iOS Pentesting - Reversing Jailbreak

In this article jailbreak detection method is analyzed and bypassed doing reversing.

Introduction

iOS jailbreaking is privilege escalation for the purpose of removing software restrictions imposed by Apple. It typically does this by using a series of kernel patches. Jailbreaking permits root access to iOS, allowing the downloading and installation of additional applications, extension, and themes that are unavailable through the official Apple App Store.

A lot of applications allow its execution in jailbroken devices, even though having jailbreak detection, because they don't want to lose users. For example, banks allow applications to execute in all devices but some fucntionalities might be restricted to be executed only in non-jailbroken devices.

Detection

File based detection

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During the jailbreaking process, some additional files are created on the device. Looking for these files is a simple way to detect a jailbreak. It's also an easy method for a malicious individual to detect and bypass. An attacker can search for a string in the application, and then simply change the file names in question to avoid detection.

• Files or appplications used:

```
/private/var/lib/apt
/private/var/tmp/cydia.log
/private/var/lib/cydia
/private/var/mobile/Library/SBSettings/Themes
/Library/MobileSubstrate/MobileSubstrate.dylib
/Library/MobileSubstrate/DynamicLibraries/Veency.plist
/System/Library/LaunchDaemons/com.ikey.bbot.plist
/System/Library/LaunchDaemons/com.saurik.Cydia.Startup.plist
/var/cache/apt
/var/lib/apt
/var/lib/cydia
/var/log/syslog
/var/tmp/cydia.log
/bin/bash
/bin/sh
/usr/sbin/sshd
/usr/libexec/ssh-keysign
```

Check 8 o Check 9 o Check 10

```
/usr/sbin/sshd
/usr/bin/sshd
/etc/apt
/Applications/Cydia.app
/Applications/RockApp.app
/Applications/Icy.app
/Applications/WinterBoard.app
/Applications/SBSettings.app
/Applications/MxTube.app
/Applications/IntelliScreen.app
/Applications/FakeCarrier.app
/Applications/blackra1n.app
```

- Directory permissions: Like detecting a jailbroken device by looking for certain new files, certain permissions on partitions and folders can also indicate a jailbroken device. For example, during the jailbreaking process, access to the root partition is amended. If the root partition has read/write permissions, the device has been jailbroken.
- **Size of /etc/fstab file**: The /etc/fstab file contains mount points for the system. Many jailbreaking tools modify this file by adding entries to it, changing its file size. The typical iOS app isn't capable of reading the file, but it can check the size of the file.

Do note however, that the file size can change as a result of a new update from Apple.

• Existence of symbolic links: Some directories are originally located in the small system partition, however, this partition is overwritten during the jailbreak process. Therefore the data must be relocated to the larger data partition. Because the old file location must remain valid, symbolic links are created. The following list contains files or directories which would be symbolic links on a jailbroken device. An application could check for these symbolic links, and, if they exist, detect a jailbreak.

```
/Library/Ringtones

/Library/Wallpaper

/usr/arm-apple-darwin9

/usr/include

/usr/libexec

/usr/share

/Applications
```

• Writing files: On jailbroken devices, applications are installed in the /Applications folder and thereby given root privileges. A jailbroken device could be detected by having the app check whether it can modify files outside of its sandbox. This can be done by having the app attempt to create a file in, for example, the /private directory. If the file is successfully created, the device has been jailbroken.

API-based detection

Some API calls provided by iOS behave differently if run on jailbroken devices. Detecting a jailbroken device based on API calls can be both effective and difficult for a malicious individual to recognize and bypass.

- **fork()**: The sandbox denies process forking on non-jailbroken devices. By checking the returned pid on fork(), an app can detect if it has successfully forked. If the fork is successful, the app can deduce that it is running on a jailbroken device.
- system(): Calling the system() function with a NULL argument on a non-jailbroken device will return 0. Doing the same on a jailbroken device will return 1. This is because the function will check whether /bin/sh exists, and it only exists on jailbroken devices.
- dyld functions: This detection method starts with calling functions like
 _dyld_image_count() and _dyld_get_image_name() to see what dylibs are currently
 loaded. This method is very difficult to dynamically patch due to the fact that the
 patches themselves are part of dylibs.

