

# The Poor Man's Obfuscator

## ELF & Mach-O Tricks to Hinder Static Analysis

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July, 2022

Pass The Salt

# Introduction

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# About

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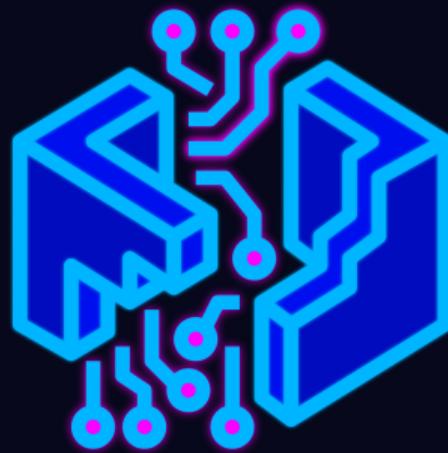
- Security engineer at UL - La Ciotat
- Working on banking app certifications (EMVCo, VISA, ...)
- Author of LIEF: <https://lief.re>
- Enjoy Android, reverse engineering and, obfuscation.



## The Challenges

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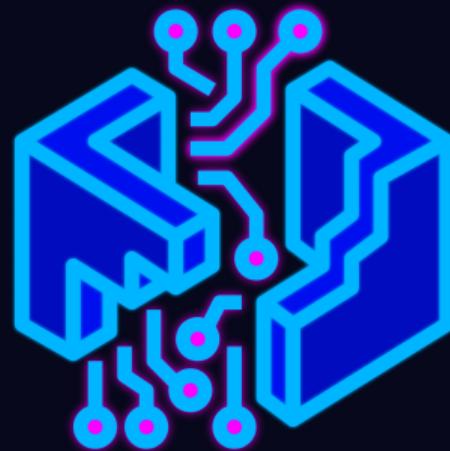
1. Transform ELF & Mach-O binaries such as they look obfuscated



## The Challenges

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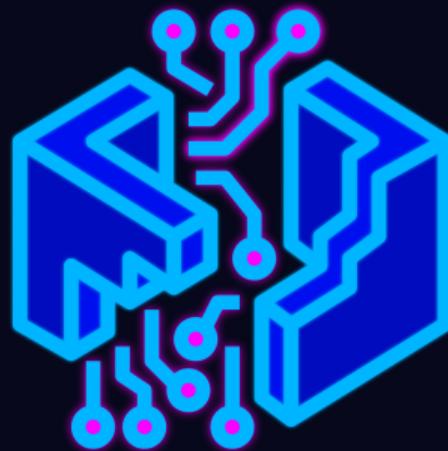
1. Transform ELF & Mach-O binaries such as they look obfuscated
2. Transformations **only** based on the executable formats



## The Challenges

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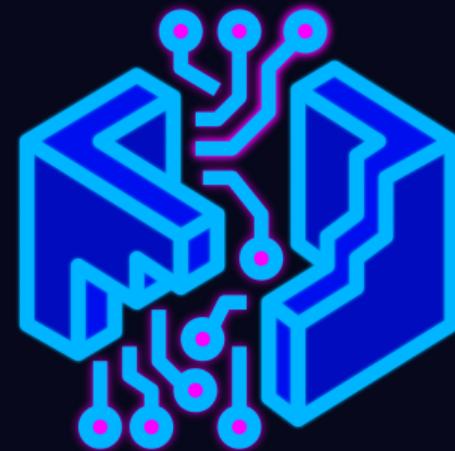
1. Transform ELF & Mach-O binaries such as they look obfuscated
2. Transformations **only** based on the executable formats
3. Must impact classical tools: IDA, BinaryNinja, Ghidra, Radare2 ...



## The Challenges

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1. Transform ELF & Mach-O binaries such as they look obfuscated
2. Transformations **only** based on the executable formats
3. Must impact classical tools: IDA, BinaryNinja, Ghidra, Radare2 ...
4. The modified binaries **must still run** after the transformations



## Transformations Overview

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- The transformations rely on LIEF (commit: [f8c711d](#))
- The ELF and Mach-O `arm64` binaries used in this presentation come from the Mbed TLS test suite

# Transformations Overview

## Symbols



## Sections



## ELF / Mach-O



## Symbols

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# Symbols

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# Exports: Random Names

```
target = lief.parse("mbedtls_self_test.arm64.elf")

for function in target.functions:
    name = ''.join(random.choice(ascii_letters) for i in range(20))
    target.add_exported_function(function.address, name)
```

Function name

# start	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# LxJfn#0RQcJUlwPqKQGjJ	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# ezFlyEHeNC5jn#sDFrJm	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# MkrtrAE5dGzHAnfpfplM	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# SsoGcpKNaPCtYznFnIKR	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# TXXLMswz0gdozxYdhBAu	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# HnEyol1bh#d1MK1ubuXJ	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# ZxdXvMhfCYBmLjy3hOK	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# QgeCqwmDkMmJtubOck	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# VOFcbjRPNEUBTEN1rrzA	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# L1r1xeEQoshSwNxTnjG	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# ozGNdKscNDRKTkvZvycFSE	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# bknKScONUVVvcaXMjkh	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# lLawfFn1PoFnPPSldCkJ	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# zVkwzDloG#rjytoCv	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# eCHULUDHxDH0rVdJGFB	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# NHouuyKeDgKFtOjEMU	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# drkgDBLnhIxzdOpPxGS	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# XYDKSzslVoyzha1nwac	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# tzCgAnVEctqlQosSeQtz	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# GAvIneuPIjuzEDw#TF	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# u0NjNehXkbclB18PevrZA	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# ekgbEFyJWBZlCtdosvd	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# pnKrsVwXKtXqZGJHPA	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# rFylGcEXTBLvxw#Tnjq	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# rZhuzzlBobbCwrELhxEA	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# xTKhbqcgtbgJydxKALEV	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# enVkeNeFzngYVhhbanv	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# MIBTFybsKhuCccCQ0rdunu	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# eCprCPEnsgphlkXehpRzj	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# ofFpvkgdcovfnbjkzKOF	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# knVlkaeCnWlHjUbuj	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# XUGLn1bz1zleqfqrXhtv	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# UNIzDftqxyLrfwSCtQ	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# FzceZqsbyuaTRTPDEzg	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# BTk5drarfYrgkhkJSEwN	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# oxzoxnnB eiMKKcin5	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# zgupivx0Sh0RQBhp1opjf	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# tggcc0tqrlutisUHRq0m	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# XnsaCX0JuhghhkGdRVrc	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# OUVyUlFxCKohnHGEX1jN	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000
# VuqdbsZHVCMKYfbAveZzh	.text	00000000000000000000000000000000



## Symbols

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# Exports: Confusing Names

```
target = lief.parse("mbedtls_self_test.arm64.elf")
nostrip = lief.parse("mbedtls_self_test.nostrip.arm64.elf")

symbols = [s.name for s in non_striped.symbols if s.name.startswith("mbedtls_")]

for function in target.functions:
    sym = random.choice(SYMBOLS)
    target.add_exported_function(function.address, sym)
```

Function name	Address
mbedtls_start	000000000000198A8
mbedtls_aes_crypt_ctr	0000000000001991C
mbedtls_ccm_encrypt_and_tag	00000000000019998
mbedtls_gcm_init	00000000000019E74
mbedtls_chacha20_init	0000000000001A358
mbedtls_rsa_private	0000000000001A390
mbedtls_ct_drbg_self_test	0000000000001A488
mbedtls_ct_mpi_uint_cond_assign	0000000000001ACDC
mbedtls_cmac_self_test	0000000000001ADCB
mbedtls_des3_init	0000000000001AE6C
mbedtls_ct_rsae_pkcs1_v15_unpadding	0000000000001AF3B
mbedtls_des3_setkey_enc	0000000000001B8A8
mbedtls_aria_crypt_ecb	0000000000001BF98
mbedtls_cipher_setup	0000000000001C19C
mbedtls_poly1305_self_test	0000000000001C544
mbedtls_camellia_crypt_ecb	0000000000001C574
mbedtls_des_free	0000000000001C584
mbedtls_sha512_self_test	0000000000001C660
mbedtls_nist_kw_init	0000000000001C94C
mbedtls_ct_base64_enc_char	0000000000001CA18
mbedtls_md	0000000000001D43C
mbedtls_mpi_random	0000000000001D528
mbedtls_ecp_group_free	0000000000001D560
mbedtls_ecp_gen_keypair_base	0000000000001D610
mbedtls_chachapoly_init	0000000000001D7BC
mbedtls_mpl_set	0000000000001DA14
mbedtls_chachapoly_encrypt_and_tag	0000000000001DBCC
mbedtls_cipher_cmac_finish	0000000000001DBDC
mbedtls_ecpake_write_round_one	0000000000001DBDC



