

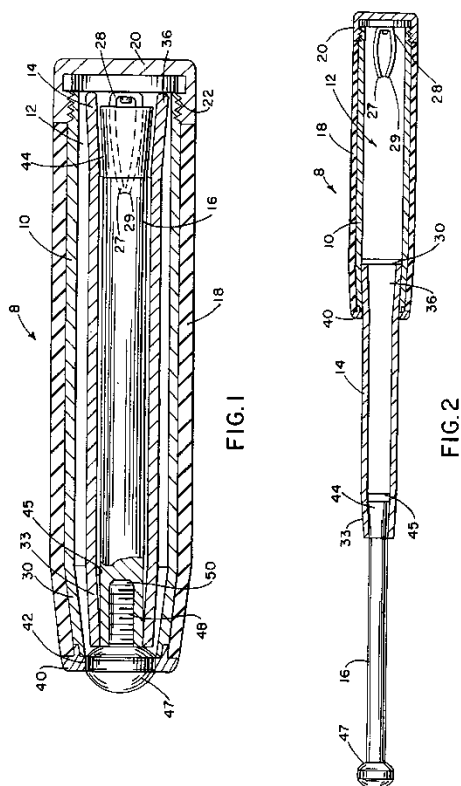
## Baton

U.S. Patent

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5,356,139



8. We think of maestros standing before an ensemble, hands dipping, diving, gesticulating with the electricity of shepherding sounds, one of those hands clutching a rubber twig in a flourish like magic.
10. We think of a skinny high-schooler in a sequined jacket leading the marching band down main street, a tasseled rod twirling hypnotically around torso, arms, head, a dazzling spin, soaring, propelled by its own lift, lost in the noon sun only to return to deft fingers, an expression

of movement and beauty of the body, a way to focus the crowd before the big game.

12. We think of runners handing over a burden.
14. Born from the Latin *bastos*, or *bastum*, which then morphed into Middle French around 1540 AD (think Baton Rouge, Louisiana, "Land of the Red Sticks," markers of tribal territories, the division of one type of people from another).
16. Example of a people divided: Police carry batons as a form of nonlethal equipment to subdue citizens.
18. Police are a type of military.
20. This military practice of carrying nonlethal sticks dates back to Roman times, when centurions carried vine staffs as emblems of their rank. If insulted, or to prove a point, they could beat citizens with these sticks.
22. In British armies, these were called "swagger sticks," carried by all higher ranks of the military.
27. We say knowledge is power. Swinging a stick is also power.
28. How to regain some of that power: [google.com/patents/US5356139](http://google.com/patents/US5356139)
29. Most batons are literally that, sticks, made from a hardwood or tough plastic or metal of roughly twelve inches in length, somewhat unwieldy when hanging from a belt loop. They are commonly used during times of what is officially known as "civil disturbance."
30. What is shown here is an expandable baton, AKA collapsible baton, AKA a telescopic baton, a baton made of segments. The idea is that the segments of the instrument are stored in the hollow handle, then, when nonlethal force is required, the wielder flicks the wrist, inertia extends the segments, and friction

- locks them. A concealable, lightweight tool that was originally used to “brain someone.” Very little skill involved. Pick a target, swing.
33. Ancient Celtic warriors strengthened their triceps—their sword muscles, their swinging muscles—by bludgeoning a stone with fire-hardened sticks, beating the rock to exhaustion until their muscles screamed and quit.
  36. “Brain Someone”: idiom, to strike a person hard on the skull as if to knock out the person’s brain.
  40. My dad was once brained by *Polizei* when he was in Germany during the 1980s. He tells me this wistfully, on the back porch while we look over pasture and a small pond full of green water. “Benny,” my dad probably said, “they hit me across the back, my neck, and my head. Two of ’em. Beat me for a bit, then left me to stew.” He shows me a pink scar beneath his whitened hair. He tells me they used batons that were actually metal springs wrapped in rubber. That the kinetic energy mixed with the give of the spring spreads the pain with a thud as opposed to a whack. I take his word for it. We stare at the hills until the sun dies. I don’t ask him why the *Polizei* beat him. I don’t need to.
  42. Police don’t officially “brain” citizens any longer. Too lethal, too wild, too many opportunities for legal recourse. They’ve come a long way in how they approach dissidents. The official method of striking is contingent on transitory neuropraxia, a temporary loss of motor and sensory function due to damaged nerve clusters. The new targets are legs (which include the back of the knees, quadriceps, calves) and arms (typically the biceps and deltoids; wrists are too susceptible to breakage). The idea here is temporary physical paralysis. The body is broken, yet the brain remains intact, just enough to process it all.
  44. “Insult”: medical term, event that causes a form of physical or mental injury. Example: My father was insulted when metal rods cut the weave of skull, damaging his brain.
  45. Black Lives Matter. Standing Rock. March for Science. Venezuela Protests. So many more, so many yet to be named. A future of unrest. A future of resistance.
  47. Police are not kinesiologyists. In the heat of confrontation, they won’t pinpoint the nerve clusters buried deep within the muscle tissue. They won’t preserve the sanctity of bone. They’ll pick a target and swing.
  48. 2016-2017: Police Pin Teen to Ground, Beat Him with Baton in Shocking Footage. California Cops Beat Man with Batons. Hebei Police Use Pepper Spray, Batons to Break Up Antipollution Blockade. Brazilian Activist in Induced Coma After Police Beating at Nationwide Protests.
  50. So, when they come for you, and they will, or if you go to them, and you must, be prepared. Watch for their swagger; watch for their emblems of rank. They’ll swing until they’ve established control. They’ll swing until you’re paralyzed. And from the pavement, the fields of snow, the dust, as you look past the smear of running bodies and up through the glint of sunlight dazzling your eyes, you’ll say to yourself and believe it, I hope: “I am the stone. I am the stone. I am the stone.”