

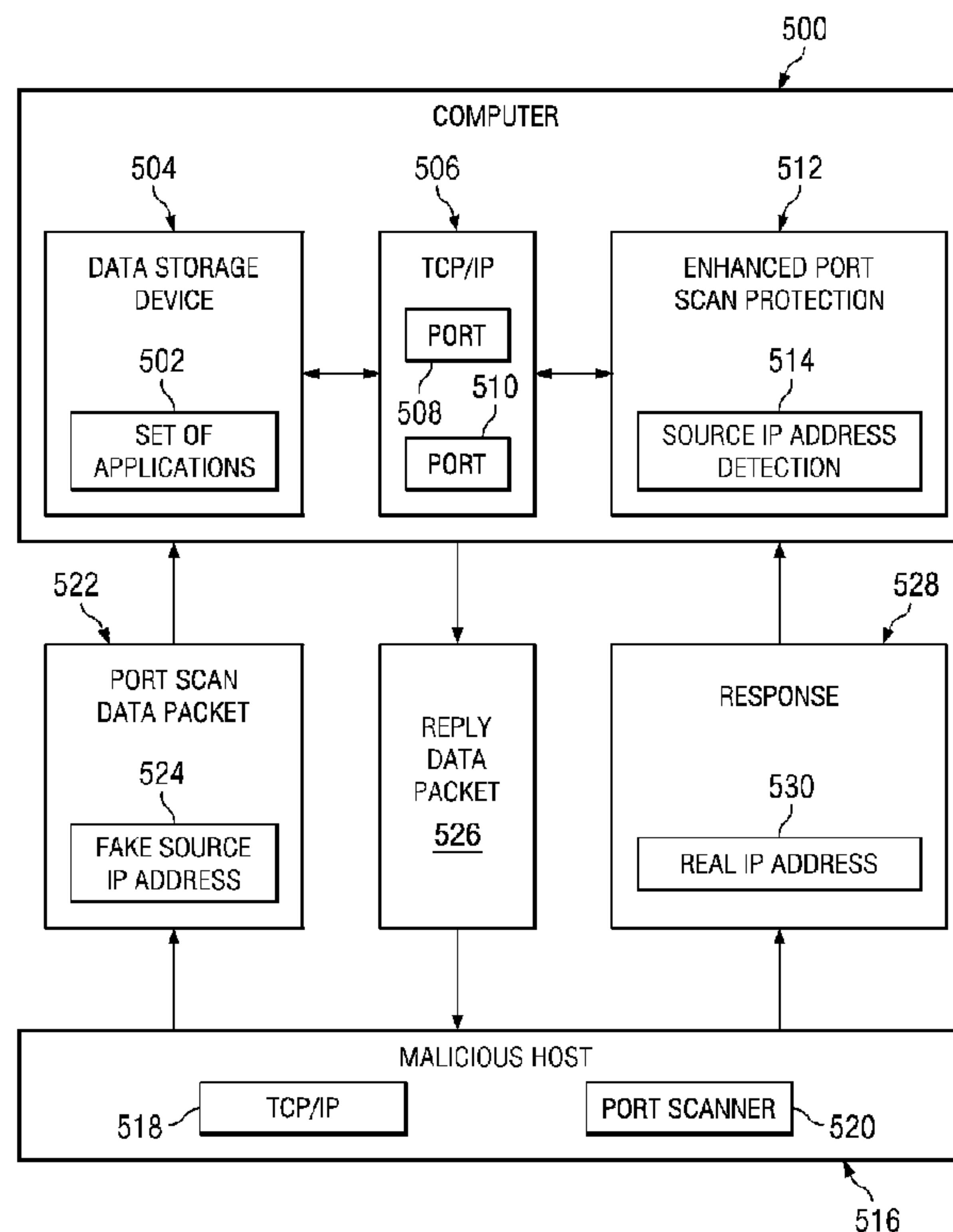


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ADRESSE SOURCE

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DETECTING PORT SCANS WITH FAKE SOURCE ADDRESS



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer program product for port scan protection. A reply data packet having a modified transmission control protocol header is generated to form a modified reply data packet, in response to detecting a port scan. The modified reply data packet will illicit a response from a recipient of the modified data packet. The reply data packet is sent to a first Internet protocol address associated with the port scan. A second Internet protocol address is identified from a header of the response to the modified reply data packet. The second Internet protocol address is an actual Internet protocol address of a source of the port scan. All network traffic from the second Internet protocol address may be blocked to prevent an attack on any open ports from the source of the port scan.

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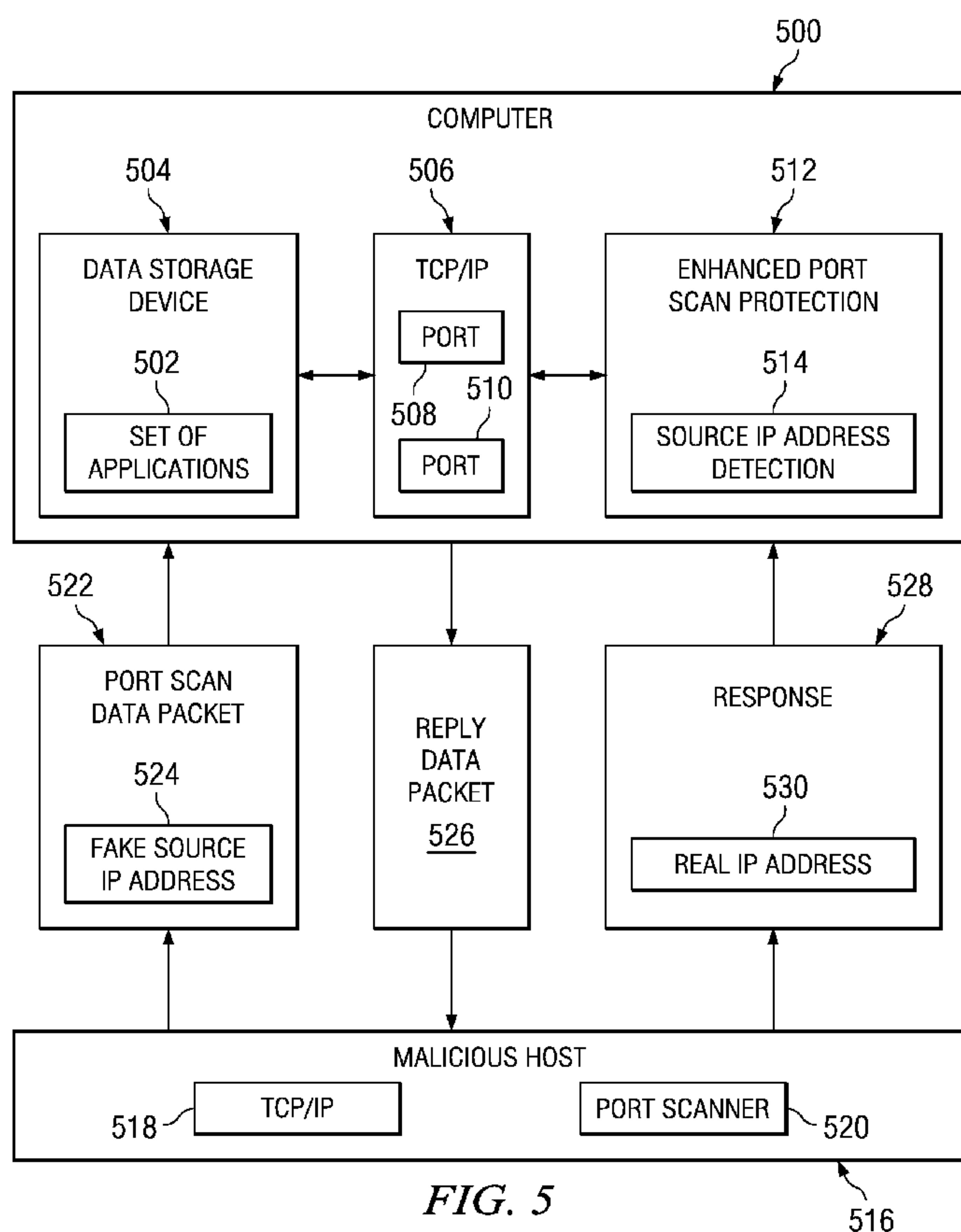
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## (54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DETECTING PORT SCANS WITH FAKE SOURCE ADDRESS



(57) Abstract: A computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer program product for port scan protection. A reply data packet having a modified transmission control protocol header is generated to form a modified reply data packet, in response to detecting a port scan. The modified reply data packet will illicit a response from a recipient of the modified data packet. The reply data packet is sent to a first Internet protocol address associated with the port scan. A second Internet protocol address is identified from a header of the response to the modified reply data packet. The second Internet protocol address is an actual Internet protocol address of a source of the port scan. All network traffic from the second Internet protocol address may be blocked to prevent an attack on any open ports from the source of the port scan.

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## METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DETECTING PORT SCANS WITH FAKE SOURCE ADDRESS

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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#### Field of the Invention

The present invention is related generally to a data processing system and in particular to a method and apparatus for data processing system security. More particularly, the present invention is directed to a computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer usable program code for blocking a port scanner using fake source Internet protocol addresses.

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#### Description of the Related Art

A user on a computing device, such as a client, connected to a network can execute an application or other service available on a different computing device, such as a server, by connecting to a port on the server associated with the application or service. A port is an endpoint to a logical connection between a client and a server in a network. Ports are typically identified by a port number. Each application available on the server is associated with a different port number.

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In other words, a port is like a door or gateway to a particular application on a computer. Like a door, a port may be open or closed. An open port on a server is a port associated with an application that is currently available on the server for use by one or more client computers. A closed port is a port that is not associated with an application or service that is available on the server. A hacker typically cannot access a computer through a closed port.

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A computing device can access a particular application on a server by specifying the port number associated with the particular application. However, sometimes unauthorized or malicious users may want to access an application or service on the server for purposes of launching an attack on the server. These users are typically referred to as hackers or

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computer crackers. The server that is attacked by a hacker may be referred to as an intended victim.

Hackers generally do not know what applications or services are available on the intended  
5 victim. Therefore, the hacker may perform a port scan. A port scan is a method for systematically scanning a computer's ports to determine which ports are open ports associated with an available application or service and which ports are closed ports. In port scanning, a series of messages are sent requesting a connection with each well-known port. The response received from the intended victim indicates whether the well-known port is an  
10 open port or a closed port. Port scanning is used by hackers to locate open access points to a computer which may be vulnerable to an attack.

Once a vulnerable open port is located, a hacker can launch an attack that may cause the resources of the application associated with the attacked open port unavailable to intended  
15 users of the application. This type of attack is sometimes referred to as a denial-of-service (DOS) attack.

One solution to this problem is provided by port scan protection software. Current port scan protection software identifies the source Internet protocol (IP) address in a connection  
20 request that may be part of a port scan. The port scan protection software then blocks that source IP address. In other words, the port scan software does not allow any additional messages from that source IP address to be received. This can prevent subsequent attacks by a hacker using the same source IP address.

