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PILFER-PROOF MERCHANDISE DISPLAY CARDS

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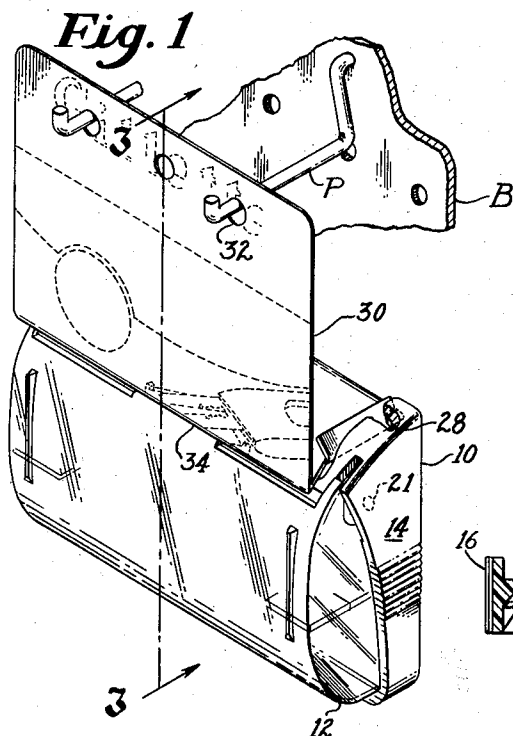


Fig. 3

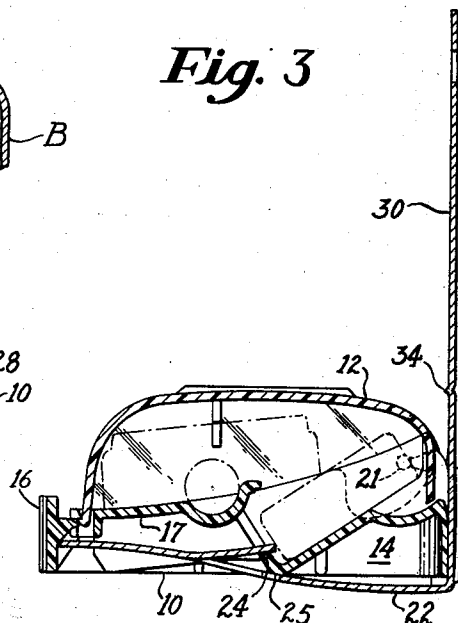


Fig. 2

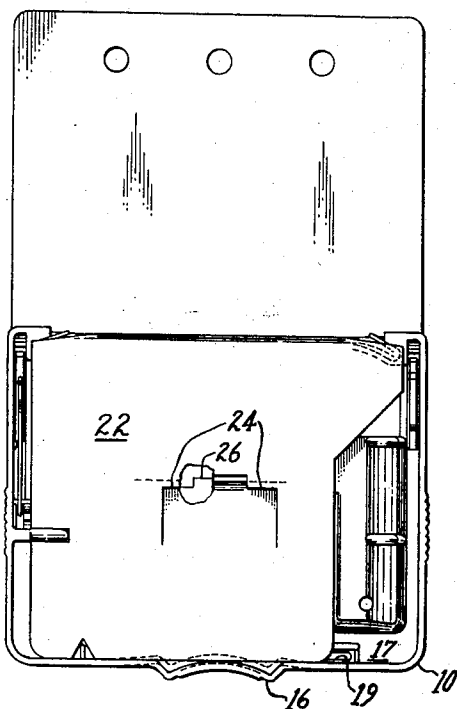


Fig. 4

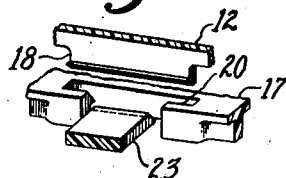
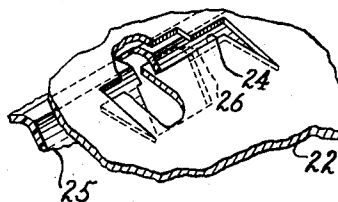


Fig. 5



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PILFER-PROOF MERCHANDISE DISPLAY CARDS

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The present invention relates to merchandise packages, and more particularly to merchandise cases which cannot, particularly when displayed for sale, be opened in an easy or surreptitious manner.

The present and expanding practice of displaying merchandise in self-service stores where customers may select what they desire and then pay for it at a removed check-out or cashier's stand has, along with its benefits, enhanced the ever-present problem of pilferage. This is particularly true of small items which may easily be removed and concealed by the unfortunate minority who deal in practices of this nature. Nonetheless, it is becoming even more necessary, in view of self-service merchandising, that goods be effectively displayed in a prominent manner to bring them to the attention of prospective purchasers.

