

Claim 88. The data packet of Claim 87 characterized in that said packet length signal immediately follows said marker byte signal.

5 Claim 89. The data packet of Claim 86 characterized by the addition of a check sum signal, said check sum signal concluding said data packet, and said data check sum utilized to determine errors in transmission.

10 Claim 90. The data packet of Claim 85 characterized by a packet type signal, said packet type signal indicating the type of data transmitted and how to interpret it, and said packet type signal immediately preceding said data signal.

15 Claim 91. In a system for monitoring vending machines and transmitting data from the machines to a remote computer, an improved data packet, said data packet including a marker signal, said marker signal indicating the beginning of said data packet, a unit identification signal, said unit identification signal following said marker signal, said unit identification signal identifying the particular vending machine, a sequence number signal, 20 said sequence number signal following said unit identification signal, said sequence number signal being incremented for each time a data packet is transmitted, and said sequence number signal indicating in incremental numbers the number of times data is sent by the links to the computer, a data signal, and said data signal carrying 30 the information in respect to the status of the vending machine.

35 Claim 92. The data packet of Claim 91 characterized by the addition of a packet length signal, said packet length signal following said marker signal,

and said packet length signal indicating that the length of said data packet excluding said marker signal.

5 Claim 93. The data packet of Claim 92 characterized by check sum signals, said check sum signals following said data signals, and said check sum signals being utilized to determine if there is error in transmission.

10 Claim 94. A system for remotely monitoring the operations elements of varying types of vending machines that have mechanical and electrical differences,
said system including means to produce a common type signal for the operational elements of a particular
15 vending machine, and
data means to store said common signal in a unitary database at a remote location.

20 Claim 95. The system of Claim 94 characterized by the addition of network means to pass said common type signal from the vending machines to the remote location.

25 Claim 96. The system of Claim 94 wherein the varying types of vending machines include one machine with a maximum number of individual inventory items and a maximum number of auxiliary functions and characterized in that said database has fields and said fields for all machines being equal in number to the maximum number of individual inventory items and auxiliary functions.

30 Claim 97. The system of Claim 96 wherein for other machines fields may be empty and characterized by the addition of means to blank the empty fields for the other machines.

35 Claim 98. The system of Claim 94 wherein the vending machines have alarms and characterized in that

said common type signal includes a signal representative of the alarm status for each machine respectively, said unitary data base having an alarm field, and means to enable or disable an indication of an alarm for each machine respectively.

Claim 99. The system of Claim 94 wherein the vending machines have vend cycles and an inventory for items and characterized in that said common type signal includes a signal representative of the vend cycles for each machine respectively, said data base has an inventory field, said inventory field including a number representative of the inventory in each machine respectively and means to modify said number by said vend cycles for each machine respectively.

Claim 100. The system of Claim 99 wherein the maximum inventory for the items has a value and characterized by the addition of means to generate an inventory requirements list for each machine respectively from the inventory field for such machine in said database.

Claim 101. The system of Claim 100 wherein the inventory items come in unitary containers having multiple items and characterized by the addition of means to modify said inventory requirement list for each machine to unitary contained multiples.

Claim 102. The system of Claim 100 wherein the vending machines are located in service areas and characterized by the addition of means to generate inventory requirements lists by vending machines in a service area.

Claim 103. The system of Claim 99 wherein the inventory items for each machine respectively have

critical values and characterized by the addition of means to generate a critical inventory report of all inventory items at the critical values.

5 Claim 104. The system of Claim 103 characterized by means to selectively alter the critical values for the inventory items for each machine respectively.

10 Claim 105. The system of Claim 94 wherein some vending machines have conditions with critical values and characterized by the addition of means to generate an alarm indication for a vending machine based on the critical values respectively.

15 Claim 106. The system of Claim 105 characterized by the addition of means to selectively alter the critical values for the conditions for each machine respectively.

20 Claim 107. The system of Claim 99 characterized by the addition of means to store historical data representative of the inventory and means to analyze said historical data.

25 Claim 108. In a system for monitoring one or more vending machines from a remote computer, such machines having operational elements memory based on data, a remote link unit, network means for said remote link
30 unit to acquire data from the remote computer and program means for said remote link unit to alter the data in the memory of the machines.

35 Claim 109. The system of Claim 108 characterized in that the vending machines have alarms automatically sent if enabled and said program means enabling or disabling said alarms.

Claim 110. The system of Claim 108 wherein the operational elements include the pricing of individual vend units and characterized in that said program means alters the pricing of such units.

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Claim 111. The system of Claim 109 wherein the operational elements include a door intrusion override by identification code and characterized in that said program means alters the identification code.

