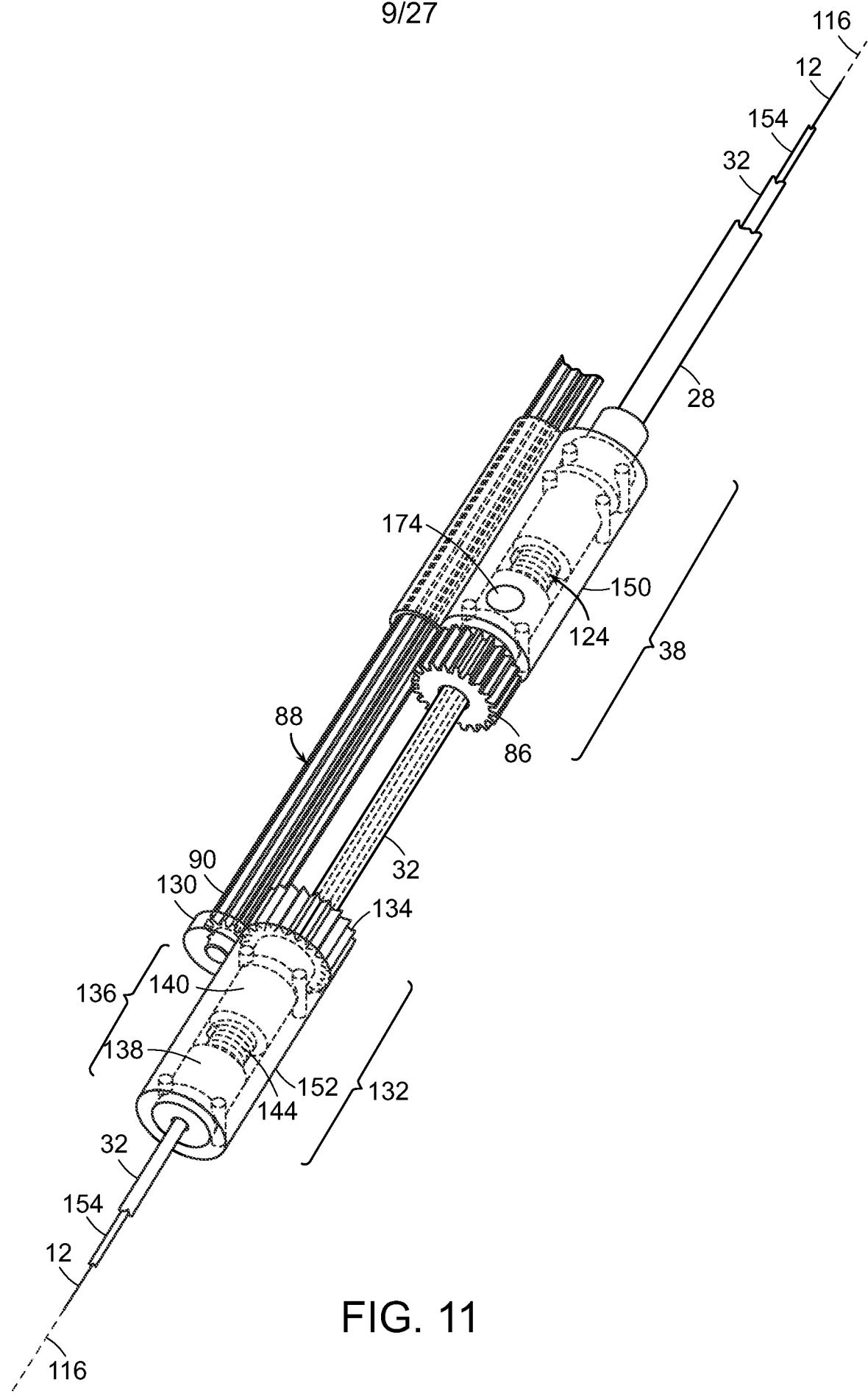


FIG. 9

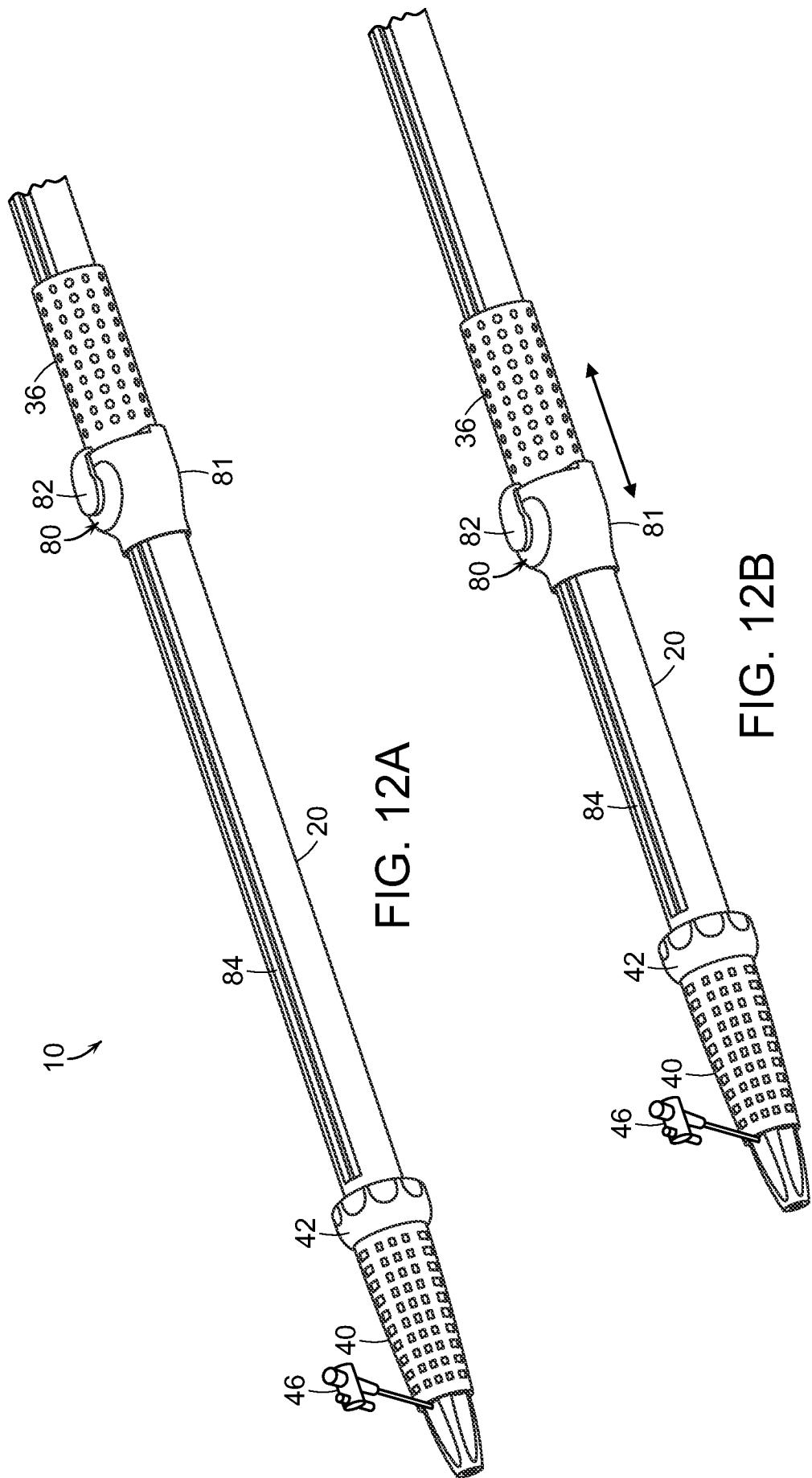
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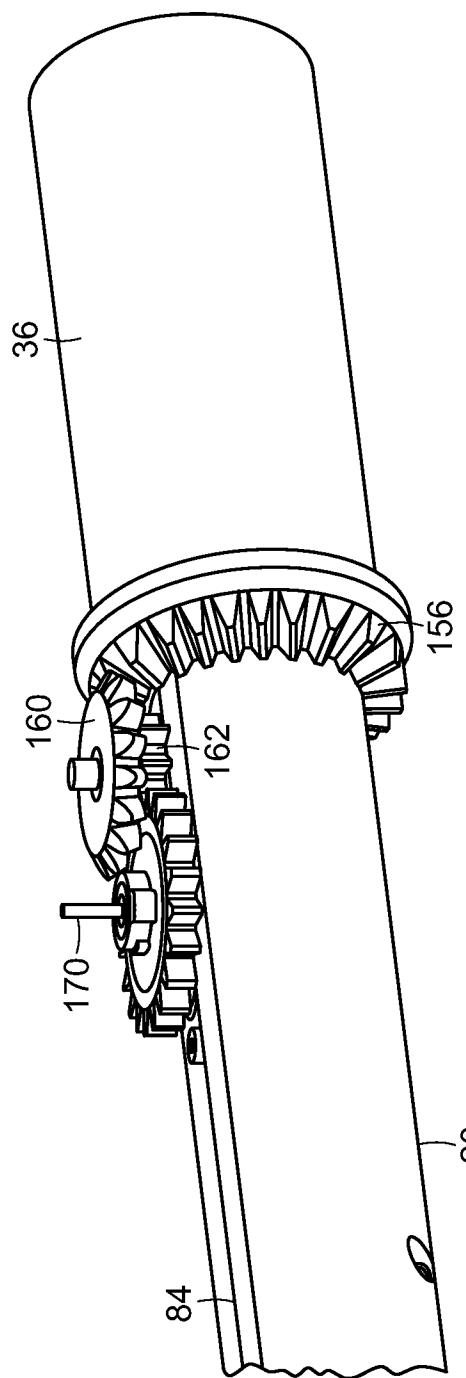
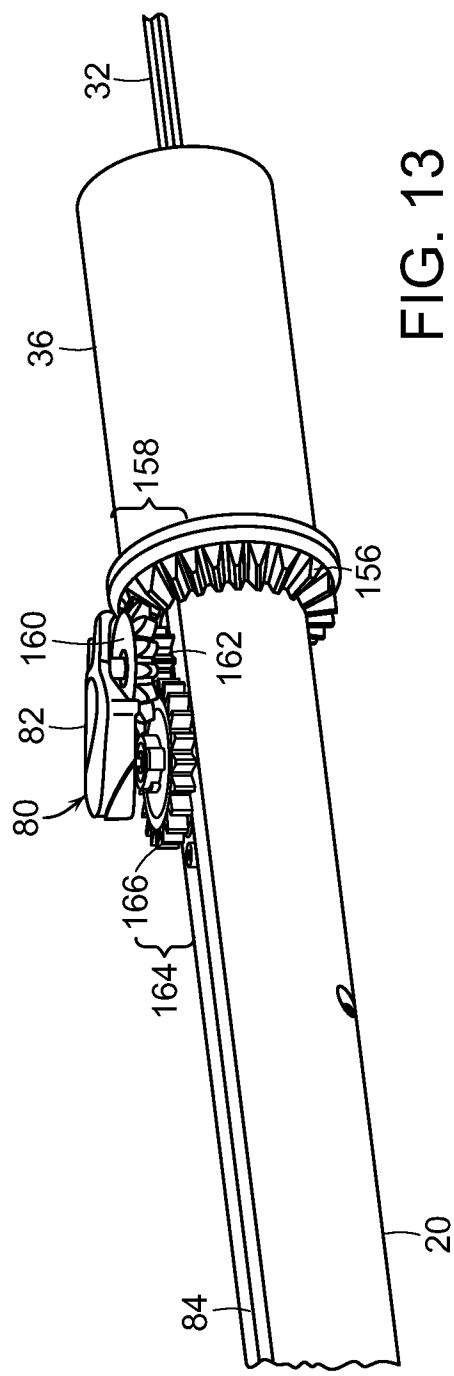


