References cited herein:

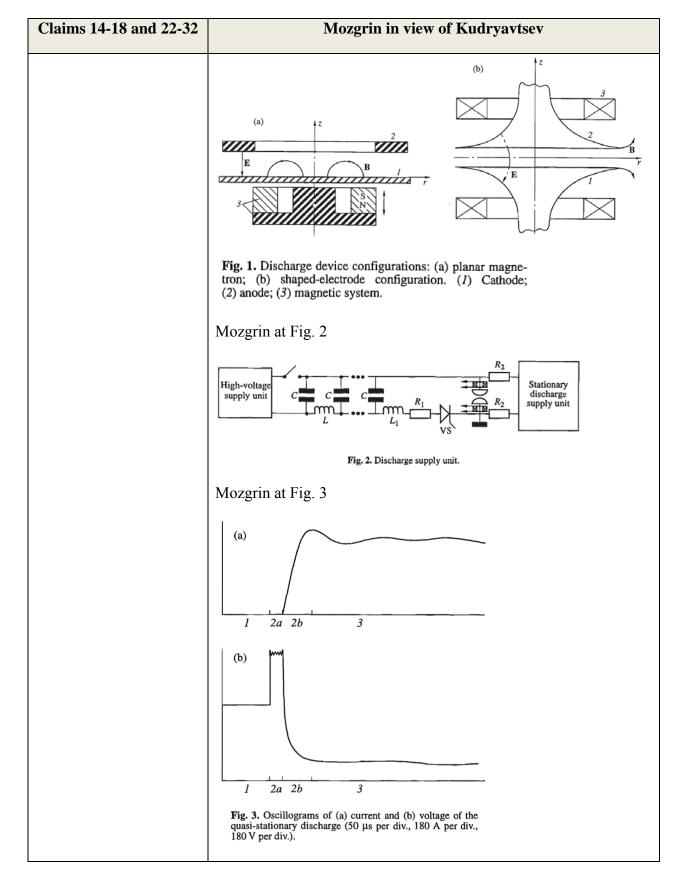
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- U.S. Patent No. 7,604,716 ("'716 Patent")
- D.V. Mozgrin, *et al*, <u>High-Current Low-Pressure Quasi-Stationary Discharge in a</u> <u>Magnetic Field: Experimental Research</u>, Plasma Physics Reports, Vol. 21, No. 5, 1995 ("Mozgrin")
- A. A. Kudryavtsev, *et al*, <u>Ionization relaxation in a plasma produced by a pulsed inert-gas</u> <u>discharge</u>, Sov. Phys. Tech. Phys. 28(1), January 1983 ("Kudryavtsev")
- Milton Ohring, The Material Science of Thin Films, Academic Press, 1992 ("Ohring")

Claims 14-18 and 22-32	Mozgrin in view of Kudryavtsev
14. A method for generating a strongly- ionized plasma, the method comprising:	The combination of Mozgrin with Kudryavtsev discloses a method for generating a strongly-ionized plasma.
	'716 Patent at claim 24 ("wherein the peak plasma density of the strongly-ionized plasma is greater than about $10^{12}$ cm <sup>-3</sup> ")
	Mozgrin at Fig 1
	Mozgrin at 400, right col, $\P$ 4 ("To study the high-current forms of the discharge, we used two types of devices: a planar magnetron and a ystem with specifically shaped hollow electrodes.")
	Mozgrin at 401, right col, ¶2 ("For pre-ionization the initial plasma density in the $10^9 - 10^{11}$ cm <sup>-3</sup> range.")
	Mozgrin at 409, left col, ¶ 4 ("The implementation of the high- current magnetron discharge (regime 2) in sputtering plasma density (exceeding $2x10^{13}$ cm <sup>-3</sup> ).")
	Mozgrin at 409, left col, ¶5 ("The high-current diffuse discharge (regime 3) is useful for producing large-volume uniform dense plasmas $n_i \cong 1.5 \times 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3} \dots$ ").
a. ionizing a feed gas in a chamber to form a	The combination of Mozgrin with Kudryavtsev discloses ionizing a feed gas in a chamber to form a weakly-ionized plasma that
weakly-ionized plasma that substantially eliminates the probability of developing an electrical breakdown	substantially eliminates the probability of developing an electrical breakdown condition in the chamber.
	'716 Patent at 5:14-15 ("The weakly-ionized plasma 232 is also referred to as a pre-ionized plasma.")
condition in the chamber;	'716 Patent at claim 23 ("wherein the peak plasma density of the
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Claims 14-18 and 22-32	Mozgrin in view of Kudryavtsev
and	weakly-ionized plasma is less than about 10 <sup>12</sup> cm <sup>-3</sup> ")
	Mozgrin at Figs. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7
	Mozgrin at 401, left col, $\P$ 1 ("The [plasma] discharge had an annular shape and was adjacent to the cathode.")
	Mozgrin at 401, left col, $\P$ 4 ("[A]pplying a square voltage pulse to the discharge gap which was filled up with either neutral or pre- ionized gas.")
	Mozgrin at 402, right col, ¶2 ("Figure 3 shows typical voltage and current oscillograms Part I in the voltage oscillogram represents the voltage of the stationary discharge (pre-ionization stage).")
	Mozgrin at 401, right col, ¶2 ("[f]or pre-ionization, we used a stationary magnetron discharge; provided the initial plasma density in the $10^9 - 10^{11}$ cm <sup>-3</sup> range.")
	Mozgrin at 400, right col, ¶ 3 ("We investigated the discharge regimes in various gas mixtures at $10^{-3} - 10$ torr")
	Mozgrin at 402, ¶ spanning left and right cols ("We studied the high-current discharge in wide ranges of discharge currentand operating pressureusing various gases (Ar, N <sub>2</sub> , SF <sub>6</sub> , and H <sub>2</sub> ) or their mixtures of various composition")
b. supplying an electrical pulse across the weakly- ionized plasma that excites atoms in the weakly-ionized plasma, thereby generating a strongly-ionized plasma without developing an electrical breakdown condition in the chamber.	The combination of Mozgrin with Kudryavtsev discloses supplying an electrical pulse across the weakly-ionized plasma that excites atoms in the weakly-ionized plasma, thereby generating a strongly- ionized plasma without developing an electrical breakdown condition in the chamber.
	'716 Patent at claim 23 ("wherein the peak plasma density of the weakly-ionized plasma is less than about $10^{12}$ cm <sup>-3</sup> ")
	'716 Patent at claim 24 ("wherein the peak plasma density of the strongly-ionized plasma is greater than about $10^{12}$ cm <sup>-3</sup> ") Mozgrin at Fig. 1