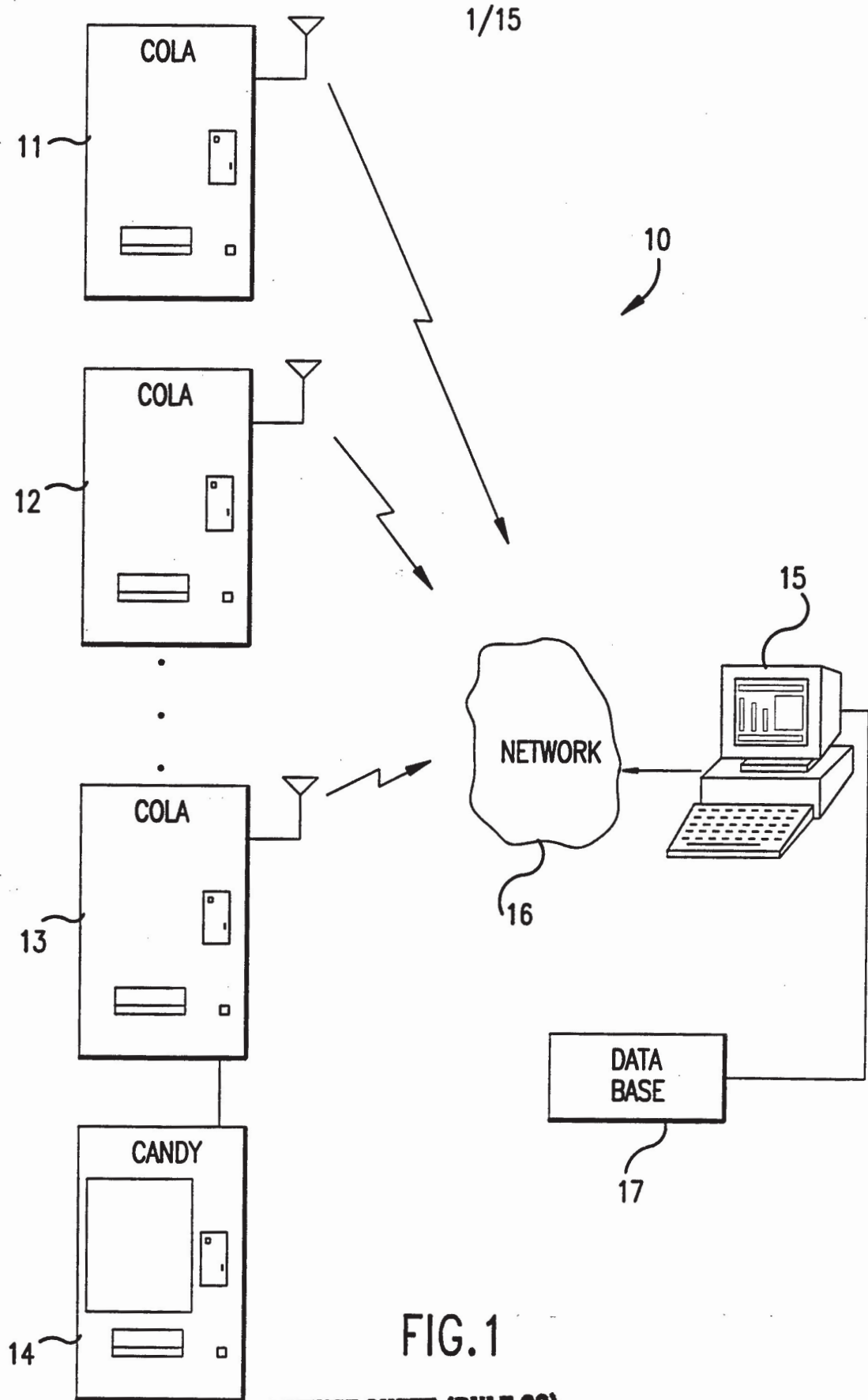


FIG. 1

SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

