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Rubinstein

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[54] **PORTABLE SECURITY CONTAINER**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **109/23,** 109/38, 109/52

[51] **Int. Cl.** **E05g 3/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 109/23, 24, 50–58, 109/38, 39, 45, 46; 223/85, 90; 340/272, 340/280, 283

[56] **References Cited**

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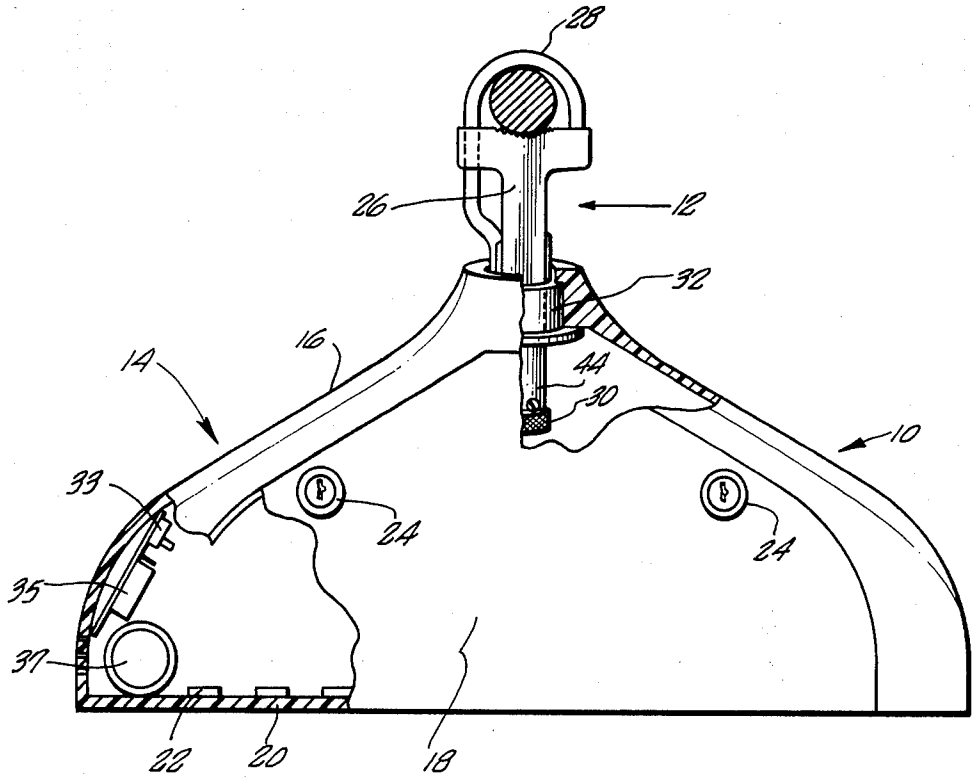
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Primary Examiner—Dennis L. Taylor

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A portable security container generally configured as a clothes hanger and having a vise-type locking mechanism for securing such container to a closet rod or other permanently installed fixture on a premise or location, is disclosed. The configuration of the container permits its use as a clothes hanger and thereby facilitates covering of the container to somewhat camouflage its presence. The vise-like locking mechanism is restricted to being operated or otherwise manipulated from within the container so as to protect against easy removal of the container from the closet rod to which it may be secured. An electronic alarm is positioned within the container to sound or trigger an alarm should the container be tampered with or burgled.