However, hackers have circumvented current port scan prevention software by using fake  
25 source IP addresses during port scans to locate open ports. When the port scan software recognizes that a port scan may be taking place, the port scan prevention software blocks the fake IP address identified in the port scan messages. However, the current port scan prevention software does not block the hacker's actual IP address. Thus, the hacker remains  
30 free to launch attacks on any open ports using the hacker's actual IP address, which is not blocked by the port scan protection software. These attacks may lead to denial-of-service (DOS) effects on users attempting to gain legitimate access to applications and/or services

provided by the intended victim. In addition, these attacks can lead to loss of time, data, and revenue while the applications and/or services are unavailable.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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The illustrative embodiments provide a computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer usable program code for port scan protection. In one embodiment, the process generates a reply data packet having a modified header for a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet in response to detecting a port scan. In one  
10 embodiment, the modified header for a protocol used to transmit data packets is a modified transmission control protocol header.

The modified reply data packet will illicit a response from a recipient of the modified data packet. The process sends the reply data packet to a first routing address associated with the  
15 port scan.

The process identifies a second routing address in a header of the response data packet in response to receiving a response to the modified reply data packet. The second routing address is an actual routing address of a source of the port scan. All network traffic from the  
20 second routing address may then be blocked to prevent an attack on any open ports. In one embodiment, the first routing address is a first Internet protocol address and the second routing address is a second Internet protocol address.

The modified header for the protocol used to transmit data packets may include a bad  
25 sequence number. A bad sequence number is a sequence number falling outside an acceptable range of sequence numbers or a protocol that elicits a response from the recipient of the reply data packet. In another embodiment, the modified header may include a reset flag or a finish flag. In another embodiment, the modified header is generated by altering a checksum used to generate the modified reply data packet.

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Viewed from a first aspect, the present invention provides a method for port scan protection, the method comprising the steps of: responsive to detecting a port scan, generating a reply

data packet having a modified header for a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet, wherein the modified reply data packet obtains a response from a recipient of the modified reply data packet; sending the modified reply data packet to a first routing address associated with the port scan; and responsive to receiving the response to the modified reply data packet, identifying a second routing address in a header of the response, wherein the second routing address is an actual routing address of a source of the port scan.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a sequence number which falls outside an acceptable range of sequence numbers.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein the sequence number is a protocol violation that will obtain a response from the recipient.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a reset flag.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a finish flag.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein modifying the header further comprises: altering a checksum used to generate the modified reply data packet.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method further comprising the step of: blocking network traffic originating from the second routing address to prevent an attack on any open ports.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein the first routing address is not a correct routing address of a computing device.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method further comprising the step of:  
responsive to receiving a port scan data packet, identifying a source routing address in a  
header of the port scan data packet as the first routing address.

5 Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein the modified header for the  
protocol is a modified transmission control protocol header.

Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein the modified header for the  
protocol is a modified user datagram protocol header.

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Preferably, the present invention provides a method wherein the first routing address is a  
first Internet protocol address and wherein the second routing address is a second Internet  
protocol address.

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Viewed from a second aspect, the present invention provides an apparatus comprising: a bus  
system; a communications system connected to the bus system; a memory connected to the  
bus system, wherein the memory comprises a computer usable program code; and a  
processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the  
computer usable program code to generate a reply data packet having a modified header for  
20 a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet in response to  
detecting a port scan, wherein the modified reply data packet obtains a response data packet  
from a recipient of the modified reply data packet; sends the modified reply data packet to a  
first routing address associated with the port scan; and identifies a second routing address in  
a header of the response data packet in response to receiving the response data packet,  
25 wherein the second routing address is an actual routing address of a source of the port scan.

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Preferably, the present invention provides an apparatus wherein the modified header for the  
protocol comprises a sequence number, wherein the sequence number is a sequence number  
which falls outside a range of acceptable sequence numbers. .

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Preferably, the present invention provides an apparatus wherein the modified header for the  
protocol comprises a reset flag.

Preferably, the present invention provides an apparatus wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a finish flag.

Preferably, the present invention provides an apparatus wherein the processor unit further  
5 executes the computer usable program code to block all network traffic originating from the second routing address to prevent an attack on any open ports.

Preferably, the present invention provides an apparatus wherein the sequence number is a protocol violation that obtains a response from a recipient of the reply data packet.

10 Preferably, the present invention provides an apparatus wherein the modified header for the protocol is a modified transmission control protocol header.

Preferably, the present invention provides an apparatus wherein the first routing address is a  
15 first Internet protocol address and wherein the second routing address is a second Internet protocol address.

Viewed from a third aspect, the present invention provides a system for protecting against port scans, the system comprising: a host computer, wherein the host computer comprises:  
20 an enhanced port scan protection software for detecting a port scan data packet and generating a reply data packet having a modified header for a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet in response to detecting a port scan; and a source Internet protocol address detector, wherein the source Internet protocol address  
25 detector identifies a source routing address in a header of a response to the modified reply data packet, wherein the source routing address is an actual routing address of a source of the port scan.

Preferably, the present invention provides a system wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a protocol violation for triggering a response from a recipient of the reply  
30 data packet.

Preferably, the present invention provides a system wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a reset flag or a finish flag.

Preferably, the present invention provides a system wherein the host computer is a first computer and further comprising: a second computer, wherein the second computer comprises: a port scanner, wherein the port scanner performs the port scan on the first computer by sending the port scan data packet having a fake source routing address to the first computer, wherein the fake source routing address is not a correct routing address for the second computer; and a transmission control protocol/Internet protocol layer, wherein the transmission control protocol/Internet protocol layer generates the response to the modified reply data packet automatically.

Viewed from a fourth aspect, the present invention provides a computer program product loadable into the internal memory of a digital computer, comprising software code portions for performing, when said product is run on a computer, to carry out all the steps of the method described above.

Viewed from a fifth aspect computer program product comprising: a computer usable medium including computer usable program code for port scan protection, said computer program product comprising: computer usable program code for generating a reply data packet having a modified header for a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet in response to detecting a port scan, wherein the modified reply data packet will illicit a response data packet from a recipient of the modified reply data packet; computer usable program code for sending the modified reply data packet to a first routing address associated with the port scan; and computer usable program code for identifying a second routing address in a header of the response data packet in response to receiving the response data packet, wherein the second routing address is an actual routing address of a source of the port scan.

Preferably, the present invention provides a computer program product wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a sequence number.

Preferably, the present invention provides a computer program wherein the sequence number is a sequence number falling outside an acceptable range of sequence numbers.

Preferably, the present invention provides a computer implemented method wherein the sequence number is a protocol violation that will obtain a response from a recipient of the reply data packet.

Preferably, the present invention provides a computer program product wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a reset flag.

Preferably, the present invention provides a computer program product wherein the modified header for the protocol comprises a finish flag.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Embodiments of the invention are described below in detail, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

**Figure 1** is a pictorial representation of a network of data processing systems in which preferred embodiments of the present invention may be implemented;

**Figure 2** is a block diagram of a data processing system in which preferred embodiments of the present invention may be implemented;

**Figure 3** is a block diagram of an open systems interconnection (OSI) basic reference model in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

**Figure 4** is a block diagram illustrating a currently used port scan protection mechanism;

**Figure 5** is a block diagram illustrating a flow through a port scan protection system for detecting a port scan with a fake source IP address in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

**Figure 6** is a block diagram illustrating a port scan protection mechanism in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

**Figure 7** is an exemplary illustration of port scan packets transmitted during a port scan in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

**Figure 8** is a flowchart illustrating a process for detecting a port scan with a fake source IP address in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and

**Figure 9** is a flowchart illustrating a process for modifying a reply data packet in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference now to the figures and in particular with reference to **Figures 1-2**, exemplary diagrams of data processing environments are provided in which illustrative embodiments may be implemented. It should be appreciated that **Figures 1-2** are only exemplary and are not intended to assert or imply any limitation with regard to the environments in which different embodiments may be implemented. Many modifications to the depicted environments may be made.

With reference now to the figures, **Figure 1** depicts a pictorial representation of a network of data processing systems in which illustrative embodiments may be implemented. Network data processing system **100** is a network of computers in which embodiments may be implemented. Network data processing system **100** contains network **102**, which is the medium used to provide communications links between various devices and computers connected together within network data processing system **100**. Network **102** may include connections, such as wire, wireless communication links, or fiber optic cables.

In the depicted example, server **104** and server **106** connect to network **102** along with storage unit **108**. In addition, clients **110**, **112**, and **114** connect to network **102**. These clients **110**, **112**, and **114** may be, for example, personal computers or network computers.

In the depicted example, server **104** provides data, such as boot files, operating system images, and applications to clients **110**, **112**, and **114**. Clients **110**, **112**, and **114** are clients to server **104** in this example. Network data processing system **100** may include additional servers, clients, and other devices not shown.

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A computing device, such as client **110**, can execute an application or other service available on a different computing device, such as server **106**, available over network **102** by connecting to a port on server **106** associated with the desired application or service. An application is computer software that uses the resources of a computing device to perform a task or service for a user.

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A port is an endpoint to a logical connection between client **110** and server **106** in network **102**. Ports are typically identified by a port number. Port numbers range from 0 to 65,536. Port numbers are assigned by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA). The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority is operated by Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

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Each application available on server **104** or **106** is associated with a different port number. Some port numbers are pre-assigned based on the type of application or service that is associated with a given port. These pre-assigned or standard port numbers are referred to as well-known ports. There are approximately 1,024 well-known port numbers reserved or pre-assigned to particular services and applications. For example, well-known port numbers include, but are not limited to, port 80 for hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) traffic, port 23 for Telnet, port 25 for simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP), port 53 for domain name servers (DNS), and port 194 for Internet relay chat (IRC). Thus, any port on any server that is designated for hypertext transfer protocol traffic will typically have an assigned port number of 80.

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Client **110** can access a particular application on server **104** or **106** by sending a connection request that specifies the port number associated with the particular application.

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In the depicted example, network data processing system **100** is the Internet with network **102** representing a worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) suite of protocols to communicate with one another. At the heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed data communication lines  
5 between major nodes or host computers, consisting of thousands of commercial, governmental, educational and other computer systems that route data and messages. Of course, network data processing system **100** also may be implemented as a number of different types of networks, such as for example, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), or a wide area network (WAN). **Figure 1** is intended as an example, and not as an architectural  
10 limitation for different embodiments.

With reference now to **Figure 2**, a block diagram of a data processing system is shown in which illustrative embodiments may be implemented. Data processing system **200** is an example of a computer, such as server **106** or client **110** in **Figure 1**, in which computer  
15 usable code or instructions implementing the processes may be located for the illustrative embodiments.

In the depicted example, data processing system **200** employs a hub architecture including a north bridge and memory controller hub (MCH) **202** and a south bridge and input/output  
20 (I/O) controller hub (ICH) **204**. Processing unit **206**, main memory **208**, and graphics processor **210** are coupled to north bridge and memory controller hub **202**. Processing unit **206** may contain one or more processors and even may be implemented using one or more heterogeneous processor systems. Graphics processor **210** may be coupled to the MCH through an accelerated graphics port (AGP), for example.