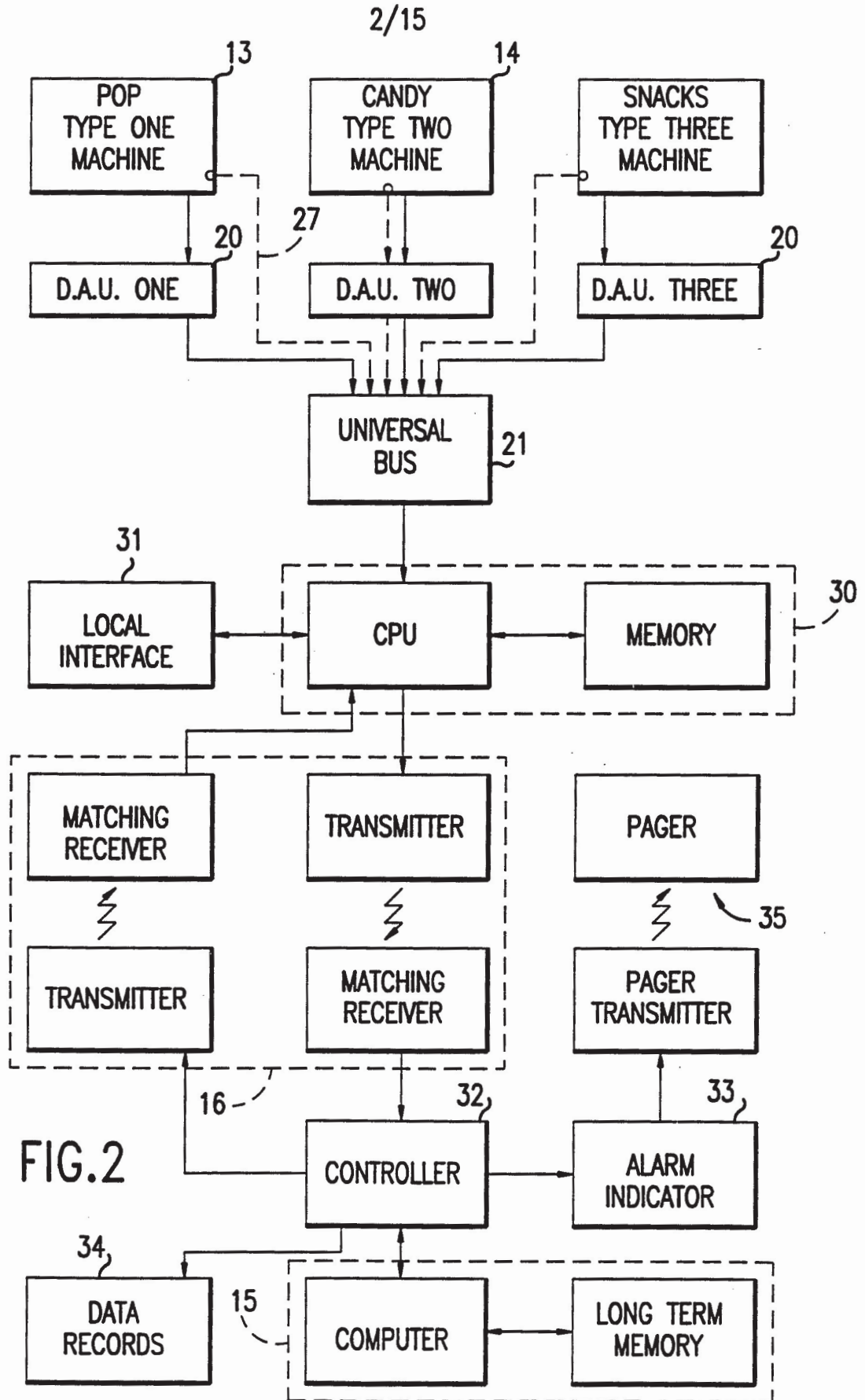


FIG.2

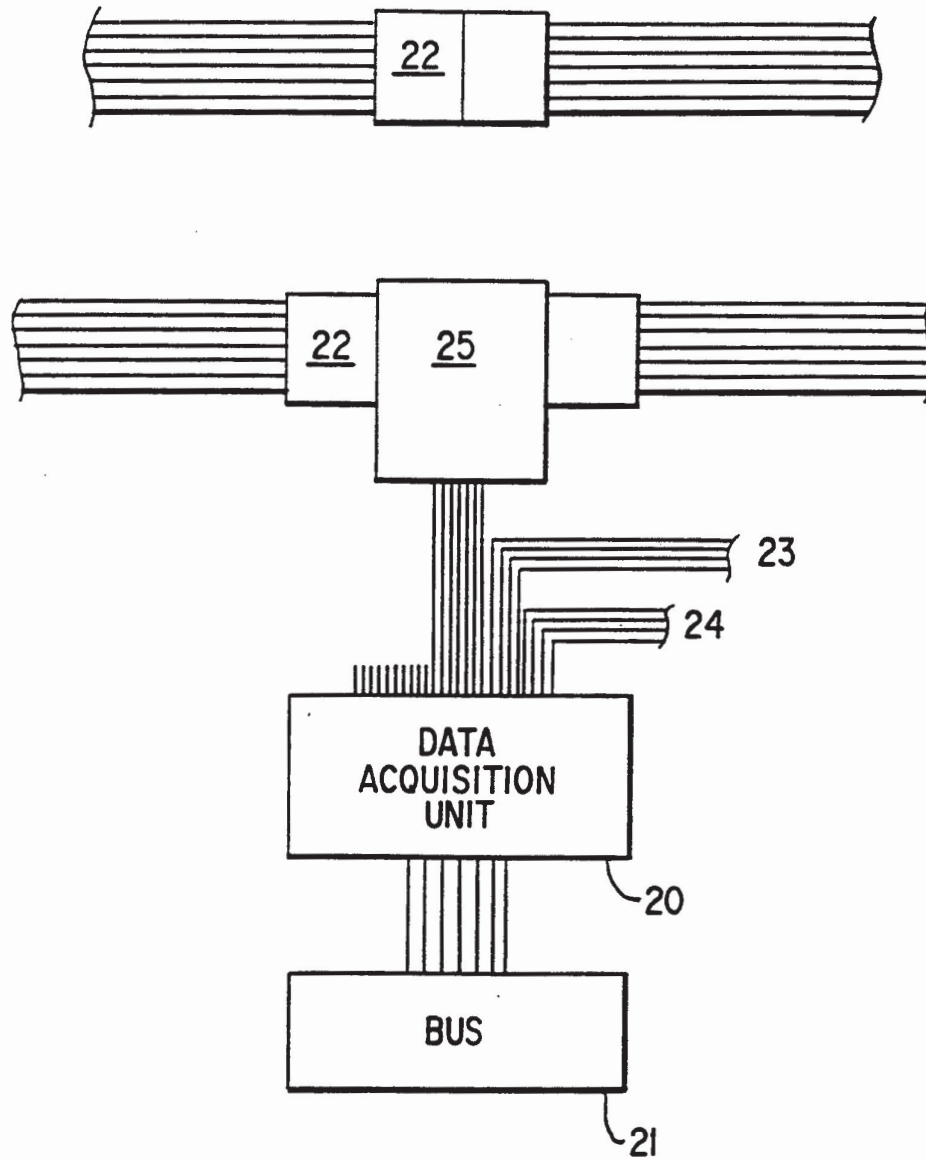


FIG. 3