36 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures



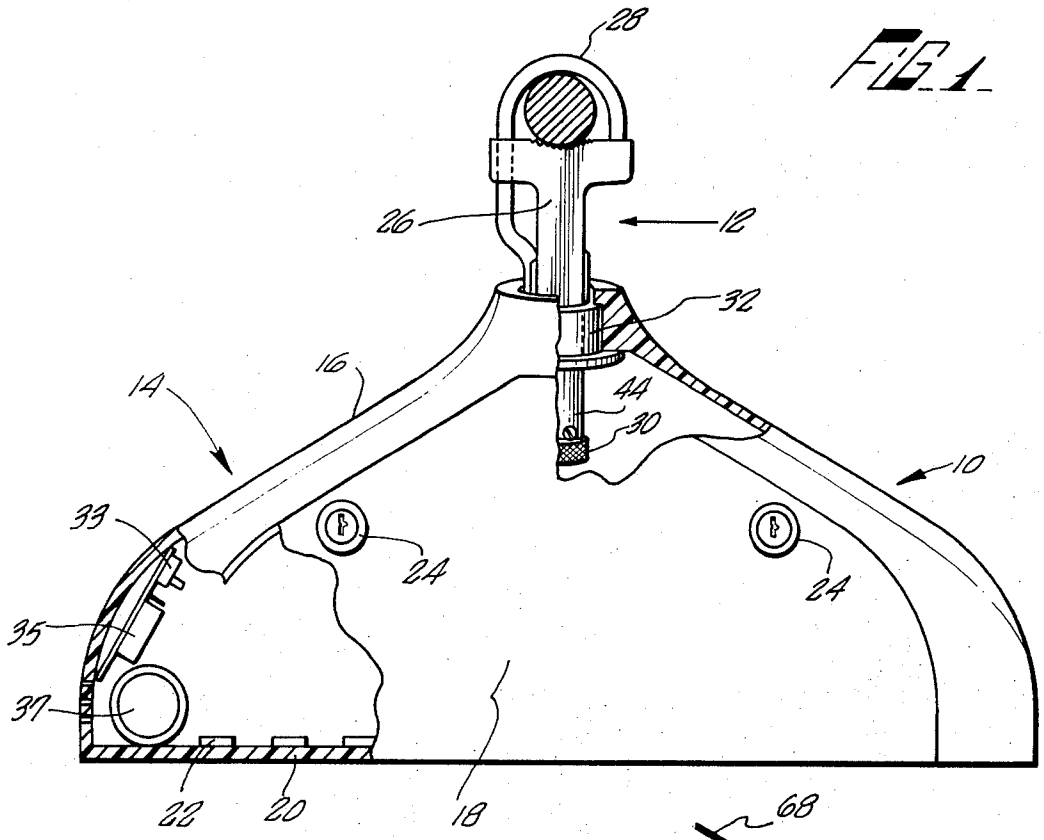


FIG. 1

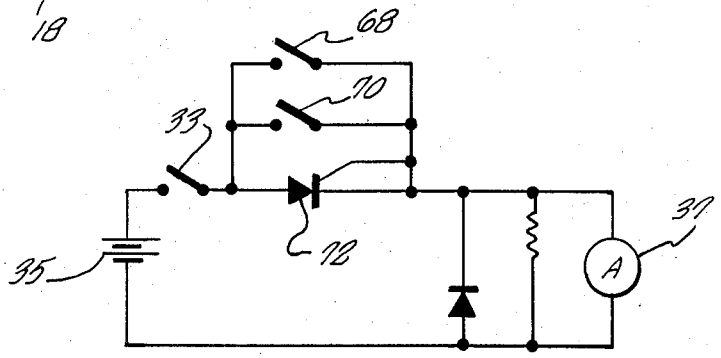


FIG. 4