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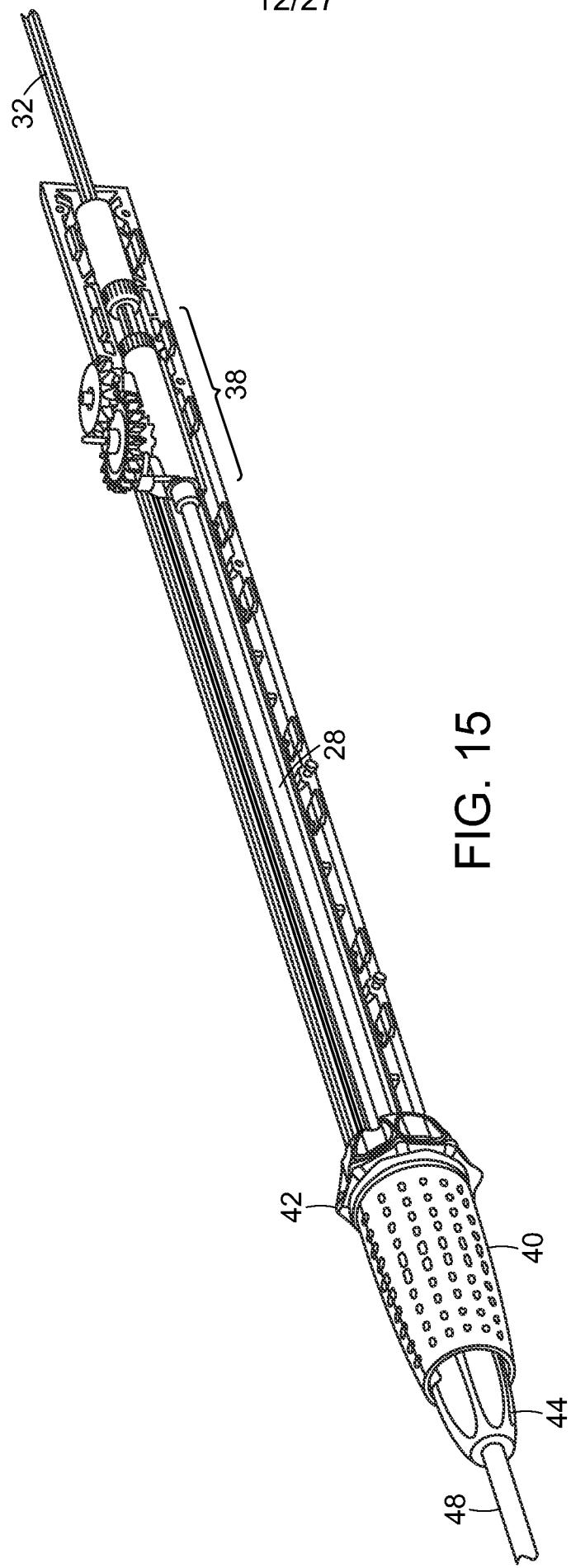


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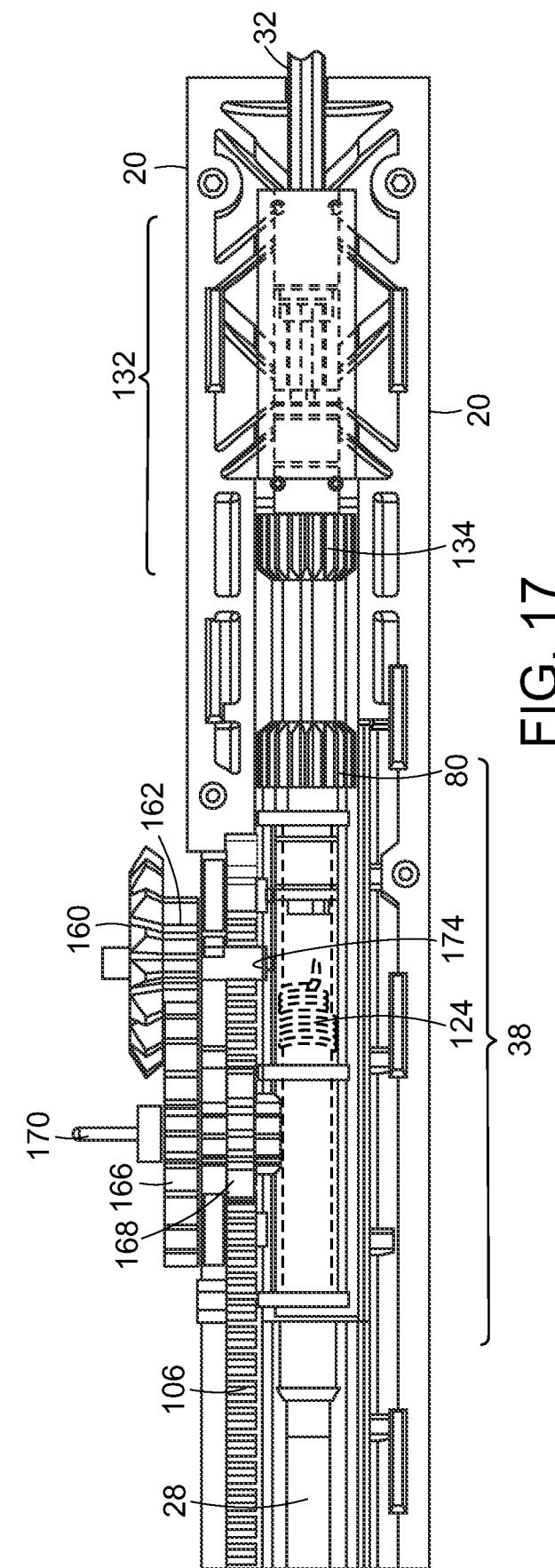
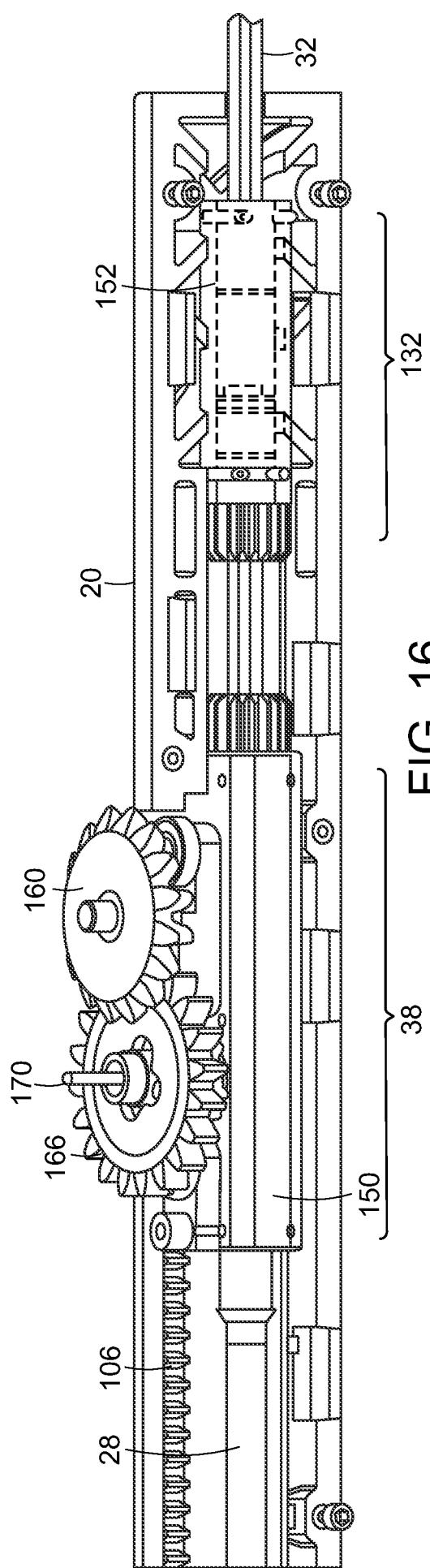