# Exports: Confusing Names



```
00189fc _start:  
189fc bti    j  
3a00 mov    x29, #0  
a04 mov    x30, #0  
a08 mov    x0, sp {arg_0}  
8a0c b      mbedtls_aes_crypt_ctr  
does not return }
```

Function name	Address
# start	000000000000198A8
# mbedtls_aes_crypt_ctr	.text 0000000000001991C
# mbedtls_cmc_encrypt_and_tag	00000000000019E74
# mbedtls_gcm_init	0000000000001A358
# mbedtls_chacha20_init	0000000000001A390
# mbedtls_rsa_private	0000000000001A488
# mbedtls_ct_drbg_self_test	0000000000001ACDC
# mbedtls_des3_init	0000000000001ADCB
# mbedtls_ct_rsae_pkcs1_v15_unpadding	0000000000001AE6C
# mbedtls_des3_update	0000000000001AF3B
# mbedtls_des_setkey_enc	0000000000001B8A8
# mbedtls_aria_crypt_ecb	0000000000001BF98
# mbedtls_cipher_setup	0000000000001C19C
# mbedtls_poly1305_self_test	0000000000001C544
# mbedtls_camellia_crypt_ecb	0000000000001C574
# mbedtls_mpl_fill_random	0000000000001C584
# mbedtls_cmc_setkey	0000000000001C860
# mbedtls_ct_drbg_reseed_internal	0000000000001C94C
# mbedtls_aria_crypt_cfb128	0000000000001CA19
# mbedtls_base64_self_test	0000000000001D43C
# mbedtls_mpl_mul_int	0000000000001D528
# mbedtls_des_free	0000000000001D560
# mbedtls_sha512_self_test	0000000000001D610
# mbedtls_nist_kw_init	0000000000001D7BC
# mbedtls_ct_base64_enc_char	0000000000001DA14
# mbedtls_md	0000000000001DBCC
# mbedtls_mpl_random	0000000000001DBDC
# mbedtls_ecp_group_free	
# mbedtls_ecp_gen_keypair_base	
# mbedtls_chachapoly_init	
# mbedtls_mpl_lset	
# mbedtls_chachapoly_encrypt_and_tag	
# mbedtls_cipher_cmac_finish	
# mbedtls_ecpake_write_round_one	



## Symbols

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# Exports: libc symbols

```
target = lief.parse("mbedtls_self_test.arm64.elf")
libc = lief.parse("aarch64-linux-android/23/libc.so")

libc_symbols = {s.name for s in libc.exported_symbols}
libc_symbols -= {s.name for s in target.imported_symbols}

for function in target.functions:
    sym = random.choice(libc_symbols)
    libc_symbols.remove(sym)

    export = target.add_exported_function(function.address, sym)

    export.binding = lief.ELF.SYMBOL_BINDINGS.GNU_UNIQUE
    export.visibility = lief.ELF.SYMBOL_VISIBILITY.INTERNAL
```

Function name	
# start	.text 0000000000001A6B
# fputs	.text 000000000000199C
# setpriority	.text 00000000000019E4
# iswblank	.text 0000000000001A358
# getnetbyname	.text 0000000000001A390
# isnanf	.text 0000000000001A688
# res_init	.text 0000000000001ACDC
# splice	.text 0000000000001ADCB
# tset	.text 0000000000001AE6C
# sched_setaffinity	.text 0000000000001AF38
# wcsncpy	.text 0000000000001B8A8
# __system_property_find_nth	.text 0000000000001BF98
# wcslen	.text 0000000000001C19C
# getnameInfo	.text 0000000000001C54
# fwscanf	.text 0000000000001C574
# flockfile	.text 0000000000001C584
# strtok	.text 0000000000001C860
# ns_sanenane	.text 0000000000001C94C
# inet_aton	.text 0000000000001CA18
# sched_getparam	.text 0000000000001D43C
# getrlimit	.text 0000000000001D528
# atol	.text 0000000000001D568
# puts_unlocked	.text 0000000000001D610
# pthread_rwlockattr_SetShared	.text 0000000000001D7BC
# sigwaitinfo	.text 0000000000001D8CC
# tcgetsid	.text 0000000000001D914
# select	.text 0000000000001D98C
# mprotect	.text 0000000000001D9E0
# setregid	.text 0000000000001D9E8
# daemon	.text 0000000000001D9F0
# getpid	.text 0000000000001D9F4
# Flock	.text 0000000000001D9F8
# getsid	.text 0000000000001D9FA
# bind	.text 0000000000001D9FB
# pthread_mutexattr_SetShared	.text 0000000000001D9FD
# __cmsg_nxthdr	.text 0000000000001D9FF
# ftruncate64	.text 0000000000001D9F8
# dprintf	.text 0000000000001D9F9
# execve	.text 0000000000001D9FA
# strtok_r	.text 0000000000001D9FB
# ns_name_pton	.text 0000000000001D9FC
# open	.text 0000000000001D9FD

# Exports: libc symbols

The image shows a debugger interface with three windows. A blue box highlights the assembly code window, which displays the assembly for the `mbedtls_aes_crypt_ecb` function. A circular icon with a grayscale portrait of a man is positioned above the assembly code. A green arrow points from the assembly code window to the list of exports.

**Assembly Code (mbedtls\_aes\_crypt\_ecb):**

```
; Attributes: bp-based frame
EXPORT mbedtls_aes_crypt_ecb
mbedtls_aes_crypt_ecb

var_s0= 0

; _ unwind {
    STP      X29, X30, [SP,-0x10+var_s0]
    MOV      X29, SP
    CMP      WI, #1
    B.NE    loc_19378

X1, X2
X2, X3
mbedtls_internal_aes_encrypt
loc_19378      X1, X2
MOV      X2, X3
BL       mbedtls_internal_aes_decrypt

loc_19384
    MOV      W0, WZR
    LDP      X29, X30, [SP+var_s0],#0x10
    RET

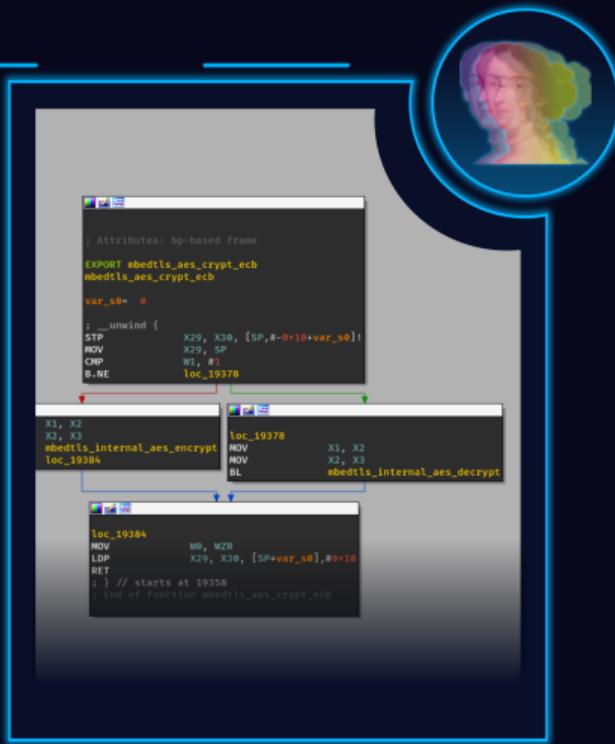
; } // starts at 19358
; .End of Function mbedtls_aes_crypt_ecb
```

**List of Exported Symbols:**

Function name	Address
start	0000000000001A6B
fputs	0000000000001990
setpriority	00000000000019E74
iswblank	0000000000001A358
getnetbyname	0000000000001A390
isnanf	0000000000001A688
res_init	0000000000001ACDC
splice	0000000000001ADCB
tzset	0000000000001AE6C
sched_setaffinity	0000000000001AF38
wcsncpy	0000000000001B8A8
_system_property_find_nth	0000000000001B9F8
wcslen	0000000000001C19C
getnameInfo	0000000000001C494C
fwscanf	0000000000001C860
flockfile	0000000000001C94C
strtok	0000000000001CA18
ns_sanenane	0000000000001D43C
inet_aton	0000000000001D528
sched_getparam	0000000000001D610
getrlimit	0000000000001D7BC
atol	0000000000001D8A4
putc_unlocked	0000000000001D8DC
pthread_rwlockattr_Setshared	0000000000001E6C
sigwaitinfo	0000000000001F38
tcgetsid	0000000000001B8A8
select	0000000000001BF98
mprotect	0000000000001C19C
setregid	0000000000001C544
daanon	0000000000001C574
getpid	0000000000001C584
flock	0000000000001C860
getsid	0000000000001C94C
bind	0000000000001CA18
pthread_mutexattr_Setshared	0000000000001D43C
_cmsg_nxt hdr	0000000000001D528
ftruncate64	0000000000001D568
dprintf	0000000000001D610
execve	0000000000001D7BC
strtol_r	0000000000001DA14
ns_name_pton	0000000000001DB8CC
open	0000000000001DBDC

A circular icon with a grayscale portrait of a man is positioned to the right of the list of exports.