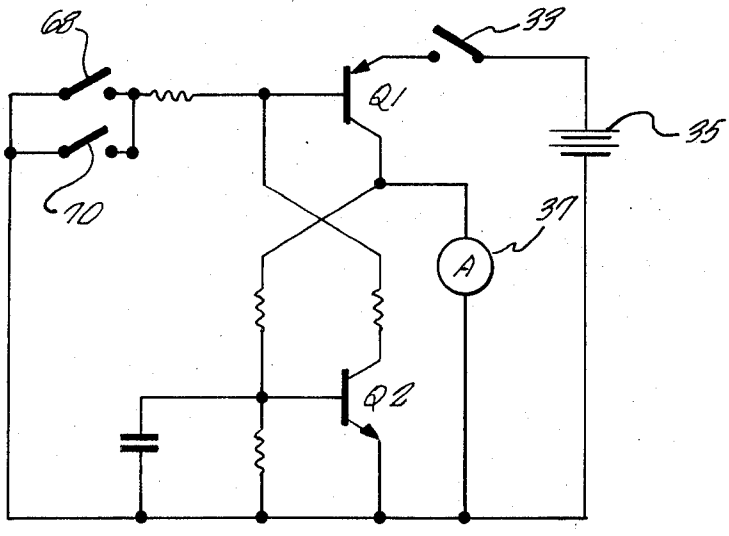


FIG. 5

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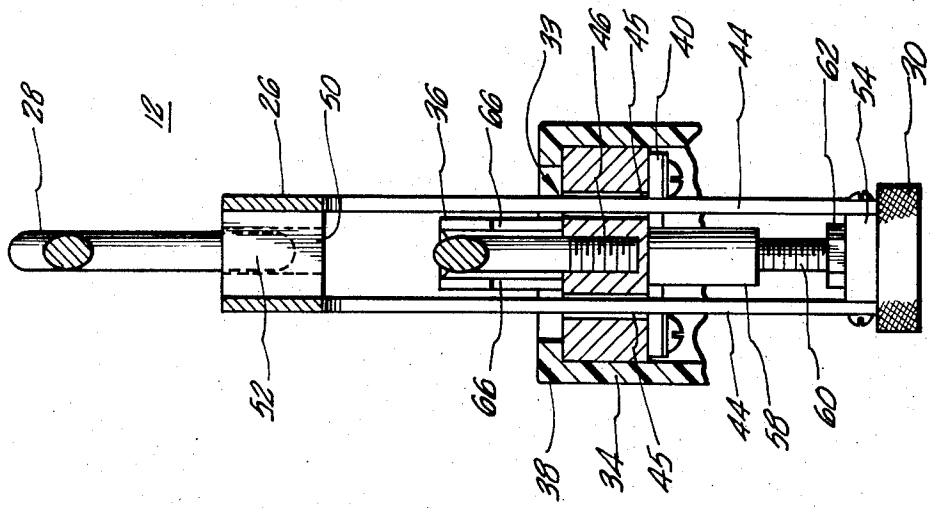
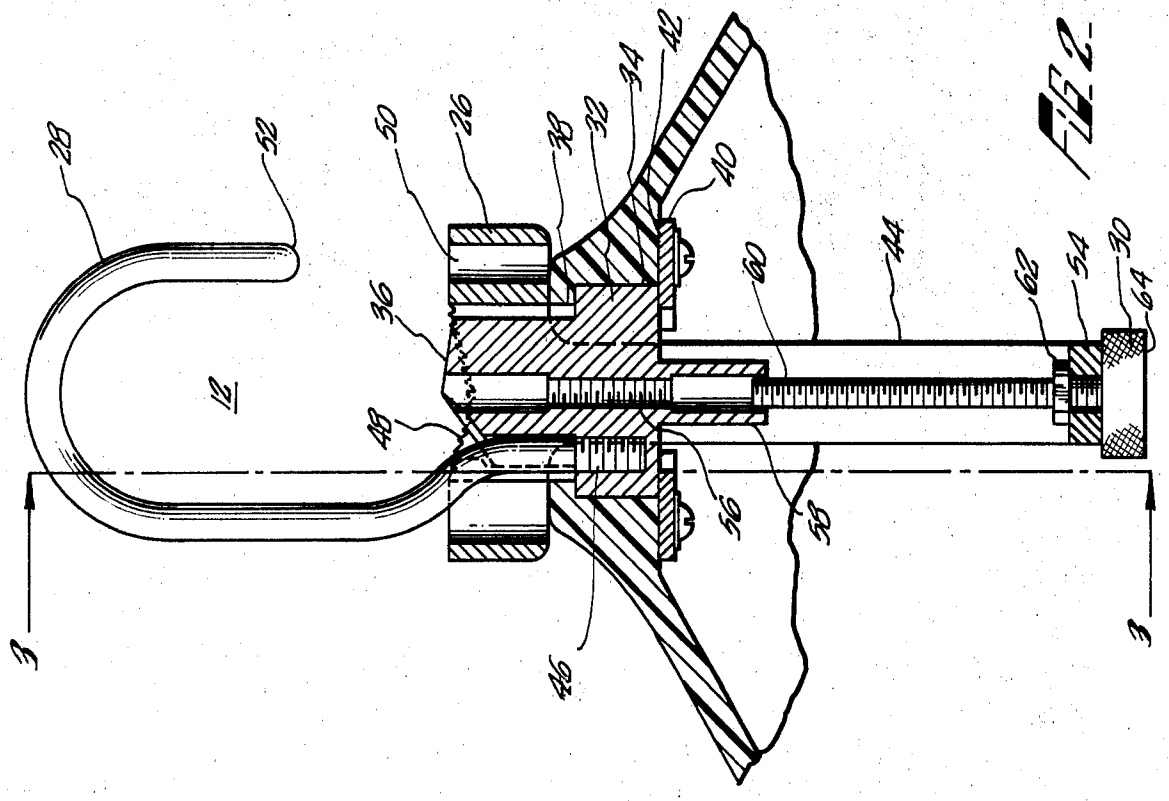