OpenSSH Service Detection

Jailbroken devices can run services that aren't normally present on non-jailbroken devices - the most common is the OpenSSH service.

Note that this detection method can be very slow. If SSH is not installed or running on the device, it can take some time for the connection to timeout. Attackers can also easily bypass this method by simply changing the port for the OpenSSH service.

Cydia Scheme Detection

Most jailbroken devices have Cydia installed. While an attacker can change the location of the Cydia app, it's unlikely they will also change the URL scheme the Cydia app is registered with.

If calling the Cydia's URL scheme (cydia://) from your application is successful, you can be sure that the device is jailbroken.

It's difficult to change the scheme for Cydia, but it is possible to simply remove Cydia during the testing process.

Objective-C

Objective-C calls from one method to another are compiled as calls to objc_msgSend(). One effect of this is that IDA Pro cross references do not reflect the actual functions being called at runtime. This function is defined with the following function signature:

```
id objc_msgSend(id self, SEL op,...)
```

This implies that for any Objective-C method call it is made, the first two arguments are the object's self pointer, and the selector, which is a string representation of the method being called on self.

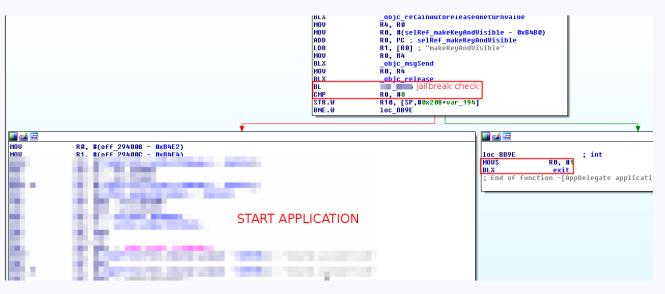
return_value = objc_msgSend(class_receiver, method_signature, arg1, arg2,...)

where:

- return_value: return value of the method called is stored in R0
- class_receiver: value should be stored in R0
- method_signature: value should be stored in R1
- arg1: value should be stored in R2
- arg2: value should be stored in R3

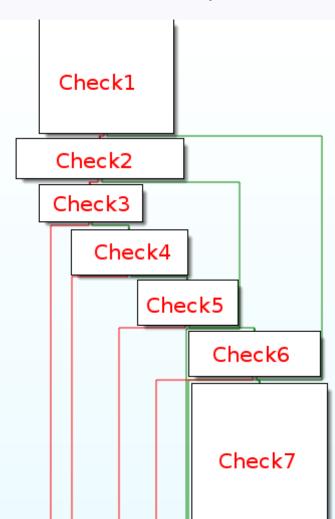
Reversing

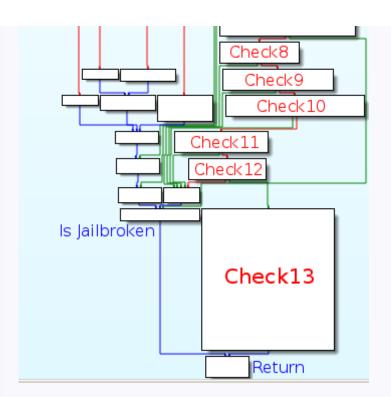
There is a method which initialize everything so the application can start. One of the checks it does before starting is whether the application is running in a jailbroken device or not:



Below we will analyze the method which is used to detect if the device is jailbroken. It has the following structure:

- 1. Makes N checks. The more checks it does, the more likely is to verify that the device is jailbroken. However, it is not related with the difficulty of bypassing the control.
- 2. If the check is negative (not jailbroken), it goes to the next check. Otherwise, it just returns that the device is jailbroken.





