

Analyzing Memory Accesses in Obfuscated x86 Executables

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DIMVA 2005
Wien

Talk Contents

Motivation

Previous work

VSA (Balakrishnan and Reps, 2004)

Abstract Stack Graph (Lakhotia and Kumar 2004)

VSA+ASG

Domain

Interpretation example

Application

Detect Call obfuscations

Implementation

Future and Conclusions

Motivation

- Past project: detecting malicious behavior
 - Match models of malicious behavior
 - models typically involved *system calls*
- *Typical application of accepted techniques*
 - implemented prototype using IDA Pro
 - standard application of formal theory (model checking)
 - tried against common virus (Win32.Evol)

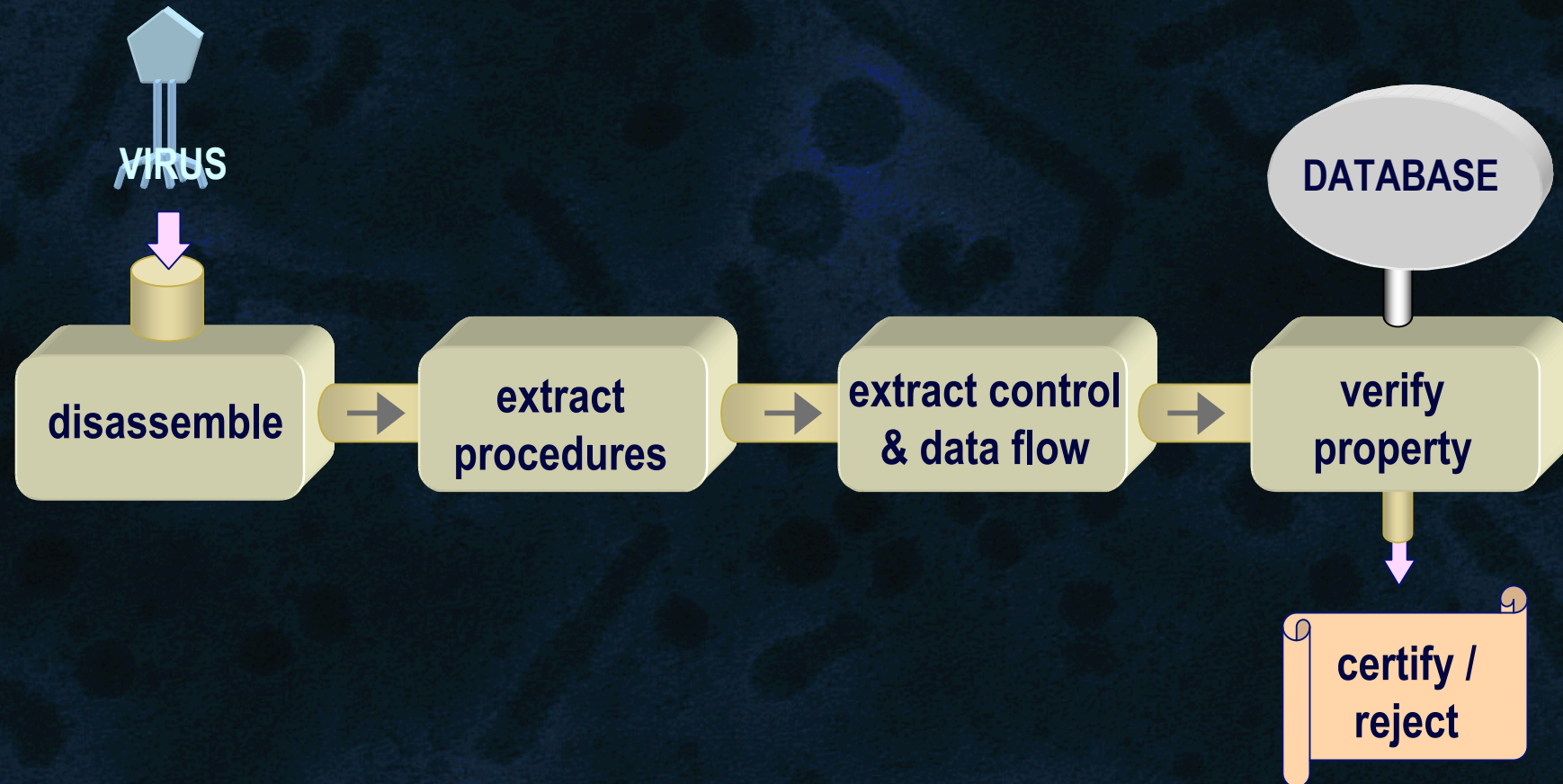
Result: FAILURE

- Our original tool didn't stand a chance
 - our technology wasn't even tested
 - virus writer fouled up the *entire analysis pipeline*
- Success out of failure:
 - showed us where a major battle lies
 - refocus on hardening analysis techniques

Code analysis: benign/adversarial

- Half a century of program analysis
 - compilers, optimizers, checkers, refactoring tools
 - read in programs, analyze, visualize, transform
- Mostly for *friendly* programs
 - yet these are often used to battle malware
 - not prepared to face adversarial code
 - **soft targets**
 - **fragile infrastructures**
 - would we send Mouseketeers to battlefield?

Typical analysis pipelines



Problem: Not hardened



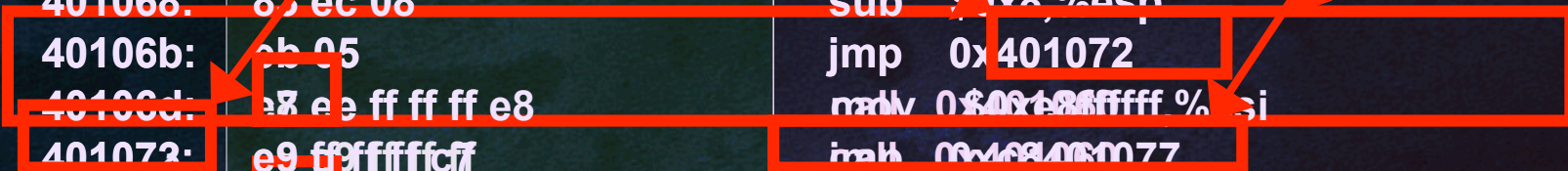
Attack: Disassembly



	ORIG BYTES	ASSEMBLY
401063:	5d	pop %ebp
401064:	c3	ret
401065:	55	push %ebp
401066:	89 e5	mov %esp,%ebp
401068:	83 ec 08	sub \$0x8,%esp
40106b:	eb 05	jmp 0x401072
40106d:	e8 ee ff ff ff e8	movl 0xffffffff,%esi
401073:	e9 ff ffffffff	jmp 0x401077
401078:	43 45 fc 00 00 00 00	movl \$0x0,0xffffffff(%ebp)
40107e:	8d 7d fc e7 03 00 00	cldpl \$0x3e7,0xffffffff(%ebp)