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FIG 2


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PORTABLE SECURITY CONTAINER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention generally relates to portable security containers of the type that are suitable for securing the personal possessions of travelers. More specifically, the present invention concerns a security container that is adapted to be easily carried by travelers and readily secured to a fixture within a hotel room or the like to provide a reasonably secure place for valuables.

2. Description of the Prior Art

The anxiety of safeguarding valuables when traveling is well known to most travelers. Such items as passports, jewelry, currency, traveler checks, and the like, are nearly always a problem. Many hotels and motels, particularly the latter, have no procedure for accepting and securing the valuables of guests. In those instances where a hotel or motel has instituted a procedure for accepting certain valuables from its guests, the depositing and recovery of valuables is at best an inconvenience, and at worst a dreadful headache, as those persons who have availed themselves of such service will attest.

Available statistics seem to indicate that thefts from hotel and motel rooms are usually performed by amateurs who somehow have obtained a passkey to the room and who may or may not be employed by the establishment. Such persons, although amateurs, are usually totally familiar with the typical hiding places used by guests in an effort to hide their valuables within the room. Such typical hiding places which include the inside pockets of suits, locked valises or suitcases, under bedding pillows and/or mattresses, within drawers covered by clothing, etc., are obviously well known to thieves who have abundantly demonstrated their ability to quickly search a room and find whatever is hidden.

The alternative to hiding valuables in a hotel room, where no other means of safekeeping is available, is to continually carry the valuables. As anyone who has been the victim of a pickpocket knows from first hand experience, carrying valuables is not a totally acceptable solution. For those travelers who venture to the seashore, carrying valuables is totally unsatisfactory if there is a desire to go swimming or become involved in some other physical activity that would require a temporary abandonment of possessions.

There are numerous other analogous situations in which some means for securing one's valuables would be desirable. As an example, vacationers in mobile homes frequently require some means for securing their valuables within the mobile homes. Traveling salesmen who carry items of exceptional value in their cars may also require some means for securing such items within their cars. Students may also require a means for safekeeping valuables in their dormitory and/or lockers at school. Workers in factories may also require some means for safekeeping their valuables in their lockers as would persons who frequent golf and/or tennis clubs at which lockers are used to contain their clothing or the like. Finally, secretaries and other such persons who may have their personal place of employment within large open offices may require a means for safekeeping their valuables in the course of a day.

It is accordingly the intention of the subject invention to provide a highly secure, electronically armed, portable security container that is adapted to be securely affixed to an appropriate fixture at various locations to provide a means for safekeeping valuables at such locations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly described, the present invention involves a portable security container.

More particularly, the subject portable security container includes a vise-like locking mechanism which may be operated only from within the container to have the container affixed to or removed from fixtures or the like at a location selected by the owner of the container. An electronic alarm mechanism is mounted within the container to provide an audible alarm or the like whenever the container is improperly tampered with or removed from its location. The container may be configured to generally resemble a clothes hanger and thereby facilitate its being cloaked for partial concealment.

The objects and many attendant advantages of the invention will be more readily appreciated as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description which is to be considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein like reference symbols designate like parts throughout the figures thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a schematic diagram illustrating a perspective, partially fragmented view of a portable security container in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. **2** is a schematic diagram illustrating a frontal cross-sectional view of a latching mechanism in accordance with the present invention wherein the vise jaw thereof is illustraded in a lowered position.