Each check will be analyze individually. They are distributed in the following categories:

• Directory check: check 1 to 6

• Cydia scheme detection: check 7

• Files or appplciations used: check 8 to 12

• Writing files: check 13

```
PUSH
                 {R4-R7,LR}
ADD
                R7, SP, #0xC
PUSH.W
                 {R8,R10,R11}
SUB
                 SP, SP, #0x1C
MOV
                R0, #(selRef_defaultManager - 0xBBC2)
MOV
                R5, #(classRef MSFileManager - 0xBBC4)
ADD
                RO, PC ; selRef defaultManager
ADD
                R5, PC; classRef NSFileManager
LDR.W
                R10, [R0]; "defaultManager"
LDR
                RO, [R5]; OBJC CLASS $ MSFileManager
MOV
                 R1, R10
BLX
                 objc msqSend
MOV
                 R7, R7
BLX
                 obic retainAutoreleasedReturnValue
MOV
MOV
                RO, #(selRef fileExistsAtPath - 0xBBE6)
                R2, #(:lower16:(cfstr ApplicationsCy - 0xBBEC)) ; "/Applications/Cydia.app
MOUW
ADD
                RO, PC ; selRef fileExistsAtPath
MOUT.W
                R2, #(:upper16:(cfstr ApplicationsCy - 0xBBEC)) ; "/Applications/Cydia.app
                R2, PC ; "/Applications/Cydia.app"
R6, [R0] ; "fileExistsAtPath:"
ADD
LDR
MOV
                RO. R8
MOV
                R1, R6
BLX
                 objc msqSend
CMP
                RO, #0
BNE
                1oc BCA6
```

- First of all it obtains the object of the NSFileManager class which is stored in R0 and defaultManager method stored in R1 (blue). Later, the result is moved again in R0 (MOV R0, R8).
- 2. Then it obtains the address of the function fileExistsAtPath which is stored in R1 (green).
- 3. "/Applications/Cydia.app" is stored in R2. (red)
- 4. Finally it calls _objc_msgSend with the attributes NSFileManager, fileExistsAtPath and "/Applications/Cydia.app" stored in the registers R0, R1 and R2 respectively.
- 5. It returns a boolean (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (BNE = branch if not equal). If the path does not exists, it jumps to check 2, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

Check 2

```
LDR
                RO, [R5]; _OBJC_CLASS_$_NSFileManager
MOV
                R1, R10
BLX
                 _objc_msgSend
                R7, R7
BLX
                 objc retainAutoreleasedReturnValue
                R2, #(:lower16:(cfstr LibraryMobiles - 0xBC16)); "/Library/MobileSubstrate/MobileSubstrate.dylib
MOUW
MOV
MOUT.W
                R2, #(:upper16:(cfstr_LibraryMobiles - 0xBC16)); "/Library/MobileSubstrate/MobileSubstrate.dylib"
MOV
ADD
                R2, PC ; "/Library/MobileSubstrate/MobileSubstrate.dylib"
                _objc_msgSend
BLX
                R0, #0
CMP
BNE
                1oc BCA0
```

The second check if the library "/Library/MobileSubstrate/MobileSubstrate.dylib" exists. It uses the same procedure as before. Loads the object of NSFileManager class and calls the function fileExistsAtPath.

It returns a boolean (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (BNE = branch if not equal). If the path does not exists, it jumps to check 3, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

```
🗾 🚄 🖼
                RO, [R5]; _OBJC_CLASS_$_NSFileManager
LDR
                R1, R10
MOV
BLX
                 objc msqSend
MOV
                R7, R7
                 objc retainAutoreleasedReturnValue
BLX
                R2, #(:lower16:(cfstr_BinBash - 0xBC3A)) ; "/bin/bash'
MOVW
MOV
                R1, R6
                R2, #(:upper16:(cfstr_BinBash - 0xBC3A)); "/bin/bash"
MOUT.W
MOV
                R4, R0
ADD
                R2, PC ; "/bin/bash"
BLX
                 objc msqSend
                R0, 1oc BC42
CBZ
```

It checks if the path "/bin/bash" exists. It uses the same procedure as before.

