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# [54] METHOD OF CONDUCTING NOCTURNAL POLICING INSPECTIONS BY CONTROLLING INTERIOR LIGHTS OF BUILDINGS

[72] Inventor: **Louis M. Burgess,** 6026 North 9th Street, Arlington, Va. 22205

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[52] **U.S. Cl.**.....**340/147,** 340/164, 340/171, 340/329, 340/330
[51] **Int. Cl.**.....**H04q 1/00,** H04q 5/00, H04q 9/00
[58] **Field of Search**.....340/164, 171, 329, 330, 147

[56] **References Cited**

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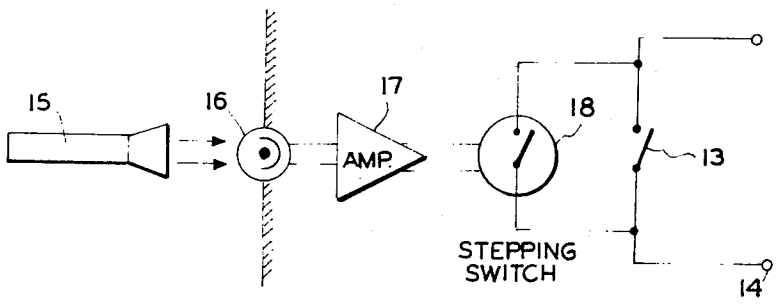
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*Primary Examiner*—Harold I. Pitts
*Attorney*—Paris, Haskell & Levine

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A method of inspecting the interior of a building for the presence of unauthorized persons, or other irregularities, at night is disclosed. A patrolman or night watchman is positioned at a vantage point exterior to the building for observing its interior through a window and is enabled to turn on the lights inside the building to fully observe the interior.

**7 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures**



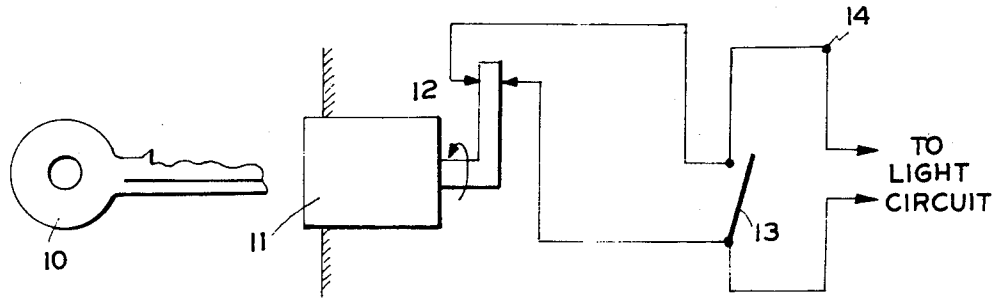



FIG.1

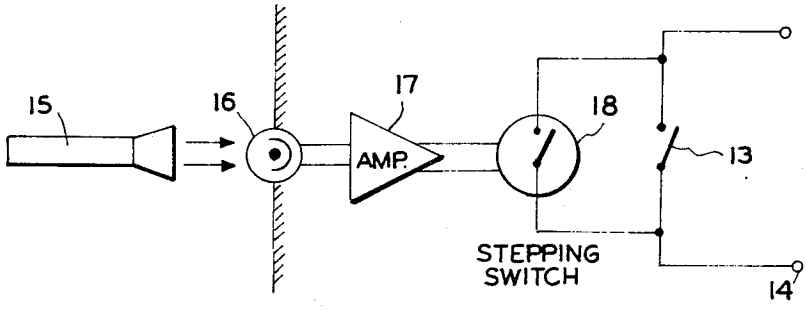



FIG.2

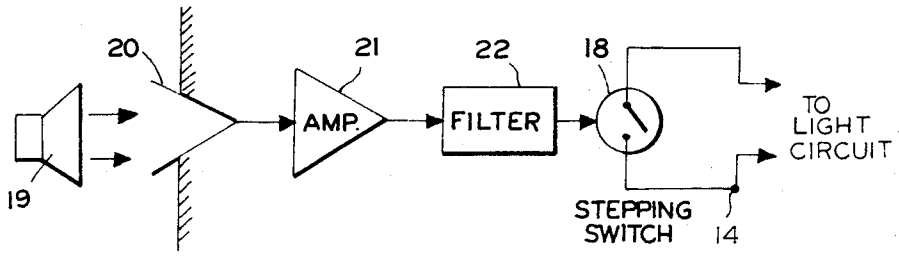



FIG.3

*INVENTOR*
LOUIS M. BURGESS

BY *Paris, Haskell & Levine*
*ATTORNEYS*

# METHOD OF CONDUCTING NOCTURNAL POLICING INSPECTIONS BY CONTROLLING INTERIOR LIGHTS OF BUILDINGS

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In the past, a night watchman or patrolman conducted a visual inspection of a building's interior either by physically entering the structure to conduct the search, or shining a light through the windows and observing from outside.