**bad disassembly
(no jump target)**

**jump over junk
malicious func**



Attack: Extract procedures

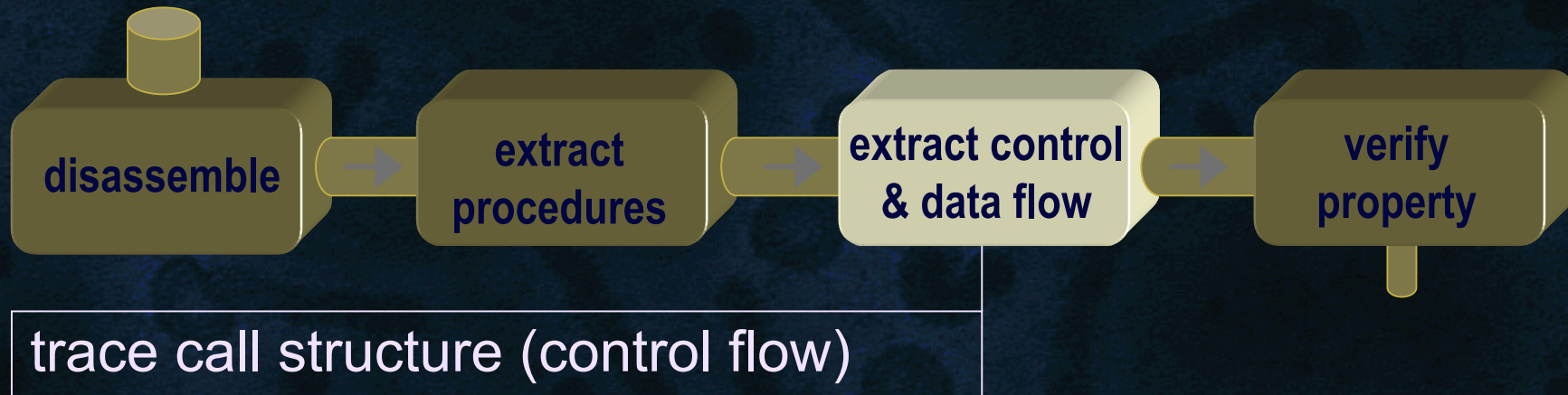


```
401063: 5d          pop  %ebp
401064: c3          ret
401065 <_malicious>:
401065: 55          push %ebp
401066: 89 e5       mov  %esp,%ebp
401068: 83 ec 08    sub  $0x8,%esp
40106b: eb 05       jmp  401072 <_malicious+0xd>
40106d: e8 ee ff ff ff  call 401060 <_sendLotsOfEmail>
401072: e8 e9 ff ff ff  call 401060 <_sendLotsOfEmail>
401077: c7 45 fc 00 00 00 00  movl $0x0,0xffffffc(%ebp)
```

malicious func

call 401060 <_sendLotsOfEmail>

Attack: Extract CF & DF



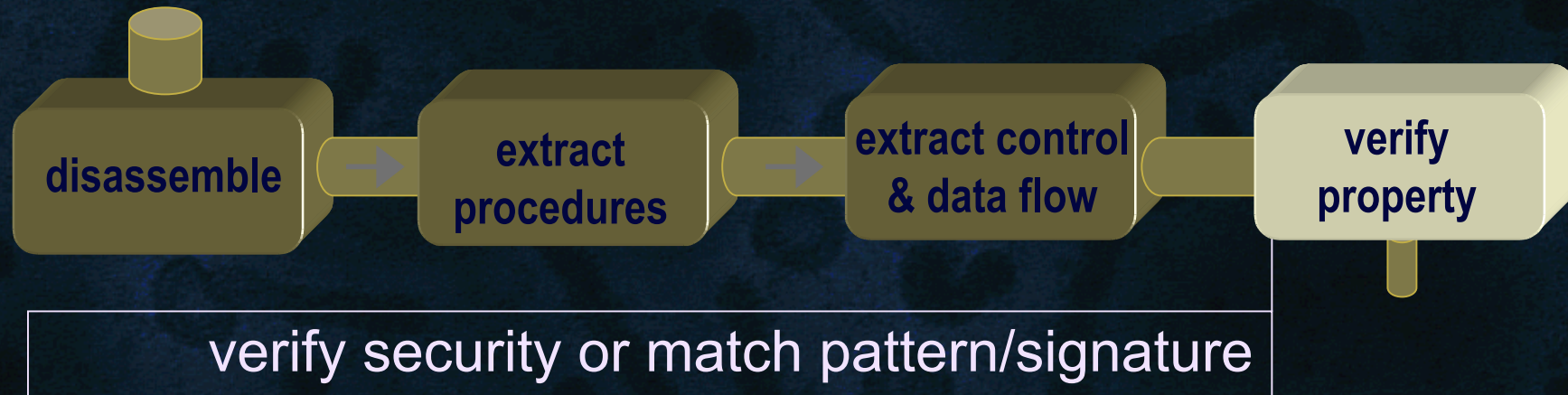
```
401063: 5d          pop  %ebp
401064: c3          ret
401065 <_malicious>:
401065: 55          push %ebp
401066: 89 e5       mov  %esp,%ebp
401068: 83 ec 08    sub  $0x8,%esp
40106b: ff 35 78 10 40 00  jmp  401072 <_malicious+0x10>
40106d: ff 83 e6 ff ff 40 00  jmp  401066 <_malicious+0x10>
401072: e8 e9 ff ff ff  call 401060 <_sendLotsOfEmail>
401078: c7 45 fc 00 00 00 00  movl $0x0,0xfffffc(%ebp)
```

L0: call F
L1: →
L0: push L1
push F
L1: ret
instr. substitution

no call found

~~path 401066: <sendLotsOfEmail>~~

Attack: Verify property



```
push x  
push y →  
ret
```

```
push x  
push z  
pop  
push y  
ret
```

```
pushl 401078 <_malicious+0x13>  
pushl 401060 <_sendLotsOfEmail>  
ret  
movl $0x0,0xffffffff(%ebp)
```

- Transformations destroy signature/pattern match
 - eg metamorphic viruses: self-transforming
 - instruction substitution, nop insertion, etc.