It returns a boolean (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (BNE = branch if not equal). If the path does not exists, it jumps to check 4, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

```
💶 🚄 🖼
1oc_BC42
                RO, [R5]; _OBJC_CLASS_$_NSFileManager
LDR
MOV
                R1, R10
STR
                R4, [SP,#0x34+var_20]
                objc msqSend
BLX
                R7, R7
MOV
                 objc retainAutoreleasedReturnValue
BLX
MOVW
                R2, #(:lower16:(cfstr_UsrSbinSshd - 0xBC62)); "/usr/sbin/sshd"
MOV
                R1, R6
                R2, #(:upper16:(cfstr_UsrSbinSshd - 0xBC62)); "/usr/sbin/sshd"
MOUT.W
MOV
                R4, R0
                R2, PC ; "/usr/sbin/sshd"
ADD
                objc msqSend
BLX
CBZ
                RØ, loc BC6A
```

It checks if the path "/usr/sbin/sshd" exists. It uses the same procedure as before.

It returns a boolean (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (CBZ = Compare and Branch on Zero). If the path does not exists, it jumps to check 5, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

```
🗾 🚄 🖼
1oc BC6A
                R0, [R5]; _OBJC_CLASS_$_NSFileManager
LDR
                R1, R10
MOV
STR
                R4, [SP,#0x34+var_24]
BLX
                 objc msqSend
                R7, R7
MOV
BL X
                 obic retainAutoreleasedReturnUalue
                R2, #(:lower16:(cfstr_EtcApt - 0xBC8A)) ; "/etc/apt"
MOUW
MOV
                R1, R6
MOUT.W
                R2, #(:upper16:(cfstr_EtcApt - 0xBC8A)) ; "/etc/apt"
MOV
                R4, R0
                R2, PC ; "/etc/apt"
ADD
BLX
                 objc msqSend
CBZ
                RO, loc BCB8
```

It checks if the path "/etc/apt" exists. It uses the same procedure as before.

It returns a boolean (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (CBZ = Compare and Branch on Zero). If the path does not exists, it jumps to check 6, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

```
🗾 🚄 🖼
1oc_BCB8
                RO, [R5]; _OBJC_CLASS_$_NSFileManager
LDR
MOV
                R1, R10
                objc msqSend
BLX
MOV
                R7, R7
                objc retainAutoreleasedReturnValue
BLX
                R2, #(:lower16:(cfstr PrivateVarLibA - 0xBCD6)) ; "/private/var/lib/apt/"
MOVW
MOV
                R1, R6
                R2, #(:upper16:(cfstr_PrivateVarLibA - 0xBCD6)) ; "/private/var/lib/apt/"
MOUT.W
MOV
                R2, PC ; "/private/var/lib/apt/"
ADD
BLX
                objc msqSend
LDR
                R6, [SP,#0x34+var_20]
CBZ
                RO, loc BCF2
```

It checks if the path "/private/var/lib/apt/" exists. It uses the same procedure as before.