Both methods of inspection have disadvantages. In the first method, the person making the inspection may unintentionally disclose his presence to an unauthorized person who may see or hear the various approach noises of the guard. Entering the building also requires considerable time limiting the number of inspections a guard may make during the course of one night. Further a guard must be provided with keys for entering all buildings to be inspected.

The second method of inspecting the interior of a building from the outside through a window also has disadvantages. The guard is forced to conduct only a cursory inspection due to limited visibility afforded by a portable lighting means and an unauthorized person inside can usually hide and avoid detection from the guard's portable flashlight.

## ADVANTAGES OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

An important advantage of the present method of inspecting the interior of a building at night is that the guard may conduct a more complete search without having to physically enter the building.

A second advantage of this inspection method is that the guard may make a more complete search of the building's interior through the increased lighting capability provided by the regular lighting system inside the building.

A third advantage of this inspection method is that a guard can conduct his search more quickly than would be possible by former methods of inspection and it is more difficult for a person inside to hide from view.

A further advantage of this inspection method is that it affords a guard conducting a nocturnal inspection with the element of surprise over an unauthorized person inside the building.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention pertains to a method of inspecting the interior of a building at night from outside by viewing through a window or similar vantage point to determine the presence of unauthorized personnel within the building. To conduct this inspection the building is provided with externally operable switching means accessible to a police or guard located outside the building that are connected to turn on the lights inside the building when operated by a code means outside the building. When the guard positions himself near the window and applies a correct decoding combination to the external switch, a circuit to the internal lighting system is completed to completely illuminate the area. Aided by this complete internal illumination, the guard may quickly determine the presence of unauthorized personnel inside the building, and if all is in order, may quickly depart to inspect the next building.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of one manner of practicing the invention using coded key actuation of the external switch,

FIG. 2 illustrates a second manner of practicing the invention using light actuation,

FIG. 3 illustrates a third manner using sound actuation of the switch.

FIG. 1 depicts one manner of practicing the invention to aid a night watchman or policeman in rapidly and effectively conducting an inspection of the interior of a building. The building is provided with key-operated lock-type electrical switch



11 placed in a location known only to properly authorized persons. This switch is positioned for access at the exterior of the building and preferably near a window or door opening through which the entire interior can be clearly viewed. The switch 11 is in turn connected to the interior lighting circuit in parallel with the usual master switch 13 provided inside of the building. A policeman or guard provided with the proper coded key 10 can operate the lock switch 11 to turn on the interior lighting system within the building.

Consequently by merely turning on the interior lights, a policeman located outside the building can clearly view the entire interior of the building to detect any unauthorized persons inside, and can do so using the element of surprise so that any such person is not given an opportunity to hide or avoid detection. After completing this inspection, the patrolman can turn the key 10 to its off position, extinguishing the lights of the building and returning the interior of the building to darkness. He can then remove the key and proceed to inspect the next succeeding building.

An alternative method for conducting a nocturnal inspection is shown in FIG. 2. Here the building is provided with a stepping light switch 18 operated by a photocell 16 and amplifier 17; with switch 18 connected in parallel with the master switch 13 inside of the building, to operate the interior lighting system. In this embodiment, the guard or policeman uses his flashlight 15 to operate the building interior lighting system instead of a key 10 as in FIG. 1. Specifically, the guard pulses or flashes the beam from his flashlight 15 to operate the building interior lighting system instead of a key 10 as in FIG. 1. Specifically, the guard pulses or flashes the beam from his flashlight 15 onto the photocell 16 according to a preset code. The electrical pulses generated by the photocell 16 are amplified by amplifier 17, and each pulse moves the contact of the stepping switch 18, of a conventional nature commonly used in the telephone applications. A preset number of such pulses moves the switch contact to a proper terminal to turn on the lights inside the building the same manner as previously discussed. This enables the policeman to observe the interior of the building which is now fully illuminated by the overhead interior lights, and he can therefore easily detect any unauthorized occupants.

