



US 20050178813A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Swayze et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0178813 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 18, 2005**

(54) **SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT
INCORPORATING A MULTI-STROKE
FIRING MECHANISM WITH AUTOMATIC
END OF FIRING TRAVEL RETRACTION**

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷ A61B 17/04**
(52) **U.S. Cl. 227/176.1; 227/19**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A surgical stapling and severing instrument particularly suited to endoscopic procedures incorporates a handle that produces separate closing and firing motions to actuate an end effector. In particular, the handle produces multiple firing strokes in order to reduce the required amount of force required to fire (i.e., staple and sever) the end effector. A linked transmission reduces the required handle longitudinal length, yet achieves a rigid, strong configuration when straightened for firing. A traction biased firing mechanism avoids binding in driving this straightened linked rack in cooperation with an anti-backup mechanism, with a lockout mechanism that prevents releasing the closure trigger during firing. Furthermore, an external indicator gives feedback to the surgeon as to how far firing has progressed, as well as providing a manual retraction capability.

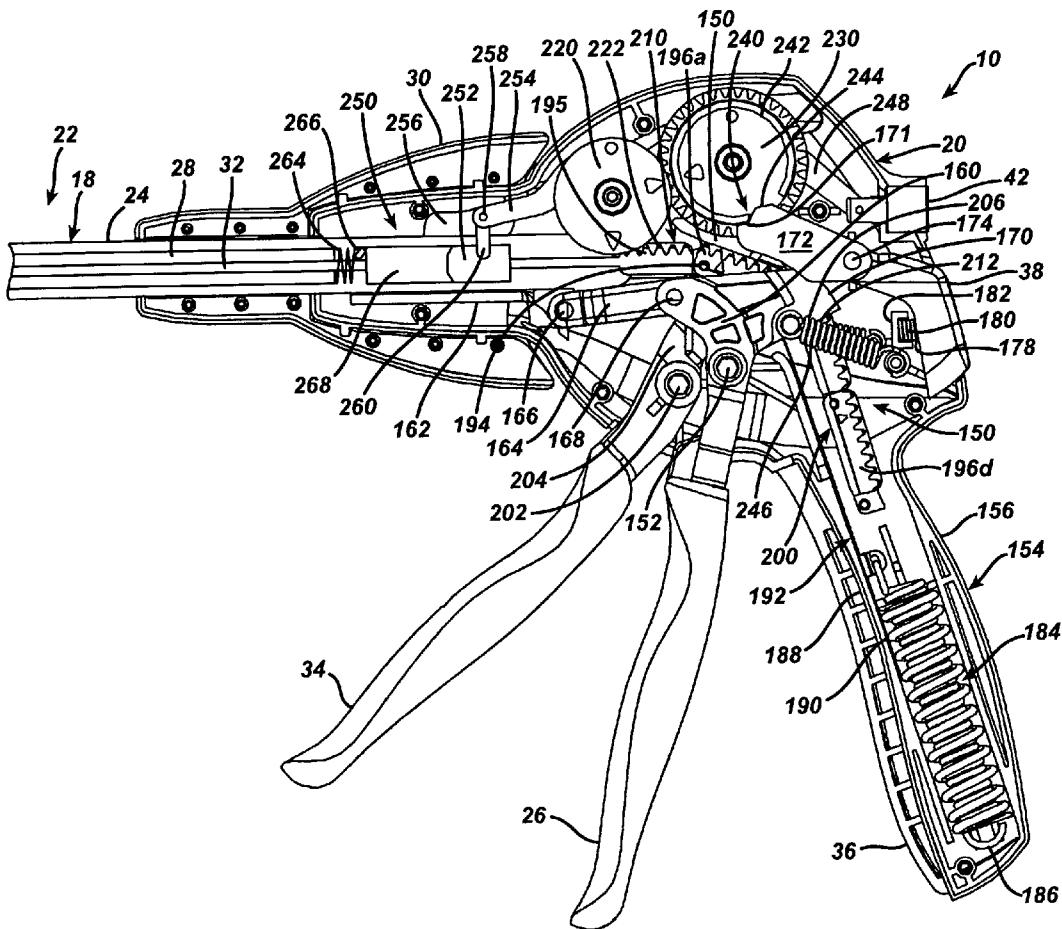
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(21) **Appl. No.: 11/052,632**