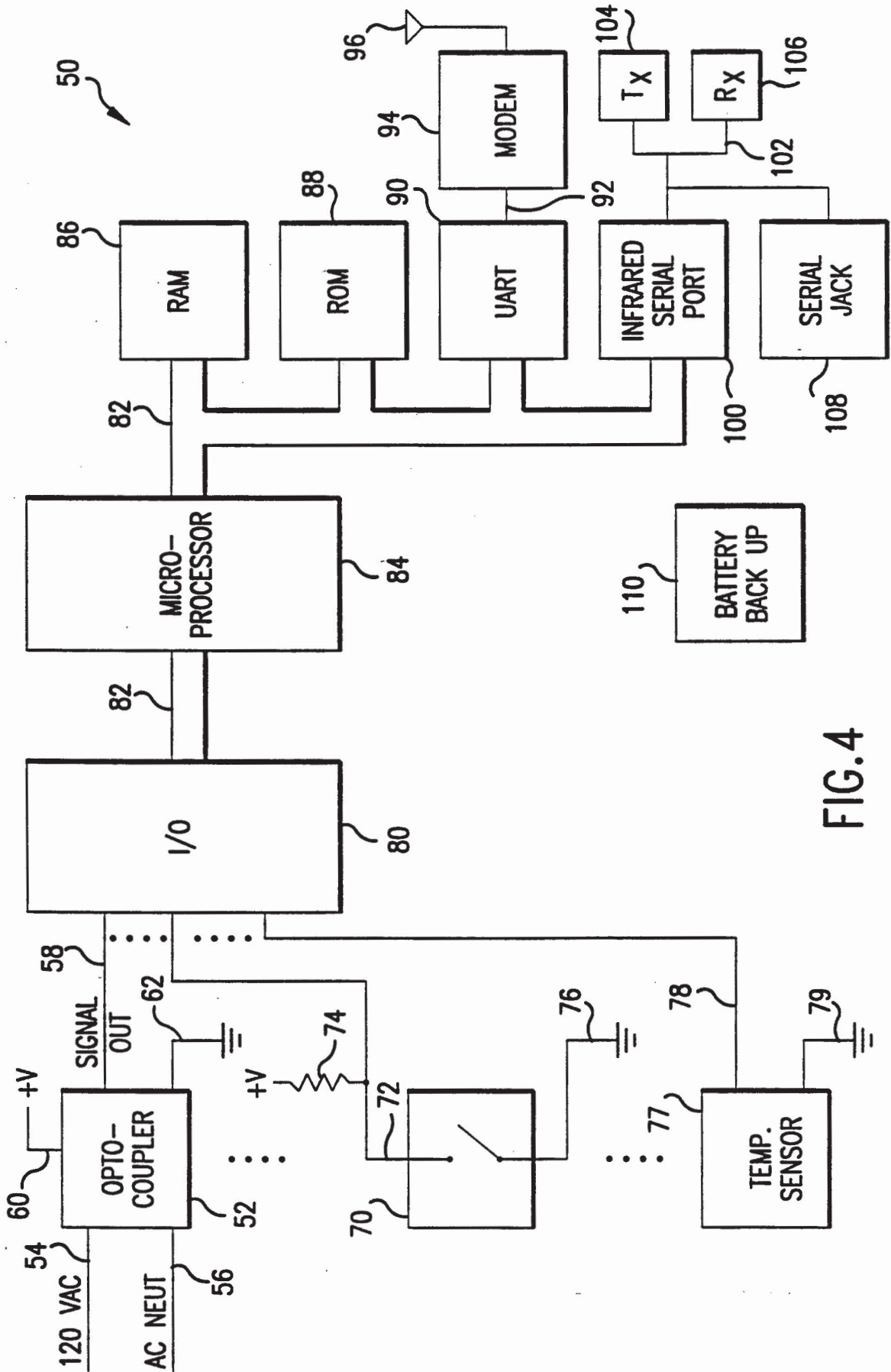


FIG.4

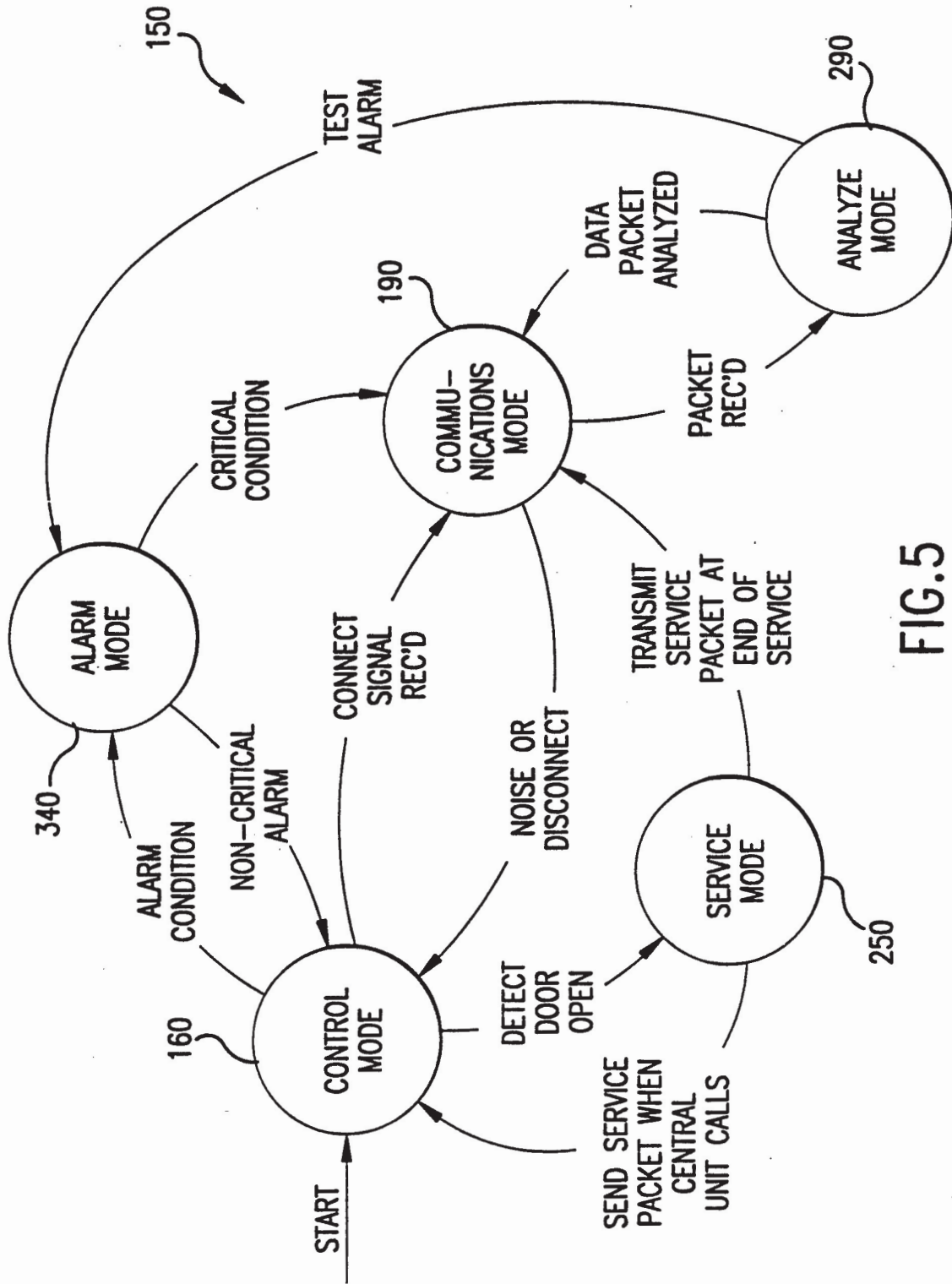


FIG. 5

