

CCured: Type-Safe Retrofitting of Legacy Software

G. C. Necula, J. Condit, M. Harren, S. McPeak, and W. Weimer
(TOPLAS '05)

Undefined behaviors in C cause vulnerabilities.

```
void foo(int *ptr, int idx, int val) {  
    *(ptr + idx) = val;  
}
```

Undefined behaviors in C cause vulnerabilities.

```
void foo(int *ptr, int idx, int val) {  
    *(ptr + idx) = val;  
}
```

```
int arr[10];  
foo(arr, N, M);
```

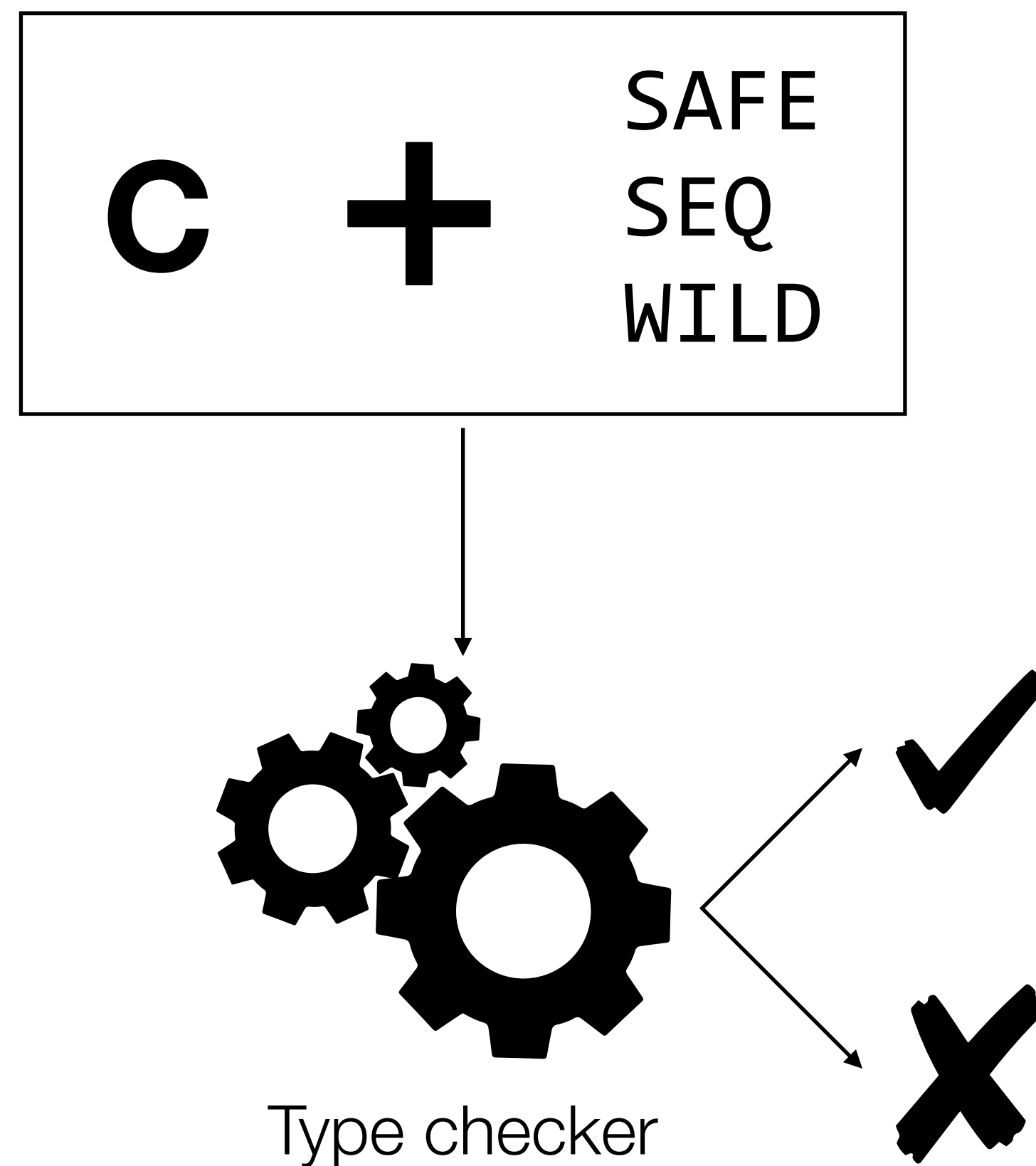
Undefined behaviors in C cause vulnerabilities.

```
struct a { int x; };  
struct b { int *p; };  
  
int i;  
struct b sb = { &i };  
  
*sb.p = M;
```