Motivation summary

- Soft target attacks
 - disassembler disruption
 - obfuscated calls
 - metamorphic transformations
- Pipeline disruptions
 - silent failures from every stage

A shift in research focus

Question

How to make program analysis battle-ready?

Advertisement: Portfolio of results

Create
malware
phylogeny



Deobfuscate
Calls



Reverse self
transformations

All results are "Patent pending"

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Value-Set Analysis

- Determines values of program variables statically
- RIC: Reduced Interval Congruence
 - Interval: $[0,4] = \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4\}$
 - RIC: $4[0,4] + 10 = \{10, 14, 18, 22, 26\}$
- Can ensure memory accesses align to memory boundaries

Example



Operations

- Easily supported operations
 - ADD
 - SUB
 - MOV
 - others
- Unsupported Operations
 - DIV
 - OR
 - AND
 - ...

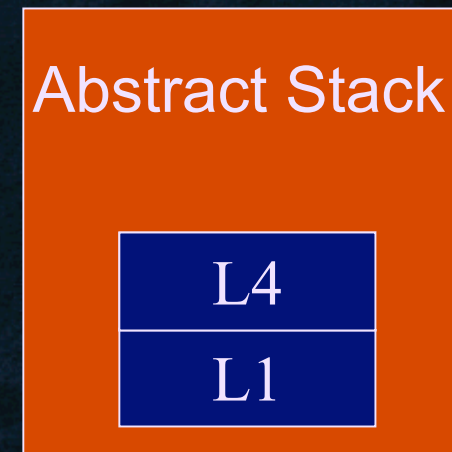
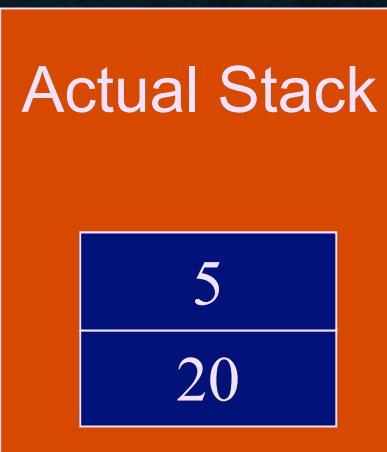
VSA Limitations

- Assumes executable conforms to standard conventions
- Depends on control-flow graph
- We would like to remove these two requirements

Abstract Stack

- Each node stores an instruction address
- Example:

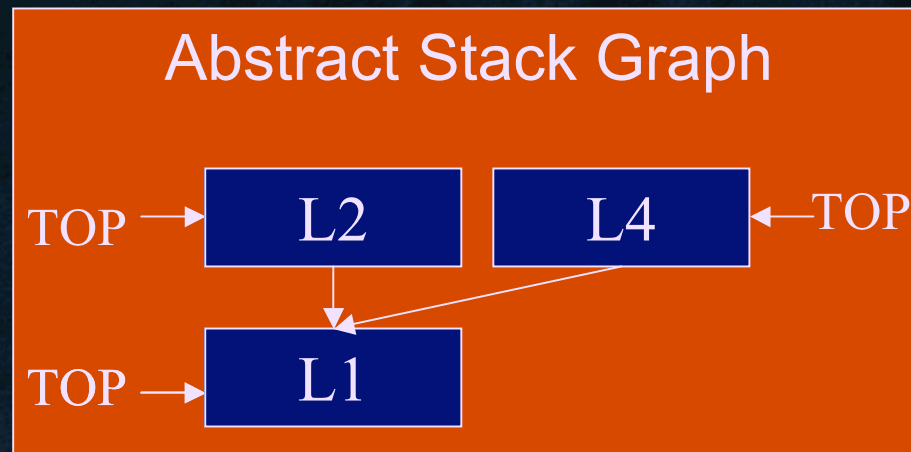
L1: PUSH 20
L2: PUSH 10
L3: POP ebx
L4: PUSH 5



Abstract Stack Graph

- Contains all possible abstract stack
- Example:

L1: PUSH 20
L2: PUSH 10
L3: POP ebx
L4: PUSH 5



Abstract Stack Graph

- Apply set of rules to detect obfuscations
- Limitations
 - Does not know register/memory contents
 - Can't handle instructions like:
 - `sub esp, eax`
 - `mov esp, eax`
 - Can't handle indirect jumps/calls

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Our Goal

- VSA+ASG
- Achieve:
 - Support more instructions (ex. `sub esp, eax`)
 - Support indirect jumps/calls
 - Not rely on CFG
 - Do not assume binary obeys common standards

Domain

- RIC
- STACK-LOCATION
- VALUE := 2-tuple
 - RIC_{\top}
 - $\text{P}(\text{STACK-LOCATION})_{\top}$
- STATE := 3-tuple
 - REGISTER \rightarrow VALUE
 - STACK-LOCATION \rightarrow VALUE
 - STACK-LOCATION \times STACK-LOCATION

Operation: Addition

$+: \text{VALUE} \times \text{VALUE} \times \text{STATE} \rightarrow \text{VALUE}$