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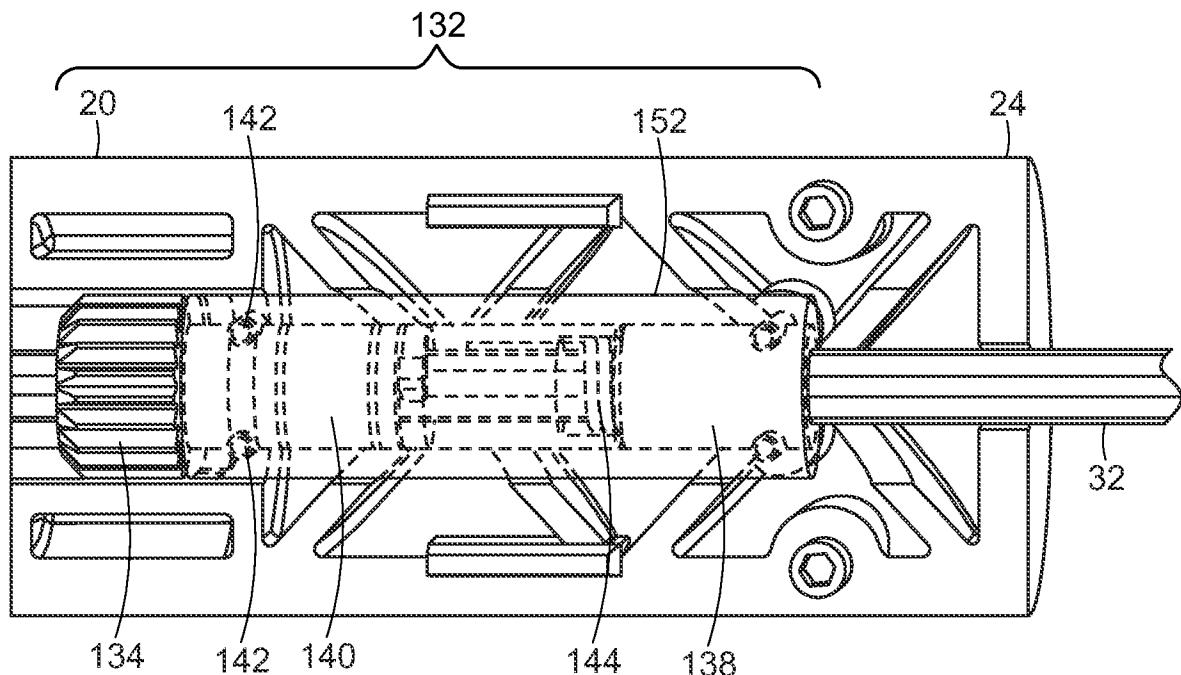


