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(54) Title: AUTHENTICATION APPARATUS AND METHOD

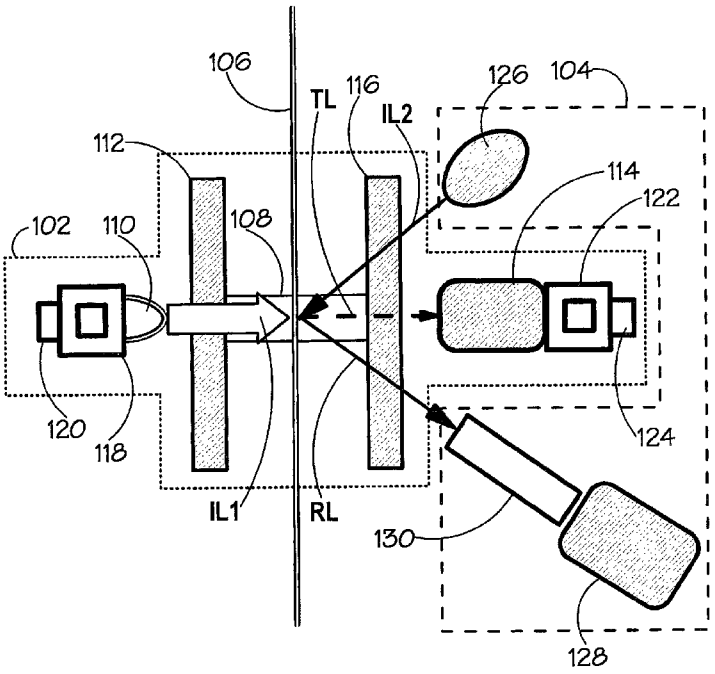


FIG.4.

(57) Abstract: An authentication apparatus operative to determine the authenticity of an item comprising a film substrate responsive to detection that a portion of said item located in a measuring region of said apparatus has a predetermined birefringence characteristic, said apparatus comprising: an item detection arrangement operative to determine if at least a portion of an item is located in a measuring region of said authentication apparatus; and an optically-based birefringence measuring apparatus, wherein said authentication apparatus is operative to compare a measured birefringence characteristic with a predetermined birefringence characteristic and to produce an authenticity signal indicative of authenticity or otherwise of said item based upon said comparison.

WO 2014/060362 A1