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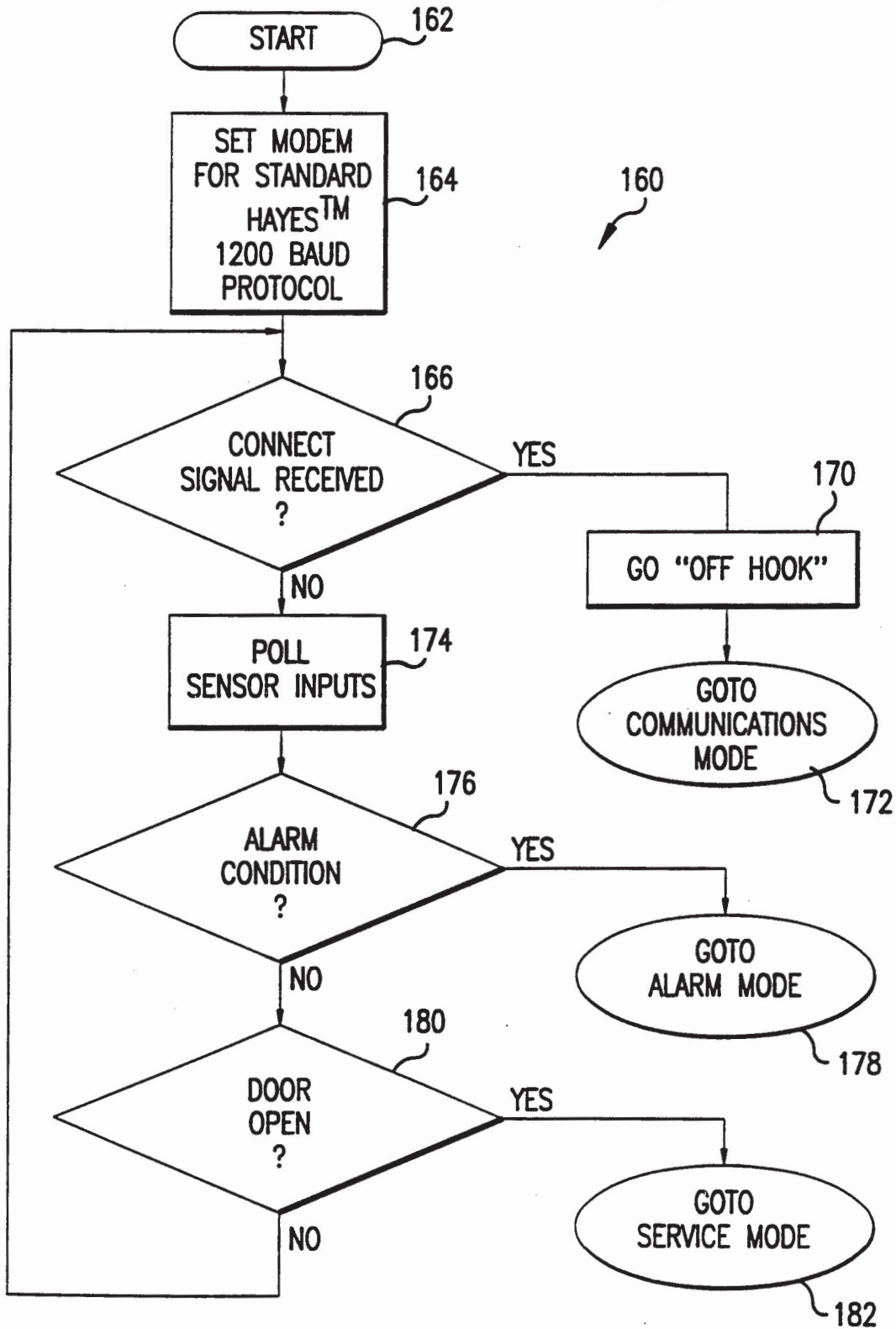
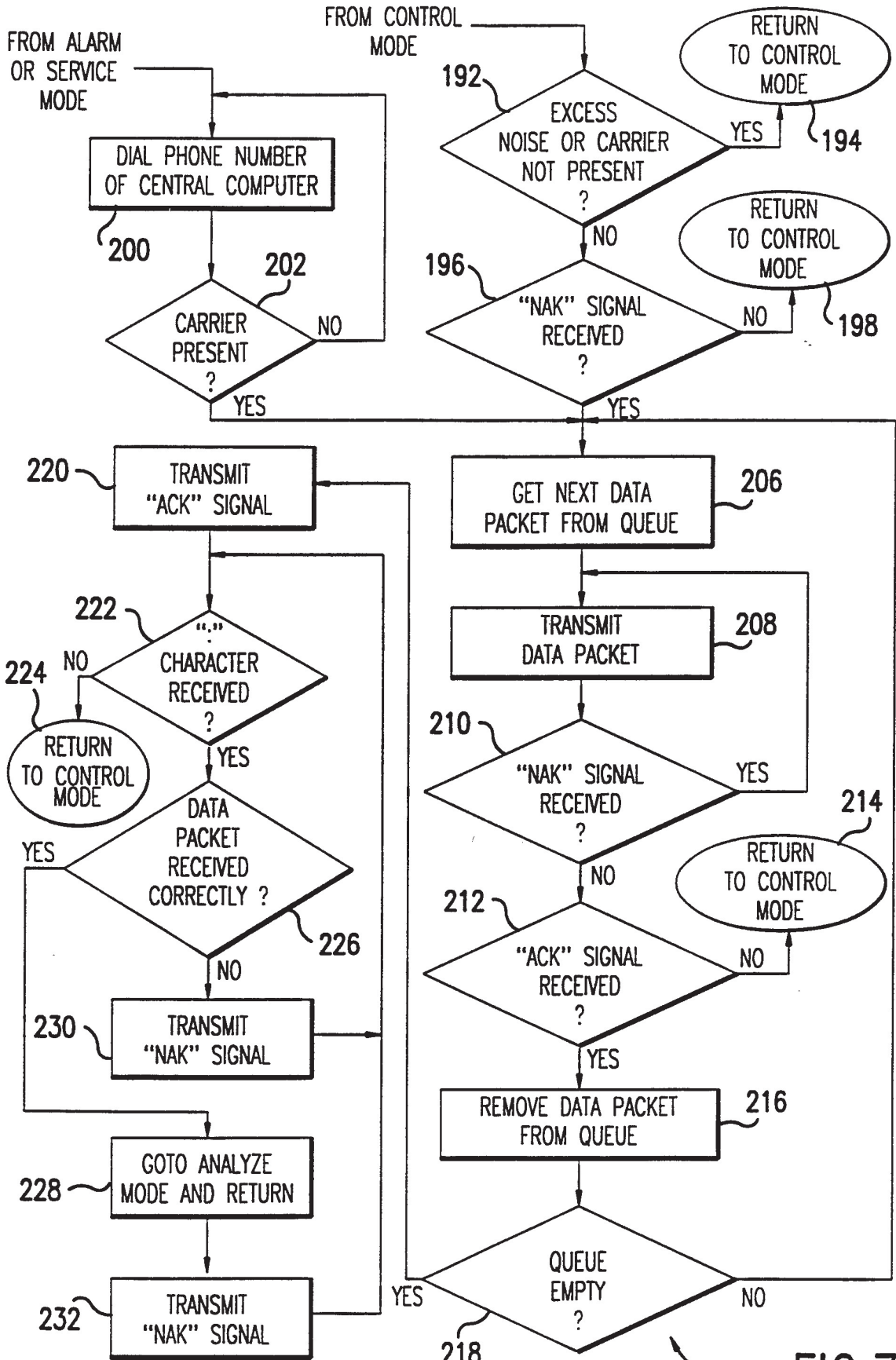