## Exports: libc symbols



# Symbols

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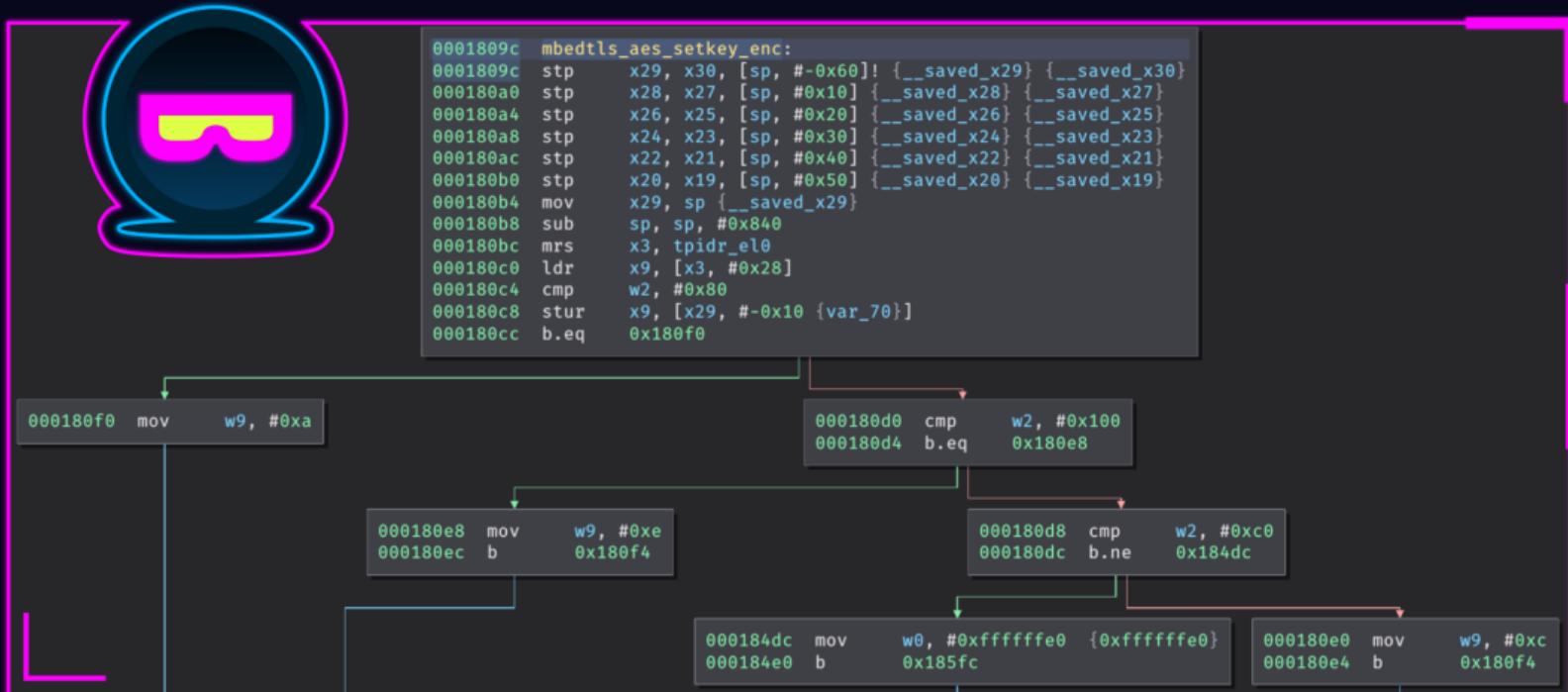
## Exports: Unaligned Functions

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```
address = function.address  
address += random.randint(16, 32)  
address -= address % 4  
  
export = target.add_exported_function(address, sym)
```

The idea is to create exports with  
**unaligned** functions

# Symbols



# Symbols

---

```
0001909c sub_1909c:  
0001909c stp      x29, x30, [sp, #-0x60]! {var_60} {var_58}  
000190a0 stp      x28, x27, [sp, #0x10] {var_50} {var_48}  
000190a4 stp      x26, x25, [sp, #0x20] {var_40} {var_38}  
000190a8 stp      x24, x23, [sp, #0x30] {var_30} {var_28}  
000190ac stp      x22, x21, [sp, #0x40] {var_20} {var_18}  
000190b0 stp      x20, x19, [sp, #0x50] {var_16} {var_14}  
000190b4 mov      x29, sp {var_60} {mktemp}  
{ Falls through into mktemp }
```



# Symbols

---

```
[0x0001909c]> pdb
    ; XREFS: CALL 0x00019688  CALL 0x000198e4  CODE 0x00019904  CALL 0x00019958  CALL 0x0001b028  CALL 0x0001b110
    ; XREFS: CALL 0x0001b244  CALL 0x0001b424  CALL 0x0001b5a4  CALL 0x0001b734  CALL 0x0001b76c  CALL 0x0001b780
    ; XREFS: CODE 0x0002848c  CALL 0x0002a66c  CALL 0x0002a808  CALL 0x0002a9c4  CALL 0x0002ae04  CALL 0x0002b010
28: fcn.0001909c (int64_t arg1, int64_t arg2, int64_t arg3, int64_t arg_10h, int64_t arg_20h, int64_t arg_30h, int64_t
rg: 3 (vars 0, args 3)
bp: 0 (vars 0, args 0)
sp: 21 (vars 13, args 8)
    0x0001909c      fd7bbaa9      stp x29, x30, [sp, -0x60]!
    0x000190a0      fc6f01a9      stp x28, x27, [sp, 0x10]
    0x000190a4      fa6702a9      stp x26, x25, [sp, 0x20]
    0x000190a8      f85f03a9      stp x24, x23, [sp, 0x30]
    0x000190ac      f65704a9      stp x22, x21, [sp, 0x40]
    0x000190b0      f44f05a9      stp x20, x19, [sp, 0x50]
    0x000190b4      fd030091      mov x29, sp
[0x0001909c]> █
```



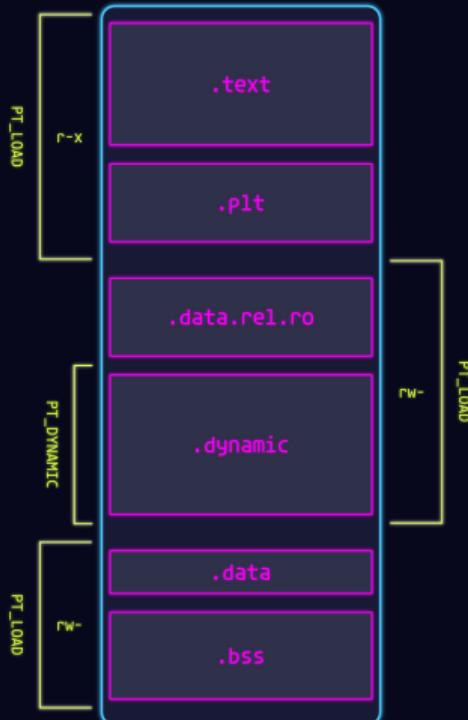
## Sections

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# Sections

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Parsing an ELF binary from sections is  
error-prone.



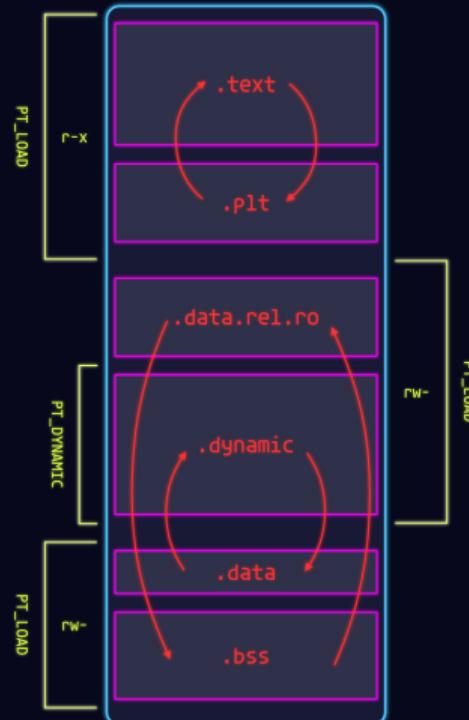
# Sections

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```
SWAP_LIST = [
    ("._rela.dyn", ".data.rel.ro"),
    (".got", ".data"),
    (".plt", ".text"),

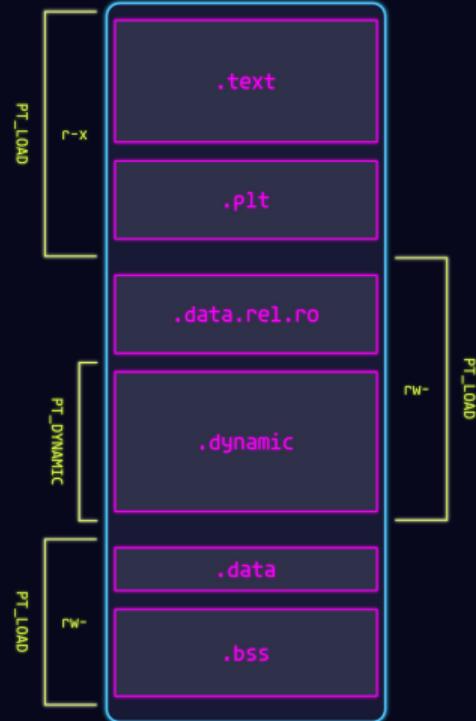
    ("._preinit_array", ".bss"),
]

for (lhs_name, rhs_name) in SWAP_LIST:
    # ...
    lhs.offset      = rhs.offset
    lhs.size        = rhs.size
    lhs.name        = rhs.name
    lhs.type        = rhs.type
    lhs.virtual_address = rhs.virtual_address
    # ...
```