FIG. 18

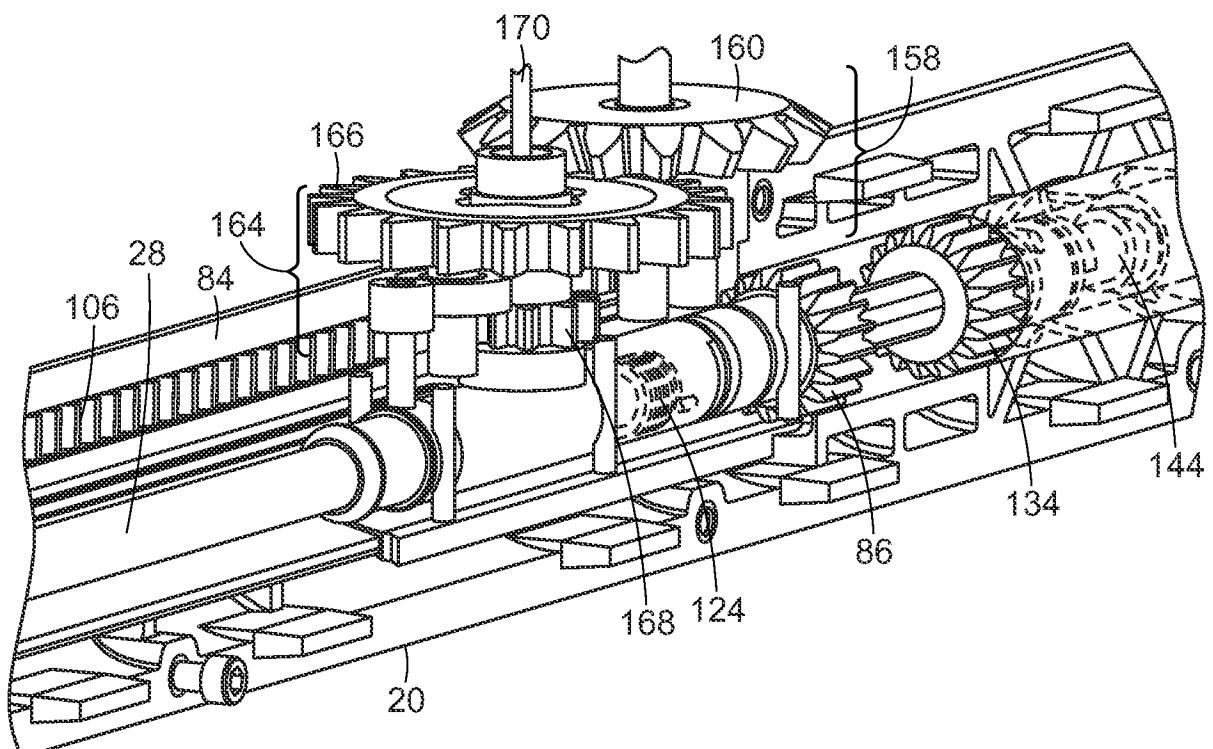


FIG. 19

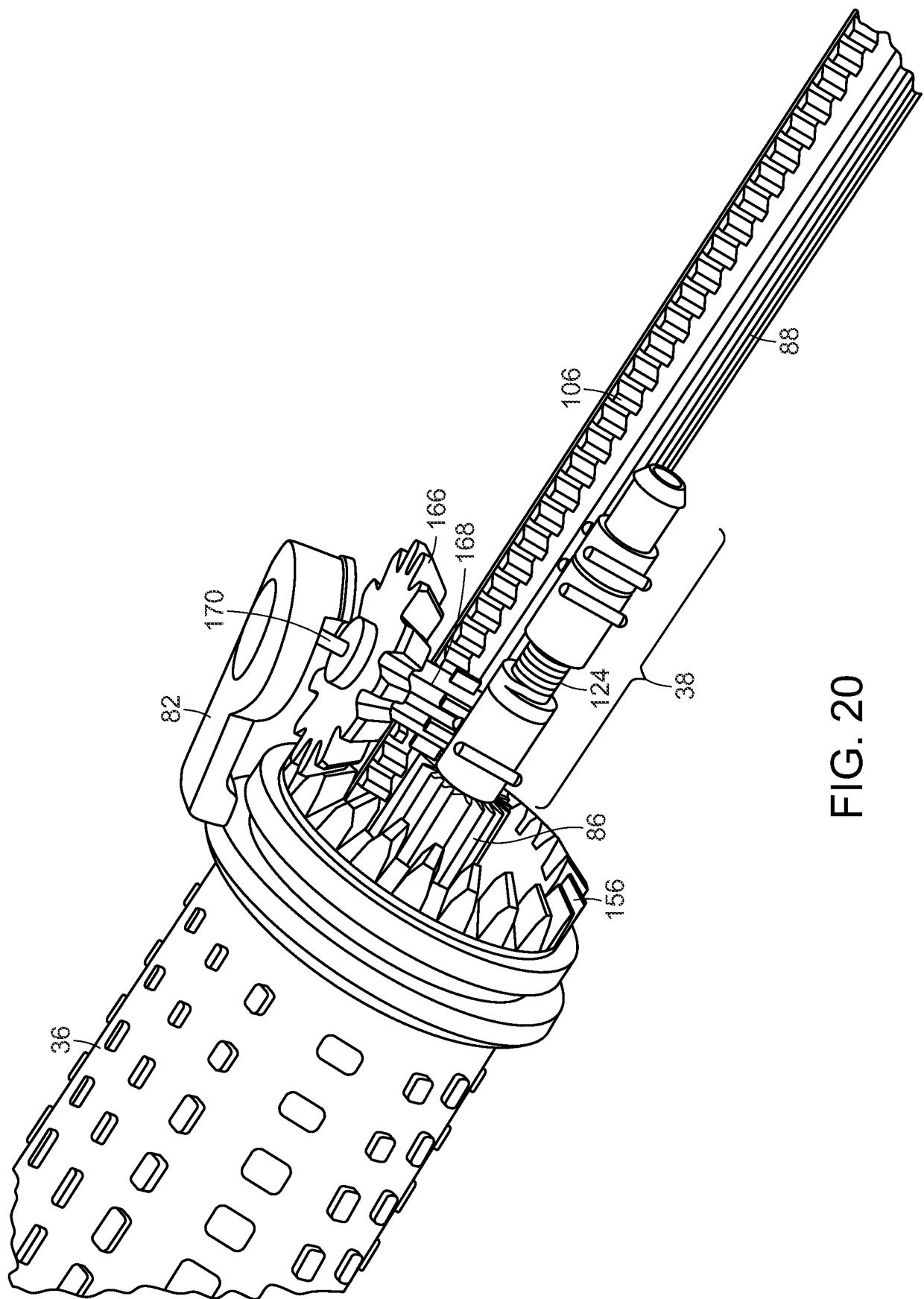


FIG. 20

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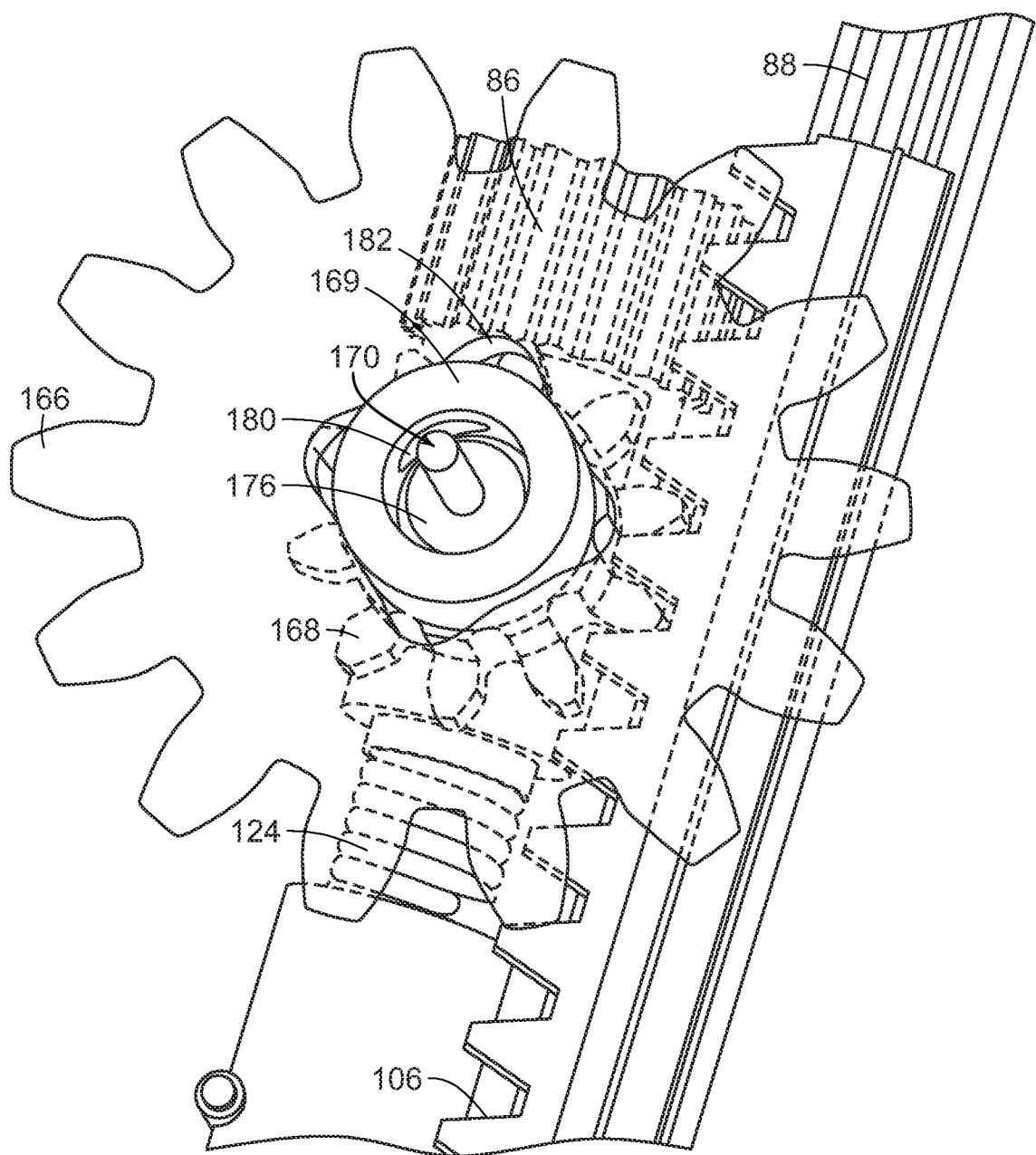


FIG. 21

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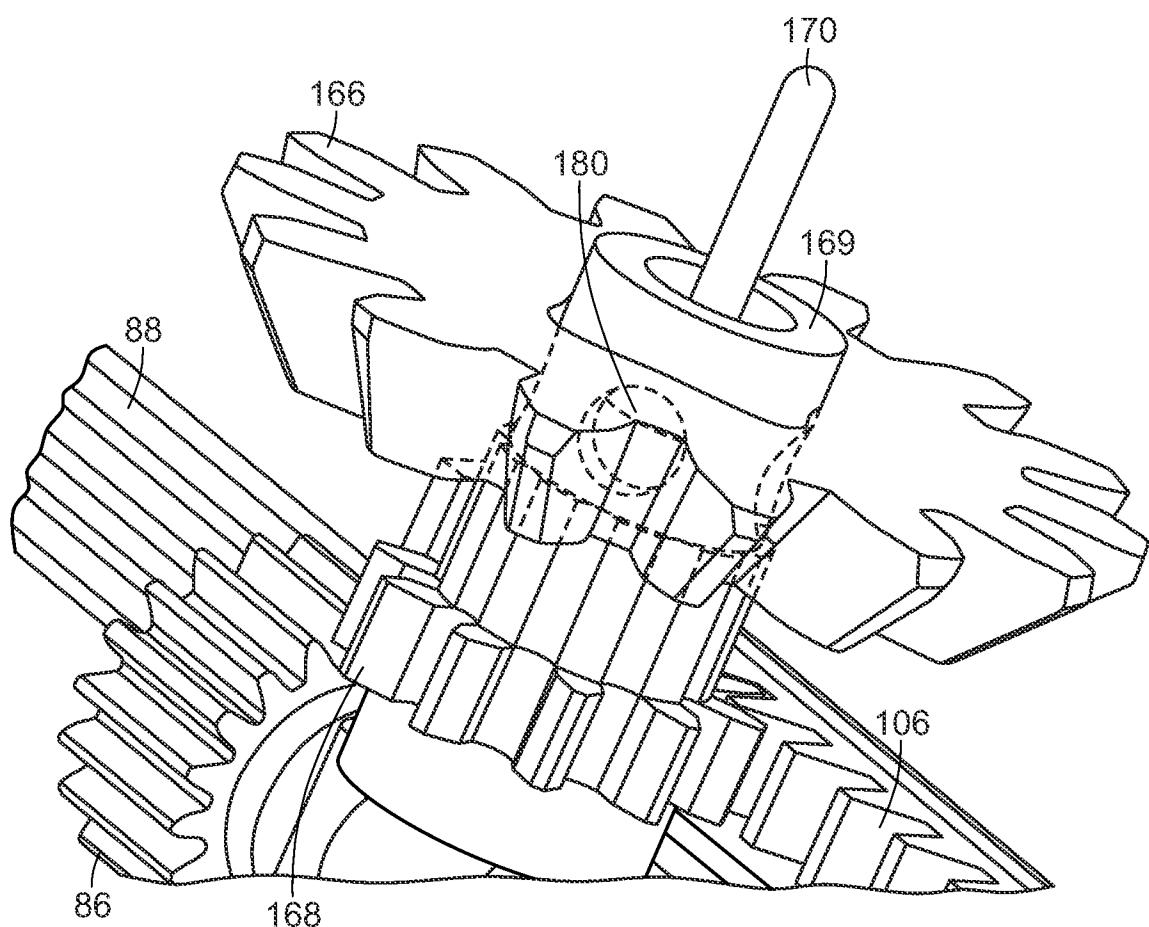


FIG. 22

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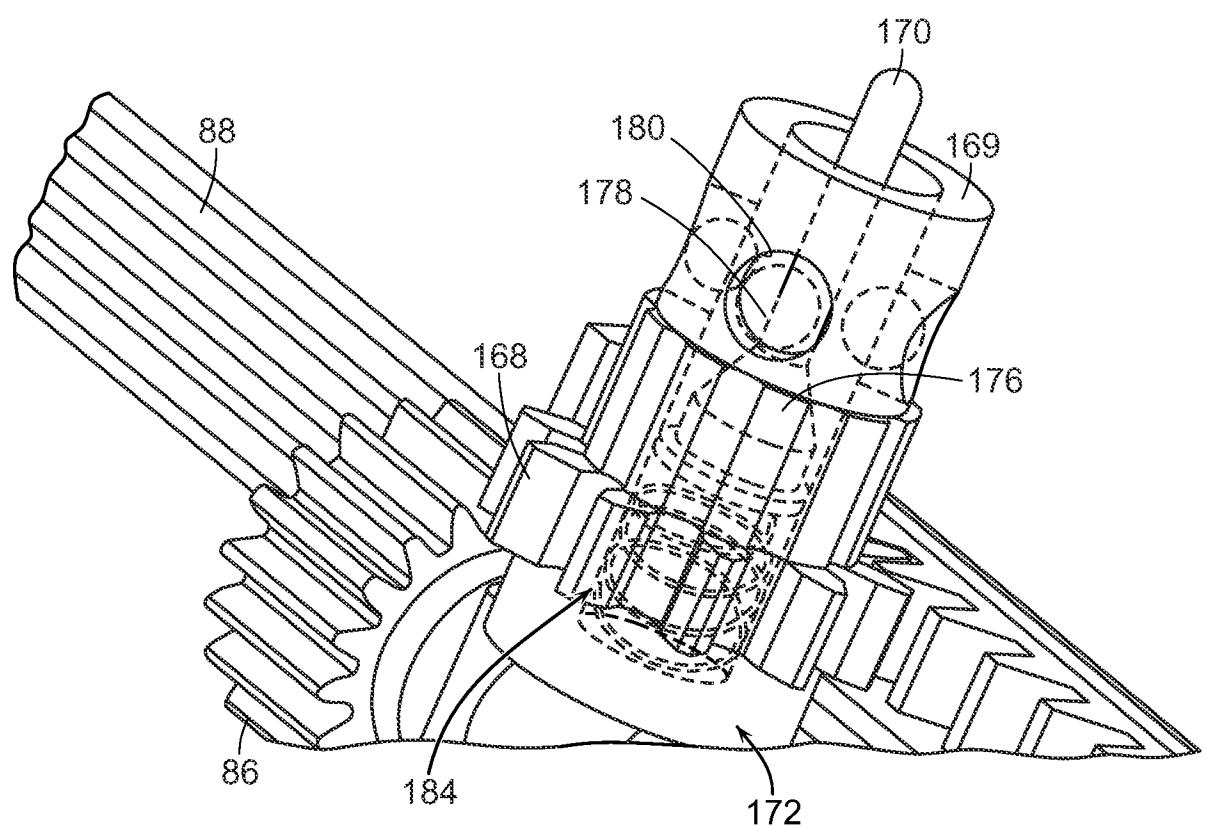