Pairwise addition of both components of VALUE

$+: \text{RIC} \times \text{RIC} \rightarrow \text{RIC}$

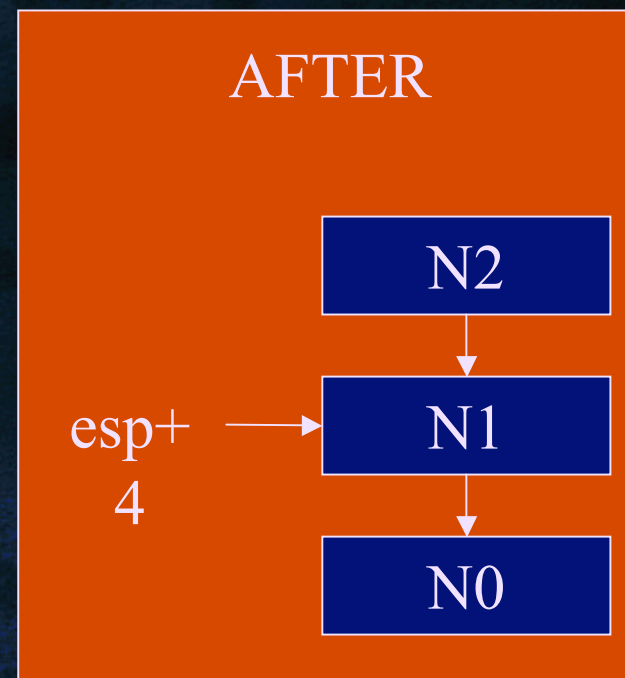
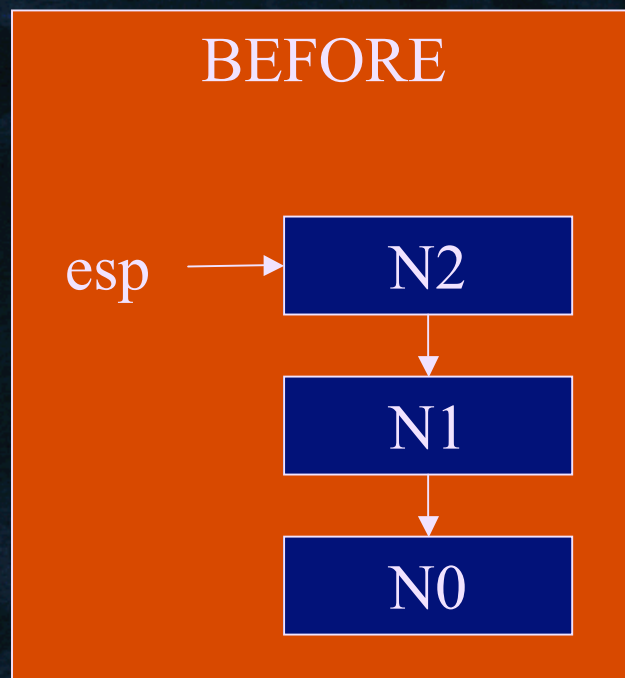
$+: \text{STACK-LOCATION} \times \text{STACK-LOCATION} = \text{NULL}$

$+: \text{RIC} \times \text{STACK-LOCATION} \rightarrow \text{P}(\text{STACK-LOCATION})$

- RIC+RIC
 - Equals approximation of the sum of each value in the two RICs
- Stack-location + Stack-location
 - Unable to do, since requires knowing actual addresses

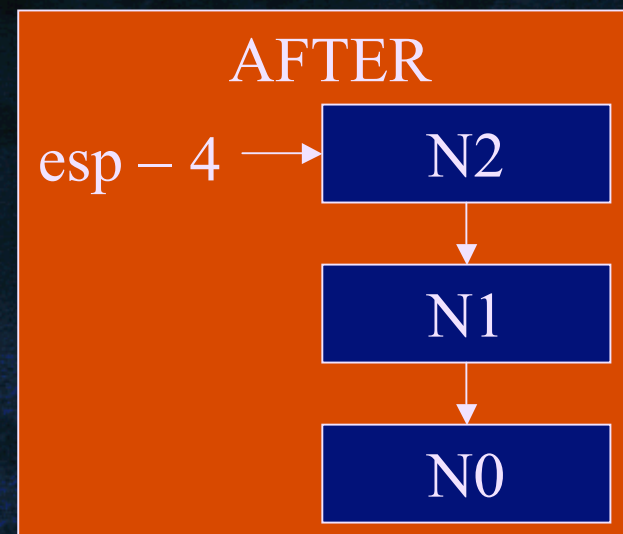
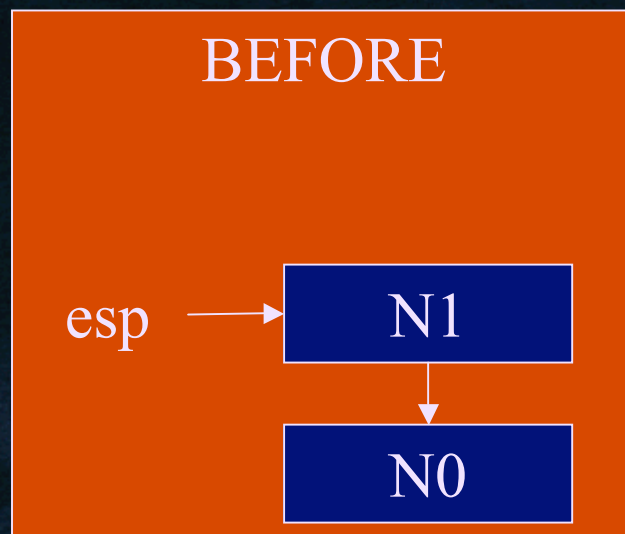
Operation: Addition

- Stack-location + RIC
 - Travel down the stack



Operation: Subtraction

- RIC – RIC, Stack-location – Stack-location
 - Similar to addition
- Stack-location – RIC
 - Travel up the stack or add new nodes



Operation: Memory Operations

- Push
 - Creates a new stack-location
 - Stores pushed value at stack-location
- Pop
 - Retrieves value at top of stack
 - Increments top of stack

Operation: Memory Operations

- Store
 - Places a value in memory
- Load
 - Retrieves a value from memory
- Other operations defined in paper

Interpretation Example

- Main
 - Pushes two values onto stack
 - Calls Max
- Max
 - Places max of parameters in eax

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2
```

```
Main:
```

```
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 CALL Max
103 ...
```

```
Max:
```

```
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
106 CMP eax, ebx
107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx
```

```
Done:
```

```
109 RET 8
```

Interpretation Example

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 CALL Max
103 ...

Max:
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
106 CMP eax, ebx
107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (⊤, ⊤)

ebx = (⊤, ⊤)

esp = (⊤, {N0})

N0: ⊥

Interpretation Example

```
VAR1 EQU 4  
VAR2 EQU 2
```

Main:

```
100 PUSH VAR1  
101 PUSH VAR2  
102 CALL Max  
103 ...
```

Max:

```
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]  
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]  
106 CMP eax, ebx  
107 JG Done  
108 MOV eax, ebx
```

Done:

```
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)

ebx = (\top , \top)

esp = (\top , {N1})

N1: (4, \top)



N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 CALL Max
103 ...