In the depicted example, local area network (LAN) adapter **212** is coupled to south bridge and I/O controller hub **204** and audio adapter **216**, keyboard and mouse adapter **220**, modem **222**, read only memory (ROM) **224**, universal serial bus (USB) ports and other  
25 communications ports **232**, and PCI/PCIe devices **234** are coupled to south bridge and I/O controller hub **204** through bus **238**, and hard disk drive (HDD) **226** and CD-ROM drive **230** are coupled to south bridge and I/O controller hub **204** through bus **240**. PCI/PCIe devices may include, for example, Ethernet adapters, add-in cards, and PC cards for notebook  
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computers. PCI uses a card bus controller, while PCIe does not. ROM **224** may be, for example, a flash binary input/output system (BIOS). Hard disk drive **226** and CD-ROM drive **230** may use, for example, an integrated drive electronics (IDE) or serial advanced technology attachment (SATA) interface. A super I/O (SIO) device **236** may be coupled to south bridge and I/O controller hub **204**.

An operating system runs on processing unit **206** and coordinates and provides control of various components within data processing system **200** in **Figure 2**. The operating system may be a commercially available operating system such as Microsoft® Windows® XP (Microsoft and Windows are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both). An object oriented programming system, such as the Java™ programming system, may run in conjunction with the operating system and provides calls to the operating system from Java programs or applications executing on data processing system **200**. Java and all Java-based trademarks are trademarks of Sun Microsystems, Inc. in the United States, other countries, or both.

Instructions for the operating system, the object-oriented programming system, and applications or programs are located on storage devices, such as hard disk drive **226**, and may be loaded into main memory **208** for execution by processing unit **206**. The processes of the illustrative embodiments may be performed by processing unit **206** using computer implemented instructions, which may be located in a memory such as, for example, main memory **208**, read only memory **224**, or in one or more peripheral devices.

The hardware in **Figures 1-2** may vary depending on the implementation. Other internal hardware or peripheral devices, such as flash memory, equivalent non-volatile memory, or optical disk drives and the like, may be used in addition to or in place of the hardware depicted in **Figures 1-2**. Also, the processes of the illustrative embodiments may be applied to a multiprocessor data processing system.

In some illustrative examples, data processing system **200** may be a personal digital assistant (PDA), which is generally configured with flash memory to provide non-volatile memory for storing operating system files and/or user-generated data. A bus system may be comprised

of one or more buses, such as a system bus, an I/O bus and a PCI bus. Of course the bus system may be implemented using any type of communications fabric or architecture that provides for a transfer of data between different components or devices attached to the fabric or architecture. A communications unit may include one or more devices used to transmit and receive data, such as a modem or a network adapter. A memory may be, for example, main memory **208** or a cache such as found in north bridge and memory controller hub **202**. A processing unit may include one or more processors or CPUs. The depicted examples in **Figures 1-2** and above-described examples are not meant to imply architectural limitations. For example, data processing system **200** also may be a tablet computer, laptop computer, or telephone device in addition to taking the form of a PDA.

Transmission control protocol/Internet protocol (TCP/IP) is a suite of communications protocols used to connect computing devices over a network, such as network **102** in **Figure 1**. Transmission control protocol and Internet protocol are the standard protocols for transmitting data over networks, such as the Internet.

Turning now to **Figure 3**, a block diagram of an open systems interconnection (OSI) basic reference model is shown in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Open systems interconnection reference model **300** is a common model of standard protocol layers for defining interoperability and communications between network devices. In this example, open systems interconnection reference model **300** includes the transmission control protocol/Internet protocol (TCP/IP) suite.

TCP/IP and similar protocols are utilized by open systems interconnection communications architecture. In this example, the architecture includes application layer **302**, presentation layer **304**, session layer **306**, transport layer **308**, network layer **310**, datalink layer **312**, and physical layer **314**. Each layer is responsible for handling various functions and/or communications tasks.

Application layer **302** handles the details of the particular application being accessed and/or executed. Many common TCP/IP applications are present for almost every implementation,

including a Telnet for remote login; a file transfer protocol (FTP); a simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) for electronic mail; and a simple network management protocol (SNMP).

The application software handled by application layer **302** may include any number of software applications designed to react to data through the communications port to provide the desired functionality the user seeks. Applications at this level may include those necessary to handle data, video, graphics, photos, and/or text which can be accessed by users of the Internet.

Presentation layer **304** includes a presentation protocol and a presentation service. The presentation service is used to identify an agreed upon transfer syntax that will be used. The presentation protocol enables users to communicate with the presentation service.

Session layer **306** consists of a session protocol and a session service. The session service provides services to the user, including, but not limited to, establishing connections between session-service users, terminating connections between users, performing negotiations for use of session layer tokens, and synchronizing points in transmitted data to permit the session to be recovered if an error or interruption occurs. The session protocol allows users to communicate with the session service.

Next, transport layer **308** provides an interface between network layer **310** and application layer **302** that facilitates the transfer of data between two host computers. Transport layer **308** is concerned with things such as, but not limited to, dividing the data passed to it from the application into appropriately sized chunks for the network layer below, acknowledging received packets, and setting timeouts to make certain the other end acknowledges packets that are sent. In the TCP/IP protocol suite, two distinctly different transport protocols are present, transmission control protocol (TCP) and user datagram protocol (UDP).

Transmission control protocol provides reliability services to ensure that data is properly transmitted between two hosts, including dropout detection and retransmission services. Conversely, user datagram protocol provides a much simpler service to application layer **302** by merely sending relatively simple packets of data called datagrams from one host to the

other. Datagrams are transmitted without providing any mechanism for guaranteeing that the data in the datagram is properly transferred. When using user datagram protocol, application layer **302** must perform the reliability functionality. An example of transport layer data packet information includes, but is not limited to, a port number for a source host and/or a port number for a destination host.

Network layer **310**, which may also be referred to as the Internet layer, handles the movement of packets of data around the network. For example, network layer **310** handles the routing of various packets of data that are transferred over the network. Network layer **310** in the TCP/IP suite is comprised of several protocols, including Internet protocol (IP), Internet control message protocol (ICMP), and Internet group management protocol (IGMP). Internet protocol (IP) may include, but is not limited to, Internet protocol version 4 (IPv4), Internet protocol version 6 (IPv6), or any other known or available version of Internet protocol. An example of network layer data packet information may include, but is not limited to, an Internet protocol (IP) address identifying a source host IP address and/or a destination host IP address.

Datalink layer **312** may also be referred to as the link layer or the network interface layer and normally includes the device driver in the operating system and the corresponding network interface card in the computer. Datalink layer **312** typically handles all the hardware details of physically interfacing with physical layer **314**, such as, but not limited to, an Ethernet network Interface card and/or a wireless Internet adapter. An example of datalink layer data packet information may include, but is not limited to, a media access control (MAC) address.

Physical layer **314** refers to the network media being used, such as optical cables or Ethernet cables. In other words, physical layer **314** is the physical network cable connecting a computing device, such as client **110** in **Figure 1**, to a network, such as network **102** in **Figure 1**.

The mechanism of the illustrative embodiments may be more specifically implemented in a layer, such as transport layer **308** and/or network layer **310**.

**Figure 4** is a block diagram illustrating a currently used port scan protection mechanism. Network data processing system **400** is a data processing system including two or more computing devices connected to a network, such as network data processing system **100** in **Figure 1**. In this example, the network is the Internet. However, the network may also include a local area network, a wide area network, an Ethernet, or any other type of network. Network data processing system **400** includes malicious host **402** and victim **404**.

Malicious host **402** is a hacker or other unauthorized user on a computing device, such as client **110** in **Figure 1**, performing a port scan of victim **404**. In other words, malicious host **402** is attempting to locate a vulnerable open access point in victim **404** so that malicious host **402** can gain unauthorized access to victim **404** and/or launch an attack on victim **404** through the open port. Malicious host **402** is performing a port scan of victim **404** to locate vulnerable open access points for use in launching an attack against victim **404**.

Victim **404** is a computing device hosting one or more applications and/or services. Malicious Host **402** is connected to a network, such as network **102** in **Figure 1**. A client computing device can access the applications and/or services available on victim **404** by requesting a connection to a port associated with a given application or service through a network connection.

Victim **404** includes port scan protection **405**. Port scan protection **405** is any currently available port scan protection software for detecting port scans and blocking a source IP address of malicious host **402**. A common method by which port scan protection **405** works is by monitoring a set of closed ports which are not being used by victim **404**, but may be used by hackers for exploitation due to vulnerabilities associated with the applications associated with the ports. Port scan protection **405** assumes that legitimate users would not attempt to access a port in the set of closed ports because legitimate users would know that victim **404** does not provide the applications or services associated with the set of closed ports. Only malicious hosts, such as malicious host **402** would attempt to connect to a port in the set of closed ports because they are fishing for vulnerable services listening on the ports.

If port scan protection **405** detects a data packet requesting a connection to a port in the set of closed ports, such as a synchronization (SYN) data packet or a pattern of these data packets coming from a particular remote host, port scan protection **405** will shun or block all traffic from the particular remote host. In this manner, even if the remote host detected a vulnerable open port, the remote host will not be able to launch an attack because all future network traffic from the remote host is blocked.

In this example, malicious host **402** performs a port scan by sending a series of data packets to victim **404** requesting a connection to one or more well-known ports on victim **404**. Data packet **406** is one of the series of data packets sent by malicious host **402**.

Data packet **406** is a transmission control protocol/Internet protocol (TCP/IP) data packet containing a request to connect to a port identified as port “n” on victim **404**. In this example, data packet **406** is transmission control protocol synchronization (TCP SYN) message requesting connection to port “n.” Port “n” may be any port number, such as port 80 associated with hypertext transfer protocol traffic.

In this example, data packet **406** includes a fake or false source IP address. A source IP address is an IP address identifying the sender of a data packet. A fake source IP address is an IP address identifying incidental victim **408** rather than the actual sender of data packet **406**. Incidental victim **408** may be an actual computing device or incidental victim **408** may not actually exist. In other words, the fake IP address used by malicious host **402** does not have to identify an actual computing device. In this example, data packet **406** includes source IP address “A” associated with incidental victim **408** rather than IP address “B” which is the actual IP address for malicious host **402**.

In response to receiving data packet **406**, victim **404** sends data packet **410** to incidental victim **408**. Data packet **410** is a transmission control protocol/Internet protocol data packet indicating whether port “x” is an open port or a closed port. In this example, data packet **410** is a synchronize acknowledge (SYN/ACK) message. Data packet **410** is being sent to a destination IP address “A” associated with incidental victim **408**. Therefore, malicious host

**402** will not receive data packet **410** in the ordinary course of message transmission from victim **404** to incidental victim **408**.

Because malicious host **402** is not the intended recipient of data packet **410**, malicious host **402** snoops **412** data packet **410** from the network. Snooping refers to capturing or viewing a data packet that was intended to be sent to a different destination computing device. In this example, malicious host **402** uses a packet sniffer to snoop data packet **410** intended to be received by incidental victim **408**. A packet sniffer is an application that captures data packets transmitted over the network despite the fact that the malicious host is not the intended recipient of the data packet.

Thus, malicious host **402** is informed as to whether port “x” is an open port that may be vulnerable to attack. If port “x” is an open port, malicious host **402** launches attack **414** against victim **404**.