FIG. **3** is a schematic diagram illustrating a side cross-sectional view of the latching mechanism shown in FIG. **2** wherein the vise jaw is illustrated in a raised position.

FIG. **4** is a schematic circuit diagram illustrating an exemplary electronic circuit that may be used to provide an alarm.

FIG. **5** is a schematic circuit diagram illustrating another exemplary electronic circuit that may be used in conjunction with an alarm.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIG. **1** of the drawings, a portable security container in accordance with the present invention may be generally configured to resemble a clothes hanger as is illustrated. The container essentially includes a body portion **10,** a vise-like latching mechanism **12,** and an electronic alarm circuit **14.**

The body portion **10** of the container is formed by integrally formed walls **16** and a door **18** which is hinged to the container walls along a lower portion **20** which essentially forms a floor of the container. A hinge **22** extending for the length of the door **18** may be used. A single lock or pair of locks **24** of any standard type may be used to secure the door **18** when the container is to be locked. The clothes hanger configuration of the container makes it particularly capable of being easily covered by an article of clothing when the container is affixed to a clothes rod in a closet or the like.

The latching mechanism **12** generally includes a vise-like mechanism including a jaw **26** which is adapted to be raised to clamp a fixture at a selected location, i.e.,

a clothes rod in a closet, against an upper hook member **28** to secure the container to the fixture. The jaw **26** is maintained in a desired raised position by a bolt **30** which is received by a center bore of a rotatable hub **32** in a manner to be described in greater detail hereinafter. As shown, the manipulation of the bolt **30** is accomplished from within the container and thus requires unlocking and opening of the container door **18** to have the jaw **26** raised or lowered. Obviously, once the jaw **26** is bolted in a raised condition to grip a fixture between the jaw **26** and the hook member **28,** removal of the container would first require entry into the container.

The electronic alarm circuit **14** may essentially include a manually operated switching mechanism **33** for activating the alarm circuit, a power source **35,** an alarm device **37** such as a horn, siren, transmitter or the like, detector switches for sensing certain physical conditions of the container that may be present whenever the container is being improperly tampered with, and an electronic circuit for energizing the alarm device **37** in response to operation of the detector switches. The alarm **14** is to be described in greater detail hereinafter in connection with FIGS. **4** and **5.**

Referring now to FIGS. **2** and **3,** the latching mechanism **12** is retained at an upper portion of the container generally corresponding to its neck by having a hub **32** maintained in movable confinement within an aperture **33** in the container wall provided for this purpose. The hub **32** may be formed to have a cylindrically shaped lower portion **34** and a somewhat flattened upper guard portion **36** extending generally upward from one end of the cylindrical lower portion **34.** The cylindrical lower portion **34** of the hub **32** is retained within the aperture **33** by a continuous shoulder **38** that extends around the rim or periphery of the aperture **33.** A ring-like plate **40** may be appropriately attached to the abutting inner surface **42** of the container wall to confine the cylindrical lower portion **34** of the hub **32** between the plate **40** and the shoulder **38.** The central opening of the ring-like plate **40** allows downwardly extending leg portions **44** of the jaw **26** to extend through the hub **32** and the plate **40.** A pair of channels **45** are provided in the hub **32** to accommodate free longitudinal movement of the leg portions **44** therethrough.

The lower portion **34** of the hub **32** is sized relative to the area in which it is confined by the shoulder **38** and the plate **40** so as to be rotatable about the longitudinal axis thereof. Such rotation permits the container to be conveniently rotated by a user to be facing in the proper direction for opening of the door **18** and operation of the bolt **30** when the latching mechanism is being manipulated to affix a container to a clothes rod, or the like. Upon being affixed, the container can then be rotated to be in general alignment with other clothes hangers in a closet.

The upper hook member **28** is secured to the cylindrical lower portion **34** of the hub **32** by having an end **46** of the hook member **28** appropriately screwed with a threaded bore provided in the cylindrical lower portion **34** for this purpose.