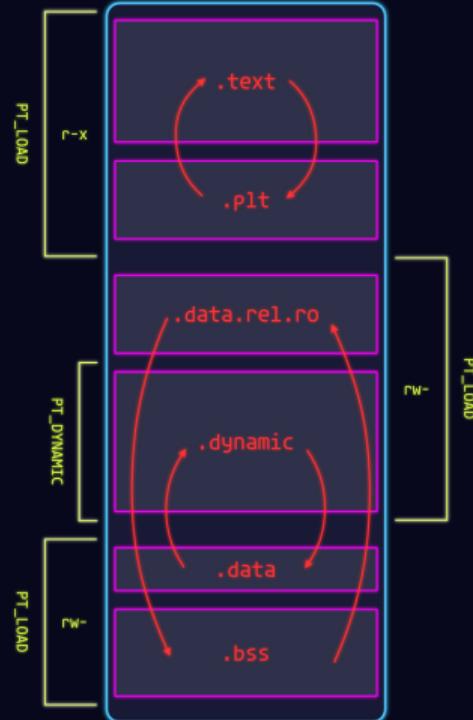
# Sections

```
.text:0000000000003F4A4      LDP      W16, W2, [X9,#-0x1C]
.text:0000000000003F4A8      LDR      W17, [X10,#0x0]
.text:0000000000003F4AC      EOR      W13, W13, W12,ROR#11
.text:0000000000003F4B0      ORR      W14, W15, W14
.text:0000000000003F4B4      EOR      W12, W13, W12,ROR#25
.text:0000000000003F4B8      LDP      W15, W13, [X10,#0x2C]
.text:0000000000003F4BC      LDUR     W1, [X10,#-8]
.text:0000000000003F4C0      ADD      W12, W12, W4
.text:0000000000003F4C4      ADD      W12, W12, W16
.text:0000000000003F4C8      EXTR     W16, W17, W17, #0x11
.text:0000000000003F4CC      ADD      W12, W12, W14
.text:0000000000003F4D0      EXTR     W14, W13, W13, #7
.text:0000000000003F4D4      EOR      W16, W16, W17,ROR#19
.text:0000000000003F4D8      EOR      W14, W14, W13,ROR#18
.text:0000000000003F4DC      EOR      W16, W16, W17,LSRF#10
.text:0000000000003F4E0      EOR      W13, W14, W13,LSRF#3
.text:0000000000003F4E4      ADD      W14, W16, W1
.text:0000000000003F4E8      ADD      W14, W14, W15
.text:0000000000003F4EC      ADD      W13, W14, W13
.text:0000000000003F4F0      STR      W13, [X10,#0x14]
.text:0000000000003F4F4      ADD      W12, W12, W13
.text:0000000000003F4F8      LDR      W13, [SP,#0x130+var_28]
.text:0000000000003F4FC      LDR      W14, [SP,#0x130+var_24]
.text:0000000000003F500      LDR      W15, [SP,#0x130+var_20]
.text:0000000000003F504      LDR      W16, [SP,#0x130+var_1C]
.text:0000000000003F508      LDR      W17, [SP,#0x130+var_10]
.text:0000000000003F50C      ORR      W1, W14, W13
.text:0000000000003F510      AND      W15, W15, W1
.text:0000000000003F514      EXTR     W1, W13, W13, #2
.text:0000000000003F518      AND      W14, W14, W13
.text:0000000000003F51C      EOR      W1, W1, W13,ROR#13
.text:0000000000003F520      EOR      W13, W1, W13,ROR#22
.text:0000000000003F524      LDR      W1, [SP,#0x130+var_14]
.text:0000000000003F528      ORR      W14, W15, W14
.text:0000000000003F52C      LDR      W15, [SP,#0x130+var_18]
.text:0000000000003F530      ADD      W16, W16, W12
.text:0000000000003F534      BIC      W1, W1, W16
.text:0000000000003F538      ADD      W13, W14, W13
.text:0000000000003F53C      AND      W15, W15, W16
.text:0000000000003F540      ORR      W15, W15, W1
.text:0000000000003F544      EXTR     W1, W16, W16, #6
.text:0000000000003F548      EOR      W1, W1, W16,ROR#11
.text:0000000000003F54C      EOR      W14, W1, W16,ROR#25
.text:0000000000003F550      ADD      W12, W13, W12
.text:0000000000003F554      STR      W16, [SP,#0x130+var_1C]
```