A number of preset coding systems may be used with such a stepping switch 18 that are known only to the policeman or guard so as to avoid any accidental or unauthorized switching "on" of the interior lights of the building. For example, the photocell 16 operated switching means 18 can be preset to receive a specific number of on and off light flashes from the flashlight 15, to turn on the light. A similar, or different code, of flashing light pulses may be used by the guard to turn off the interior lights using the same mechanism, so that the patrolman may be again be flashing his flashlight 15, turn off the interior lights after he has completed his inspection of the building and has determined that conditions inside are safe and proper.

In many instances it may be desirable to provide an automatic mechanism for turning off the lights after a time internal has elapsed that is sufficient for enabling the patrolman to fully observe the interior of the building and to apprehend any unauthorized occupants. For example, a time delay operated switch opening mechanism (not shown) may be incorporated in or connected to the stepping switch circuit to automatically open the circuit and extinguish the lights after a preset time has expired.

FIG. 3 shows a third arrangement for conducting a nocturnal inspection of the interior of a building from outside. Here the building is provided with an externally accessible microphone 20 that responds to a particular frequency, or to a code of sound frequencies, and the policeman or guard is provided with an acoustic frequency source 19 that generates a sound frequency, or code, at or above a range audible to humans. This source may be in the form of a simple whistle, or may be more elaborate pushbutton-operated sound source 19, In the same manner as previously described, a guard desiring

to inspect the building operates his special whistle 19 of other source near the microphone 20 or sound detector. This microphone responds to produce electrical signals that are amplified by amplifier 21 and filtered by a filter 22 to prevent operation of the switch 18 by a spurious source; and then applied to the stepping switch 18 as discussed above in FOG. 2. The stepping switch 18 responds to the whistle or sound source in the same manner as discussed above to close the proper switch contacts for energizing the lights inside the building. After the patrolman has fully inspected the interior and determined that all matters are as they should be, he can then extinguish the lights by again operating his sound source. Alternatively, as discussed above, the circuit of the stepping switch 18 may be provided with a time delay opening switch (not shown), that opens the circuit after expiration of a preset time interval to automatically extinguish the lights inside the building.

It will be appreciated that the method of the present invention is particularly useful for nocturnally inspecting commercial places of business, such as gasoline stations, supermarkets, shops and department stores, all of which customarily have large plate glass window front areas that permit observation of almost the entire first floor of the shop or store through such windows when the overhead lights within the building are turned on. The policeman or guard can, therefore, very rapidly and thoroughly inspect all such stores in a shopping center by proceeding from one to the next and sequentially operating the coding switches provided for each store as he passes the front window areas and making a brief inspection of each store. By providing automatically operating extinguishing switches, this guard can inspect more such stores within a given time.

It will be appreciated that the coding mechanism described above need not be usually complex or expensive since it only serves the purpose of preventing an unauthorized user from turning on the interior lights of the building from a location outside the building and does not provide access to the interior of the building. Therefore, in the event that such coding means does become known, or does become accessible to unauthorized users, such as children, the only harm than can be done is that such persons can operate the interior lights. Furthermore should such coding become known, the presetting of the stepping switches can be changed in FIGS. 2 and 3 to change the code; and in FIG. 1, a differently coded lock switch may be substituted to change the code.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for conducting nocturnal policing and inspection of the interior of buildings from locations exterior of the building through transparent door and window openings without entering the building comprising: switching means interconnected with the interior lighting system circuitry of the building and accessible to the authorized user exterior to the building, said switching means being disposed adjacent one of said transparent openings whereby the interior of the building may be observed through said opening, said switching means being normally inactuable by unauthorized users, and means enabling an unauthorized user to actuate said switching means from the exterior of the building while being disposed in a position to observe the interior of the building through said transparent opening when said interior lights are actuated.

2. In the system of claim 1, said switching means being coded and requiring preset decoding actuation by said authorized user.

3. In the system of claim 2, said switching means being a coded lock switch that is actuable by a coded key.

4. In the system of claim 2, said switching means being responsive to light and said user employing a light source to actuate said switch.

5. In the system of claim 2, said switching means being responsible to an acoustical wave and said user employing a wave source.

6. In the system of claim 1, said switching means automatically extinguishing said interior lights after a preset elapsed time interval.

7. In the system of claim 1, a plurality of said switching means, each being associated with a different one of a plurality of different buildings disposed in a grouped array, with each switching means connected with the interior lighting circuitry of its associated building and disposed to be actuated at an exterior location adjacent a transparent opening of its associated building, whereby an authorized inspector may conveniently and rapidly visit the buildings in said array and actuate the interior lighting of any selected ones of said buildings in any desired sequence and observe the interiors thereof in any sequence without entering any of the buildings.

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