Max:
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
106 CMP eax, ebx
107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)

ebx = (\top , \top)

esp = (\top , {N2})

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 CALL Max
103 ...

Max:
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
106 CMP eax, ebx
107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)

ebx = (\top , \top)

esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,

\top)

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

```
VAR1 EQU 4  
VAR2 EQU 2
```

Main:

```
100 PUSH VAR1  
101 PUSH VAR2  
102 CALL Max  
103 ...
```

Max:

```
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]  
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]  
106 CMP eax, ebx  
107 JG Done  
108 MOV eax, ebx
```

Done:

```
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)

ebx = (\top , \top)

esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,

\top)

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

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VAR1 EQU 4
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Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
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Max:
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107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)

ebx = (4, \top)

esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,

\top)

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

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VAR1 EQU 4
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Max:
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Done:
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)

ebx = (4, \top)

esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,

\top)

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

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VAR1 EQU 4
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Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
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Max:
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
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107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)

ebx = (4, \top)

esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,

\top)

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 CALL Max
103 ...

Max:
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
106 CMP eax, ebx
107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (4, \top)

ebx = (4, \top)

esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,

\top)

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 CALL Max
103 ...

Max:
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
106 CMP eax, ebx
107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2[0,1]+2, \top)

ebx = (4, \top)

esp = (\top , {N0})

N3: (103,

\top)

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

Interpretation Example

```
VAR1 EQU 4  
VAR2 EQU 2
```

Main:

```
100 PUSH VAR1  
101 PUSH VAR2  
102 CALL Max
```

```
103 ...
```

Max:

```
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]  
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]  
106 CMP eax, ebx  
107 JG Done  
108 MOV eax, ebx
```

Done:

```
109 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2[0,1]+2, \top)

ebx = (4, \top)

esp = (\top , {N0})

N3: (103,

\top)

N2: (2, \top)

N1: (4, \top)

N0: \perp

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Application

- Detect
 - Call replaced with equivalent instruction(s)
 - Return address manually removed from stack
- Flag as obfuscation if
 - instruction = `retn` AND `topOfStack.creator` \neq `call`
 - instruction = `pop` AND `topOfStack.creator` = `call`
- Rules are applied to each instruction

Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 PUSH 104
103 JMP Max
104 ...

Max:
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
107 CMP eax, ebx
108 JG Done
109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (T, T)

ebx = (T, T)

esp = (T, {N0})

N0: ⊥

Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4  
VAR2 EQU 2
```

Main:

```
100 PUSH VAR1  
101 PUSH VAR2  
102 PUSH 104  
103 JMP Max  
104 ...
```

Max:

```
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]  
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]  
107 CMP eax, ebx  
108 JG Done  
109 MOV eax, ebx
```

Done:

```
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)

ebx = (\top , \top)

esp = (\top , {N1})

N1: (4, \top)
100



N0: \perp

Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 PUSH 104
103 JMP Max
104 ...

Max:
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
107 CMP eax, ebx
108 JG Done
109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)

ebx = (\top , \top)

esp = (\top , {N2})

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

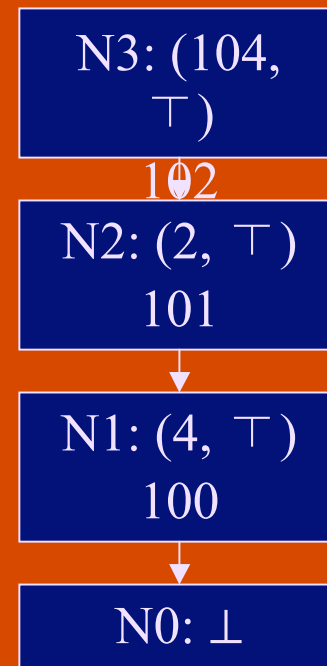
Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 PUSH 104
103 JMP Max
104 ...

Max:
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
107 CMP eax, ebx
108 JG Done
109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)
ebx = (\top , \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})



Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

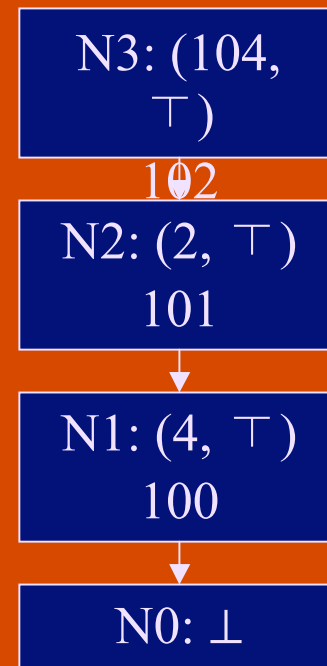
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Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)
ebx = (\top , \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})



Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4  
VAR2 EQU 2
```

Main:

```
100 PUSH VAR1  
101 PUSH VAR2  
102 PUSH 104  
103 JMP Max  
104 ...
```

Max:

```
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]  
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]  
107 CMP eax, ebx  
108 JG Done  
109 MOV eax, ebx
```

Done:

```
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)
ebx = (\top , \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (104,
 \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
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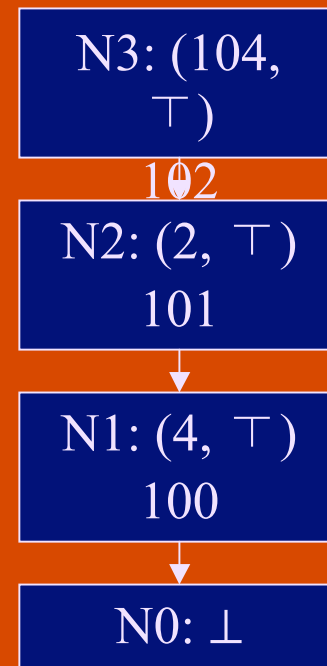
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109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})



Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

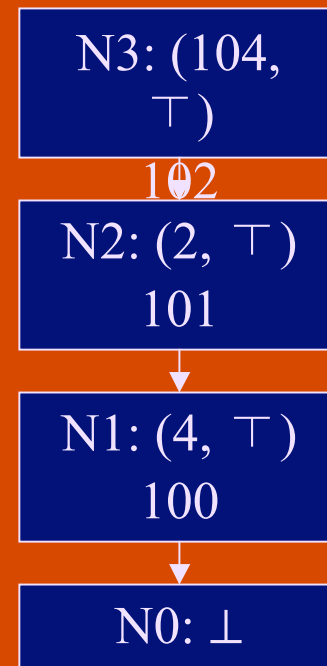
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Max:
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
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108 JG Done
109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})



Replace CALL with JMP

```
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VAR2 EQU 2

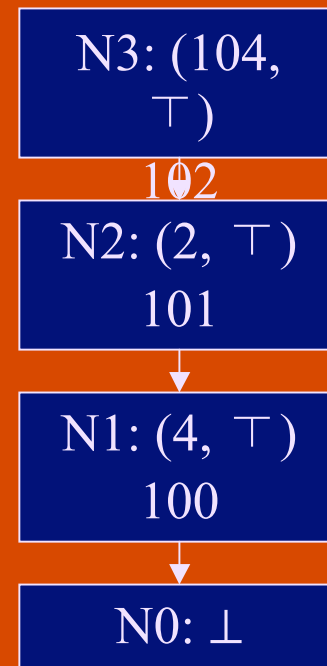
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104 ...

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105 MOV eax, [esp+4]
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107 CMP eax, ebx
108 JG Done
109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})



Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

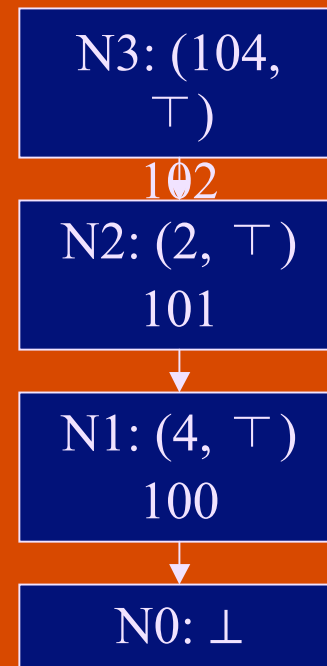
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103 JMP Max
104 ...

Max:
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
107 CMP eax, ebx
108 JG Done
109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (4, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})



Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 PUSH 104
103 JMP Max
104 ...

Max:
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
107 CMP eax, ebx
108 JG Done
109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2[0,1]+2, \top)

ebx = (4, \top)

esp = (\top , {N0})

N3: (104,
 \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101



N1: (4, \top)
100



N0: \perp

Replace CALL with JMP

```
VAR1 EQU 4
VAR2 EQU 2

Main:
100 PUSH VAR1
101 PUSH VAR2
102 PUSH 104
103 JMP Max
104 ...

Max:
105 MOV eax, [esp+4]
106 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
107 CMP eax, ebx
108 JG Done
109 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
110 RET 8
```

STATE

eax = (2[0,1]+2, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N0})

N3: (104, \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Return address placed
on stack by push

Removal of Return Address

Main:

```
100  PUSH  4
101  PUSH  2
102  CALL  Max
103  ...
```

Max:

```
104  MOV   eax, [esp+4]
105  MOV   ebx, [esp+8]
106  CMP   eax, ebx
107  JG    Done
108  MOV   eax, ebx
```

Done:

```
109  POP   ebx
110  ADD   esp, 8
111  JMP   ebx
```

STATE

eax = (⊤, ⊤)

ebx = (⊤, ⊤)

esp = (⊤, {N0})

N0: ⊥

Removal of Return Address

Main:

100 PUSH 4

101 PUSH 2

102 CALL Max

103 ...

Max:

104 MOV eax, [esp+4]

105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]

106 CMP eax, ebx

107 JG Done

108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:

109 POP ebx

110 ADD esp, 8

111 JMP ebx

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)

ebx = (\top , \top)

esp = (\top , {N1})

N1: (4, \top)

100



N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

Main:

100 PUSH 4

101 PUSH 2

102 CALL Max

103 ...

Max:

104 MOV eax, [esp+4]

105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]

106 CMP eax, ebx

107 JG Done

108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:

109 POP ebx

110 ADD esp, 8

111 JMP ebx

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)

ebx = (\top , \top)

esp = (\top , {N2})

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

```
Main:
100  PUSH  4
101  PUSH  2
102  CALL  Max
103  ...

Max:
104  MOV   eax, [esp+4]
105  MOV   ebx, [esp+8]
106  CMP   eax, ebx
107  JG    Done
108  MOV   eax, ebx

Done:
109  POP   ebx
110  ADD   esp, 8
111  JMP   ebx
```

STATE

eax = (\top , \top)
ebx = (\top , \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103, \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

Main:

```
100 PUSH 4
101 PUSH 2
102 CALL Max
103 ...
```

Max:

```
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
106 CMP eax, ebx
107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx
```

Done:

```
109 POP ebx
110 ADD esp, 8
111 JMP ebx
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)
ebx = (\top , \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,
 \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

```
Main:
100  PUSH  4
101  PUSH  2
102  CALL  Max
103  ...

Max:
104  MOV   eax, [esp+4]
105  MOV   ebx, [esp+8]
106  CMP   eax, ebx
107  JG    Done
108  MOV   eax, ebx

Done:
109  POP   ebx
110  ADD   esp, 8
111  JMP   ebx
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103, \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

```
Main:
100  PUSH  4
101  PUSH  2
102  CALL  Max
103  ...