The jaw **26** is formed to have a serrated upper surface **48** that is slightly depressed to accommodate the generally cylindrical configuration of a clothes rod to which the latching mechanism is particularly designed for attachment. Any appropriate configuration might be used for the jaw **26,** but it has been found that a generally T-shape, as shown, is suitable wherein the serrated portion **48** is centrally situated between the arm portions of the T-shaped jaw. One arm of the jaw **26** may be generally solid and provided with a bore **50** which is adapted to receive an end **52** of the hook member **28** when the jaw **26** is in a raised position, as shown by FIG. **3,** so as to prevent the hook member **28** from being pried in an effort to deform the hook member **28** and thereby remove the container from a clothes rod or other fixture to which it may be attached.

The body portion of the T-shaped jaw **26** essentially includes the pair of downwardly extending legs **44** between which may be attached a plate **54.** The plate **54** is provided with a central aperture to permit the extension therethrough of the bolt **30** which, as shown, extends upward through the plate **54** and between the legs **44** to be received in a threaded central bore **56** of the hub **32.** A lower tubular guide **58** having a generally cylindrical shape may extend downwardly from the lower surface of the cylindrical lower portion **34** of the hub **32.** The tubular guide **58** may be countersunk to permit the threaded portion **60** of the bolt **30** to be raised towards the threaded control bore **56** in the hub **32.** Any appropriate means such as a nut **62** may be used to movably retain the bolt **30** with respect to the plate **54.**

The bolt **30,** as shown, is provided with an enlarged head portion **64** so as to be readily manually turned in the process of securing the jaw **26** in a raised position by having the threaded portion **60** of the bolt **30** threaded within the bore **56** of the hub **32.** Clearly, as the threaded portion **60** of the bolt **30** is threaded in the bore **56** the jaw **26** is driven towards a raised position until a fixture is securely clamped between the hook member **28** and the serrated upper surface **48** of the jaw **26.**

The upper guard portion **36** of the hub **32** serves to extend the threaded bore **56** beyond the thickness of the cylindrical lower portion **34** to provide added strength for the latching mechanism. Further, the guard portion **36** includes a channel formed by a pair of side walls **66** which partially extend around the portion of the hook member **28** near the hub **32** to partially protect the end thereof against destruction.

Any suitable alarm electronic circuit may be used to provide an alarm. For example, the circuit shown in FIG. **4** illustrates that a simple battery may be used as the power source **35.** The manually operated switch **33** used for activating the alarm circuit may be connected in series with the battery **35** to have power applied to the alarm device **37** whenever either or both of a pair of detector switches **68** or **70** are closed in response to a container being tampered with. For example, the switch **68** may be a mercury switch of a common type that would be closed whenever a container is tilted beyond a predetermined angle from an upright position. Any conventional type of mercury switch may be used. A suitable example is mercury switch Model HJ244LO manufactured by the Gordos Corporation of Bloomfield, New Jersey. The switch **70** may simply represent some other condition of the container which would be electronically closed in the process of having the container tampered with. For example, the container door **18** may be electronically isolated from the body walls **16.** Such isolation may be attained in any convenient manner such as by emplacing a plastic insulation material between peripheral portions of the door **18** and

corresponding portions of the walls **16** at which contact would otherwise be made. Any attempt to pry the door **18** open with a metallic object would then serve to represent closure of the switch **70**. It is, of course, clear that other switches may be used to effectively sense other conditions attendant to the container being burgled or otherwise improperly tampered with.

As is obvious to any person skilled in the art, closure of either or both of the switches **68** or **70** whenever the circuit is activated by manual closure of the switch **33** will render a SCR **72** conductive. An SCR **72** is particularly useful for the purpose of maintaining the alarm device **37** in operation irrespective of the switches **68** and/or **70** being later opened after having been closed. Accordingly, the alarm device **37** once turned on will remain operative until the manual switch **33** is reopened.

A more complex latching circuit is equally as useful for a container in accordance with the present invention. An alternate alarm circuit is shown by FIG. **5**. The closure of the manual switch **33** permits power to be applied from the battery **35** to the alarm device **37** whenever a transistor Q1 is rendered conductive by closure of either or both of the detector switches **68** and **70**. A transistor Q2 which is connected to Q1 in the configuration of a conventional latching circuit operates to maintain the transistor Q1 conductive irrespective of the switches **68** and/or **70** being reopened after having been closed.