# Sections

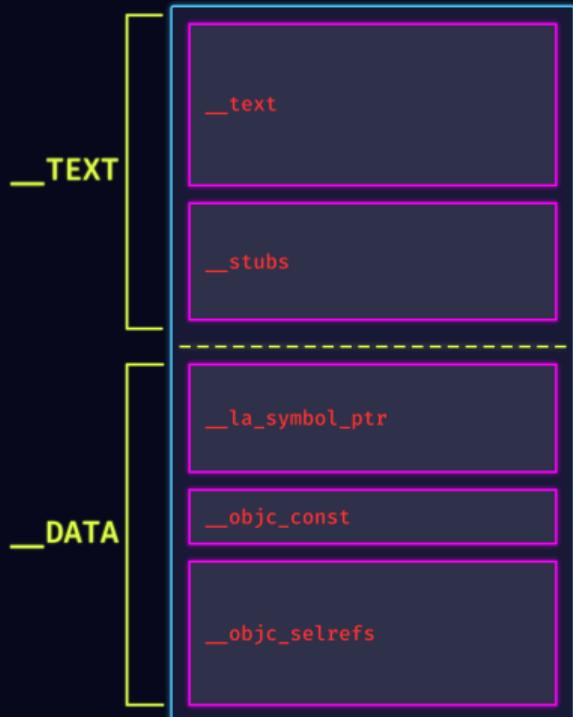
```
LOAD:000000000003F4A0      AND      W15, W16, W12
LOAD:000000000003F4A4      LDP      W16, W2, [X10,#-0x1C]
LOAD:000000000003F4A8      LDR      W17, [X10,#0xC]
LOAD:000000000003F4AC      EOR      W13, W13, W12,ROR#11
LOAD:000000000003F4B0      ORR      W14, W15, W14
LOAD:000000000003F4B4      EOR      W12, W13, W12,ROR#25
LOAD:000000000003F4B8      LDP      W15, W13, [X10,#-0x2C]
LOAD:000000000003F4BC      LDUR     W1, [X10,#-8]
LOAD:000000000003F4C0      ADD      W12, W12, W4
LOAD:000000000003F4C4      ADD      W12, W12, W16
LOAD:000000000003F4C8      EXTR     W16, W17, W17, #0x11
LOAD:000000000003F4CC      ADD      W12, W12, W14
LOAD:000000000003F4D0      EXTR     W14, W13, W13, #7
LOAD:000000000003F4D4      EOR      W16, W16, W17,ROR#19
LOAD:000000000003F4D8      EOR      W14, W14, W13,ROR#18
LOAD:000000000003F4DC      EOR      W16, W16, W17,LSR#10
LOAD:000000000003F4E0      EOR      W13, W14, W13,LSR#3
LOAD:000000000003F4E4      ADD      W14, W16, W1
LOAD:000000000003F4E8      ADD      W14, W14, W15
LOAD:000000000003F4EC      ADD      W13, W14, W13
LOAD:000000000003F4F0      STR      W13, [X10,#0x14]
LOAD:000000000003F4F4      dword_3F4F4 DCD 0xB0D010C ; DATA XREF: LOAD:0000
LOAD:000000000003F4F8      LDR      W13, [SP,#0x108]
LOAD:000000000003F4FC      LDR      W14, [SP,#0x10C]
LOAD:000000000003F500      LDR      W15, [SP,#0x110]
LOAD:000000000003F504      LDR      W16, [SP,#0x114]
LOAD:000000000003F508      LDR      W17, [SP,#0x120]
LOAD:000000000003F50C      ORR      W1, W14, W13
LOAD:000000000003F510      AND      W15, W15, W1
LOAD:000000000003F514      EXTR     W1, W13, W13, #2
LOAD:000000000003F518      AND      W14, W14, W13
LOAD:000000000003F51C      EOR      W1, W1, W13,ROR#13
LOAD:000000000003F520      EOR      W13, W1, W13,ROR#22
LOAD:000000000003F524      LDR      W1, [SP,#0x11C]
LOAD:000000000003F528      ORR      W14, W15, W14
LOAD:000000000003F52C      LDR      W15, [SP,#0x118]
LOAD:000000000003F530      ADD      W16, W16, W12
LOAD:000000000003F534      BIC      W1, W1, W16
LOAD:000000000003F538      ADD      W13, W14, W13
LOAD:000000000003F53C      AND      W15, W15, W16
LOAD:000000000003F540      ORR      W15, W15, W1
LOAD:000000000003F544      EXTR     W1, W16, W16, #6
LOAD:000000000003F548      EOR      W1, W1, W16,ROR#11
```



# Sections

---

The Mach-O format and dyld enforce a stricter layout for sections.



# Sections

---

```
__text = target.get_section("__text")
__stubs = target.get_section("__stubs")

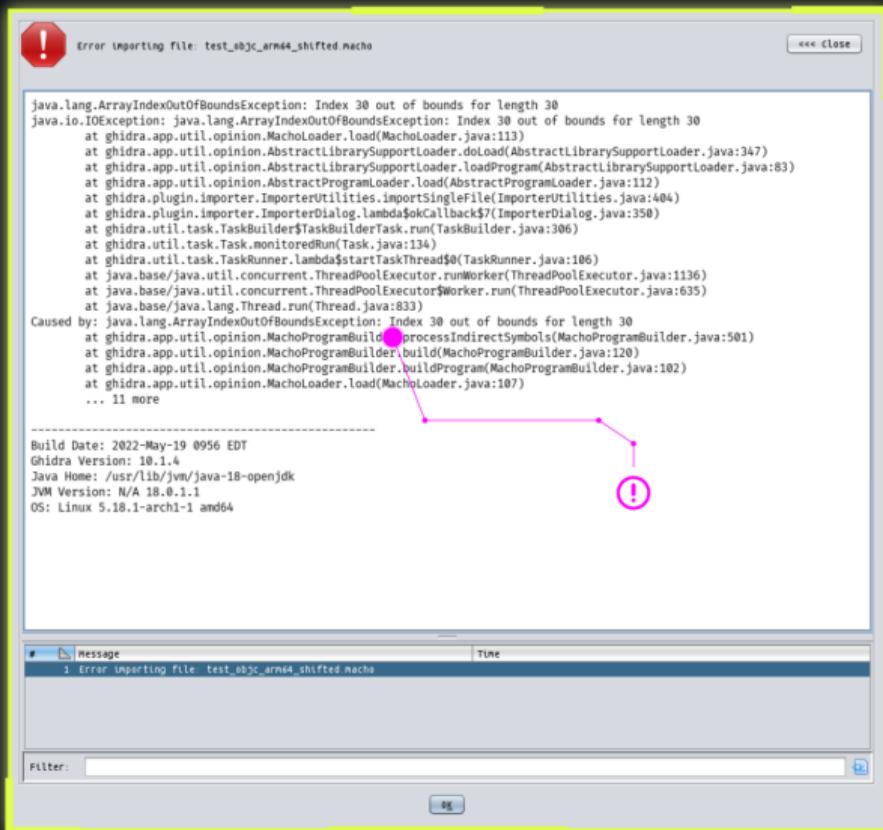
DELTA = 0x100

__text.size          -= DELTA

__stubs.offset       -= DELTA
__stubs.virtual_address -= DELTA
__stubs.size         += DELTA
```

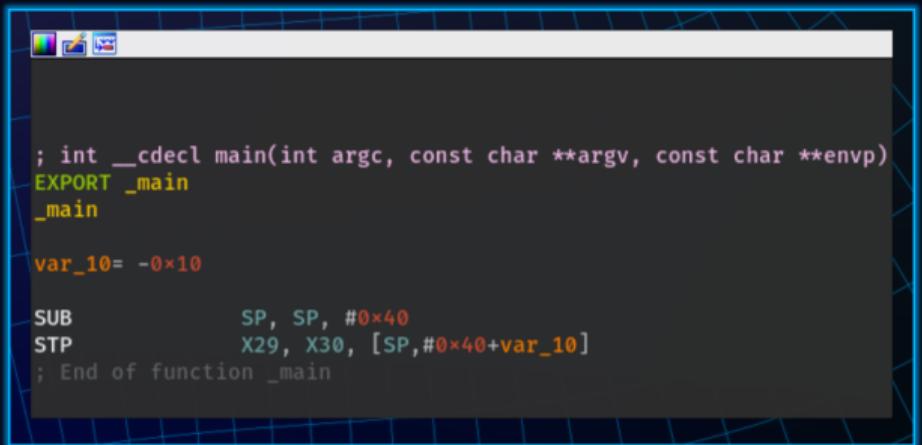


# Sections



# Sections

---



The screenshot shows the assembly code for the `_main` function. The code includes the declaration of the function, its parameters, local variable declarations, and the assembly instructions for the function's body.

```
; int __cdecl main(int argc, const char **argv, const char **envp)
EXPORT _main
_main

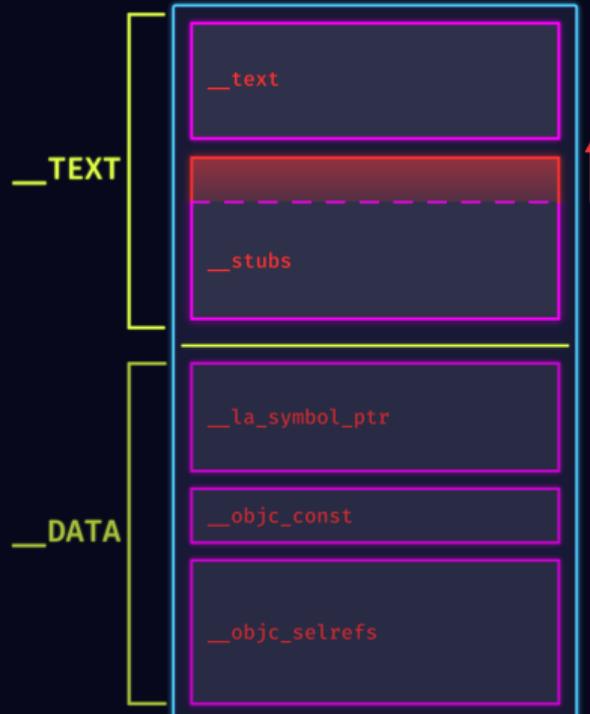
var_10= -0x10

SUB      SP, SP, #0x40
STP      X29, X30, [SP,#0x40+var_10]
; End of function _main
```