Max:
104  MOV   eax, [esp+4]
105  MOV   ebx, [esp+8]
106  CMP   eax, ebx
107  JG    Done
108  MOV   eax, ebx

Done:
109  POP   ebx
110  ADD   esp, 8
111  JMP   ebx
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,
 \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101



N1: (4, \top)
100



N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

```
Main:
100  PUSH  4
101  PUSH  2
102  CALL  Max
103  ...

Max:
104  MOV   eax, [esp+4]
105  MOV   ebx, [esp+8]
106  CMP   eax, ebx
107  JG   Done
108  MOV   eax, ebx

Done:
109  POP   ebx
110  ADD   esp, 8
111  JMP   ebx
```

STATE

eax = (2, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103,
 \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

```
Main:
100  PUSH  4
101  PUSH  2
102  CALL  Max
103  ...

Max:
104  MOV   eax, [esp+4]
105  MOV   ebx, [esp+8]
106  CMP   eax, ebx
107  JG    Done
108  MOV   eax, ebx
109  POP   ebx
110  ADD   esp, 8
111  JMP   ebx

Done:
```

STATE

eax = (4, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N3})

N3: (103, \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

```
Main:
100  PUSH  4
101  PUSH  2
102  CALL  Max
103  ...

Max:
104  MOV   eax, [esp+4]
105  MOV   ebx, [esp+8]
106  CMP   eax, ebx
107  JG    Done
108  MOV   eax, ebx

Done:
109  POP   ebx
110  ADD   esp, 8
111  JMP   ebx
```

STATE

$eax = (2[0,1]+2, \top)$
 $ebx = (4, \top)$
 $esp = (\top, \{N2\})$

N3: (103, \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Removal of Return Address

```
Main:
100 PUSH 4
101 PUSH 2
102 CALL Max
103 ...

Max:
104 MOV eax, [esp+4]
105 MOV ebx, [esp+8]
106 CMP eax, ebx
107 JG Done
108 MOV eax, ebx

Done:
109 POP ebx
110 ADD esp, 8
111 JMP ebx
```

STATE

eax = (2[0,1]+2, \top)
ebx = (4, \top)
esp = (\top , {N2})

N3: (103, \top)

102

N2: (2, \top)
101

N1: (4, \top)
100

N0: \perp

Return address is
popped off stack

Talk Contents

Motivation

Previous work

VSA (Balakrishnan and Reps, 2004)

Abstract Stack Graph (Lakhotia and Kumar 2004)

VSA+ASG

Domain

Interpretation example

Application

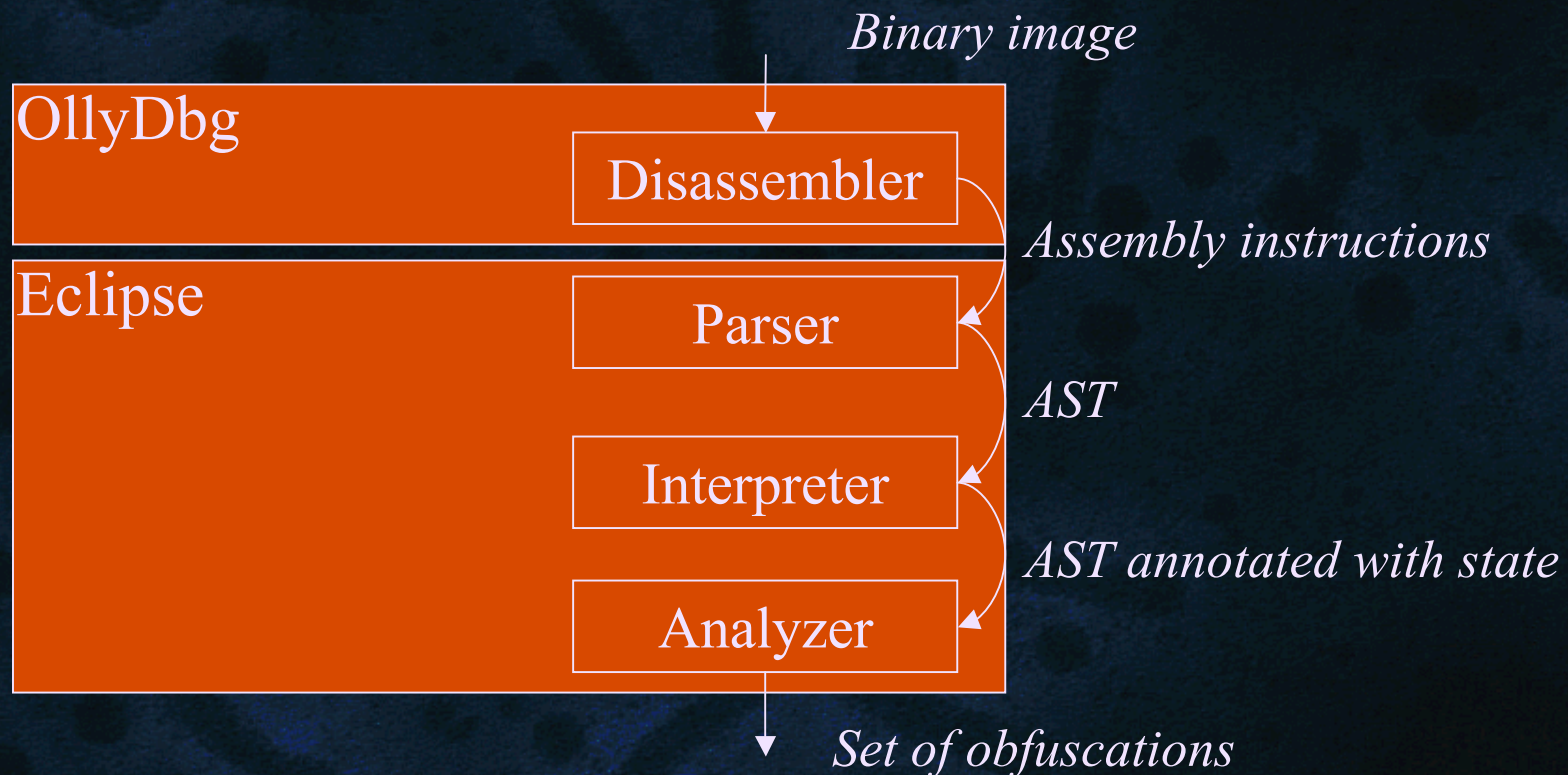
Detect Call obfuscations

Implementation

Future and Conclusions

Prototype

- Implemented on Eclipse platform



The screenshot shows the Eclipse IDE interface for assembly code analysis. The main editor displays assembly instructions with green circular markers indicating obfuscation. The ruler at the top of the editor has orange arrows pointing to these markers, with a callout box stating "Obfuscations shown on ruler".