Victim **404** has current port scan protection software. The current port scan protection allows victim **404** to recognize data packet **406** as a possible port scan from a hacker, such as malicious host **402**. The current port scan protection software enables victim **404** to block subsequent messages from the source IP address identified in a suspected port scan, such as data packet **406**. However, because the source IP address in data packet **406** was a fake IP address, victim **404** will not block messages from malicious host **402**, such as messages from malicious host **402** associated with attack **414**. In this manner, malicious host **402** may be able to bypass current port scan protection software to attack and possibly disable or compromise victim **404**.

Thus, in this example, malicious host **402** is a port scanner that is attempting to connect to a vulnerable port by sending a TCP SYN packet, such as data packet **406**, to a given port on victim **404**. Data packet **406** generated by malicious host **402** includes a fake source IP address for an incidental victim that may or may not exist. If there is a program or application listening on the given port, victim **404** responds by sending a TCP SYN/ACK packet, such as data packet **410** to the incidental victim.

Malicious host **402** monitors the network and sees data packet **410** go by. Malicious host **402** determines that the given port is an open port that can be connected to for exploitation of any existing vulnerabilities in the application associated with the given port. Malicious host **402** can determine which application is associated with the given port based on the well-known port numbers assigned to each port.

Port scan protection **405** on victim **404** responds to the fake packet by blocking the fake source IP address “A” for incidental victim **408**. Malicious host **402** is free to send attack **414** to the given port on victim **404** using the appropriate hacking tool for this particular port and vulnerable application program associated with the particular port.

The illustrative embodiments recognize that when current port scan protection software responds to a fake data packet using a fake source IP address received from a hacker during a port scan, the port scan protection software responds by blocking the fake source IP address for the incidental victim, rather than the actual IP address for the true malicious host. The current port scan protection software fails to identify and block the true source IP address where fake source IP addresses are provided by a malicious host. Therefore, the illustrative embodiments recognize the need for enhanced port scan protection software that will shun a host IP address that is actually launching an attack as quickly as possible after a port scan is detected.

Thus, the illustrative embodiments provide a computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer usable program code for port scan protection. In one embodiment, the process generates a reply data packet having a modified header for a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet in response to detecting a port scan.

In the illustrative embodiments described below, the modified header for the protocol that is used to transmit data packets is a modified transmission control protocol header. However, the illustrative embodiments are not limited to modifying headers in transmission control protocols. The illustrative embodiments may modify a header in any type of known or available protocol used for transmitting data packets over a network connection to form a

modified reply data packet, including, but not limited to, transmission control protocol or user datagram protocol (UDP).

5 The modified reply data packet will illicit a response from a recipient of the modified data packet. The process sends the reply data packet to a first routing address associated with the port scan. The process identifies a second routing address in a header of the response data packet in response to receiving a response to the modified reply data packet. In the examples described below, the first routing address is a first Internet protocol address and the second routing address is a second Internet protocol address. The Internet protocol may  
10 be any version of Internet protocol, including but not limited to, Internet protocol version 4 (IPv4), Internet protocol version 6 (IPv6), or any other version of Internet protocol. In addition, the illustrative embodiments are not limited to Internet protocol. Any type of known or available protocol for providing routing addresses for one or more ports may be used in accordance with the illustrative embodiments.

15 The second routing address is an actual routing address of a source of the port scan. All network traffic from the second routing address may then be blocked to prevent an attack on any open ports.

20 Turning now to **Figure 5**, a block diagram illustrating a flow through a port scan protection system for detecting a port scan with a fake source IP address is shown in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Computer **500** may be implemented using any type of computing device, including but not limited to, server **106** or client **110** in **Figure 1**.

25 Computer **500** includes set of applications **502**. Set of applications **502** is a set of one or more applications and/or services available on computer **500**. An application is computer software that uses the resources of a computing device to perform a task or service for a user.

30 Set of applications **502** may be stored on a data storage device, such as data storage device **504**. Data storage device **504** is any type of known or available device for storing data, including but not limited to, main memory, a database, a read only memory (ROM), a

random access memory (RAM), a non-volatile random access memory (NV-RAM), a hard disk, a flash memory, a floppy disk, a compact disk rewritable (CD-RW), or any other type of data storage device. In this example, data storage device **504** is located on or locally to computer **500**. However, data storage device **504** may also be located remotely to computer **500**.

Computer **500** uses transmission control protocol/Internet protocol (TCP/IP) **506** to transmit and receive messages from other computing devices connected to a network, such as network **102** in **Figure 1**. TCP/IP **506** is a suite of standard protocols for providing a connection between a sender and receiver. TCP/IP **506** may provide guaranteed delivery and ensure that packages are received in a correct sequence. In other words, when messages are sent from another computing device to computer **500**, the messages may not be received in order. Therefore, TCP/IP **506** uses transmission control protocol (TCP) sequence numbers to ensure the messages are delivered to the application layer in the correct order.

TCP/IP **506** gives a sequence number to every message that is sent by TCP/IP **506** so that a recipient of the messages can determine the correct order for the messages. Initial sequence numbers (ISNs) are exchanged between computer **500** and a second computing device when the connection between computer **500** and the second computing device is established.

TCP/IP **506** allows for receiving messages with sequence numbers that are out of sequence if the out-of-sequence numbers are within certain bounds or limitations. However, if the sequence number is too far outside the expected range of sequence numbers, the message will be disregarded or identified as a bad message. In such cases, computer **500** may request the second computer resend the message with the bad sequence number.

TCP/IP **506** includes port **508** and port **510**. In this example, computer **500** is depicted as having two ports. However, computer **500** may have any number of ports.

Port **508** has an assigned port number and is associated with an application in set of applications **502**. For example, if port **508** is associated with an application for handling hypertext transfer protocol traffic, then port **508** would be assigned to port number 80. In this example, port **508** is an open port.

Port **510** is also assigned a port number. In this example, port **510** is assigned port number 20 for file transfer protocol (FTP). However, in this example, file transfer protocol is not available on computer **500**. Therefore, port **510** is a closed port.

5 Computer **500** also includes enhanced port scan protection **512**. Enhanced port scan protection **512** is port scan protection software for detecting port scans and blocking an IP address associated with a malicious host or other computing device performing the port scan, such as malicious host **516**.

10 Malicious host **516** is a hacker, cracker, unauthorized user, or illegitimate user performing a port scan on one or more ports associated with computer **500**, such as ports **508** and **510**. Malicious host **516** includes TCP/IP **518** suite of protocols for sending and receiving data packets over the network. Malicious host **516** connects to computer **500** over this network connection.

15 Malicious host **516** includes port scanner **520**. Port scanner **520** may be any type of known or available device for performing a port scan of a set of one or more ports on computer **500**. Port scanner **520** may be implemented completely in software or as a combination of hardware and software. In this example, port scanner **520** generates port scan data packet  
20 **522**. Port scan data packet **522** comprises fake source IP address **524**. Fake source IP address **524** is not an IP address associated with malicious host **516**. Fake source IP address **524** may be an IP address for an actual computing device other than malicious host **516**, or fake source IP address **524** may be an IP address for a computing device that does not actually exist.

25 Enhanced port scan protection **512** includes source IP address detection **514**. Source IP address detection **514** is a software component for generating reply data packet **526**. Reply data packet **526** is a data packet that is modified to compel TCP/IP **518** on malicious host **516** to generate response **528**. In other words, if enhanced port scan detection **512** detects a  
30 port scan, enhanced port scan protection **512** responds by sending reply data packet **526** to malicious host **516** that will cause malicious host **516** to send response **528**. Response **528** may include a reset (RST) flag or finish acknowledge (FIN/ACK) flag in the transmission

control protocol header of response **528**. In this example, response **528** also includes the malicious host's real IP address **530** in the network layer of the transmission control protocol header of response **528**.

5 Computer **500** can identify the malicious host's real IP address **530** from response **528**. Enhanced port scan protection **512** then shuns or blocks real IP address **530** of malicious host **516** to prevent any future attacks from malicious host **516**.

10 Next, **Figure 6** is a block diagram illustrating a port scan protection mechanism in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Network data processing system **600** is a data processing system including multiple computing devices connected over a network, such as network data processing system **100** in **Figure 1**. In this example, the network is the Internet. However, the network may also include a local area network, a wide area network, an Ethernet, or any other type of network. Network data processing system **600** includes  
15 malicious host **602** and victim **604**.

Malicious host **602** is a hacker or other unauthorized user on a computing device, such as client **110** in **Figure 1**, or malicious host **516** in **Figure 5**. Malicious host **602** is performing an unauthorized port scan on victim **604** in an attempt to locate a vulnerable open access  
20 point so that malicious host **602** can gain unauthorized access to victim **604** and/or launch an attack on victim **604** through the open port.

Victim **604** is a computing device hosting one or more applications and/or services, such as server **106** in **Figure 1** or computer **500** in **Figure 5**. A client computing device can access  
25 the applications and/or services available on victim **604** by requesting a connection to a port associated with a given application or service through a network connection.

Victim **604** includes enhanced port scan protection **605** that includes source IP address detection software, such as enhanced port scan protection **512** in **Figure 5**. Enhanced port  
30 scan protection **605** is software for use in identifying an IP address of malicious host **602** when malicious host **602** launches a port scan by sending data packet **606** using a fake

source IP address and blocking the IP address for malicious host **602** rather than blocking the fake source IP address used by malicious host **602**.

Malicious host **602** performs a port scan by sending a series of data packets to victim **604** requesting a connection to one or more well-known ports on victim **604**. Data packet **606** is one of the series of data packets sent by malicious host **602** to a port on victim **604**, such as port scan data packet **522** in **Figure 5**.

Data packet **606** is a transmission control protocol/Internet protocol data packet requesting a connection to a port identified as port “n” on victim **604**. In this example, data packet **606** is a transmission control protocol synchronization (TCP SYN) data packet. Port “n” may be any port number, such as port 80 associated with hypertext transfer protocol traffic.

Data packet **606** includes a fake or false source IP address for an incidental victim. The incidental victim may or may not actually exist. In this example, data packet **606** includes source IP address “A” associated with an incidental victim, rather than IP address “B” which is the actual IP address for malicious host **602**.

In response to receiving data packet **606**, enhanced port scan protection **605** generates data packet **608**. Data packet **608** is a reply data packet, such as reply data packet **526** in **Figure 5**. Data packet **608** is manufactured so that the data packet will illicit a response from malicious host **602** if malicious host **602** snoops data packet **608** from off the network. The header of the transmission control protocol (TCP) header of data packet **608** is altered in a manner that will trick the TCP/IP layer of the malicious host into responding to data packet **608** if malicious host **602** snoops data packet **608** from the network.

For example, if enhanced port scan protection **605** gives data packet **608** a bad sequence number, TCP/IP layer of malicious host **602** will respond by sending a synchronization (SYN) flag in an attempt to reconnect to victim **604**. A bad sequence number is a sequence number that is outside the expected or acceptable range of possible sequence numbers.