FIG. 23

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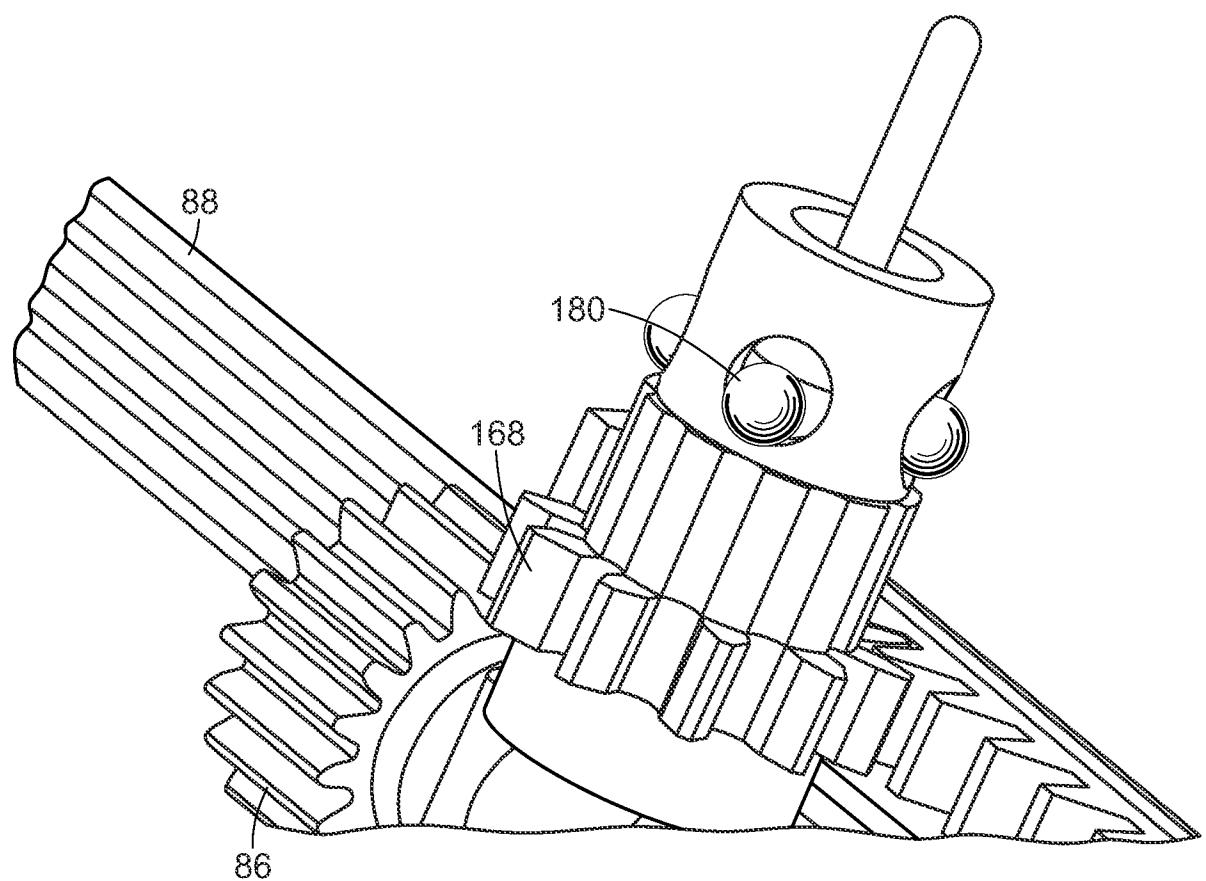


FIG. 24

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FIG. 25

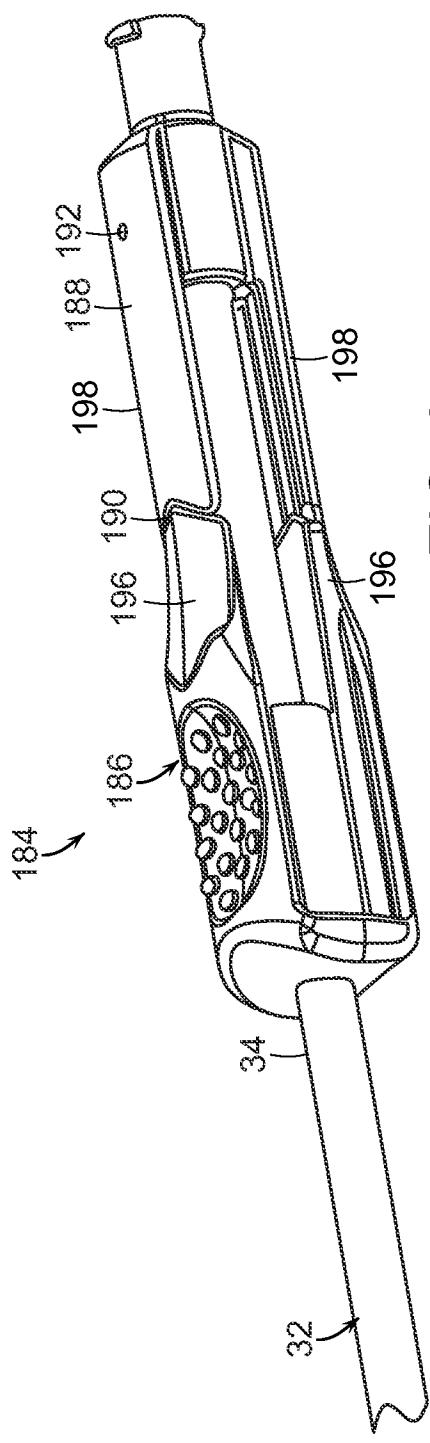
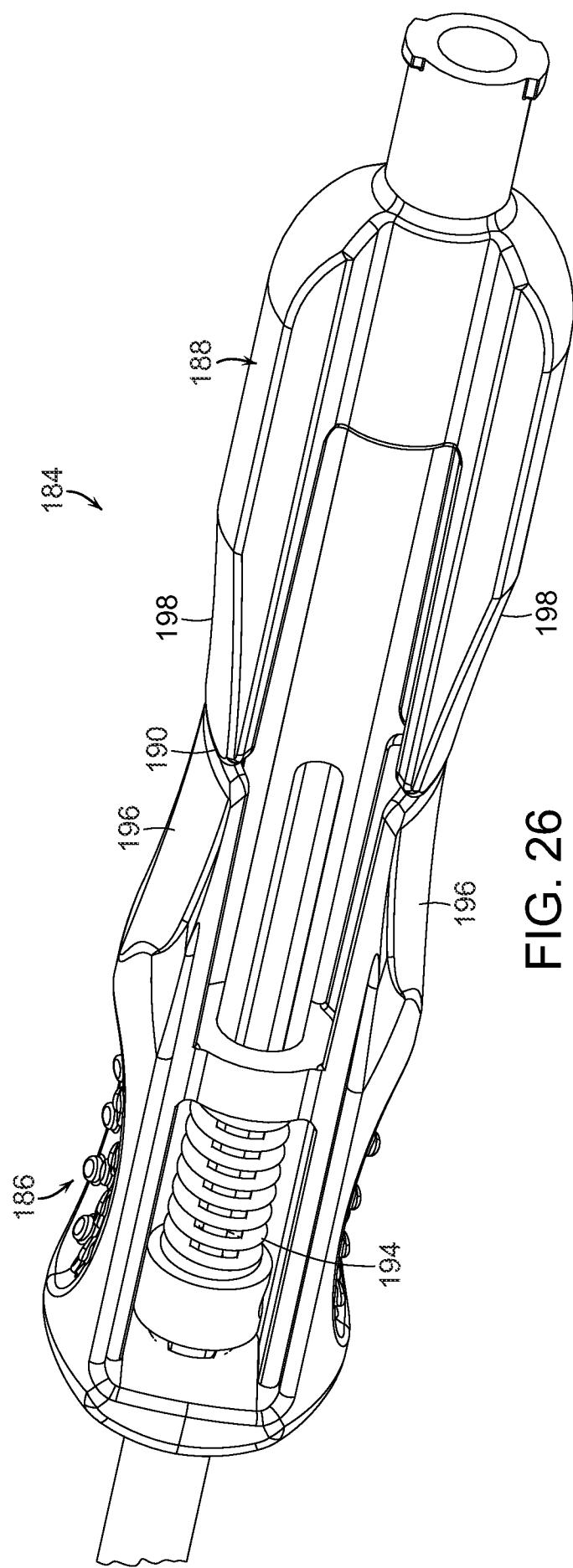
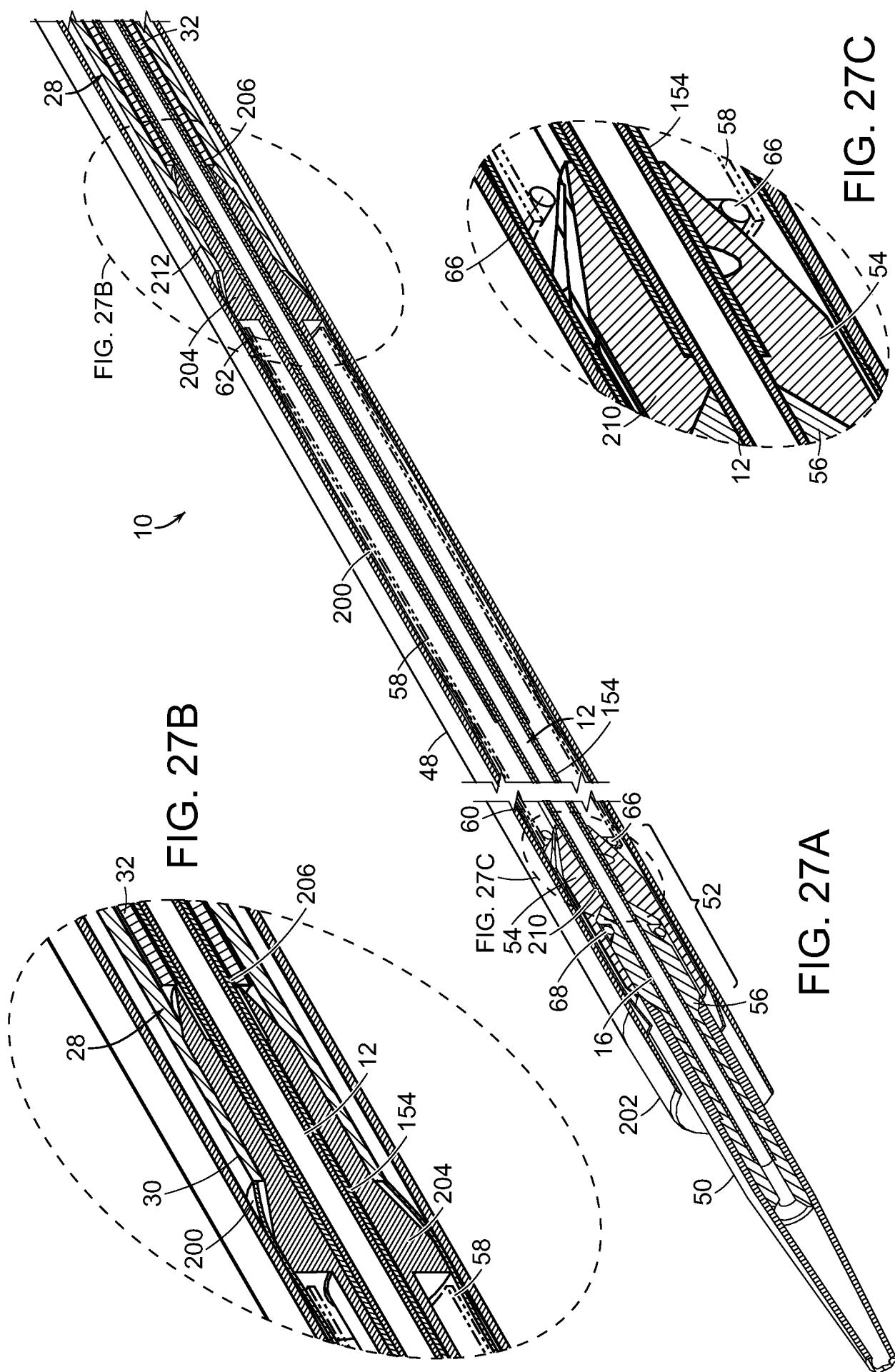