FIG.6



190 FIG. 7

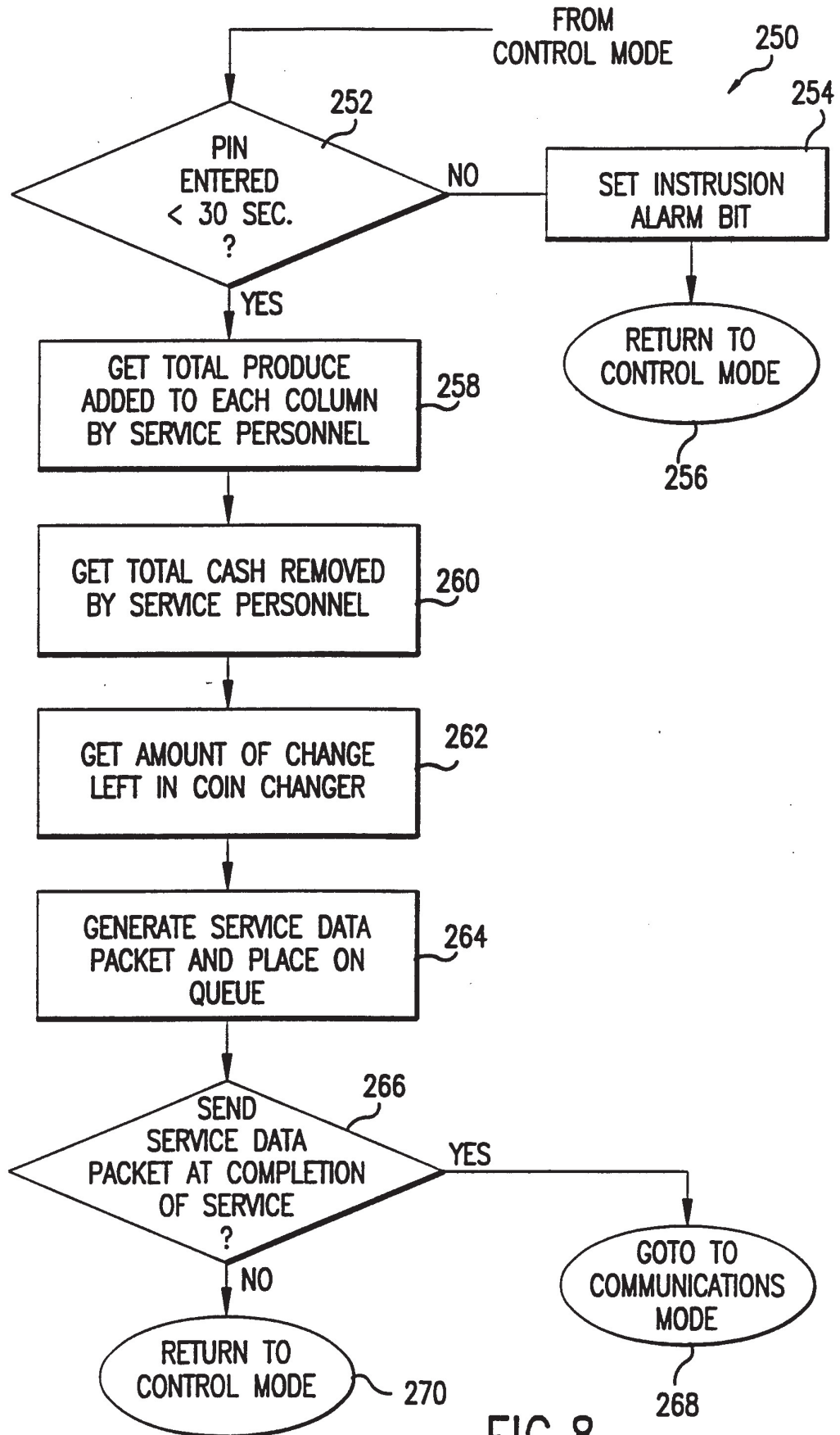


FIG.8

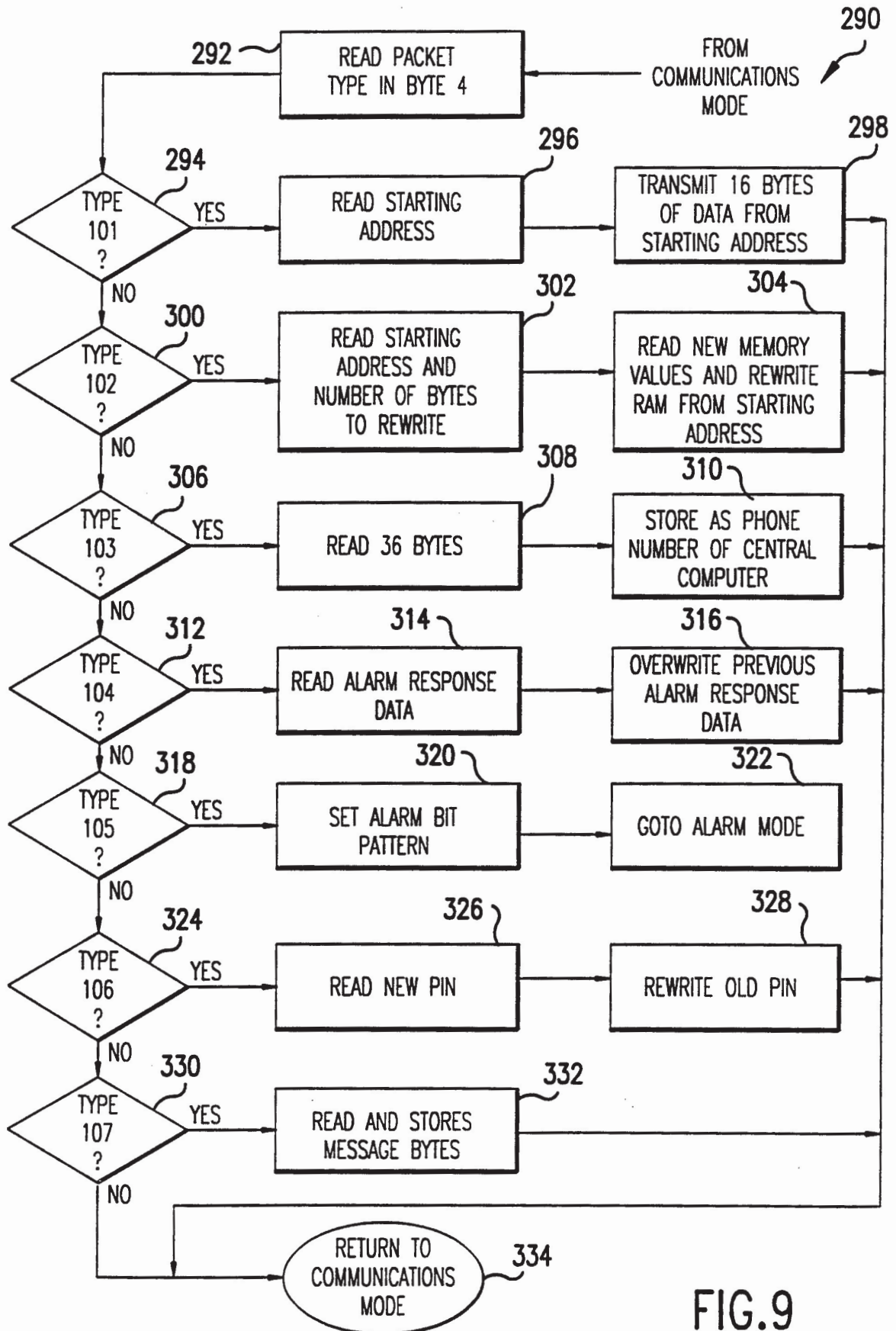


FIG. 9

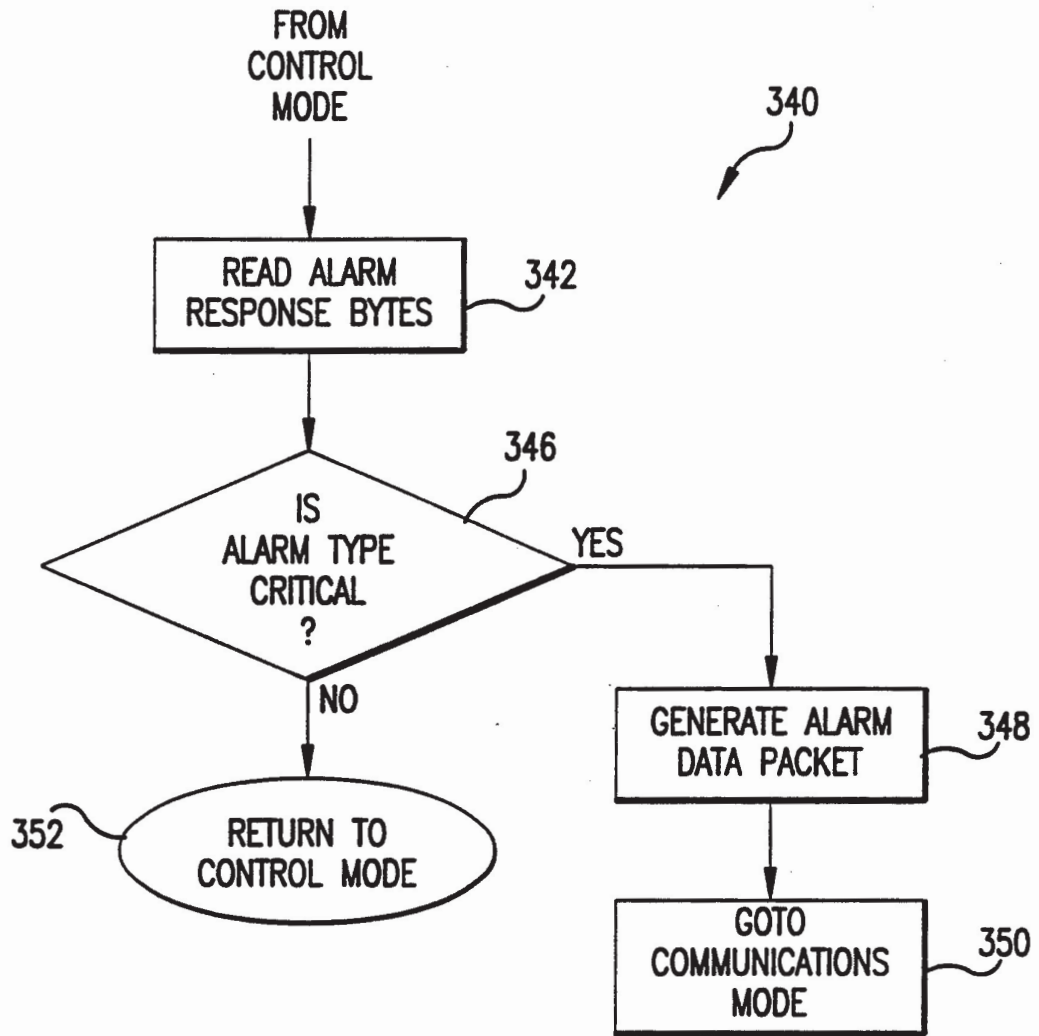


