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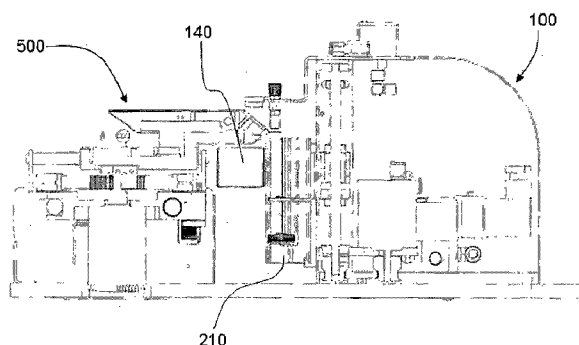


Fig. 1a

(57) Abstract: A plate extractor for extracting a top plate from a plurality of plates in a stacked arrangement positioned in a marking apparatus, said plate extractor includes, a holder adapted to hold the stacked plurality of plates, guiding elements designed to retain the stacked plurality of plates and guide the stacked plurality of plates to maneuver in a longitudinal direction, an extracting mechanism adapted to extract the top plate from the stacked plurality of plates in the longitudinal direction through the first opening; a marking apparatus for marking the top plate having the plate extractor a marking device for marking the top plate, a picking device adapted to pick the top plate from the plate extractor and transfer the top plate from the plate extractor to the marking device, wherein the top plate is fed to the marking device for marking; a method of extracting the top plate having steps of holding the stacked plurality of plates, and extracting the top plate from the stacked plurality of plates in the longitudinal direction.