A finish (FIN) flag indicates the end of a session. When a data packet, including a finish flag, is received, TCP/IP automatically sends a finish acknowledgement in response. Thus, if port scan protection **605** gives data packet **608** a finish flag, TCP/IP layer of malicious host **602** will automatically send a finish acknowledge (FIN/ACK) flag in a response message to victim **604**.

Thus, in this example, enhanced port scan protection **605** sends data packet **608** to the incidental victim associated with the fake source IP address. Data packet **608** is a transmission control protocol/Internet protocol data packet indicating whether port “n” is an open port or a closed port. In this example, data packet **608** contains a synchronize acknowledge (SYN/ACK) flag and a bad sequence number. Victim **604** sends data packet **608** to the fake IP address “A” associated with the incidental victim.

The datalink layer in the header of data packet **608** indicates a media access control (MAC) address for the destination of data packet **608**. The media access control address specifies the particular network adapter of the destination computing device. In this case, the media access control address specifies the network adapter of the incidental victim.

Normally, if malicious host **602** was not running in snoop mode, malicious host **602** would not receive data packet **608** because the datalink layer media access control address does not match the network adapter associated with malicious host **602**. However, in this example, malicious host **602** is in snoop mode. Therefore, the Ethernet driver associated with malicious host **602** will ignore the media access control address in the header of data packet **608** and pass data packet **608** up the TCP/IP layer associated with malicious host **602**.

Malicious host **602** snoops data packet **608** from the network. In this example, malicious host **602** uses a packet sniffer to snoop data packet **608** from the network. In response to detecting the bad sequence number in data packet **608**, the TCP/IP layer of malicious host **602** automatically generates and transmits a response to data packet **610** to victim **604** in an attempt to reconnect to victim **604**. Data packet **610** is a response data packet, such as response **528** in Figure 5.

Data packet **610** contains the actual source IP address “B” for malicious host **602** rather than the fake IP address “A.” Enhanced port scan protection **605** blocks the actual source IP address “B” from sending further messages to victim **604** over the network. In this manner, malicious host **602** is blocked from launching any attacks on any vulnerable ports on victim **604**.

**Figure 7** is an exemplary illustration of port scan packets transmitted during a port scan in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. Port scan data packet **702** is a data packet having a false source IP address generated by a malicious host, such as port scan data packet **522** in **Figure 5** and/or data packet **606** in **Figure 6**. In this example, the port scan data packet is a synchronization (SYN) data packet.

Reply data packet **703** is a data packet generated by a recipient of port scan data packet **702**, such as reply data packet **526** in **Figure 5** and/or data packet **608** in **Figure 6**. The recipient is an intended victim of the malicious host. Reply data packet **703** is generated by the victim and sent to the false IP address. In this example, the reply data packet is a synchronization acknowledge (SYN/ACK) data packet generated by an intended victim of the malicious host, such as victim **604** in **Figure 6**.

Port scan data packet **702** includes information for the datalink layer in section **704**. The transmission route of the port scan data packet from the malicious host to the intended victim will assign the Ethernet (ETH) media access control (MAC) address based on routing tables.

Port scan data packet **702** also includes information in the network layer. The network layer information includes a fake source IP address “A” in line **705**. The fake source IP address “A” is an IP address for an existent or non-existent incidental victim, rather than the actual IP address for the malicious host that generated port scan data packet **702**. The network layer information in the data packet also includes a destination IP address **706** identifying the victim computing device.

The transport layer information in port scan data packet **702** identifies a source port number for the malicious hacker and a destination port number for the victim host computing device,

as shown in line **708**. Line **710** is a sequence number for the port scan packet. Line **712** identifies the data packet as a synchronization (SYN) data packet requesting a connection with the victim computing device.

5       Reply data packet **703** includes a source IP address for victim **714** and destination IP address **716**. Destination IP address **716** is the fake IP address used by the malicious hacker.

10       The transport layer information includes a source port number for the victim computing device generating the reply data packet, as shown in line **714**. Line **716** includes a destination IP address. The destination IP address in this example is the fake IP address for the incidental victim. The incidental victim may or may not actually exist.

15       Line **722** may provide a bad sequence number. The bad sequence number is a sequence number that is outside the expected or acceptable range of possible sequence numbers.

Line **722** indicates that reply data packet **703** is a synchronization/acknowledge (SYN/ACK) data packet. In another example, line **722** could indicate that reply data packet **703** is a reset (RST) or finish (FIN) data packet.

20       In other words, using currently available port scan protection software, if the victim had an active service on port 23, which may be identified in line **708**, the victim would respond by generating a SYN/ACK reply data packet. This would be the end of the session between port 23 on the victim and port 1494 of the malicious host. The malicious host would then know that the victim had a telnet service running on port 23. The malicious host could then  
25       launch a telnet attack on port 23. The current port scan protection software would block the fake IP address identified in line **705** of the port scan packet but would be unable to block the actual IP address of the malicious host. Thus, the malicious host would be free to attack port 23.

30       In accordance with the illustrative embodiments, when the victim receives port scan data packet **702**, the enhanced port scan protection software on the victim responds in such a way as to obligate the actual malicious host to respond. For example, the enhanced port scan

protection software generates reply data packet **703** that includes a bad sequence number, a reset (RST) message, or a finish (FIN) message. Because the incidental host never sent port scan data packet **702**, the incidental host will not respond to reply data packet **703**. Instead, if the incidental host actually exists, the incidental host will only ignore reply data packet **703**. If the incidental host does not exist, then the incidental host cannot respond to reply data packet **703**. Thus, only the malicious host is expected to respond to reply data packet **703**. In this manner, the victim can identify and block the actual IP address of a malicious host using a port scan to identify open ports that may be vulnerable to attack by the malicious host.

Referring now to **Figure 8**, a flowchart illustrating a process for detecting a port scan with a fake source IP address is depicted in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this illustrative example shown in **Figure 8**, the process is performed by a software component for port scan protection, such as enhanced port scan protection **512** in **Figure 5**.

The process begins by making a determination as to whether a port scan is detected (step **802**). If a port scan is not detected, the process returns to step **802** until a port scan is detected. A port scan may be detected when a port scan data packet or a series of data packets is received from a malicious host.

If a port scan is detected in step **802**, the process generates a modified reply data packet (step **804**). The process sends the modified reply data packet to the source IP address identified in the port scan data packet (step **806**). In this example, the source IP address is a fake source IP address that is not a correct IP address of the host conducting the port scan.

The process then makes a determination as to whether a response to the reply is received (step **808**). If a response is not received, the process returns to step **808** until a response is received. When a response is received in step **808**, the process blocks all network traffic from a second IP address identified in the transmission control protocol header of the response (step **810**) to prevent any attacks that may be launched from the source of the port scan with the process terminating thereafter.

**Figure 9** is a flowchart illustrating a process for modifying a reply data packet in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. In this example in **Figure 9**, the process may be implemented by a software component for port scan protection, such as enhanced port scan protection **512** in **Figure 5**.

5

The process begins by generating a reply data packet (step **902**). The process makes a determination as to whether to modify the reply data packet by adding a bad sequence number to the transmission control protocol header for the reply data packet (step **904**). If a determination is made to modify the reply data packet by adding a bad sequence number, the process adds a bad sequence number to the header of the reply data packet (step **906**) and transmits the modified reply data packet to the incidental victim (step **908**) with the process terminating thereafter.

10

Returning to step **904**, if a determination is made that a bad number sequence will not be added, the process makes a determination as to whether to add a reset flag or a finish flag to the reply data packet (step **910**). If the process makes a determination that a flag will not be added, the process terminates thereafter.

15

Returning to step **910**, if the process makes a determination to modify the reply data packet by adding a reset flag or a finish flag, the process adds a reset flag or a finish flag (step **912**) to the reply data packet. The process then sends the modified reply data packet to the incidental victim (step **908**) with the process terminating thereafter.

20

Thus, the illustrative embodiments provide a computer implemented method, apparatus, and computer usable program code for port scan protection. In one embodiment, the process generates a reply data packet having a modified transmission control protocol header to form a modified reply data packet in response to detecting a port scan. The modified reply data packet will illicit a response from a recipient of the modified data packet. The process sends the reply data packet to a first Internet protocol address associated with the port scan.

25

30

The process identifies a second Internet protocol address in a header of the response data packet in response to receiving a response to the modified reply data packet. The second

Internet protocol address is an actual Internet protocol address of a source of the port scan.

All network traffic from the second Internet protocol address may then be blocked to prevent an attack on any open ports.

5 The modified transmission control protocol header may include a bad sequence number. A bad sequence number is a sequence number falling outside an acceptable range of sequence numbers. In another embodiment, the modified transmission control protocol header may include a reset flag or a finish flag. In another embodiment, the modified transmission control protocol is generated by altering a checksum used to generate the modified reply data  
10 packet.

In this manner, attacks on open and potentially vulnerable ports by hackers using false IP addresses can be prevented.

15 The flowchart and block diagrams in the figures illustrate the architecture, functionality, and operation of possible implementations of systems, methods and computer program products according to various embodiments. In this regard, each step in the flowchart or block diagrams may represent a module, segment, or portion of code, which comprises one or more executable instructions for implementing the specified logical function(s). It should  
20 also be noted that, in some alternative implementations, the functions noted in the steps may occur out of the order noted in the figures. For example, two steps shown in succession may, in fact, be executed substantially concurrently, or the steps may sometimes be executed in the reverse order, depending upon the functionality involved.

25 The invention can take the form of an entirely hardware embodiment, an entirely software embodiment or an embodiment containing both hardware and software elements. In a preferred embodiment, the invention is implemented in software, which includes but is not limited to firmware, resident software, microcode, etc.

30 Furthermore, the invention can take the form of a computer program product accessible from a computer-usable or computer-readable medium providing program code for use by or in connection with a computer or any instruction execution system. For the purposes of this

description, a computer-usable or computer readable medium can be any tangible apparatus that can contain, store, communicate, propagate, or transport the program for use by or in connection with the instruction execution system, apparatus, or device.

5 The medium can be an electronic, magnetic, optical, electromagnetic, infrared, or semiconductor system (or apparatus or device) or a propagation medium. Examples of a computer-readable medium include a semiconductor or solid state memory, magnetic tape, a removable computer diskette, a random access memory (RAM), a read-only memory (ROM), a rigid magnetic disk and an optical disk. Current examples of optical disks include  
10 compact disk – read only memory (CD-ROM), compact disk – read/write (CD-R/W) and DVD.

A data processing system suitable for storing and/or executing program code will include at least one processor coupled directly or indirectly to memory elements through a system bus.

15 The memory elements can include local memory employed during actual execution of the program code, bulk storage, and cache memories which provide temporary storage of at least some program code in order to reduce the number of times code must be retrieved from bulk storage during execution.

20 Input/output or I/O devices (including but not limited to keyboards, displays, pointing devices, etc.) can be coupled to the system either directly or through intervening I/O controllers.

Network adapters may also be coupled to the system to enable the data processing system to  
25 become coupled to other data processing systems or remote printers or storage devices through intervening private or public networks. Modems, cable modem and Ethernet cards are just a few of the currently available types of network adapters.