FIG.10

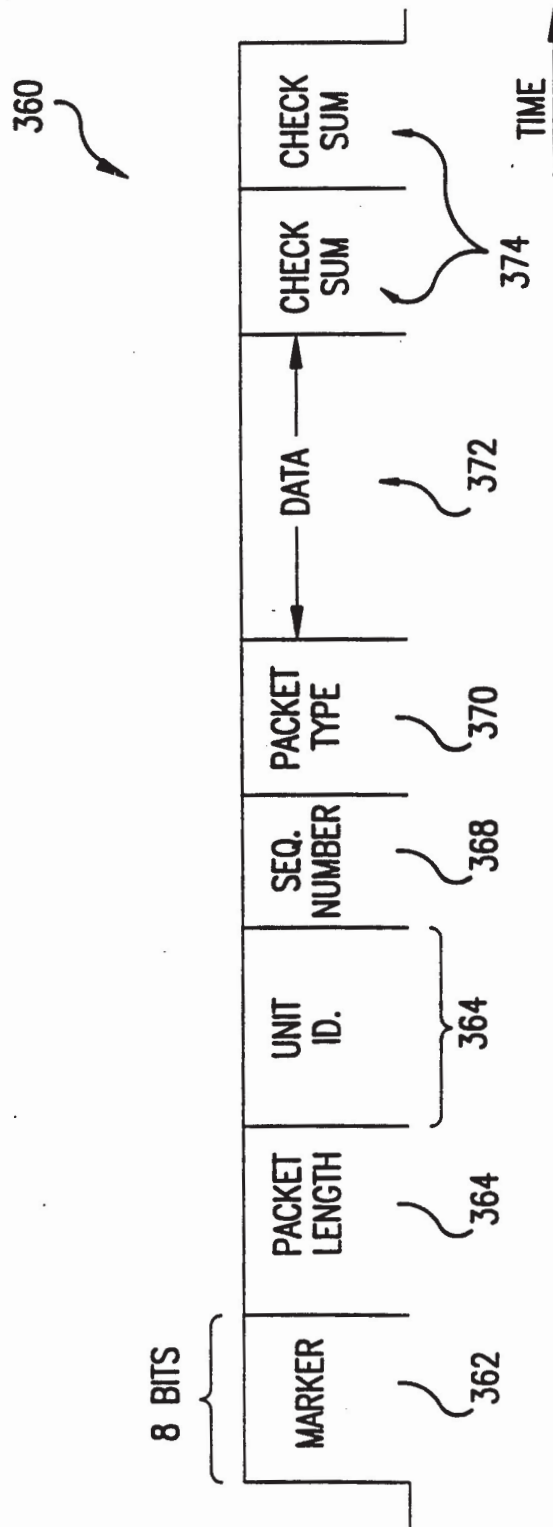


FIG.11

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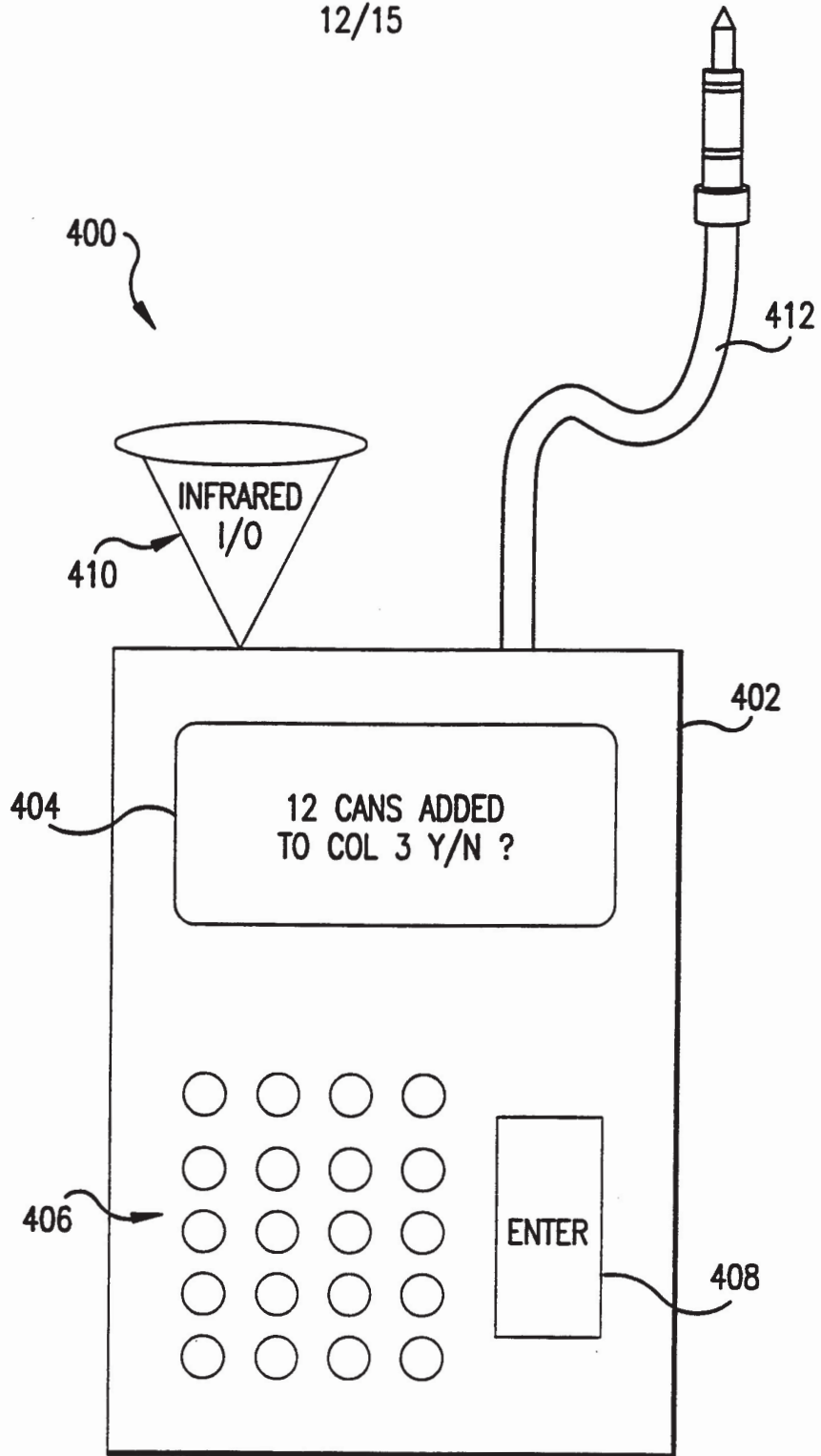