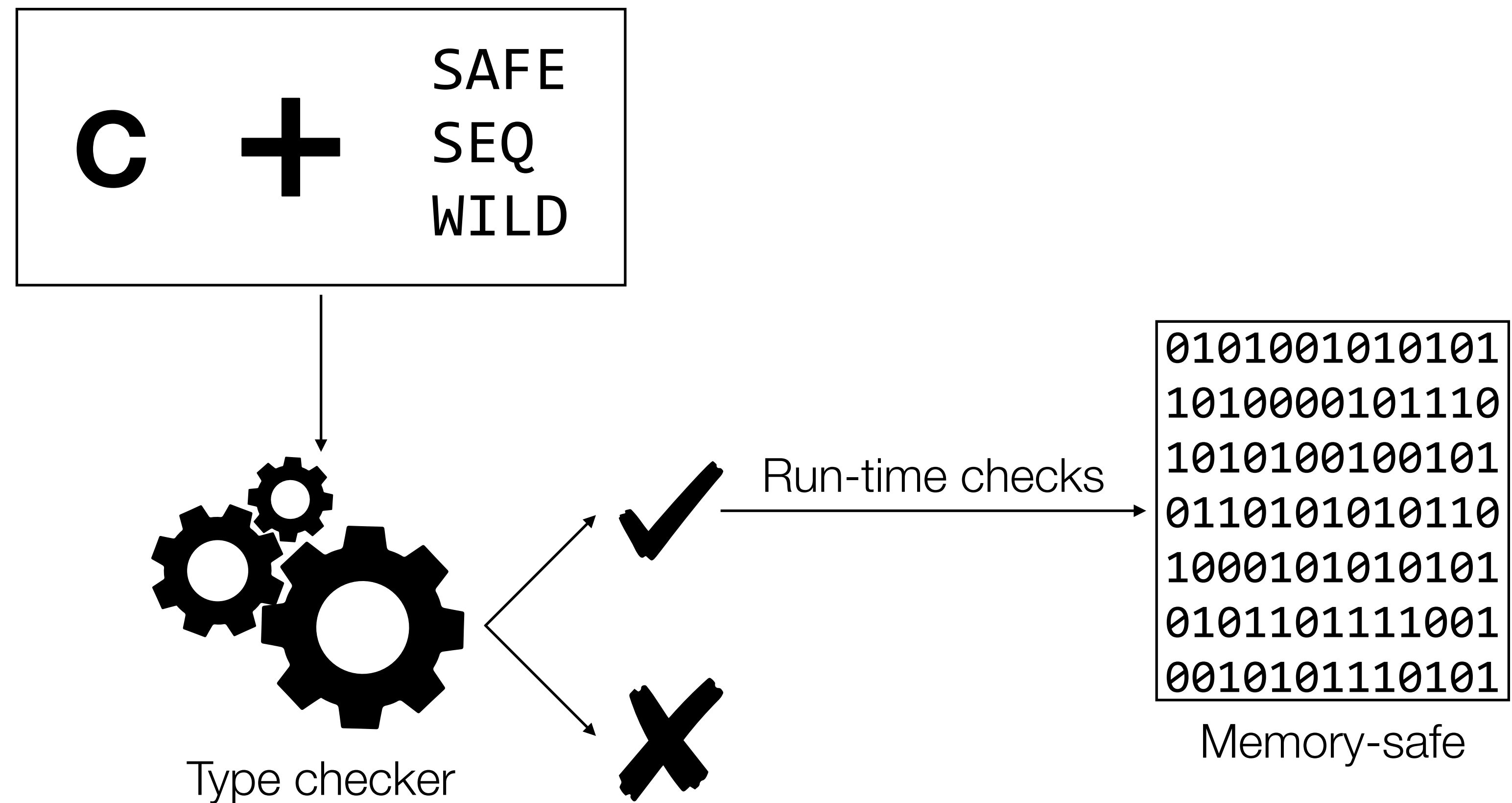
Undefined behaviors in C cause vulnerabilities.

```
struct a { int x; };  
struct b { int *p; };  
  
int i;  
struct b sb = { &i };  
struct a *sa = (struct a *) &sb;  
sa->x = N;  
*sb.p = M;
```

CCured transforms C programs to achieve memory safety guarantees.