# Sections

```
_stubs:00000001000037B4 ; ————— SUBROUTINE —————
_stubs:00000001000037B4 ; Attributes: noreturn
_stubs:00000001000037B4
_stubs:00000001000037B4 ; void NSLog(NSString *format, ...)
_stubs:00000001000037B4 _NSLog
_stubs:00000001000037B4
_stubs:00000001000037B4 arg_8      = 8
_stubs:00000001000037B4 arg_20     = 0x20
_stubs:00000001000037B4
_stubs:00000001000037B4 LDR        X0, [SP,#arg_8]
_stubs:00000001000037B8 LDP        X29, X30, [SP,#arg_20]
_stubs:00000001000037BC ADD        SP, SP, #0x30 ; '0'
_stubs:00000001000037C0
_stubs:00000001000037C0 ; void __cdecl _Unwind_Resume(_Unwind_Exception *exception_object)
_stubs:00000001000037C0 _Unwind_Resume
_stubs:00000001000037C0 RET
_stubs:00000001000037C0 ; End of function _NSLog
_stubs:00000001000037C0
_stubs:00000001000037C4
_stubs:00000001000037C4 ; ————— SUBROUTINE —————
_stubs:00000001000037C4 ; Attributes: noreturn bp-based frame
_stubs:00000001000037C4
_stubs:00000001000037C4 ; std::allocator<char>::allocator(void)
_stubs:00000001000037C4 __ZNSt3__19allocatorIcEc2Ev_0 ; CODE XREF: std::__compressed_pair_ele
_stubs:00000001000037C4
_stubs:00000001000037C4 var_10      = -0x10
_stubs:00000001000037C4 var_8       = -8
_stubs:00000001000037C4 var_50      = 0
_stubs:00000001000037C4
_stubs:00000001000037C4 SUB        SP, SP, #0x20
_stubs:00000001000037C4 STP        X29, X30, [SP,#0x10+var_50]
_stubs:00000001000037CC
_stubs:00000001000037CC ; std::char_traits<char>::length(char const*)
_stubs:00000001000037CC j__ZNSt3__11char_traitsIcE6lengthEPKc
_stubs:00000001000037CC
_stubs:00000001000037D0 ADD        X29, SP, #0x10
_stubs:00000001000037D0 STR        X0, [SP,#0x10+var_8]
_stubs:00000001000037D0 LDR        X0, [SP,#0x10+var_8]
```



## Specific Transformations

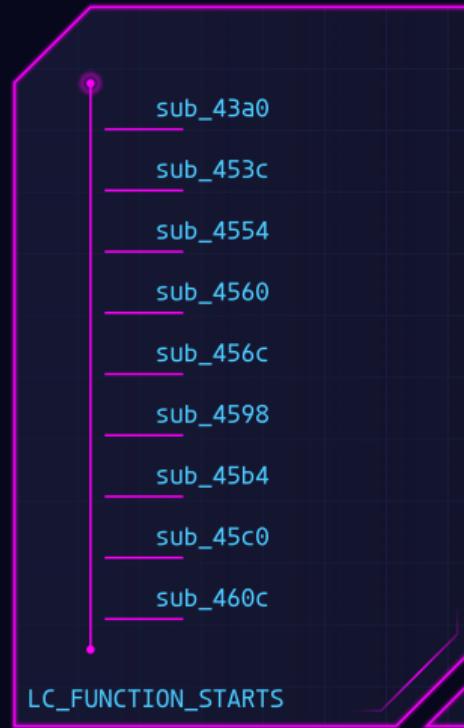
---

## Mach-O: LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS

---

The **LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS** is a Mach-O command that embeds a list of functions.

Similarly to unaligned exports, we can unalign these functions



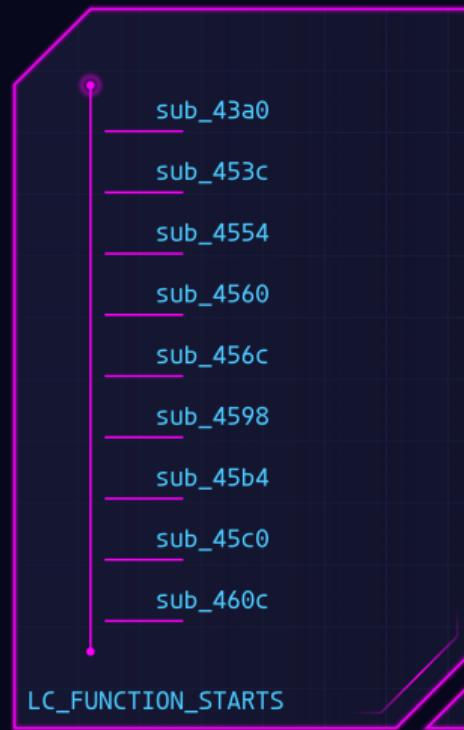
## Mach-0: LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS

---

```
functions = [addr for addr in LC_FUNCTION_STARTS.functions]

for idx, _ in enumerate(functions):
    if idx % 2 == 0:
        functions[idx] += 4 * 7
    else:
        functions[idx] -= 4 * 7

LC_FUNCTION_STARTS.functions = functions
```



# Mach-0: LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS

---

The screenshot shows three windows from a Mach-O debugger. The top window displays the assembly code for the function `sub_100004B78`. It includes a comment `; Attributes: bp-based frame`, the function name `sub_100004B78`, and a local variable `var_s0 = 0`. The assembly instructions shown are:

```
STP      X29, X30, [SP,-0x10+var_s0]!
MOV      X29, SP
LDRB    WB, [X2]
CBZ    WB, loc_100004B90
```

A red bracket highlights the `STP` instruction. The bottom-left window shows the continuation of the assembly code, starting with `LDP` and `B`, followed by the address `sub_10000E070`. The bottom-right window shows the end of the function, including the label `loc_10000DA30`, the `BL` instruction, the `MOV` instruction, the `LDP` instruction, the `RET` instruction, and the comment `; End of function sub_100004B78`.

# Mach-0: LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS

---

The screenshot shows three windows of a debugger interface. The top window displays the assembly code for the function `sub_100004B78`. It includes attributes like `; Attributes: bp-based frame`, variable declarations (`var_s0 = 0`), and instructions such as `STP X29, X30, [SP,-0*10+var_s0]!`, `MOV X29, SP`, `LDRB W8, [X2]`, and `CBZ W8, loc_100004B90`. A red bracket highlights the `CBZ` instruction. The bottom-left window shows the continuation of the assembly code, starting with `LDP X29, X30, [SP+var_s0],#0*10` and `B sub_10000E070`. The bottom-right window shows the end of the function `loc_100004B90` with instructions `BL sub_10000DA30`, `MOV W0, #0`, `LDP X29, X30, [SP+var_s0],#0*10`, and `RET`, followed by the comment `; End of function sub_100004B78`.

This screenshot shows a single window of the debugger displaying the assembly code for the function `sub_100004B78`. It includes attributes like `; Attributes: bp-based frame`, variable declarations (`var_s0 = 0`), and instructions such as `STP X29, X30, [SP,-0*10+var_s0]!`, `MOV X29, SP`, `LDRB W8, [X2]`, and `CBZ W8, loc_100004B90`. Below these, it shows the continuation of the assembly code with `BL sub_10000DA30`, `MOV W0, #0`, `LDP X29, X30, [SP+var_s0],#0*10`, and `RET`, followed by the comment `; End of function sub_100004B78`.