The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and  
30 description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of

the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

1. A computer implemented method for port scan protection, the computer implemented method comprising:

responsive to detecting a port scan, generating, by a processor, a reply data packet having a modified header conforming to a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified  
5 reply data packet, wherein the modified reply data packet will elicit a response from a recipient of the modified reply data packet, wherein the modified header will compel the recipient's transmission control protocol/internet protocol layer to respond to the modified reply data packet in response to the recipient snooping the modified reply data packet;

10 sending the modified reply data packet to a first source internet protocol address associated with the port scan; and

responsive to receiving the response to the modified reply data packet, identifying that a second source internet protocol address in a header of the response is a correct source internet protocol address of a source of the port scan, wherein the second source internet protocol address is different from the first source internet protocol address.

15 2. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a bad sequence number.

20 3. The computer implemented method of claim 2 wherein the bad sequence number is a protocol violation that will excite a response from the recipient.

4. The computer implemented method of claim 2 wherein the bad sequence number is a sequence number falling outside an acceptable range of sequence numbers.

25 5. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a reset flag.

6. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a finish flag.

7. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein modifying the header further comprises:

altering a checksum used to generate the modified reply data packet.

5

8. The computer implemented method of claim 1 further comprising:

blocking all network traffic originating from the second routing address to prevent an attack on any open ports.

10 9. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein the first routing address is not a correct routing address of a computing device.

10. The computer implemented method of claim 1 further comprising:

15 responsive to receiving a port scan data packet, identifying a source routing address in a header of the port scan data packet as the first routing address.

11. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol is a modified transmission control protocol header.

20 12. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol is a modified user datagram protocol header.

13. The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein a datalink layer in the modified header indicates a media access control address for a destination of the modified reply data packet.

25

14. A computer program product for port scan protection, the computer program product comprising:

a computer usable storage device including computer usable program code embodied therewith, the computer usable program code comprising:

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computer usable program code for generating a reply data packet having a modified header conforming to a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet in response to detecting a port scan, wherein the modified reply data packet will elicit a response data packet from a recipient of the modified reply data packet, wherein the modified header will compel the recipient's transmission control protocol/internet protocol layer to respond to the modified reply data packet in response to the recipient snooping the modified reply data packet;

computer usable program code for sending the modified reply data packet to a first source internet protocol address associated with the port scan; and

computer usable program code for identifying that a second source internet protocol address in a header of the response data packet in response to receiving the response data packet a correct source internet protocol address of a source of the port scan, wherein the second source internet protocol address is different from the first source internet protocol address.

15. The computer program product of claim 14 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a bad sequence number.

16. The computer program product of claim 15 wherein the bad sequence number is a sequence number falling outside an acceptable range of sequence numbers.

17. The computer implemented method of claim 15 wherein the bad sequence number is a protocol violation that will excite a response from a recipient of the reply data packet.

18. The computer program product of claim 14 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a reset flag.

19. The computer program product of claim 14 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a finish flag.

20. The computer program product of claim 14 further comprising:

computer usable program code for altering a checksum used to generate the modified reply data packet.

21. The computer program product of claim 14 further comprising:

computer usable program code for blocking all network traffic originating from the second routing address to prevent an attack on any open ports.

22. The computer program product of claim 14 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol is a modified transmission control protocol header.

23. The computer program product of claim 14 wherein a datalink layer in the modified header indicates a media access control address for a destination of the modified reply data packet.

24. An apparatus comprising:

a bus system;

a communications system connected to the bus system;

a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the memory includes computer usable program code; and

a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the computer usable program code to generate a reply data packet having a modified header conforming to a protocol used to transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet in response to detecting a port scan, wherein the modified reply data packet will elicit a response data packet from a recipient of the modified reply data packet, wherein the modified header will compel the recipient's transmission control protocol/internet protocol layer to respond to the modified reply data packet in response to the recipient snooping the modified reply data packet; send the modified reply data packet to a first source internet protocol address associated with the port scan; and identify that a second source internet protocol address in a header of the response data packet in response to receiving the response data packet a correct source internet protocol

address of a source of the port scan, wherein the second source internet protocol address is different from the first source internet protocol address.

25. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol  
5 includes a bad sequence number.

26. The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the bad sequence number is a protocol violation that will excite a response from a recipient of the reply data packet.

10 27. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a reset flag.

28. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a finish flag.

15 29. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the processor unit further executes the computer usable program code to block all network traffic originating from the second routing address to prevent an attack on any open ports.

20 30. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol is a modified transmission control protocol header.

31. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein a datalink layer in the modified header indicates a media access control address for a destination of the modified reply data packet.

25 32. A system for protecting against port scans, the system comprising:  
a host computer, wherein the host computer comprises:  
an enhanced port scan protection software for detecting a port scan data packet and  
generating a reply data packet having a modified header conforming to a protocol used to  
30 transmit data packets to form a modified reply data packet in response to detecting a port scan,  
wherein the modified reply data packet will elicit a response data packet from a recipient of the

modified reply data packet, wherein the modified header will compel the recipient's transmission control protocol/internet protocol layer to respond to the modified reply data packet in response to the recipient snooping the modified reply data packet, wherein the modified reply data packet is sent to a first source internet protocol address associated with the port scan; and

5           a source Internet protocol address detector, wherein the source Internet protocol address detector identifies that a second source internet protocol address in a header of a response to the modified reply data packet is a correct source internet protocol address of a source of the port scan, wherein the second source internet protocol address is different from the first source internet protocol address.

10           33. The system of claim 32 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a protocol violation that will excite the response from the recipient of the reply data packet.

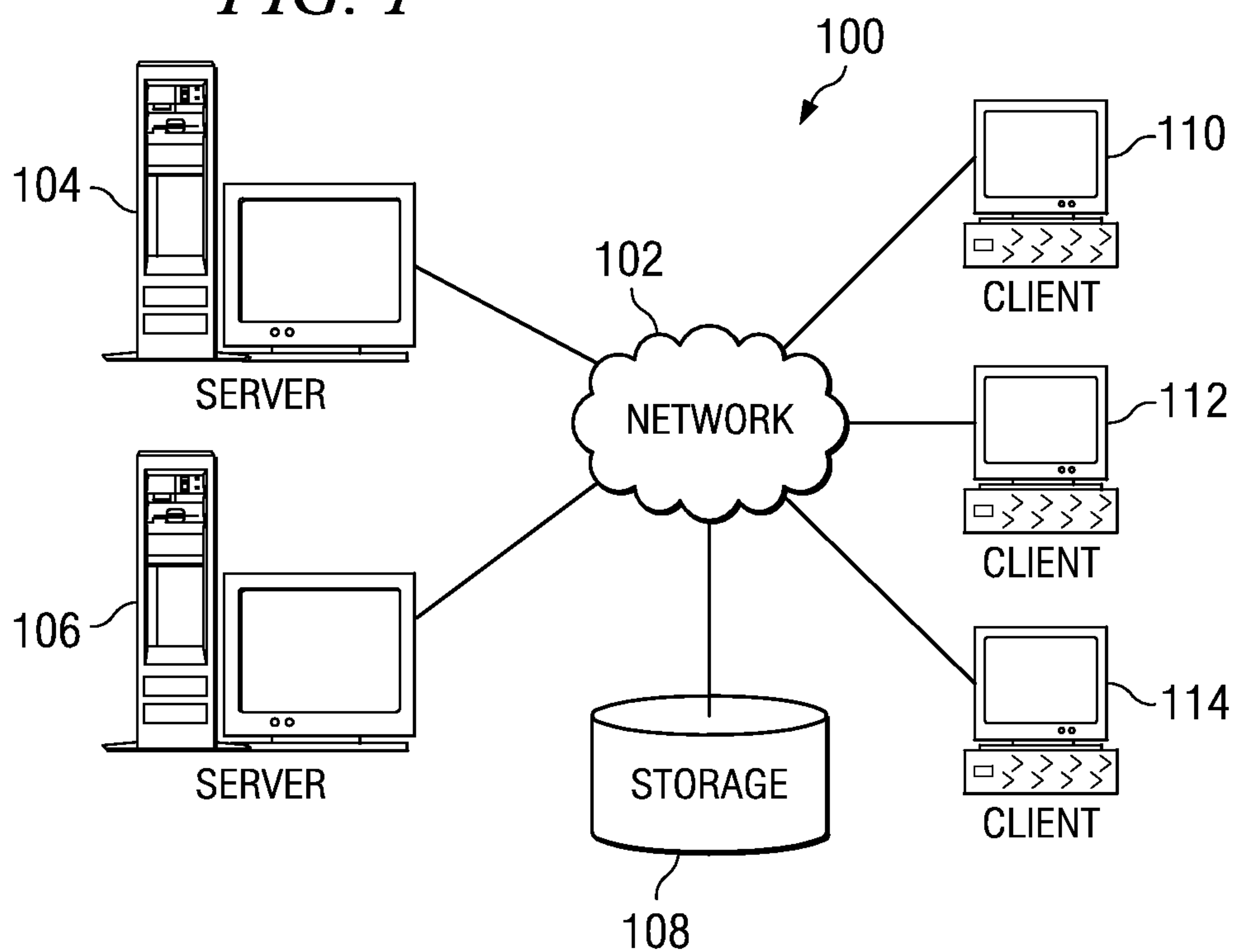
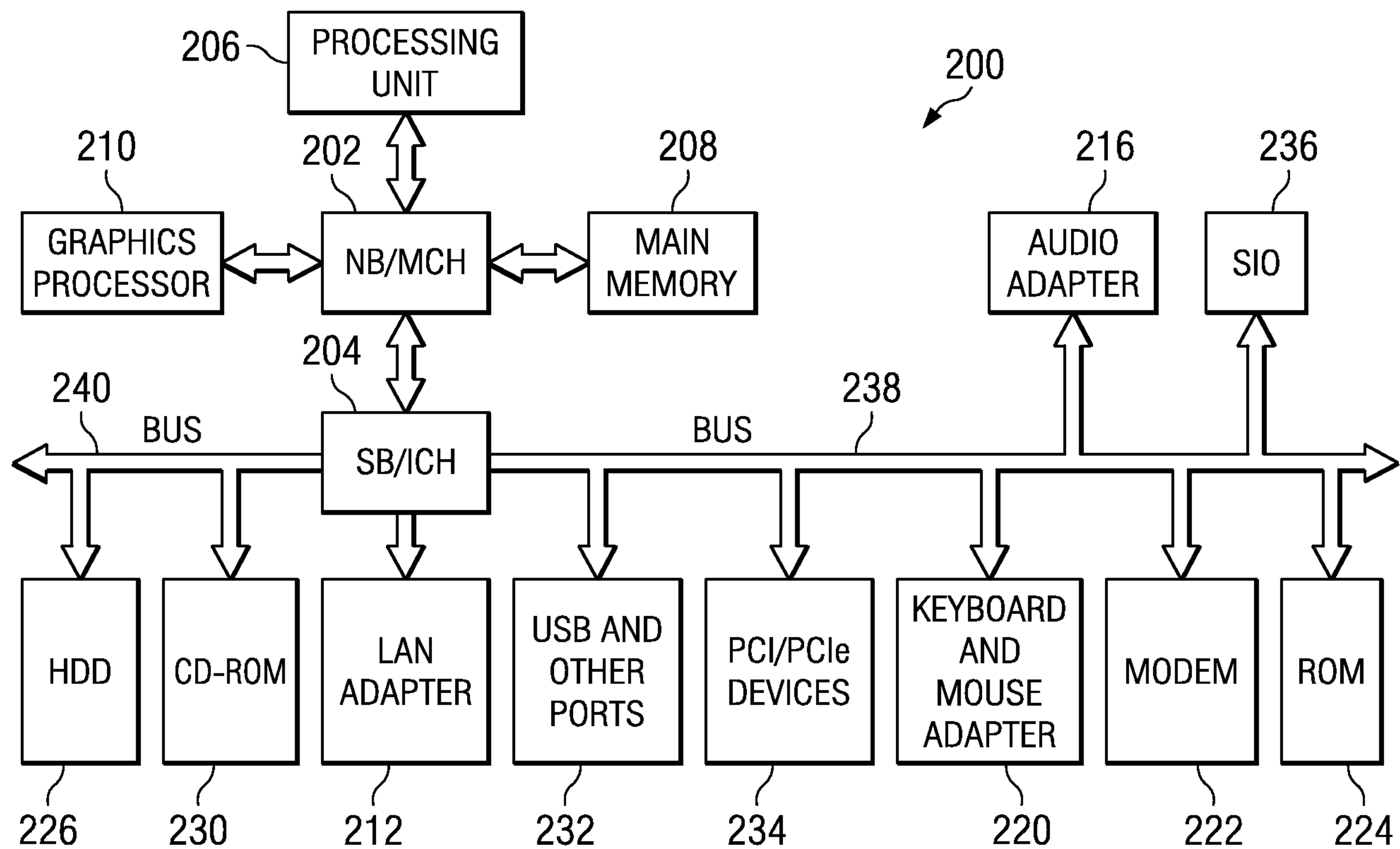
15           34. The system of claim 32 wherein the modified header conforming to the protocol includes a reset flag or a finish flag.