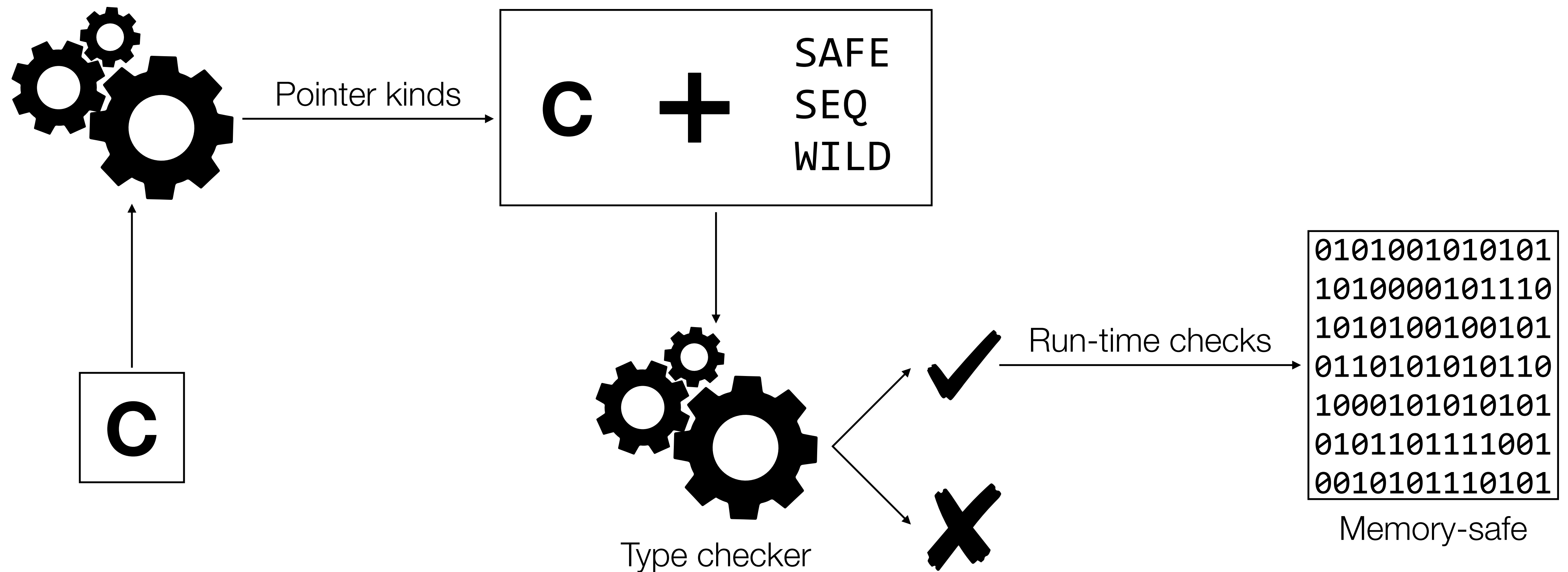


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Inference algorithm



CCured classifies pointers into 3 kinds.

$$\text{Type } \tau ::= \text{int} \mid \tau *$$

Types

int

int * *

int *

...

CCured classifies pointers into 3 kinds.

Type $\tau ::= \text{int} \mid \tau * q$
 Kind $q ::= \text{SAFE} \mid \text{SEQ} \mid \text{WILD}$

Types

$\text{int} * \text{WILD} * \text{WILD}$
 int
 $\text{int} * \text{SEQ}$
 $\text{int} * \text{SAFE}$...

CCured classifies pointers into 3 kinds.