FIG. 26



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FIG. 28C

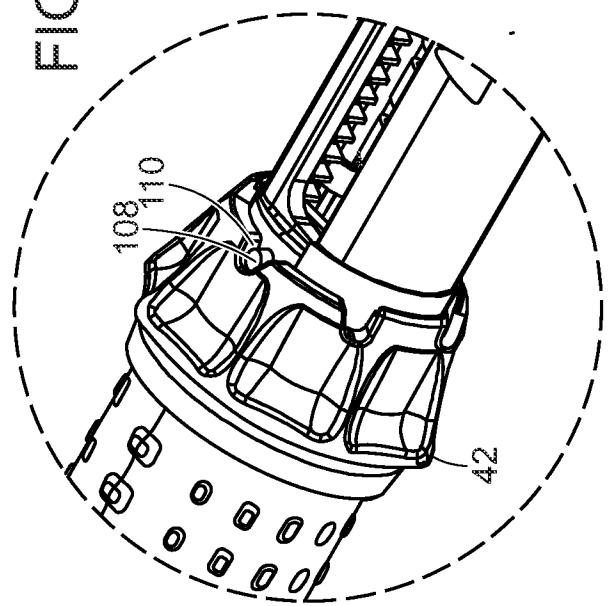


FIG. 28B

FIG. 28B

FIG. 28A

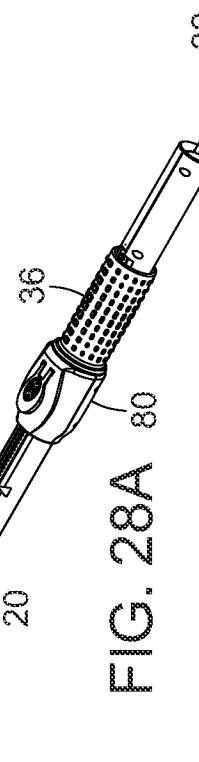
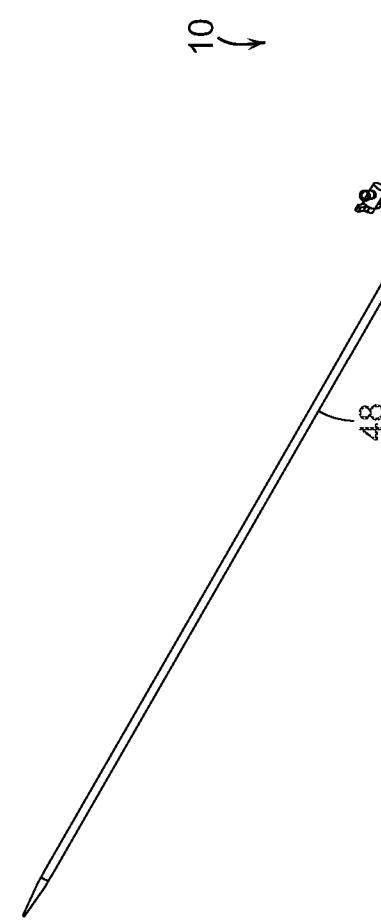
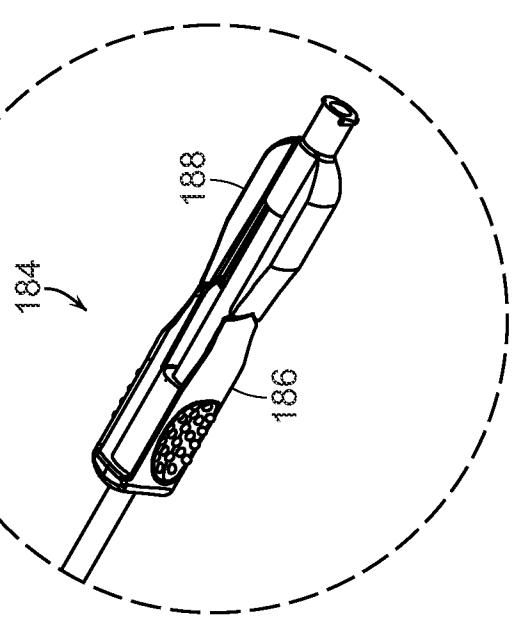
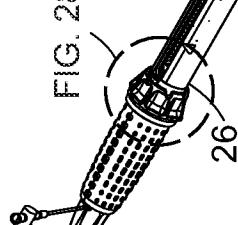
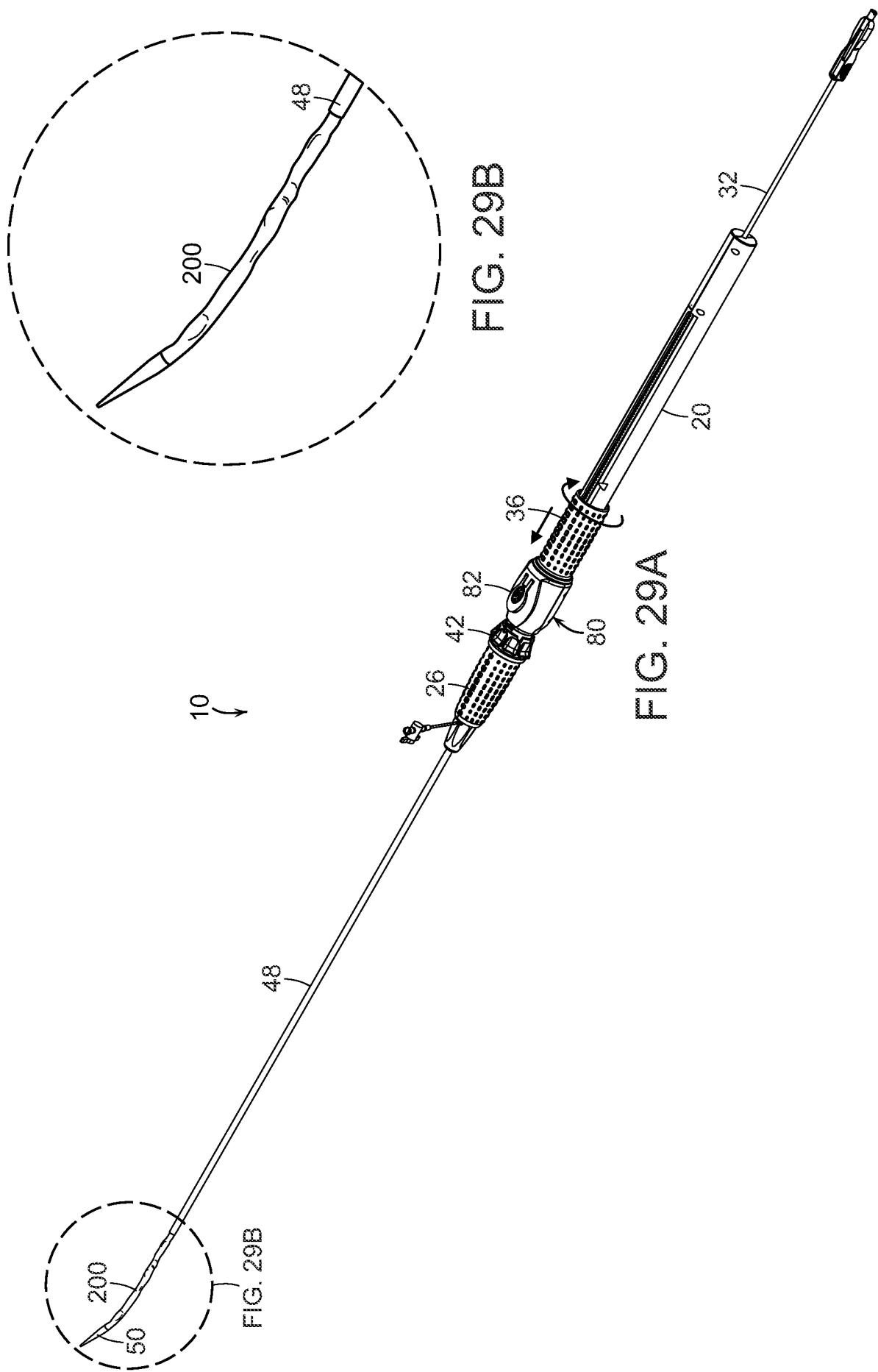