# Mach-0: LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS

```
__text:0000000100004B1C sub_100004B1C
__text:0000000100004B1C
__text:0000000100004B1C arg_10 = 0x10
__text:0000000100004B1C
__text:0000000100004B1C LDR X0, =__stderrp
__text:0000000100004B20 LDR X0, [X0]
__text:0000000100004B24 ADR X0, aobufNull ; "obuf != NULL"
__text:0000000100004B28 NOP
__text:0000000100004B2C STR X0, [SP,#arg_10]
__text:0000000100004B30 MOV WB, #0<CE
__text:0000000100004B34 B loc_100004AF8
__text:0000000100004B34 ; End of function sub_100004B1C
__text:0000000100004B34
__text:0000000100004B38 CMP W2, W3
__text:0000000100004B3C B, NE loc_100004B70
__text:0000000100004B40 CBZ W2, loc_100004B66
__text:0000000100004B44 MOV WB, W2
__text:0000000100004B44
__text:0000000100004B44 loc_100004B48 ; CODE XREF: __text:0000000100004B64+j
__text:0000000100004B44 LDRB W9, [X0]
__text:0000000100004B44 LDRB W10, [X1]
__text:0000000100004B50 CMP W9, W10
__text:0000000100004B54 B, NE loc_100004B70
__text:0000000100004B58 ADD X0, X0, #1
__text:0000000100004B5C ADD X1, X1, #1
__text:0000000100004B60 SUBS XB, XB, #1
__text:0000000100004B64 B, NE loc_100004B48
__text:0000000100004B64
__text:0000000100004B68 loc_100004B66 ; CODE XREF: __text:0000000100004B40+j
__text:0000000100004B68 MOV W0, #0
__text:0000000100004B6C RET
__text:0000000100004B70 ; CODE XREF: __text:0000000100004B3C+j
__text:0000000100004B70 ; __text:0000000100004B54+j
__text:0000000100004B70 MOV W0, #0<FFFFFFFFFF
__text:0000000100004B74 RET
__text:0000000100004B78 ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
__text:0000000100004B78
__text:0000000100004B78
__text:0000000100004B78 ; Attributes: bp-based Frame
__text:0000000100004B78
__text:0000000100004B78
__text:0000000100004B78 __text:0000000100004B78 sub_100004B78
__text:0000000100004B78
__text:0000000100004B78
__text:0000000100004B78 var_s0 = 0
__text:0000000100004B78
__text:0000000100004B78 STP X29, X30, [SP,-0x10+var_s0]!
__text:0000000100004B7C MOV X29, SP
__text:0000000100004B80 LDRB WB, [X2]
__text:0000000100004B80 ; End of function sub_100004B78
__text:0000000100004B80
```

# Mach-0: LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS

---

```
100004b38 5f00036b cmp w2, w3
100004b3c a1010054 b.ne 0x100004b70

100004b40 42010034 cbz w2, 0x100004b68

100004b44 e803022a mov w8, w2

100004b48 090004039 ldrb w9, [x0]
100004b4c 2a0004039 ldrb w10, [x1]
100004b50 3f01036b cmp w9, w10
100004b54 e1000054 b.ne 0x100004b70

100004b58 00040091 add x0, x0, #0x1
100004b5c 21040091 add x1, x1, #0x1
100004b60 000500f1 subs x8, x8, #0x1
100004b64 21ffff54 b.ne 0x100004b48

100004b68 000008052 mov w0, #0
100004b6c c0035fd6 ret

100004b70 000008012 mov w0, #0xffffffff {0xffffffff}
100004b74 c0035fd6 ret

100004b78 int64_t sub_100004b78(int32_t* arg1, int32_t arg2, char* arg3)
100004b78 fd7bbfa9 stp x29, x30, [sp, #-0x10]! {__saved_x29} {__saved_x30}
100004b7c fd030091 mov x29, sp {__saved_x29}
100004b80 480004039 ldrb w8, [x2]
100004b84 68000034 cbz w8, 0x100004b90

100004b88 fd7bc1a8 ldp x29, x30, [sp], #0x10 {__saved_x29} {__saved_x30}
100004b8c 39250014 b sub_100004e070

100004b90 a8230094 bl sub_10000da0
100004b94 000008052 mov w0, #0
100004b98 fd7bc1a8 ldp x29, x30, [sp], #0x10 {__saved_x29} {__saved_x30}
100004b9c c0035fd6 ret

100004ba0 int64_t sub_100004ba0(int32_t arg1)
100004ba0 B002f837 tbnz w0, #0x1f, 0x100004bf0

100004ba4 480300f0 adrp x8, 0x100006f000
100004ba8 092543f9 ldr x9, [x8, #0x648] {data_100006f648}
100004bac 2a553510 adr x10, 0x100006f650
100004bb0 1f2003d5 nop
100004bb4 890100b4 cbz x9, 0x100004be4
```

# Mach-O: LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS

```
100004b38 5f00036b cmp w2, w3
100004b3c a1010054 b.ne 0x100004b70

100004b40 42010034 cbz w2, 0x100004b68

100004b44 e803022a mov w8, w2

100004b48 09004039 ldrb w9, [x0]
100004b4c 2a004039 ldrb w10, [x1]
100004b50 3f01036b cmp w9, w10
100004b54 e1000054 b.ne 0x100004b70

100004b58 00040091 add x0, x0, #0x1
100004b5c 21040091 add x1, x1, #0x1
100004b60 080500f1 subs x8, x8, #0x1
100004b64 21ffff54 b.ne 0x100004b48

100004b68 00008052 mov w0, #0
100004b6c c0035fd6 ret

100004b70 00008012 mov w0, #0xffffffff {0xffffffff}
100004b74 c0035fd6 ret

100004b78 int64_t sub_100004b78(int32_t* arg1, int32_t arg2, char* arg3)

100004b78 fd7bbfa9 stp x29, x30, [sp, #-0x10]! {__saved_x29} {__saved_x30}
100004b7c fd030091 mov x29, sp {__saved_x29}
100004b80 48004039 ldrb w8, [x2]
100004b84 68000034 cbz w8, 0x100004b90

100004b88 fd7bc1a8 ldp x29, x30, [sp], #0x10 {__saved_x29} {__saved_x30}
100004b8c 39250014 b sub_100004e070

100004b90 a8230094 bl sub_10000da30
100004b94 00008052 mov w0, #0
100004b98 fd7bc1a8 ldp x29, x30, [sp], #0x10 {__saved_x29} {__saved_x30}
100004b9c c0035fd6 ret

100004ba0 int64_t sub_100004ba0(int32_t arg1)

100004ba0 B002f837 tbnz w0, #0x1f, 0x100004bf0

100004ba4 480300f0 adrp x8, 0x10000f000
100004ba8 092543f9 ldr x9, [x8, #0x648] {data_10000f648}
100004bac 2a553510 adr x10, 0x10000f650
100004bb0 1f2003d5 nop
100004bb4 890100b4 cbz x9, 0x100004be4
```

```
100004b50 3f010a6b cmp w9, w10
100004b54 e1000054 b.ne 0x100004b70

100004b58 00040091 add x0, x0, #0x1
100004b5c 21040091 add x1, x1, #0x1
100004b60 080500f1 subs x8, x8, #0x1
100004b64 21ffff54 b.ne 0x100004b48

100004b68 00008052 mov w0, #0
100004b6c c0035fd6 ret

100004b70 00008012 mov w0, #0xffffffff {0xffffffff}
100004b74 c0035fd6 ret

100004b78 48 00 40 39
100004b80 int64_t sub_100004b84(int32_t* arg1, int32_t arg2, char* arg3, int32_t arg4)
100004b84 68000034 cbz w8, 0x100004b90

100004b88 fd7bc1a8 ldp x29, x30, [sp], #0x10 {arg5} {arg6}
100004b8c 39250014 b sub_10000e070

100004b90 a8230094 bl sub_10000da30 {sub_100004b94}
{ Falls through into sub_100004b94 }

100004b94 int64_t sub_100004b94(int64_t arg1)

100004b94 00008052 mov w0, #0
100004b98 fd7bc1a8 ldp x29, x30, [sp], #0x10 {arg1} {arg_8}
100004b9c c0035fd6 ret

100004ba0 80 02 f8 37
100004ba4 int64_t sub_100004ba4(int32_t arg1)

100004ba4 480300f0 adrp x8, 0x10000f000
100004ba8 092543f9 ldr x9, [x8, #0x648] {data_10000f648}
100004bac 2a553510 adr x10, 0x10000f650
100004bb0 1f2003d5 nop
100004bb4 890100b4 cbz x9, 0x100004be4

100004bb8 0b0000d2 mov x11, #0
100004bbc 4c796bb8 ldr w12, [x10, x11, lsl #0x2]
100004bbc 9f01006b cmp w12, w0
100004bbc 60010054 b.eq 0x100004bf0
```