FIG.12

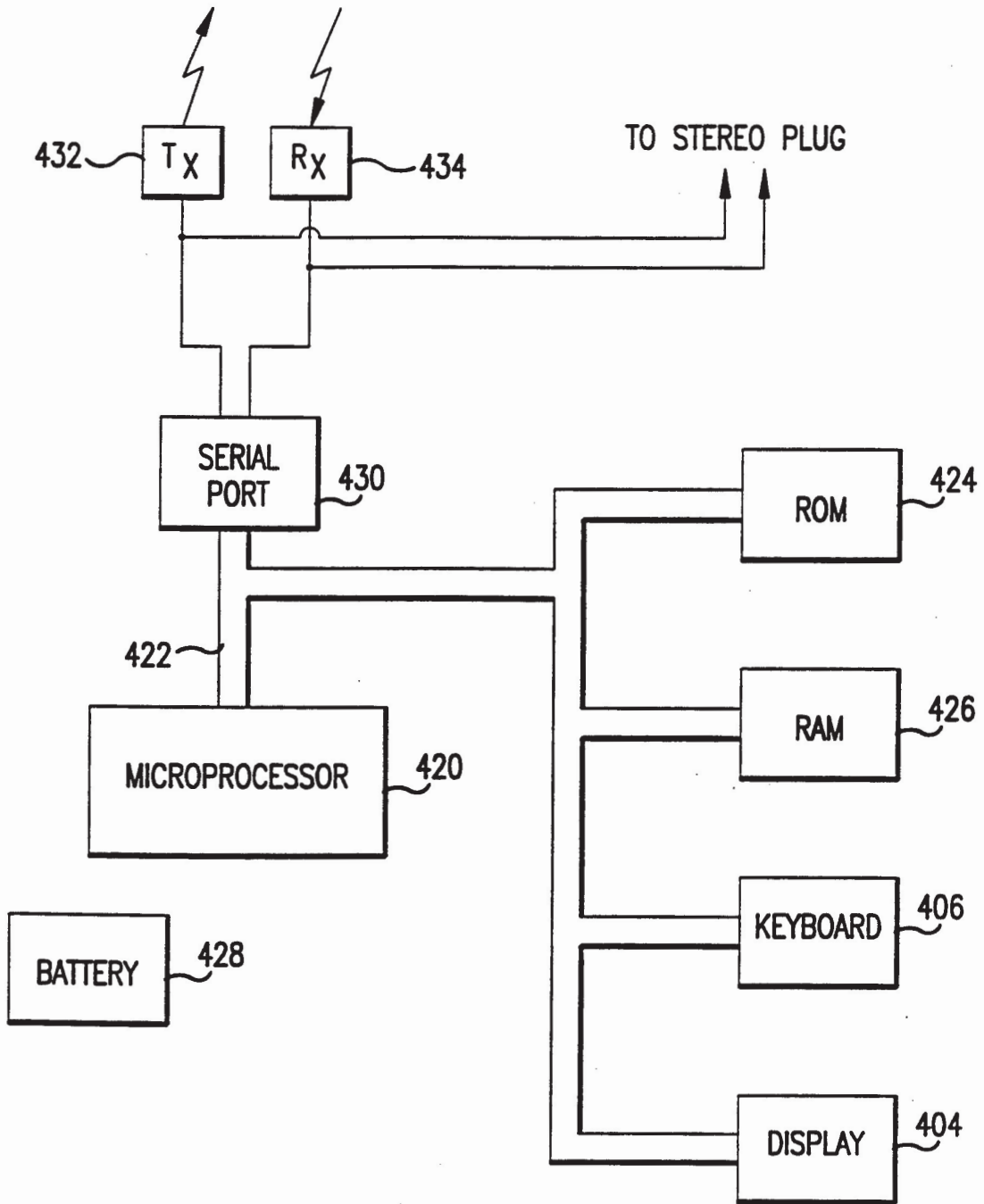


FIG.13

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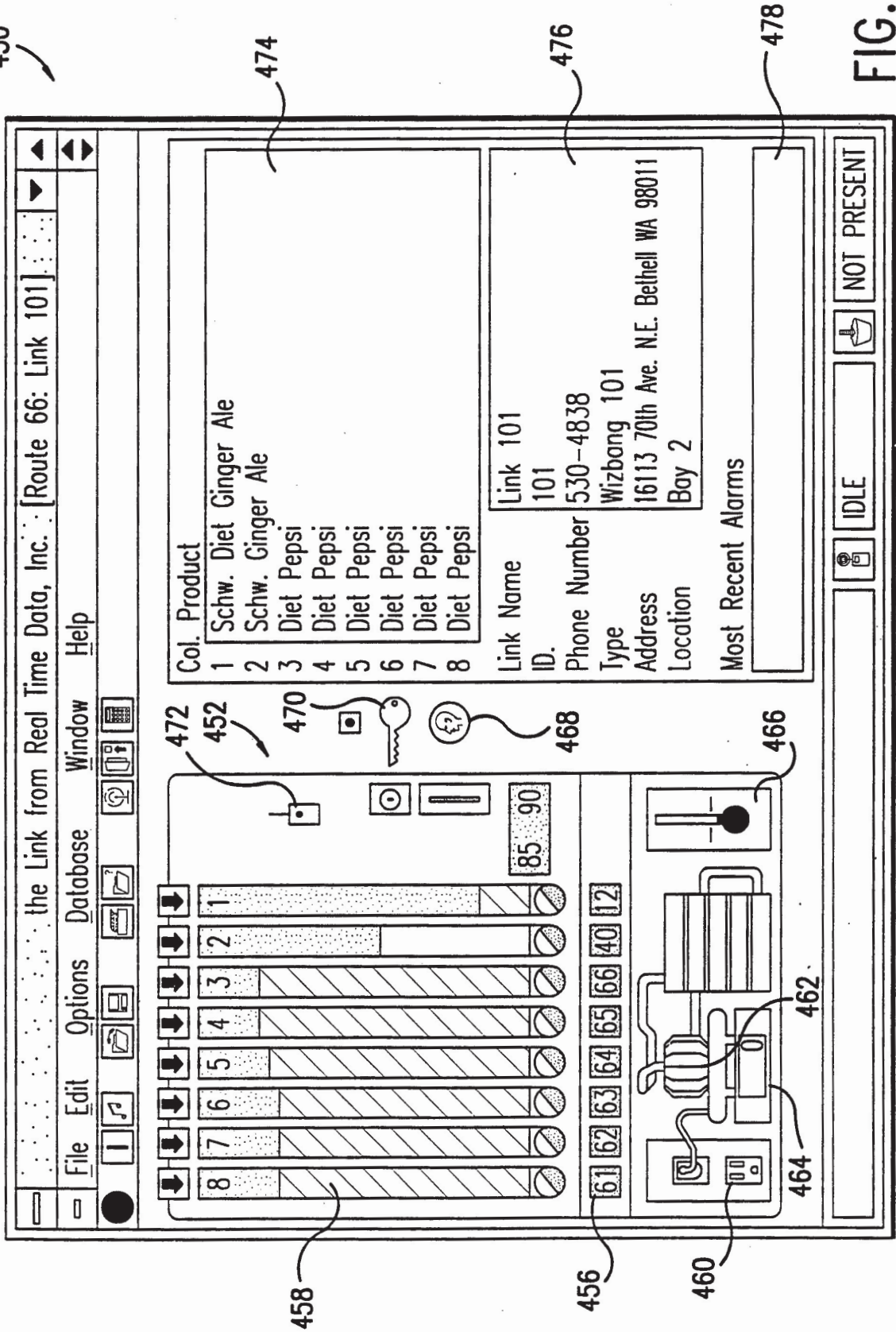


FIG. 14

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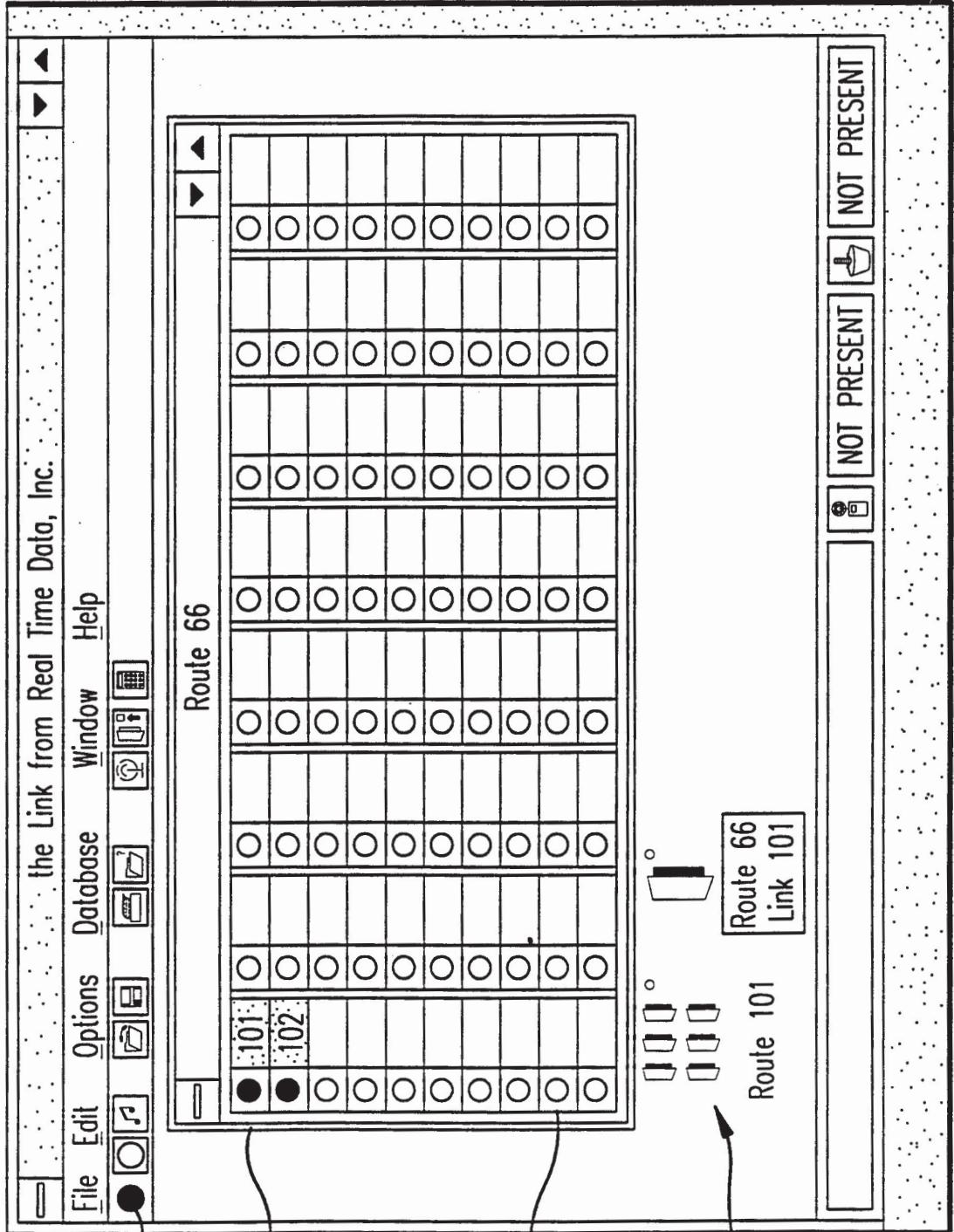


FIG. 15

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