Merchandise cases and particularly display cases having transparent covers are a partial solution to this problem, since they provide a bulky parcel which cannot be readily taken and concealed. In many instances, however, the display cases are intended to serve further purposes, such as providing a storage container for the articles originally sold therein. Thus, it is necessary that such display cases be readily openable. This situation allows enterprising pilferers in a store to quickly open such display cases, remove the contents therefrom, and conceal these items on their persons, all without creating any notice which would lead to their detection.

A merchandise display case particularly adapted for razor sets is shown in United States Patent No. 2,702,116, Shnitzler et al. Generally, this case comprises a cover, preferably transparent, held in a closed position by latch means, which are manually deflectable inwardly to release the cover from its closed position. This display case, which is intended to serve other functions, as alluded to above, will be referred to in describing the various aspects of the present invention, but it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to this particular construction of display case.

It is the object of this invention to provide a merchandise display case having pilfer-proof means which can, by rendering the pilfer-proof means inoperative, later be used for other purposes such as to store the merchandise originally purchased therein.

The invention in one of its aspects comprises a merchandise display case having a cover and a base and latch means manually deflectable inwardly to release the cover from a closed position preventing free access to the contents thereof, and removable stop means for preventing inward deflection of said latch means.

Another aspect of my invention includes a merchandise display case having a cover and a base and latch means manually deflectable inwardly to release the cover from a closed position and a sheet material member extending between said latch means and an abutment formed interiorly of said base which serves as stop means for preventing inward deflection of said latch means.

Yet another aspect of the invention is found in the provision of a display case in combination with latch stop means having formed therewith an integral advertising display panel.

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A further aspect of the invention contemplates the combination of a merchandise display case having latch means as described above in combination with latch stop means having formed integrally therewith mounting means for attaching the combination to a display unit.

Further objects and related aspects of my invention will be apparent from a reading of the following detailed description, in which reference is made to the accompanying drawing, and from the appended claims wherein the particular novelty thereof is set forth.

In the drawing:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of my pilfer-proof merchandise case mounted on a display unit;

Fig. 2 is a bottom view of the merchandise case seen in Fig. 1 with a portion of the sheet material member broken away;

Fig. 3 is a section taken on the line 3—3 in Fig. 1, on an enlarged scale, but with the case shown in a position suitable for display on a store counter;

Fig. 4 is a perspective view, on an enlarged scale, of the latching means of the illustrated display case; and

Fig. 5 is a perspective view, on an enlarged scale, of certain portions of Fig. 2.

The base 10 and cover 12 of the display case illustrated in the drawing is identical in all respects to the display case shown in the above-mentioned Shnitzler et al. patent and reference is made thereto for details of construction which are not relevant to the present invention.

The cover 12 of this case may, for greater sales effectiveness, be formed of a transparent plastic material, and its base 10 preferably formed of some colorful plastic material for the sake of more attractive appearance. The illustrated case is particularly adapted to hold a razor set comprising a safety razor and a supply of blades in a dispenser, as indicated in dot and dash lines in Fig. 3. The base 10 is provided with a generally rectangular skirt 14 which includes a resilient front wall 16, separated from the deck 17 of the base 10 by a slot 19 (Fig. 2). The cover 12 has dependent from its front wall a notched flange 18 which enters an opening 20 also formed in the deck 17 and underlies the front portion of said opening (Fig. 3) to latch the cover 12 in a closed position preventing free access to the razor and blades therein. Also included in the latching means is the central portion of the resilient front wall 16, on the inner side of which is provided a beveled arm 23 extending through a passageway between the opening 20 and the slot 19. Upon manual inward deflection of the central portion of the front wall 16 (as indicated by dot and dash lines in Fig. 2), the arm 23 engages a matching beveled surface on the flange 18. This engagement causes the cover to yield rearwardly and pass from under the surfaces adjacent the opening 20. The cover 12 is thus released from its closed position and opens about a pivot point 21 under the influence of spring means not shown herein.

The above specific description illustrates one type of latching means for merchandise cases, however, it should be understood that my inventive concepts are not limited to this particular construction other than its disclosure of latching means which can, by manual inward deflection, release a case cover from its closed position.

My improved merchandise case contemplates the provision of removable stop means for preventing manual inward deflection of such latch means to prevent release of a case cover from its closed position until such stop means are removed. To this end, a sheet material member 22 of cardboard or the like may be provided. The forward edge of the sheet material member 22 engages the exposed central portion of the front wall 16 and may be perforated to form edges 24 which engage an external abutment 25 on the undersurface of the base 10. With this arrangement, manual inward deflection of the front

wall 16 is prevented by the portion of the card interposed between the rear face of the wall 16 and the stationary external abutment 25. The present invention, in certain of its aspects, deals with the provision of stop means for the illustrated merchandise case which does not require modification in the already existing structure. In this connection, it will be noted that while the stop means described to this point should be effective, there is a slight rearward slope to the abutment 25 engaged by the edges 24. In order to insure against any possible slippage therebetween, the perforation of the sheet member 22 also includes, as locking means, a tongue 26 which enters into an opening already existing in the abutment portion of the base (Figs. 2, 3 and 5). This locking tongue, moreover, guards against inadvertent removal of the stop means regardless of the nature of the abutment against which it bears.