(22) **Filed: Feb. 7, 2005**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) **Continuation-in-part of application No. 10/673,930,
filed on Sep. 29, 2003, now Pat. No. 6,905,057.**



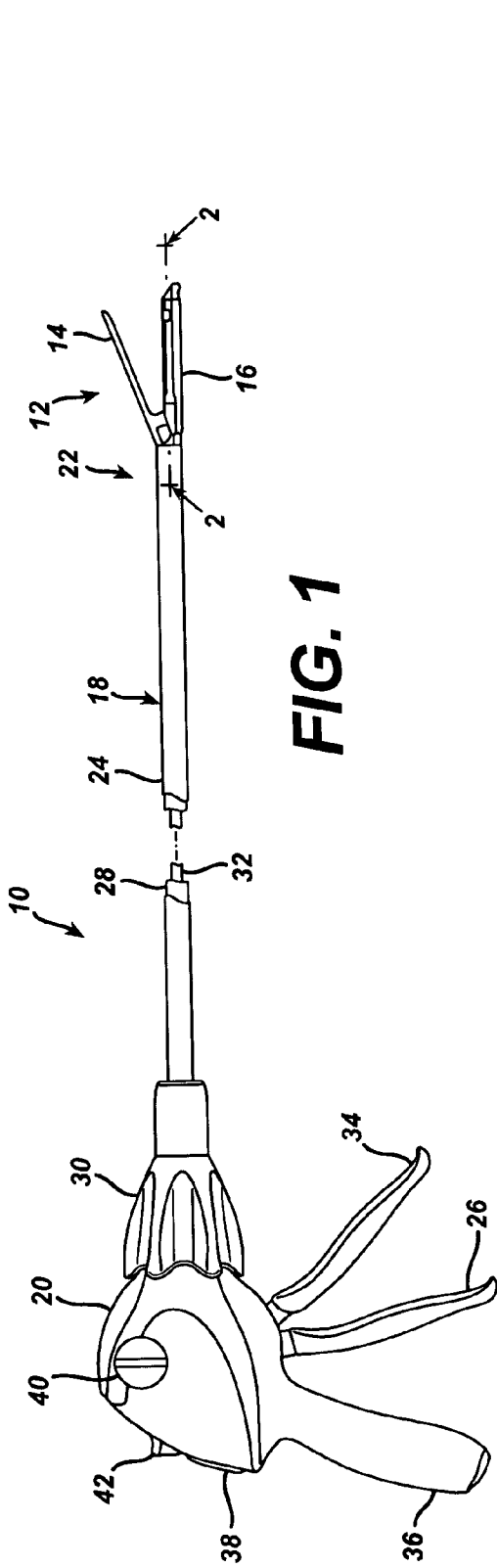


FIG. 1

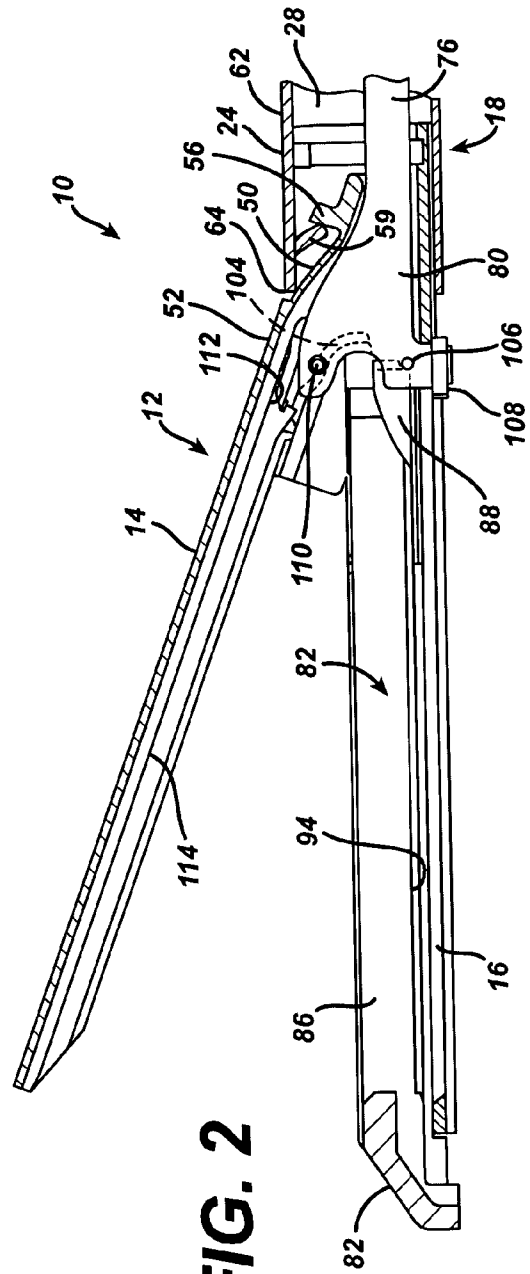