It is to be understood that the alarm device **37** may be any appropriate alarm device or utilization means. As an example, a horn or siren may be used. As an alternative, a miniature transmitter may be used to activate an external alarm mechanism or other responsive utilization device situated within transmission range. Such utilization devices are well known as is exemplified by the system disclosed by U.S. Pat. No. 3,662,111. It is to be further understood that although the illustrated circuits are suitable for use with the subject invention that other circuits also may be used to control an electronic alarm mechanism. For example, an electronic timer may be used to automatically turn the alarm device off after a predetermined length of time rather than requiring that the manual switch **33** be opened to stop the sounding of the alarm device **37**.

It is now clear that the subject invention provides a security container which includes an electronically armed alarm mechanism and a latching mechanism that operates to securely affix the container to a clothes rod or other suitable fixture that may be found in a hotel room, or the like, Hence, the subject container is capable of providing a significant degree of security for the valuable possessions of a user. It is to be understood that although the foregoing discussion has been presented with a clothes rod being the fixture to which the subject container may be affixed, suitable portions of lockers, automobiles, campers, etc. will serve the intended purpose of such clothes rods and the like.

While a preferred embodiment of the present invention has been described hereinabove, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description and shown in the accompanying drawings be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense and that all modifications, constructions and arrangements which fall within the scope and spirit of the invention may be made.

What is claimed is:

1. A portable container comprising:

an enclosed wall forming an interior cavity and a door hinged to said wall for enclosing said interior cavity when said door is closed and permitting entry into said cavity when said door is opened;

alarm means for effecting an alarm in response to predetermined conditions of said container, said alarm means situated within said interior cavity; and

affixing means for securing said container to an external fixture, said enclosed wall having an aperture for receiving said affixing means therein, said affixing means including first and second clamping members between which said fixture is firmly sandwiched for securing said container, and hub means positioned in said aperture for maintaining said affixing means positioned in said enclosed wall such that at least one of said clamping members extends into said cavity through said aperture to enable manipulation only from within said interior cavity to have said container secured to and removed from said external fixture.

2. The portable container defined by claim **1**,

said first clamping member being securely attached to said hub means;

said second clamping member having a clamping portion and an elongate body portion extending from said clamping portion, said elongate body portion slideably extending through said hub means; and

said hub means further having channel means for receiving said elongate body portion of said second clamping member and permitting movement therein to allow said clamping portion to be moved to fixedly sandwich said fixture between said first and second clamping members.

3. The portable container defined by claim **2**, said affixing means further including drive means for controlling movement of said second clamping member to fixedly sandwich said fixture between said first and second clamping members or release said fixture.

4. The portable container defined by claim **2**, said clamping portion of said second clamping member being serrated.

5. The portable container defined by claim **3**, said drive means including a bolt for being threaded into said hub means, said hub means including a threaded bore for receiving said bolt, said bolt being positioned with respect to said body portion of said second clamping member and within said interior cavity to have said second clamping member driven towards a clamping position as said bolt is threaded into said bore of said hub means.

6. The portable container defined by claim **5**, said first clamping member having a hook portion adapted to work in cooperation with said clamping portion of said second clamping member to fixedly sandwich a fixture therebetween.

7. The portable container defined by claim **2**, said alarm means including:

utilization means for effecting an alarm when operated;

switch means for enabling said utilization means to be operated in response to preselected physical conditions of said container; and

means for operating said utilization means to effect an alarm in response to said preselected physical conditions of said container.

8. The portable container defined by claim **7**, said affixing means further including drive means for controlling movement of said second clamping member to fixedly sandwich said fixture between said first and second clamping members or release said fixture.

9. The portable container defined by claim **8**, said means for operating said utilization means including detecting means for sensing selected conditions of said container.

10. The portable container defined by claim **9**, said drive means including a bolt for being threaded into said hub means, said hub means including a threaded bore for receiving said bolt, said bolt being positioned with respect to said body portion of said second clamping member and within said interior cavity to have said second clamping member driven towards a clamping position as said bolt is threaded into said bore of said hub means.

11. The portable container defined by claim **10**, said first clamping member having a hook portion adapted to work in cooperation with said clamping portion of said second clamping member to fixedly sandwich a fixture therebetween.