On the right side, the "Registers" window shows a list of registers and their values. Below it, the "Stack" window shows a stack diagram with two frames, N1 and N0, each containing a value in parentheses. A callout box points to these windows, stating "Register and stack contents".

At the bottom, the "Messages" window is active, showing a table of obfuscated instructions. A callout box points to this table, stating "Obfuscations shown as list".

Line	Instruction
11	POP ebx

```
401000h PUSH 4
401002h PUSH 2
401004h CALL 401010h
401009h PUSH 0
40100bh CALL KERNEL32.ExitProcess
401010h MOV eax, dword ptr ss:[esp+4]
401014h MOV ebx, dword ptr ss:[esp+8]
401018h CMP eax, ebx
40101ah JG 40101eh
40101ch MOV eax, ebx
40101eh POP ebx
40101fh ADD esp, 8
401022h JMP ebx
40000000h UNDEF eax
40000001h RET 12
40000005h UNDEF eax
40000006h RET 24
40000010h UNDEF eax
40000011h RET 4
10000000h UNDEF eax
10000001h RET 4
```

Register	Value
EAX	(T, T)
EBX	(T, T)
ECX	(T, T)
EDX	(T, T)
ESP	(T, {N1})
EBP	(T, T)
ESI	(T, T)
EDI	(T, T)
CS	(T, T)
DS	(T, T)
ES	(T, T)

Stack Diagram:

```
graph TD
    N1["N1  
(4, T)"] --> N0["N0  
(T, T)"]
```


Obfuscation Detection - input.asm - Eclipse Platform

File Edit Navigate Search Project Run Window Help

input.asm

```
401000h PUSH 402000h
401005h CALL KERNEL32.SetCurrentDirectoryA
40100ah PUSH 40200dh
40100fh PUSH 402005h
401014h PUSH 40101fh
401019h PUSH KERNEL32.FindFirstFileA
40101eh RET
40101fh CMP eax, -1
401022h JE 401054h
401024h MOV dword ptr ds:[4202827], eax
401029h PUSH 402039h
40102eh PUSH 401039h
401033h PUSH KERNEL32.DeleteFileA
401038h RET
401039h PUSH 40200dh
40103eh PUSH dword ptr ds:[4202827]
401044h PUSH 40104fh
401049h PUSH KERNEL32.FindNextFileA
40104eh RET
40104fh CMP eax, 0
401052h JNZ 401029h
401054h PUSH 0
401056h CALL KERNEL32.ExitProcess
```

Registers

Register	Value
ESI	(T, T)
EDI	(T, T)
CS	(T, T)
DS	(T, T)
ES	(T, T)

Stack

```
graph TD
    N5["N5  
(4198431, T)"] --> N4["N4  
(4202501, T)"]
    N4 --> N3["N3  
(4202509, T)"]
    N3 --> N0["N0  
(T, T)"]
```

Messages Valid Call-Return Sites Obfuscated Calls Obfuscated Returns Associated Instructions

Line	Instruction
7	RET
14	RET
19	RET
67	RET 8
69	RET 4
71	RET 8

Pushes return address and function

Talk Contents

Motivation

Previous work

VSA (Balakrishnan and Reps, 2004)

Abstract Stack Graph (Lakhotia and Kumar 2004)

VSA+ASG

Domain

Interpretation example

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Detect Call obfuscations

Implementation

Future and Conclusions

Prototype Limitations

- More Memory Support
 - `mov [eax], ebx`
 - `GetModuleHandle/GetProcAddress`

```
PUSH offset DLL_NAME      ; "kernel32.dll"
CALL GetModuleHandleA

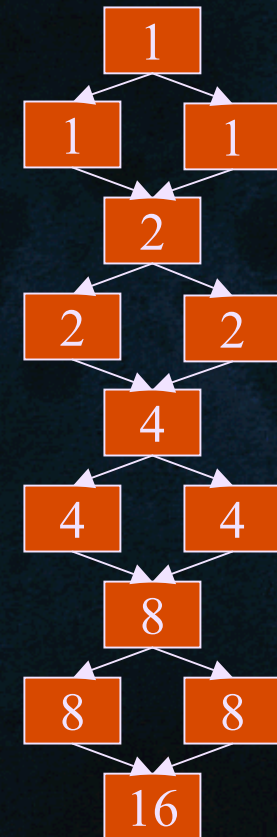
PUSH offset PROC_NAME     ; "ExitProcess"
PUSH eax
CALL GetProcAddress

PUSH 0
CALL eax
```

Prototype Limitations

- Efficiency
 - Many paths to each instruction
 - More efficient algorithms needed

CFG with branches



General Limitations

- More RIC operations
 - Too many undefined RICs
- What about obfuscated call–obfuscated return pairs
 - Not a problem with system calls

General Limitations

- Structure Exception Handling

Main:

```
PUSH  offset Handler          ; set up exception handler
PUSH  dword ptr FS:[0]
MOV   FS:[0], esp

MOV   edx, 0                  ; force an exception
MOV   eax, 0
DIV   eax                     ; (edx / eax)

PUSH  0
CALL  ExitProcess
```

Handler:

```
...                          ; real code goes here
```

Conclusion

- Method
 - Combines VSA+ASG
 - Interpret using abstract values
 - Apply rules to abstract stack graph to detect obfuscations
- Results
 - Can handle more instructions (`mov esp, eax`)
 - Can handle indirect jumps/calls
 - Anticipate support for `GetModuleHandle/GetProcAddress`
- Prototype performed as expected, though more work is needed