FIG. 28C

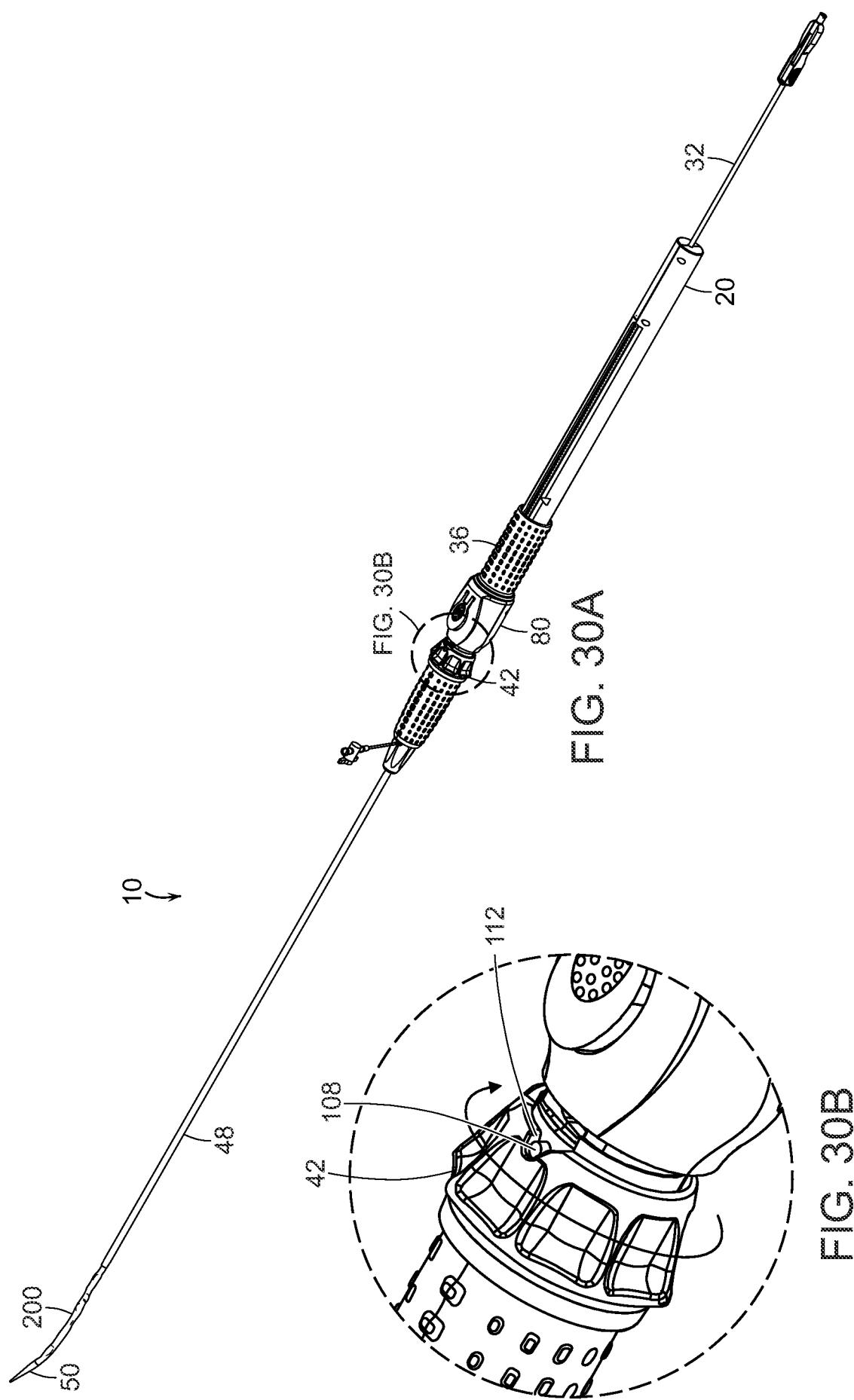
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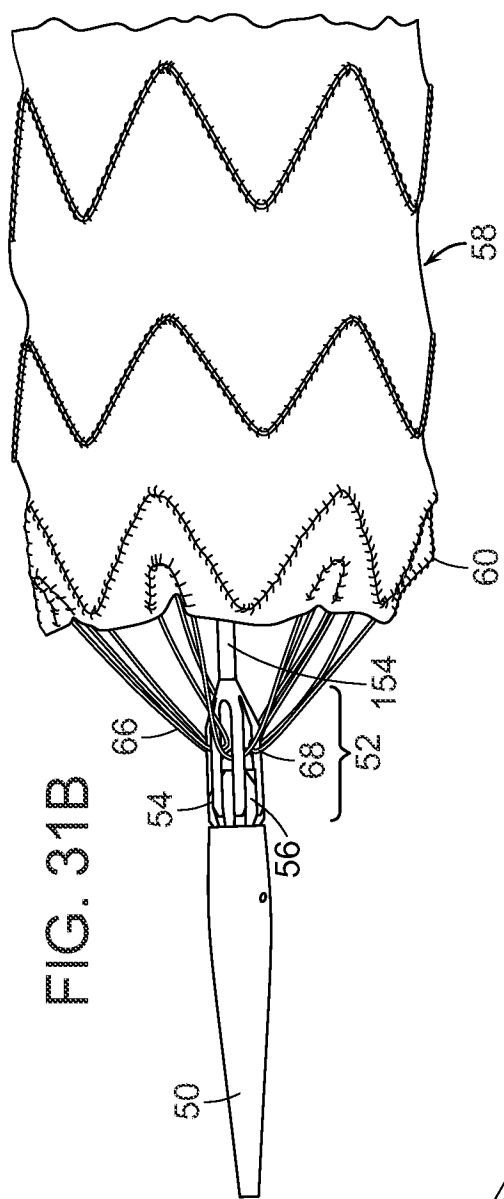