          35. The system of claim 32 wherein the host computer is a first computer and further comprising:  
          a second computer, wherein the second computer comprises:

20           a port scanner, wherein the port scanner performs the port scan on the first computer by sending the port scan data packet having a fake source routing address to the first computer, wherein the fake source routing address is not a correct routing address for the second computer; and

25           a transmission control protocol/Internet protocol layer, wherein the transmission control protocol/Internet protocol layer generates the response to the modified reply data packet automatically.

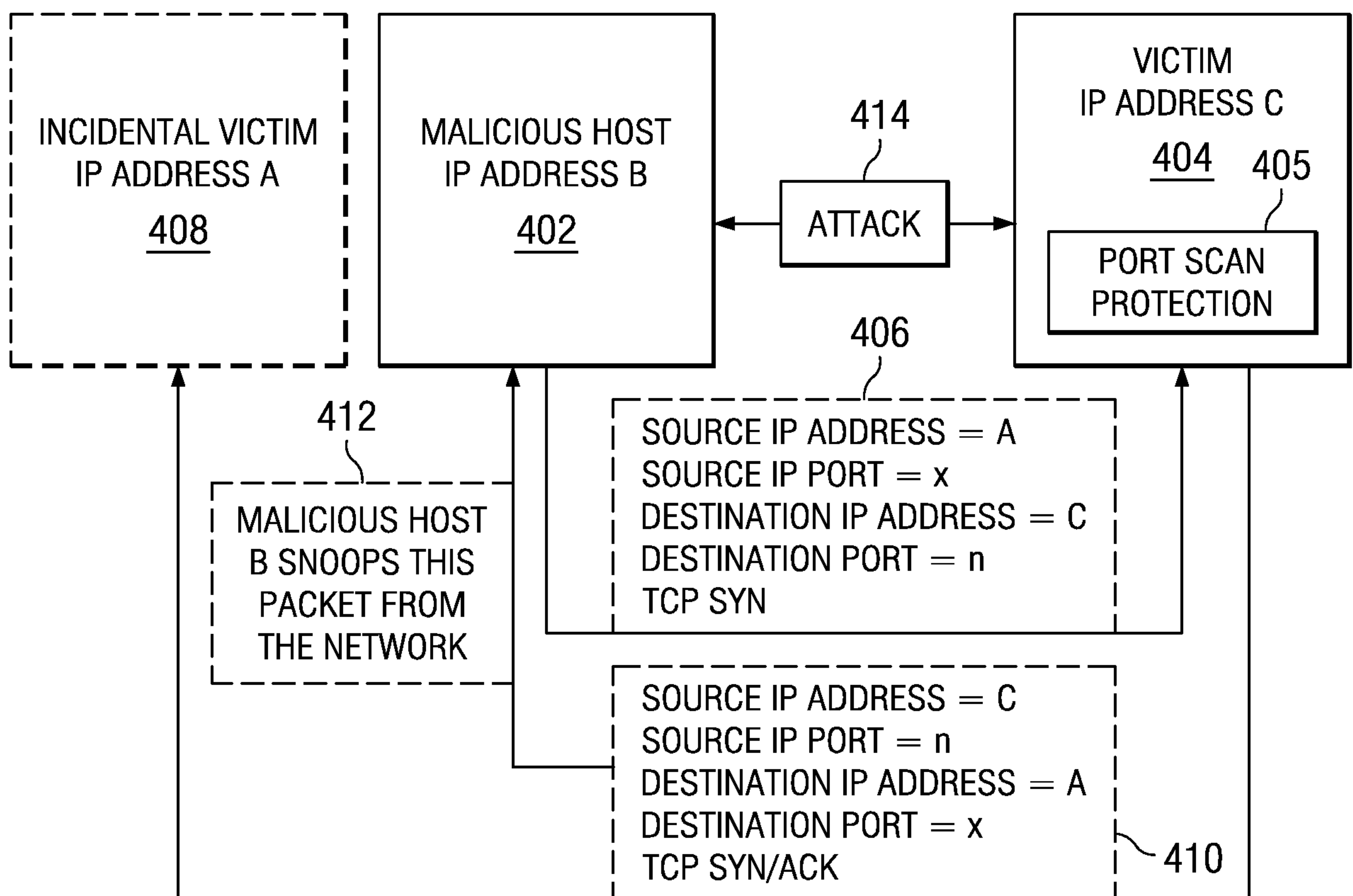
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*FIG. 1**FIG. 2*

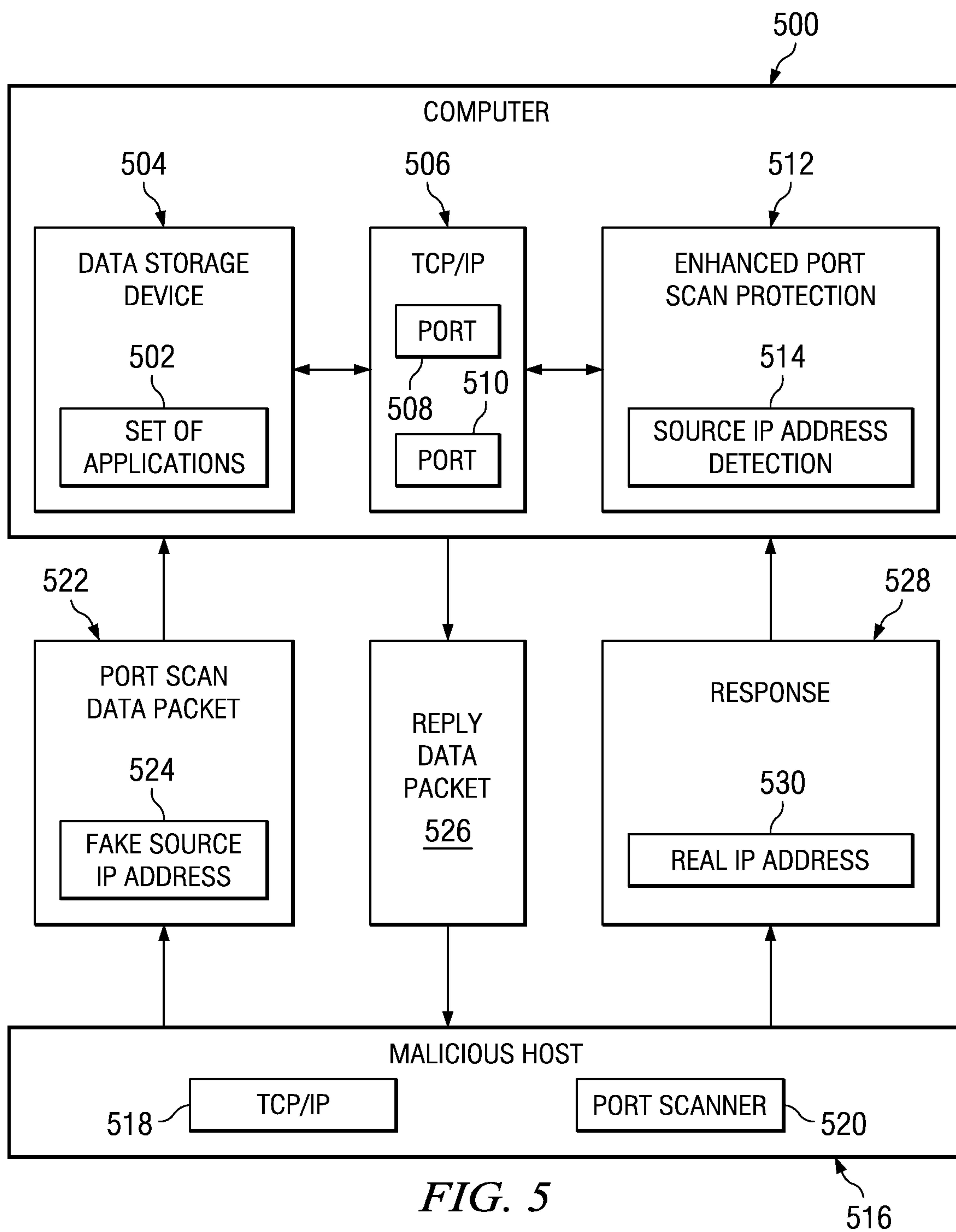
300

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|     | LAYER           | EXAMPLE                         |
|-----|-----------------|---------------------------------|
|     |                 |                                 |
| 302 | APPLICATION     |                                 |
| 304 | PRESENTATION    |                                 |
| 306 | SESSION         |                                 |
| 308 | TRANSPORT LAYER | TCP OR UDP                      |
| 310 | NETWORK         | IPv4 OR IPv6                    |
| 312 | DATALINK LAYER  | ETHERNET NETWORK INTERFACE CARD |
| 314 | PHYSICAL LAYER  | THE CABLE                       |

*FIG. 3**FIG. 4*  
(PRIOR ART)