# Mach-0: LC\_FUNCTION\_STARTS

```
[0x100004b50]> pd 20
 0x100004b50  3f010a6b      cmp w9, w10
 0x100004b54  e1000154      bne 0x100004b70
 0x100004b58  0040191      add x0, x0, 1
 0x100004b5c  2104091      add x1, x1, 1
 0x100004b60  08050ff1     subs x8, x8, 1
 0x100004b64  21ffff54     bne 0x100004b48
 0x100004b68  00008052     mov w0, 0
 0x100004b6c  c0035fd6     ret
 0x100004b70  00008012     mov w0, -1
 0x100004b74  c0035fd6     ret
12: fcn.100004b78 (int64_t arg1, int64_t arg2, int64_t arg3);
    ; arg int64_t arg1 @ x0
    ; arg int64_t arg2 @ x1
    ; arg int64_t arg3 @ x2
    ; var int64_t var_10h @ sp+0x0
    ; var int64_t var_10h_2 @ sp+0x8
 0x100004b78  fd7bbfa9      stp x29, x30, [var_10h]!
 0x100004b7c  fd030091      mov x29, sp
 0x100004b80  48004039      ldrb w8, [x2]
                           ; 0xda ; 218 ; arg3
16: sym.func.100004b84 (int64_t arg1, int64_t arg2, int64_t arg3);
    ; arg int64_t arg1 @ x0
    ; arg int64_t arg2 @ x1
    ; arg int64_t arg3 @ x2
    ; var int64_t var_10h @ sp+0x60
    ; var int64_t var_20h @ sp+0x70
    ; var int64_t var_30h @ sp+0x80
    ; var int64_t var_40h @ sp+0x90
 0x100004b84  68000034      cbz w8, 0x100004b90
 0x100004b88  fd7bc1a8      ldp x29, x30, [sp], 0x10
 0x100004b8c  39250014      b fcn.10000e070
 0x100004b90  a8230094      bl fcn.10000da30
12: sym.func.100004b94 ();
 0x100004b94  00008052      mov w0, 0
 0x100004b98  fd7bc1a8      ldp x29, x30, [sp], 0x10
 0x100004b9c  c0035fd6     ret
[0x100004b50]> ■
(1) remain1:5.7.0*
```

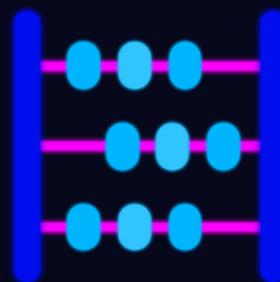
0.42 0.58 0.34 06:22



## ELF: .dynsym

---

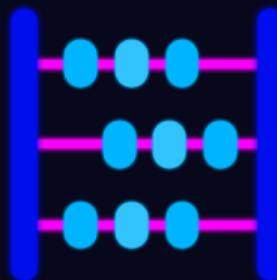
Counting the number of **dynamic symbols** in an ELF binary is somehow complicated ...



## ELF: .dynsym

---

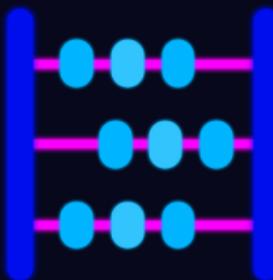
- Easy & Dirty: `.dynsym` section
- Harder & Reliable: `DT_GNU_HASH` / `DT_HASH`



## ELF: .dynsym

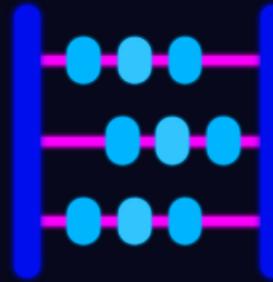
---

```
dynsym = target.get_section(".dynsym").as_frame()  
  
sizeof = dynsym.entry_size  
osize = dynsym.size  
nsyms = osize / sizeof  
  
dynsym.size = sizeof * min(3, nsyms)
```



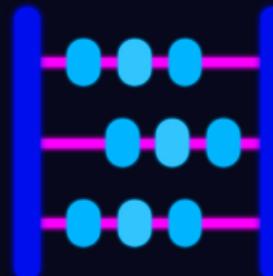
## ELF: .dynsym

```
.plt:000000000000410A0 ; int __fastcall __cxa_atexit(void (*lpfunc)(void *), void *obj, void *lpdso_handle)
=plt:000000000000410A0 .__cxa_atexit ; CODE XREF: sub_17A68+1C↑j
    ADRP      X16, #off_48880@PAGE
=plt:000000000000410A4     LDR       X17, [X16,#off_48880@PAGEOFF]
=plt:000000000000410A8     ADD       X16, X16, #off_48880@PAGEOFF
=plt:000000000000410AC     BR        X17
=plt:000000000000410AC ; End of function __cxa_atexit
=plt:000000000000410AC
=plt:000000000000410B0
=plt:000000000000410B0 ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
=plt:000000000000410B0
=plt:000000000000410B0 ; Attributes: thunk
=plt:000000000000410B0
=plt:000000000000410B0 ; int puts(const char *)
=plt:000000000000410B0 .puts ; CODE XREF: sub_17A8C+14↑p
=plt:000000000000410B0
=plt:000000000000410B0
=plt:000000000000410B0     ADRP      X16, #off_48888@PAGE
=plt:000000000000410B4     LDR       X17, [X16,#off_48888@PAGEOFF]
=plt:000000000000410B8     ADD       X16, X16, #off_48888@PAGEOFF
=plt:000000000000410BC     BR        X17
=plt:000000000000410BC ; End of function puts
=plt:000000000000410BC
=plt:000000000000410C0
=plt:000000000000410C0 ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
=plt:000000000000410C0
=plt:000000000000410C0 ; Attributes: thunk
=plt:000000000000410C0
=plt:000000000000410C0 ; int printf(const char *format, ...)
=plt:000000000000410C0 .printf ; CODE XREF: sub_17A8C+34↑p
=plt:000000000000410C0
=plt:000000000000410C0
=plt:000000000000410C0     ADRP      X16, #off_48890@PAGE
=plt:000000000000410C4     LDR       X17, [X16,#off_48890@PAGEOFF]
=plt:000000000000410C8     ADD       X16, X16, #off_48890@PAGEOFF
=plt:000000000000410CC     BR        X17
=plt:000000000000410CC ; End of function printf
=plt:000000000000410CC
```

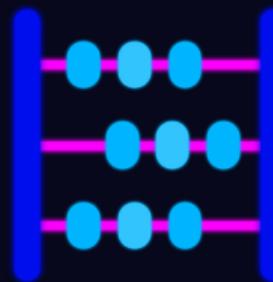


## ELF: .dynsym

```
.plt:000000000000410A0 ; int __fastcall __cxa_atexit(void (*lpfunc)(void *), void *obj, void *lpdso_handle)
=plt:000000000000410A0 .__cxa_atexit ; CODE XREF: sub_17A68+1C↑j
    ADRP      X16, #off_48880@PAGE
    LDR       X17, [X16,#off_48880@PAGEOFF]
    ADD       X16, X16, #off_48880@PAGEOFF
    BR        X17
=plt:000000000000410AC ; End of function .__cxa_atexit
=plt:000000000000410AC
=plt:000000000000410A4
=plt:000000000000410A8
=plt:000000000000410AC
=plt:000000000000410AC
=plt:000000000000410AC ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
=plt:000000000000410B0
=plt:000000000000410B0
=plt:000000000000410B0 ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
=plt:000000000000410B0 ; Attributes: thunk
=plt:000000000000410B0
=plt:000000000000410B0 sub_410B0 ; CODE XREF: sub_17A8C+14↑p
=plt:000000000000410B0 ; sub_17A8C+20↑p ...
    ADRP      X16, #qword_48888@PAGE
    LDR       X17, [X16,#qword_48888@PAGEOFF]
    ADD       X16, X16, #qword_48888@PAGEOFF
    BR        X17
=plt:000000000000410BC ; End of function sub_410B0
=plt:000000000000410BC
=plt:000000000000410C0
=plt:000000000000410C0 ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
=plt:000000000000410C0
=plt:000000000000410C0 ; Attributes: thunk
=plt:000000000000410C0
=plt:000000000000410C0 sub_410C0 ; CODE XREF: sub_17A8C+34↑p
=plt:000000000000410C0 ; sub_17AD8+32C↑p ...
    ADRP      X16, #qword_48890@PAGE
    LDR       X17, [X16,#qword_48890@PAGEOFF]
    ADD       X16, X16, #qword_48890@PAGEOFF
    BR        X17
=plt:000000000000410CC ; End of function sub_410C0
=plt:000000000000410CC
=plt:000000000000410D0
=plt:000000000000410D0 ; ===== S U B R O U T I N E =====
```



## ELF: .dynsym



## Conclusion

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- Executable file formats modifications (still) have an impact on all the reverse engineering tools.
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- Executable file formats modifications (still) have an impact on all the reverse engineering tools.
- This is a topic that is less explored than regular obfuscation.
- ⇒ less covered by recovering *scripts* and papers.
- Can be used in pair with *classical* obfuscation.



# Thank you for your attention

- ⌚ <https://github.com/romainthomas/the-poor-mans-obfuscator>
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## Questions?