It returns a boolean (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (CBZ = Compare and Branch on Zero). If the path does not exists, it jumps to check 7, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

```
STR
                R4, [SP,#0x34+var_28]
MOV
                R0, #(selRef_sharedApplication - 0xBD08)
MOV
                R2, #(classRef_UIApplication - 0xBD0A)
ADD
                RO, PC ; selRef_sharedApplication
ADD
                R2, PC ; classRef_UIApplication
                R1, [R0] ; "sharedApplication"
LDR
                RO, [R2]; OBJC_CLASS $ UIApplication
LDR
BLX
                 objc msgSend
MOV
                R7, R7
BLX
                 _objc_retainAutoreleasedReturnValue
MOV
                RØ, #(classRef NSURL - 0xBD2C)
MOV
               R1. #(selRef URLWithString - 0xBD2E)
MOV
ADD
                R0, PC ; classRef_NSURL
ADD
               R1, PC ; selRef URLWithString
                RO, [RO] ; OBJC CLASS $ NS
LDR
MOV
               R2, #(cfstr CydiaPackageCo - 0xBD3C) ; "cydia://package/com.example.package'
LDR
                R1, [R1]; "URLWithString:"
ADD
                R2, PC ; "cydia://package/com.example.package"
BLX
                 objc_msgSend
MOV
                R7, R7
BLX
                 objc retainAutoreleasedReturnValue
MOV
                R6, R0
MOV
                R0, #(selRef canOpenURL - 0xBD54)
MOV
                R2, R6
ADD
                R0, PC ; selRef_canOpenURL_
LDR
                R1, [R0] ; "canOpenURL:"
MOU
               RØ, R4
                 objc_msgSend
BLX
STR
                R0, [SP,#0x34+var_20]
MOV
                RØ, R6
BLX
                 objc_release
MOV
                RØ, R4
BLX
                 objc_release
MOV
                RØ, R5
BLX
                 objc release
LDR
                R0, [SP,#0x34+var 28]
BLX
                 objc release
LDR
                R0, [SP,#0x34+var_24]
BLX
                 objc release
LDR
                R0, [SP,#0x34+var 20]
BLX
                 objc release
MOV
                RØ, R11
BLX
                 objc release
MOV
                RØ, R8
BLX
                 objc release
                RO, [SP,#0x34+var_2C]
LDR
CHP
                RØ, #0
```

This check tries to call the Cydia's URL scheme (cydia://). It does it in two steps: first it creates the URL object and then it opens the URL.

- 1. First of all it obtains the object of the class UIApplication which is stored in R4 (blue).
- 2. It obtains the object of the class NSURL which is stored in R0 (purple).
- Then it obtains the address of the method URLWithString which it is stored in R1 (green).
- 4. "cydia://package/com.example.package" is stored in R2 (red).
- It calls _objc_msgSend with the attributes NSURL, URLWithString and "cydia://package/com.example.package" stored in the registers R0, R1 and R2 respectively.
- 6. It returns a NSURL object initialized with URLString which is stored in first in R6 and after in R2 (orange).
- 7. It obtains the address of the method canOpenURL which it is stored in R1 (light blue).
- 8. The value of R4 (UIApplication class) is moved to R0 (blue).
- 9. It calls _objc_msgSend with the attributes UIApplication, canOpenURL and NSURL object stored in the registers R0, R1 and R2 respectively.
- 10. It returns a a Boolean value indicating whether an app is available to handle a URL scheme (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (BNE = branch if not equal). If the path exists, it jumps to check 8, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

It tries to open the file "/bin/bash" with readonly calling the method "_fopen".

It returns a boolean stored in (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (CBNZ = Compare and Branch on Non-Zero). If the file can not be open, it jumps to check 9, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

Check 9

```
MOV R0, #(aApplicationsCy - 0xBDC0); "/Applications/Cydia.app"
MOV R1, #(aR - 0xBDC2); "r"
ADD R0, PC; "/Applications/Cydia.app"
ADD R1, PC; "r"
BLX _fopen
CBNZ R0, loc_BE14
```

It tries to open the file "/Application/Cydia.app" with readonly calling the method "_fopen".

It returns a boolean stored in (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (CBNZ = Compare and Branch on Non-Zero). If the file can not be open, it jumps to check 10, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

Check 10

```
MOU R0, #(aLibraryMobiles - 0xBDDA); "/Library/MobileSubstrate/MobileSubstrat"...
MOU R1, #(aR - 0xBDDC); "r"
ADD R0, PC; "/Library/MobileSubstrate/MobileSubstrat"...
ADD R1, PC; "r"
BLX _fopen
CBNZ R0, loc_BE14
```

It tries to open the file "/Library/MobileSubstrate/MobileSubstrate.dylib" with readonly calling the method "_fopen".