FIG. 2

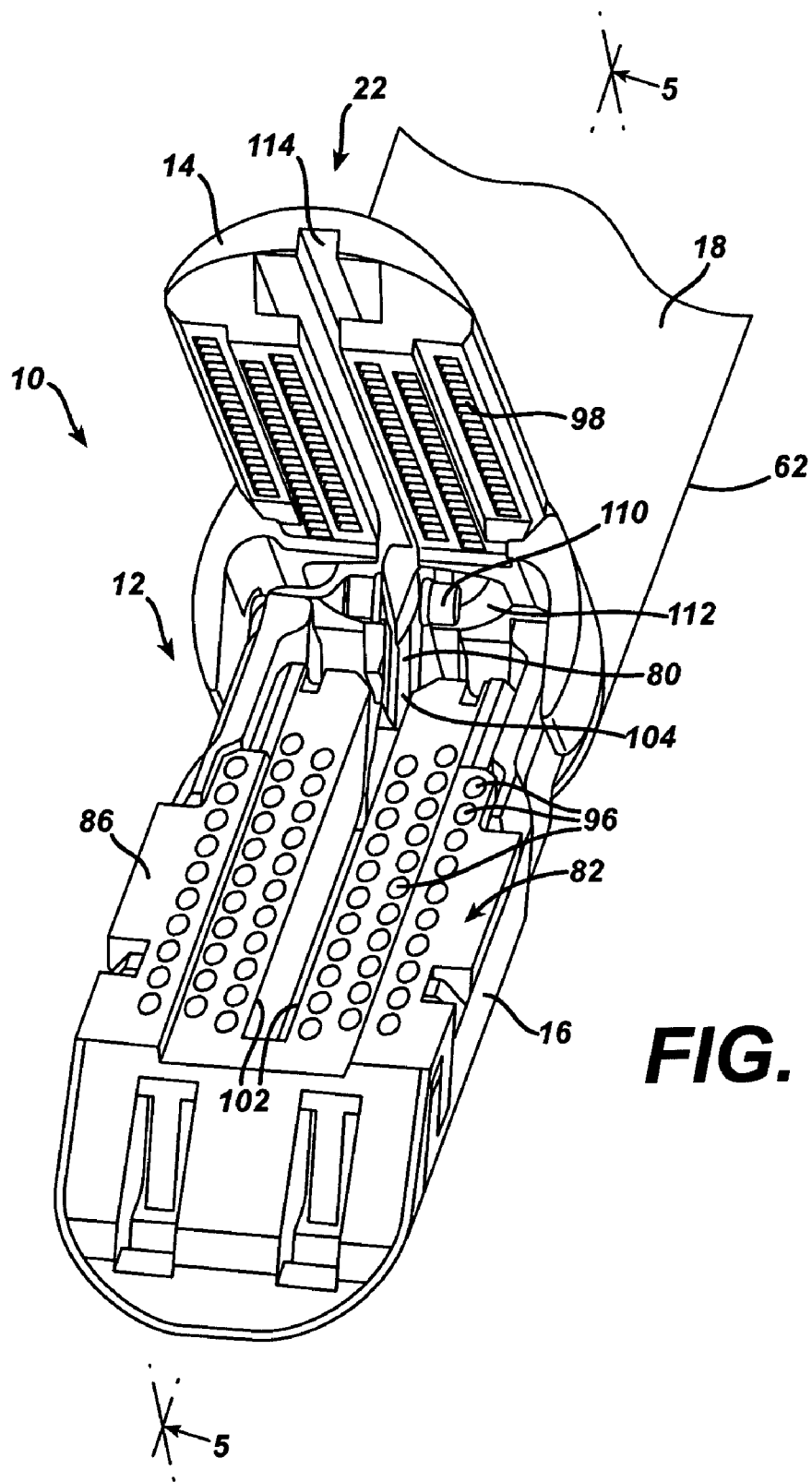


FIG. 3

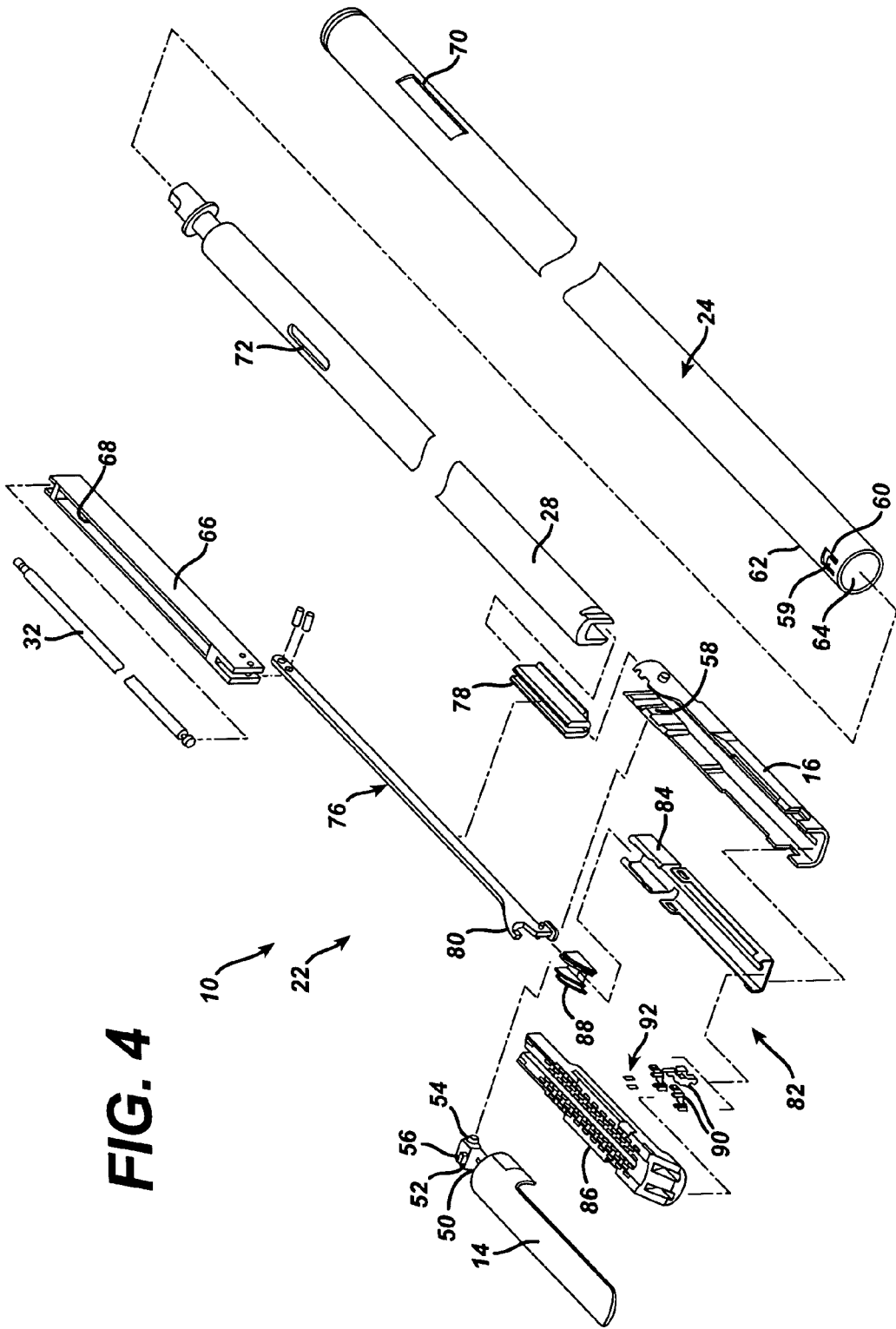


FIG. 4

FIG. 5