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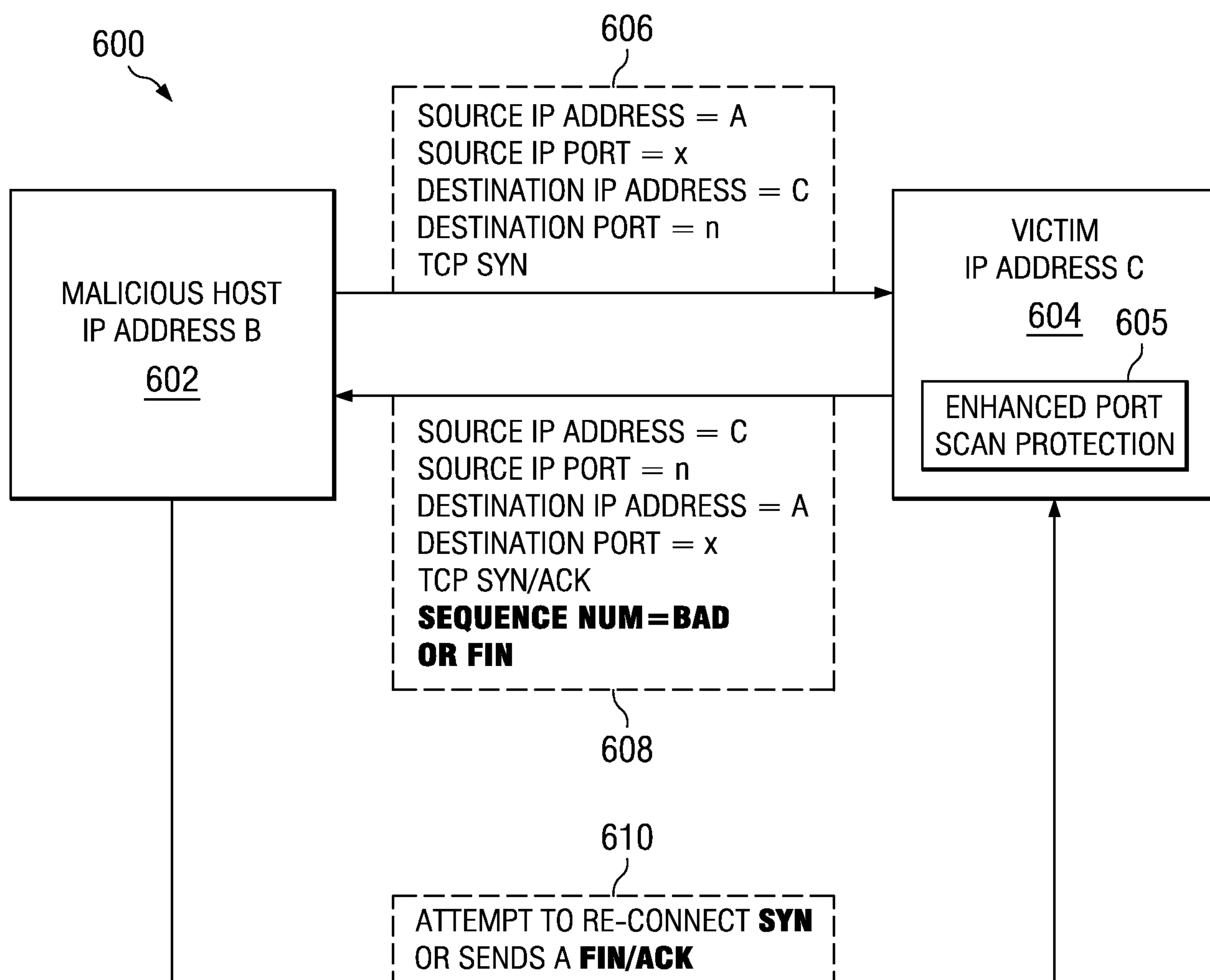


FIG. 6

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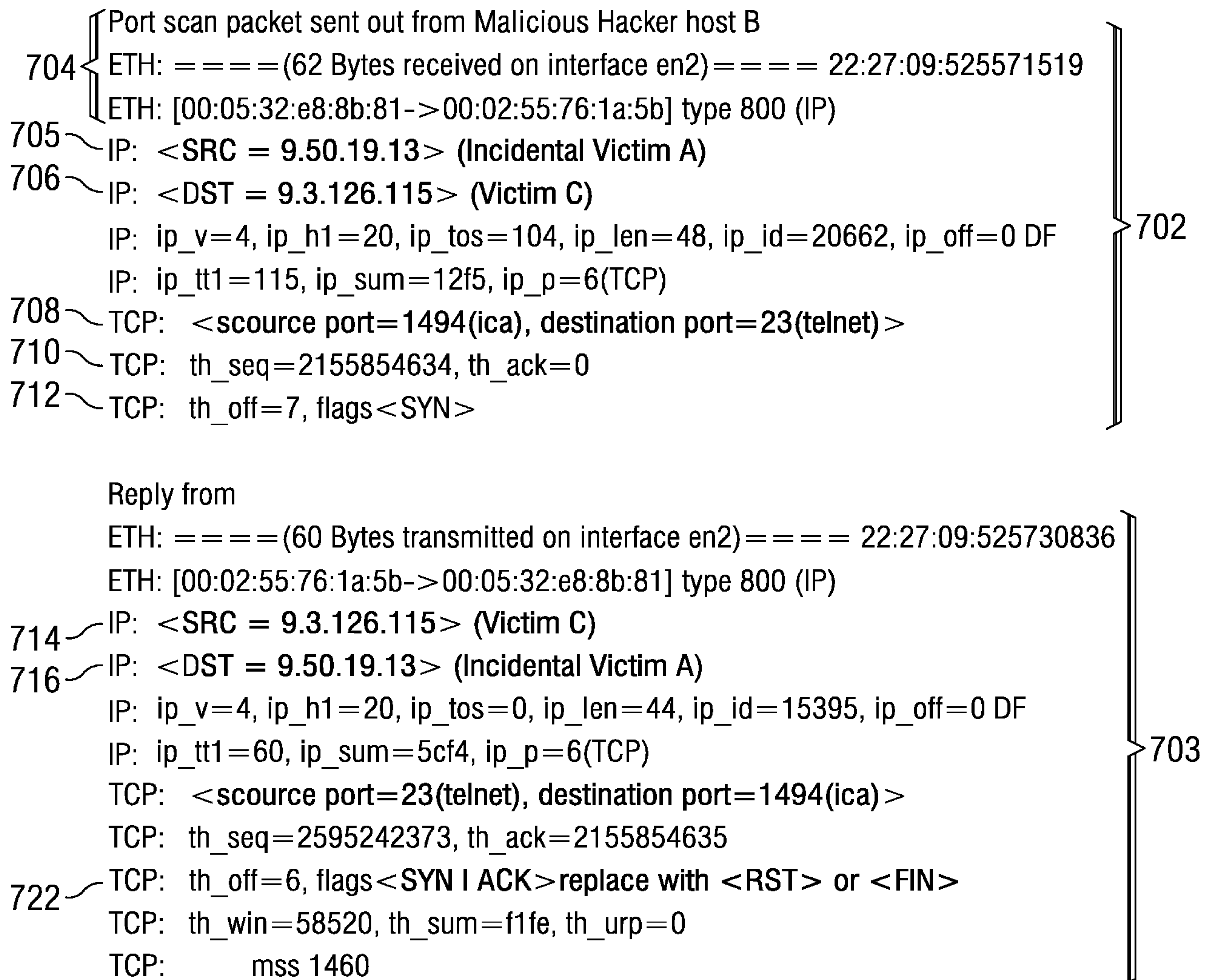
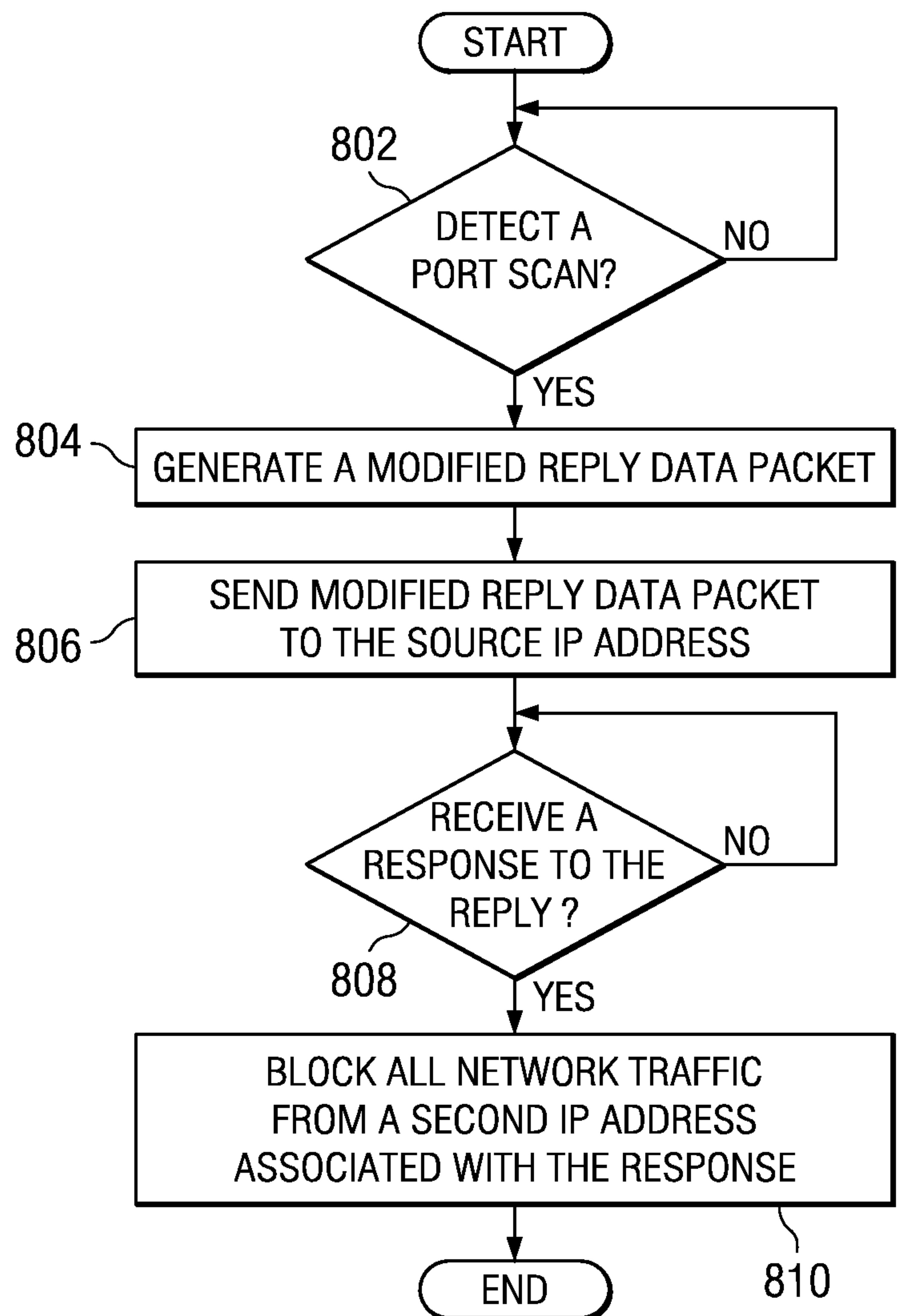


FIG. 7

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*FIG. 8**FIG. 9*