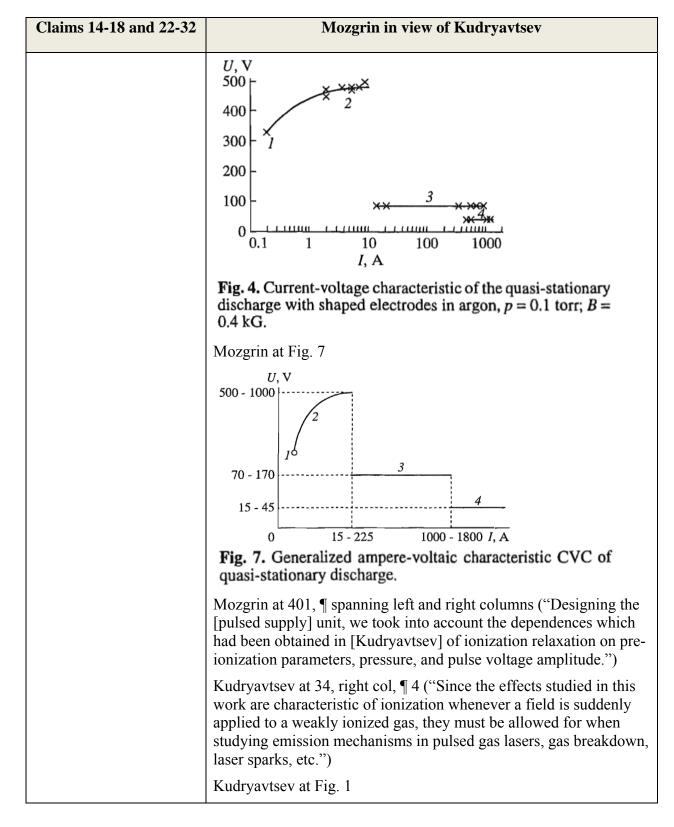


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Claims 14-18 and 22-32	Mozgrin in view of Kudryavtsev
	Mozgrin at 402, right col, $\P$ 2 ("Part 1 in the voltage oscillogram represents the voltage of the stationary discharge (pre-ionization stage).")
	Mozgrin at 401, right col, ¶2 ("For pre-ionization the initial plasma density in the $10^9 - 10^{11}$ cm <sup>-3</sup> range.")
	Mozgrin at 401, right col, ¶ 1 ("Thus, the supply unit was made providing square voltage and current pulses with [rise] times (leading edge) of $5 - 60 \ \mu s$ ").
	Mozgrin 403, right col, ¶4 ("Regime 2 was characterized by intense cathode sputtering") (emphasis added).
	Mozgrin at 409, left col, ¶ 4 ("The implementation of the high- current magnetron discharge (regime 2) in sputtering plasma density (exceeding $2x10^{13}$ cm <sup>-3</sup> ).").
	Mozgrin at 409, left col, ¶5 ("The high-current diffuse discharge (regime 3) is useful for producing large-volume uniform dense plasmas $n_i \cong 1.5 \times 10^{15} \text{ cm}^{-3}$ ")
	Mozgrin at 400, left col, $\P$ 3 ("Some experiments on magnetron systems of various geometry showed that discharge regimes which do not transit to arcs can be obtained even at high currents.")
	Mozgrin at 400, right col, $\P$ 1 ("A further increase in the discharge currents caused the discharges to transit to the arc regimes").
	Mozgrin at 404, left col, ¶ 3 ("The parameters of the shaped- electrode dischargetransit to arc regime 4, could be well determined The point of the planar-magnetron discharge transit to the arc regime was determined by discharge voltage and structure changes").
	Mozgrin at 404, left col, ¶ 4 ("If the current was raised above 1.8 kA or the pulse duration was increase to $2 - 10$ ms, an instability development and discharge contraction was observed.").
	Mozgrin at Fig. 4



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