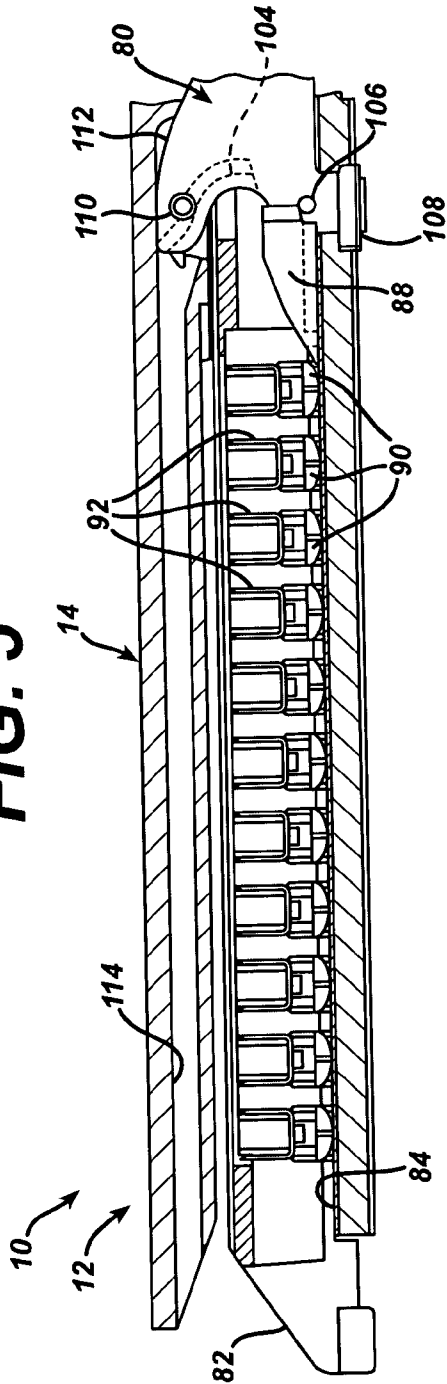
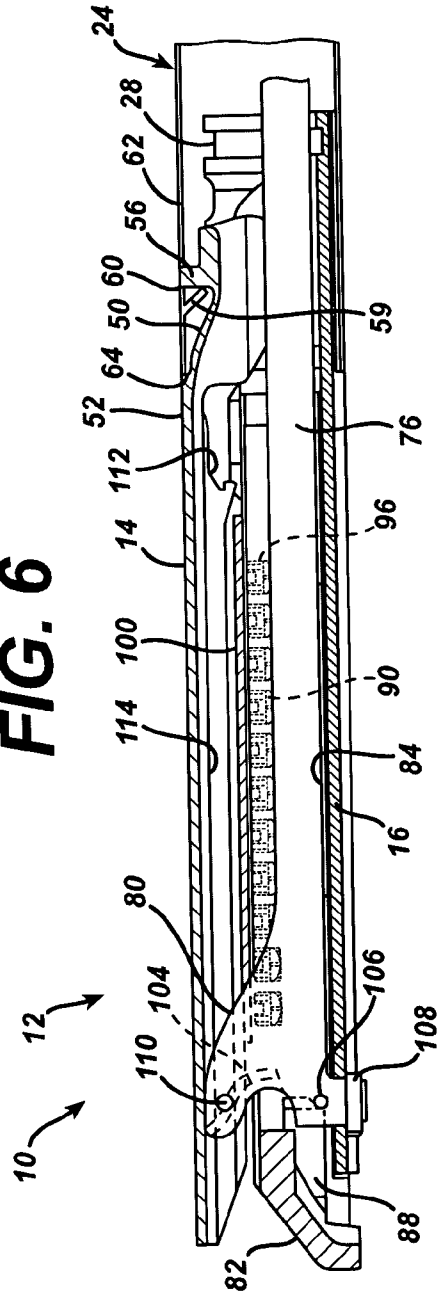


FIG. 6



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