12. The portable container defined by claim **11**, said hub means being rotatably mounted in said aperture of said enclosed wall to permit said container to be moved with respect to said affixing means.

13. The portable container defined by claim **11**, said detecting means including a mercury switch for detecting a tilting of the container with respect to a selected upright position.

14. The portable container defined by claim **11** wherein said door is electrically insulated from said enclosed wall, said detecting means including said door and said enclosed walls wherein any electrical path completed between said door and said enclosed wall effects operation of said utilization means when enabled by said switch means.

15. The portable container defined by claim **11**, said container being configured to resemble a clothes hanger.

16. The portable container defined by claim **15**, wherein said affixing means is configured to receive an external fixture having the shape of an elongate cylinder.

17. The portable container defined by claim **11** wherein said utilization means is an audible tone generator.

18. The portable container defined by claim **11** wherein said utilization means is a miniature transmitter.

19. The portable container defined by claim **2**, said clamping portion of said second clamping member being serrated.

20. The portable container defined by claim **1**, said hub means being rotatably mounted in said aperture of said enclosed wall to permit said container to be moved with respect to said affixing means.

21. The portable container defined by claim **20**, said first clamping member having a hook portion adapted to work in cooperation with said clamping portion of said second clamping member to fixedly sandwich a fixture therebetween.

22. The portable container defined by claim **1**, said container being configured to resemble a clothes hanger.

23. The portable container defined by claim **22**, wherein said affixing means is configured to receive an external fixture having the shape of an elongate cylinder.

24. The portable container defined by claim **1**, said alarm means including:

utilization means for effecting an alarm when operated;

switch means for enabling said utilization means to be operated in response to preselected physical conditions of said container; and

means for operating said utilization means to effect an alarm in response to said preselected physical conditions of said container.

25. The portable container defined by claim **24**, said means for operating said utilization means including detecting means for sensing selected conditions of said container.

26. The portable container defined by claim **25**, said detecting means including a mercury switch for detecting a tilting of the container with respect to a selected upright position.

27. The portable container defined by claim **25** wherein said door is electrically insulated from said enclosed wall, said detecting means including said door and said enclosed walls wherein any electrical path completed between said door and said enclosed wall effects operation of said utilization means when enabled by said switch means.

28. The portable container defined by claim **24** wherein said utilization means is an audible tone generator.

29. The portable container defined by claim **24** wherein said utilization means is a miniature transmitter.

30. A portable container comprising:

an enclosed wall forming an interior cavity and a door hinged to said wall for enclosing said interior cavity when said door is closed and permitting entry into said cavity when said door is opened, said enclosed wall having an aperture extending therethrough; and

affixing means for securing said container to an external fixture, said affixing means including first and second clamping members between which said fixture is firmly sandwiched for securing said container, said hub means positioned in said aperture for maintaining said affixing means extended through said enclosed wall to have at least one of said first and second clamping members adapted to be only manipulated from within said interior cavity.

31. The portable container defined by claim **30**,

said first clamping member being securely attached to said hub means;

said second clamping member having a clamping portion and an elongate body portion extending from said clamping portion, said elongate body portion slideably extending through said hub means; and

said hub means further having channel means for receiving said elongate body portion of said second clamping member and permitting movement therein to allow said clamping portion to be moved

to fixedly sandwich said fixture between said first and second clamping members.

32. The portable container defined by claim **30,** said hub means being rotatably mounted in said aperture of said enclosed wall to permit said container to be moved with respect to said affixing means.

33. The portable container defined by claim **30,** said affixing means further including drive means for controlling movement of said second clamping member to fixedly sandwich said fixture between said first and second clamping members or release said fixture.

34. The portable container defined by claim **3,** said clamping portion of said second clamping member being serrated.

35. The portable container defined by claim **33,** said drive means including a bolt for being threaded into said hub means, said hub means including a threaded bore for receiving said bolt, said bolt being positioned with respect to said body portion of said second clamping member and within said interior cavity to have said second clamping member driven towards a clamping position as said bolt is threaded into said bore of said hub means.

36. The portable container defined by claim **30,** said container being configured to resemble a clothes hanger.

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