It returns a boolean stored in (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (CBNZ = Compare and Branch on Non-Zero). If the file can not be open, it jumps to check 11, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

Check 11

```
MOV R0, #(aUsrSbinSshd - 0xBDF4); "/usr/sbin/sshd"
MOV R1, #(aR - 0xBDF6); "r"
ADD R0, PC; "/usr/sbin/sshd"
ADD R1, PC; "r"
BLX _fopen
CBNZ R0, loc_BE14
```

It tries to open the file "/usr/sbin/sshd" with readonly calling the method "_fopen".

It returns a boolean stored in (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (CBNZ = Compare and Branch on Non-Zero). If the file can not be open, it jumps to check 12, otherwise the

method will return that the device is jailbroken.

Check 12

```
MOV R0, #(aEtcApt - 0xBE0E) ; "/etc/apt'
MOV R1, #(aR - 0xBE10) ; "r"
ADD R0, PC ; "/etc/apt"
ADD R1, PC ; "r"
BLX _fopen
CBZ R0, loc_BE1A
```

It tries to open the file "/etc/apt" with readonly calling the method "_fopen".

It returns a boolean stored in (R0) which is compared with 0x00 (CBNZ = Compare and Branch on Non-Zero). If the file can not be open, it jumps to check 13, otherwise the method will return that the device is jailbroken.

Check 13

This check tries to create a file called "jailbreak.txt" in /private.

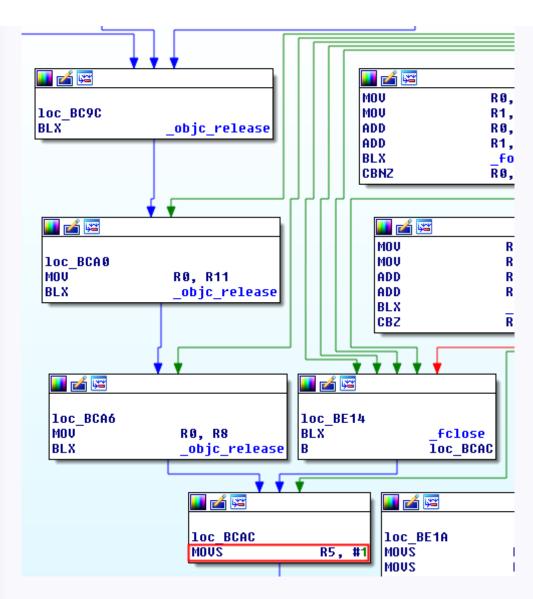
```
🗾 🊄 🖼
loc BE1A
                        ; FILE *
MOVS
                RO, #0
MOUS
                R5, #0
BLX
                 fclose
                R1, #(:lower16:(selRef writeToFile atomically encoding error - 0xBE3C))
MOVW
ADD
                R2, SP, #0x34+var_10
MOUT.W
                R1, #(:upper16:(selRef_writeToFile_atomically_encoding_error_ - 0xBE3C))
                RO, #(cfstr_ThisIsATest_ - 0xBE4A) ; "This is a test."
MOV
                R8, #(:lower16:(cfstr PrivateJailbre - 0xBE42)) ; "/private/jailbreak.txt"
MOUW
                R1, PC; selRef_writeToFile_atomically_encoding_error_
ADD
                R8, #(:upper16:(cfstr_PrivateJailbre - 0xBE42)) ; "/private/jailbreak.txt"
MOUT.W
                R8, PC ; "/private/jailbreak.txt"
ADD
                R2, [SP,#0x34+var 30]
STR
LDR
                R1, [R1]; "writeToFile:atomically:encoding:error:"
RUOMS
                R2, #4
                RO, PC ; "This is a test."
ADD
STR
                R2, [SP,#0x34+var 34]
                R2, R8
MOV
NOVS
                R3, #1
STR
                R5, [SP,#0x34+var_10]
BLX
                 objc msqSend
LDR
                RO, [SP,#0x34+var_10]
BLX
                objc retain
MOV
                R6, R0
MOV
                RO, #(classRef MSFileManager - 0xBE6A)
                R1, R10
MOV
ADD
                RO, PC ; classRef_NSFileManager
LDR
                RO, [RO] ; OBJC CLASS $ NSFileManager
BLX
                 objc msgSend
MOV
                R7, R7
                objc retainAutoreleasedReturnValue
BLX
MOV
                R4, R0
```

```
RO, #(selRef removeItemAtPath error - 0xBE84)
MOV
                RO, PC ; selRef_removeItemAtPath_error_
ADD
MOVS
                R1, [R0]; "removeItemAtPath:error:"
LDR
MOV
                R0, R4
BLX
                 objc msqSend
MOV
                R0, R6
BLX
                 objc release
MOV
                R0, R4
BLX
                 objc release
CMP
                R6, #0
IT EQ
MOVEQ
                R5, #1
                1oc BCAE
; End of function
```