A further advantage of the stop means thus described is that its existence is not apparent when the display case is sitting on a counter as shown in Fig. 3 or when it is hanging from a display unit of the type shown in Fig. 1.

The sheet stop member 22 may extend to the rear wall of the base 10 and be folded upwardly thereagainst. Further, its edges in this portion may be folded inwardly to enter re-entrant grooves 23 in the rear wall of the base. The sheet stop member 22 may then continue upwardly to form an advertising panel 30 and assume the position shown in Fig. 3. The advertising panel 30, where it is desired to display the case from a display unit, such as a peg board, may be folded about a fold line 34 adjacent the upper edge of the case so that it will hang in a vertical plane as shown in Fig. 1. When displayed in this latter manner, holes 32 may be provided in the panel 30 to accept pins or pegs P extending from a peg board B.

The stop means above described has proven to be an effective deterrent to pilfering, since as the case cannot be readily opened except by removal of the stop means its contents cannot be removed in a surreptitious manner. Further, within the same combination additional displays or advertising panels are provided which greatly enhance the overall merchandise case in being brought to the attention of prospective purchasers. Additionally the display panel acts as a further pilferage deterrent to the misappropriation of the entire merchandise case. After purchase, removal of the stop means is a simple matter albeit some manipulation is required in view of its pilfer-proof aspects. For more convenient removal as well as for reasons of economy, it has been found preferable to form the sheet material member 22 of relatively stiff cardboard. Such material has sufficient strength to prevent depression of the latch means and also may be compressed slightly to eliminate the need for close tolerances, particularly with respect to the distance between the front edge thereof and the edges 24 which engage the abutment 25 on the underside of the razor case.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as novel and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A pilfer-proof merchandise case having a cover, a base having a bottom with upright walls forming an enclosure and latch means for maintaining said cover in a closed position preventing free access to merchandise within said case, said latch means being manually deflectable inwardly to release said cover and having a surface facing rearwardly of said base, said base having an external abutment on its under side with an opening therein, a removable relatively-stiff sheet material member extending between and in contact with said rear surface and said abutment to prevent inward deflection of said latch means and a tongue formed on said sheet material member extending into the abutment opening to prevent inadvertent removal of said sheet material member.

2. A pilfer-proof merchandise case having a cover, a base having a bottom with upright walls forming an enclosure and latch means for maintaining said cover in

a closed position preventing free access to merchandise within said case, said latch means being manually deflectable inwardly to release said cover and having a surface facing rearwardly of the underside of said base, said base having an external abutment on its underside, and a removable relatively-stiff sheet material member extending between and in contact with said rear surface and said abutment to prevent inward deflection of said latch means and insure against surreptitious removal of merchandise from the case.

3. A pilfer-proof merchandise case having a cover, a base having a bottom with upright walls forming an enclosure and latch means for maintaining said cover in a closed position preventing free access to merchandise within said case, said latch means being manually deflectable inwardly to release said cover and having a surface facing rearwardly of said said base, said base having an external abutment, and a removable member located entirely within the enclosure and extending between and in contact with said rear surface and said abutment to prevent inward deflection of said latch means and insure against surreptitious removal of merchandise from the case.

4. A pilfer-proof merchandise case having a cover, a base having a bottom with upright walls forming an enclosure and latch means for maintaining said cover in a closed position preventing free access to merchandise within said case, said latch means being manually deflectable inwardly, to release said cover and a sheet material member detachably secured to the base externally of said case in position to prevent said inward deflection of said latch means, said sheet material member extending substantially beyond said cover to act as a further pilferage deterrent.

5. A pilfer-proof merchandise case having a cover, a base having a bottom with upright walls forming an enclosure and an external abutment and latch means for maintaining said cover in a closed position preventing free access to merchandise within said case said latch means being manually deflectable inwardly to release said cover and having a surface facing rearwardly of said base, and a removable relatively-stiff sheet material member extending between and in contact with said rear surface and said abutment to prevent inward deflection of said latch means, said sheet material extending rearwardly along the undersurface of said base, upwardly along and adjacent to its rear wall and extending substantially thereabove to provide an upright advertising panel.

6. The merchandise case of claim 5 in which vertically extending opposed re-entrant grooves are formed in its rear wall and the sheet material member is provided with infolded margins which lie within said opposed grooves to maintain said advertising panel in an upright position.

7. The merchandise case of claim 5 in which means are provided in the advertising panel for suspending said case from a display unit and a fold line in the sheet material is provided adjacent the top of said case about which the advertising panel may be folded so that the case will be disposed in a vertical plane.

8. A merchandise case of claim 7 in which opposed re-entrant grooves are formed in the rear wall of its base and the sheet material member has side margins within said grooves to maintain it adjacent the rear wall of the base.

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