FIG. 31B

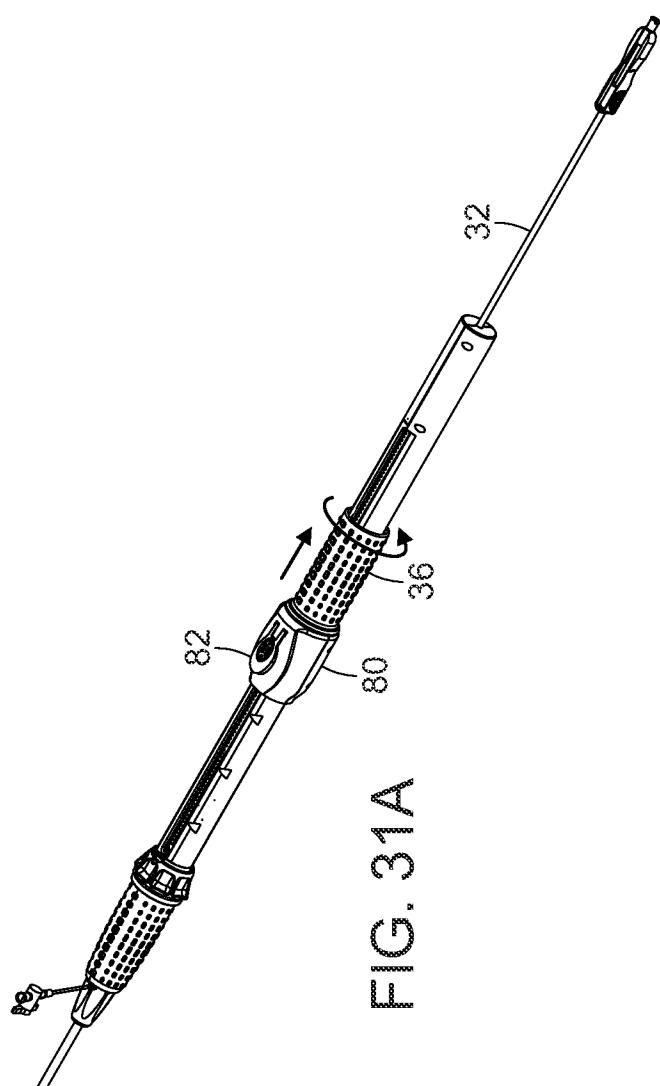


FIG. 31A

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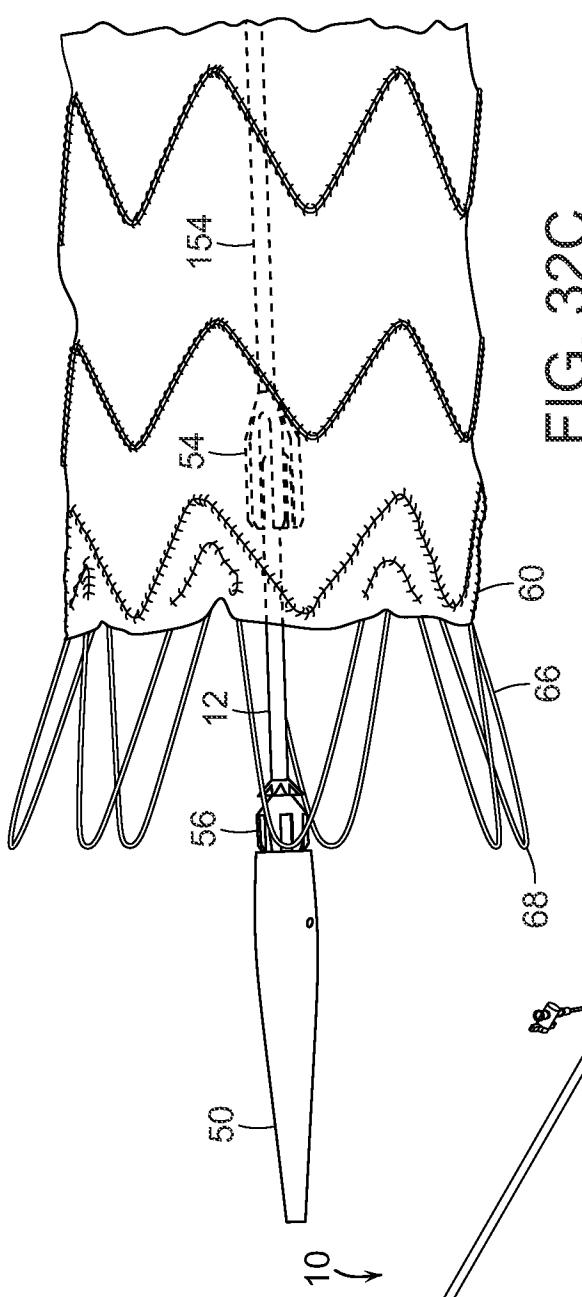
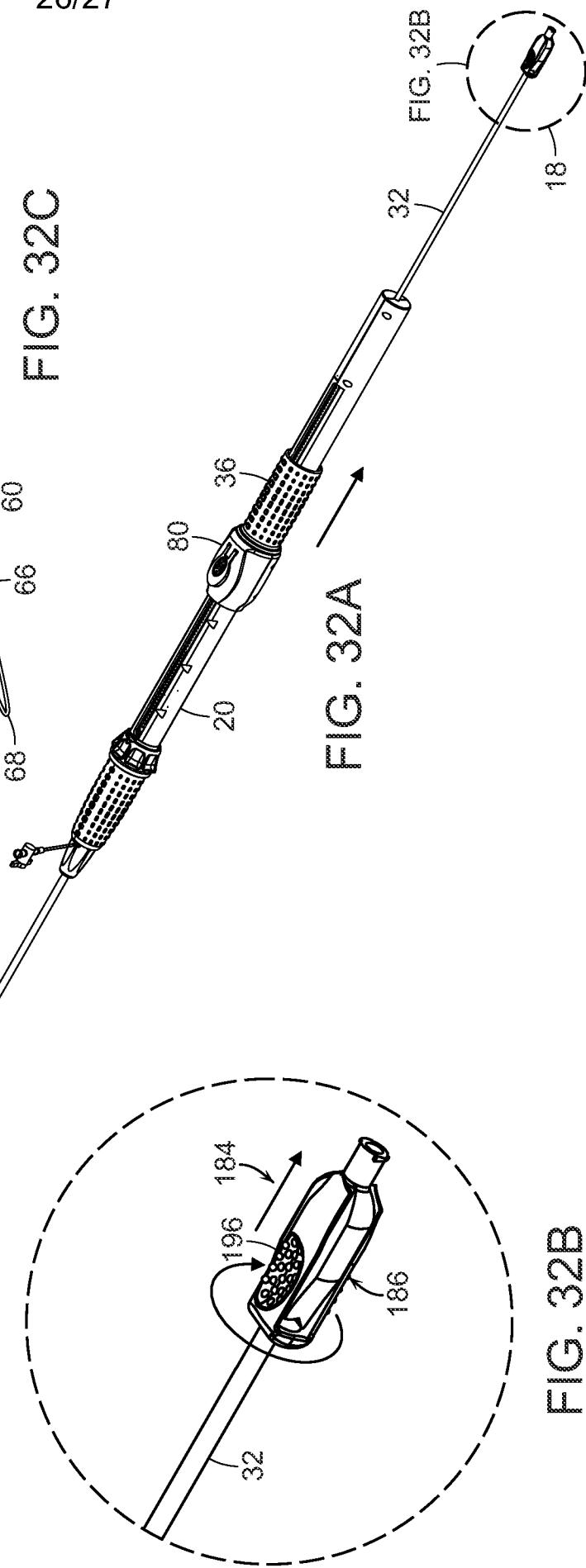
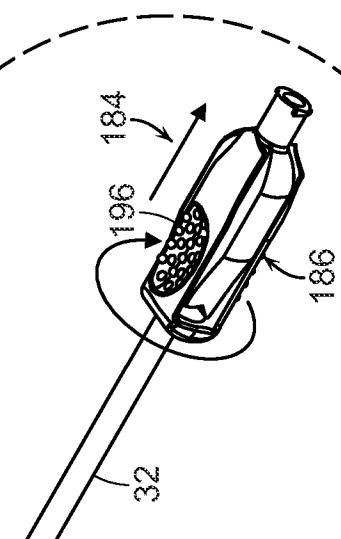


FIG. 32C



EIG. 32A



32B  
G  
L

27/27

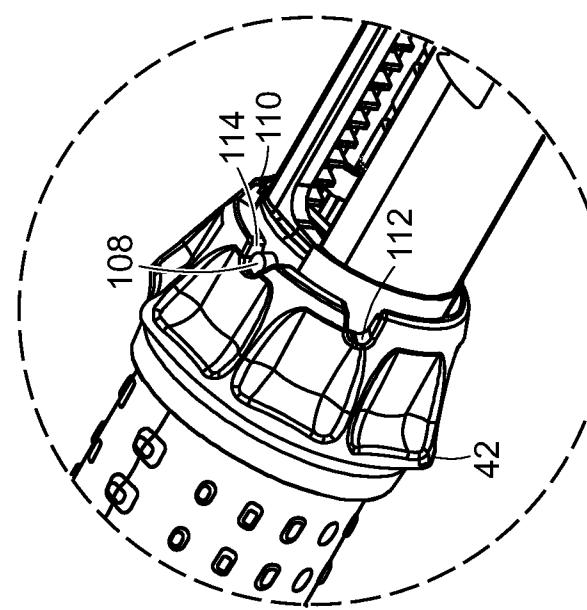


FIG. 33B

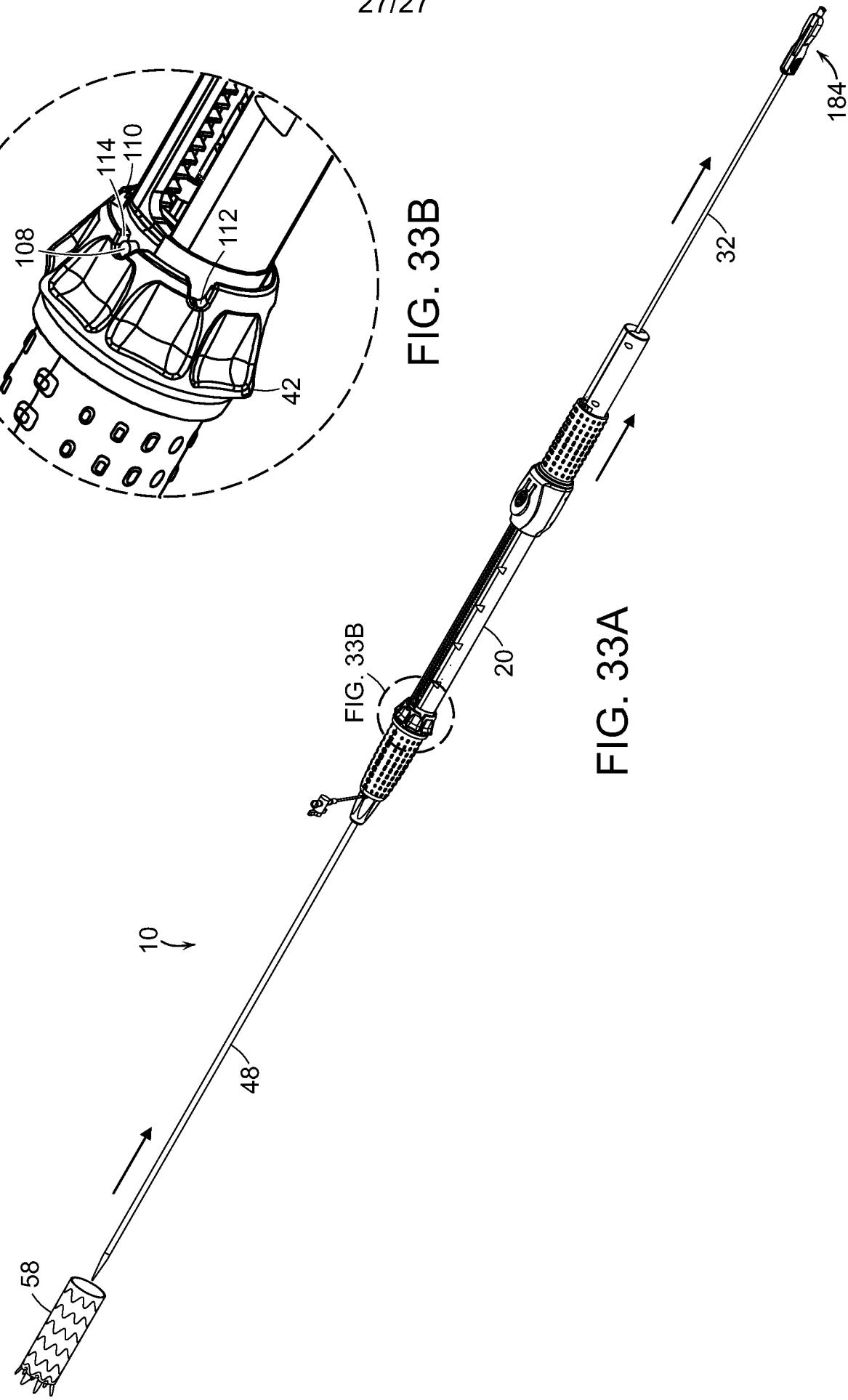


FIG. 33A

# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/US2013/031702

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**  
**INV. A61F2/966**  
**ADD.**

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

**A61F**

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

**EPO-Internal, WPI Data**

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 1 982 677 A2 (MEDTRONIC VASCULAR INC [US]) 22 October 2008 (2008-10-22) paragraphs [0127] - [0143]; figures 22-28 -----	1-17
X	US 2011/251664 A1 (ACOSTA DE ACEVEDO MARIA [US]) 13 October 2011 (2011-10-13) paragraphs [0034] - [0038]; figures 1-4 -----	1-17
A	US 2003/199966 A1 (SHIU BRIAN [US] ET AL) 23 October 2003 (2003-10-23) paragraphs [0064] - [0096]; figures 7-12 -----	1-17
A	US 2011/307049 A1 (KAO STEPHEN [US]) 15 December 2011 (2011-12-15) paragraphs [0092] - [0126]; figures 13-15F -----	1-17



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

\* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

Date of mailing of the international search report

21 June 2013

02/07/2013

Name and mailing address of the ISA/  
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Authorized officer

Chevalot, Nicolas

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.  
PCT/US2013/031702

### Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1.  Claims Nos.: **18-30**  
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:  

The subject-matter of claims 18-30 has not been searched (Rule 39.1(iv) PCT) and no examination of said subject-matter will be carried out (Rule 67.1(iv) PCT): said-subject-matter is related to a method for treatment of the human body by surgery.
2.  Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
3.  Claims Nos.:  
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

### Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1.  As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2.  As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3.  As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4.  No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

#### Remark on Protest

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.

No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/US2013/031702

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
EP 1982677	A2	22-10-2008	EP 1982677 A2 JP 2008264550 A US 2008262590 A1	22-10-2008 06-11-2008 23-10-2008
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US 2011307049	A1	15-12-2011	NONE	