It can be divided in three parts:

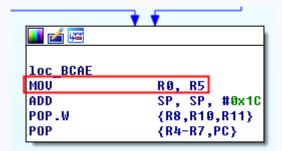
- 1. **Create file**: uses the method writeToFile, stored in R1, to create the file. In R0 there is the text inside the file and in R2 the path "/private/jailbreak.txt". If the file has been successful created, it returns a 1 and it is stored in R6. (blue)
- 2. **Remove file**: First obtains the object of NSFileManager by calling _objc_msgSend with NSFileManager in R0 and defaultManager in R1, moved from R10 (purple). The obtained object is used to call the method removeItemAtPath, stored in R1, with the path passed as argument stored in R2. (red)
- 3. **Comparision**: Moves the result of the file creation stored in R6 to R0. It makes a comparission between R0 and 0 and stores 1 to R5 if R0 is 0. (green)

Is Jailbroken



If any of the checks fail, except check 13 which jumps to the return method, it ends here. Integer 1 is moved to R5 (device is jailbroken).

Return



There are two possible ways to get here:

- 1. From the "Is Jailbroken" step, so R5 will be 1.
- 2. From the "Check 13", so R5 can be either 0 or 1.

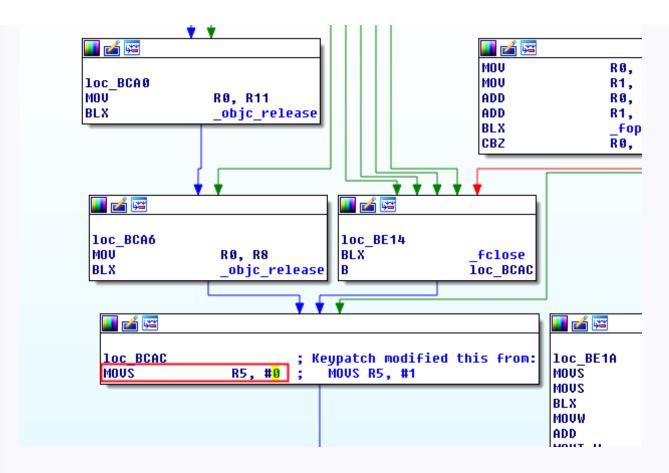
The method will move R5 to R0 and will return 1 if the device is jailbroken or 0 if not.

Patching

Jailbreak method

Makeing the method which checks if the device is jailbroken return always 0. There are some ways to do it:

- 1. Modifying all jumps from all the checks so they jump always to the next check and then make check 13 to return always 0 by modifying the comparision.
- 2. Modifying is_jailbroken because is where the checks jump if they fail.



1. Modify R0 before the jailbreak method ends, so it always return 0.

Parent method

An other way is to modify the behaivour of the method which calls the jailbreak check:

1. Modifying the register used in the comparission by repleacing the call to the jailbreak check method:



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