Type $\tau ::= \text{int} \mid \tau * q$
 Kind $q ::= \text{SAFE} \mid \text{SEQ} \mid \text{WILD}$

More \longleftarrow Static restrictions \longrightarrow Less

Types

$\text{int} * \text{WILD} * \text{WILD}$

int

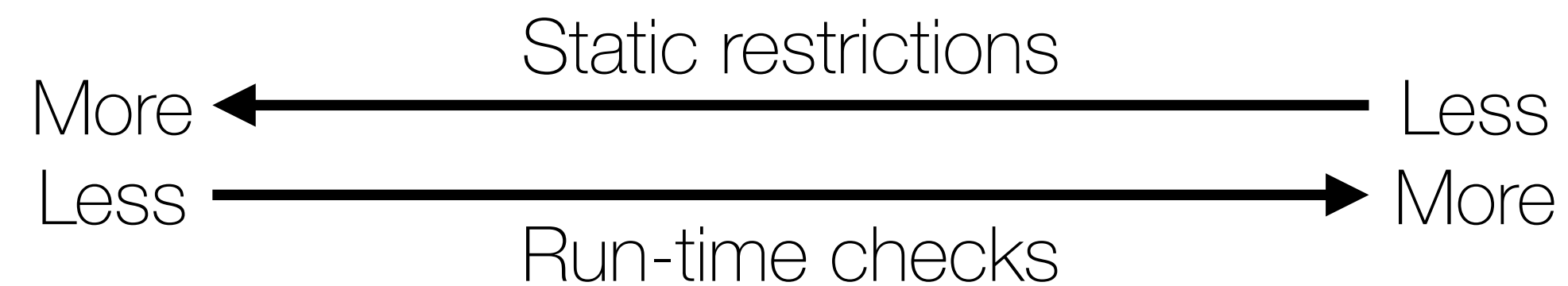
$\text{int} * \text{SEQ}$

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...

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Types

$\text{int} * \text{WILD} * \text{WILD}$

int

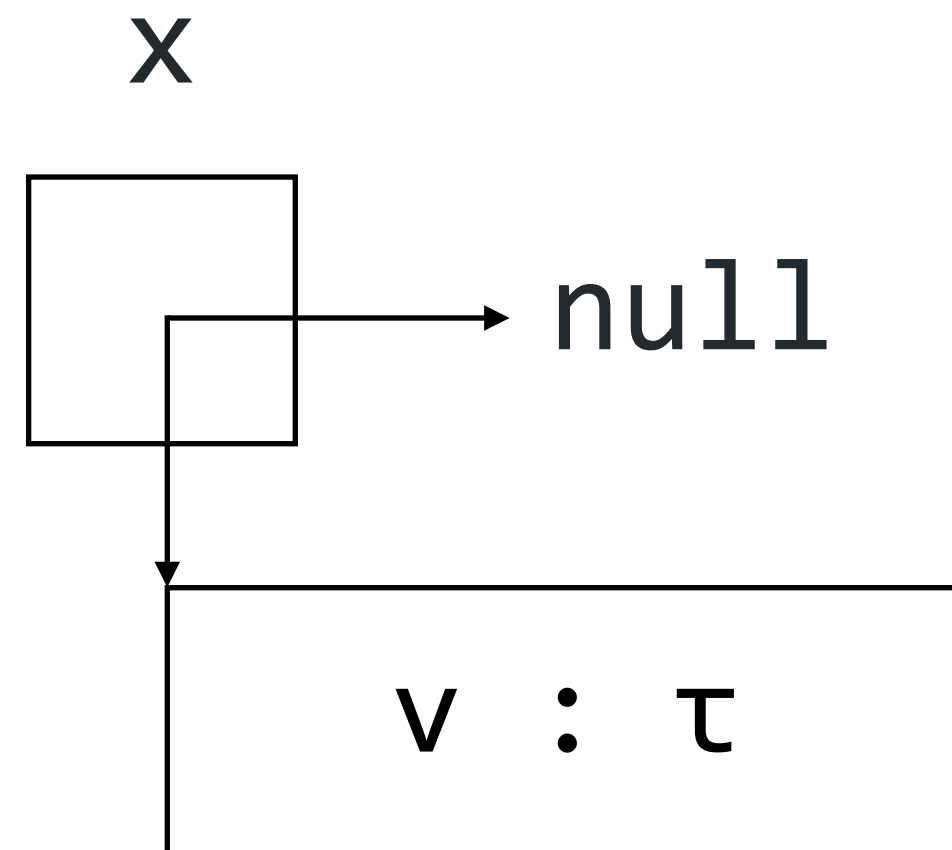
$\text{int} * \text{SEQ}$

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...

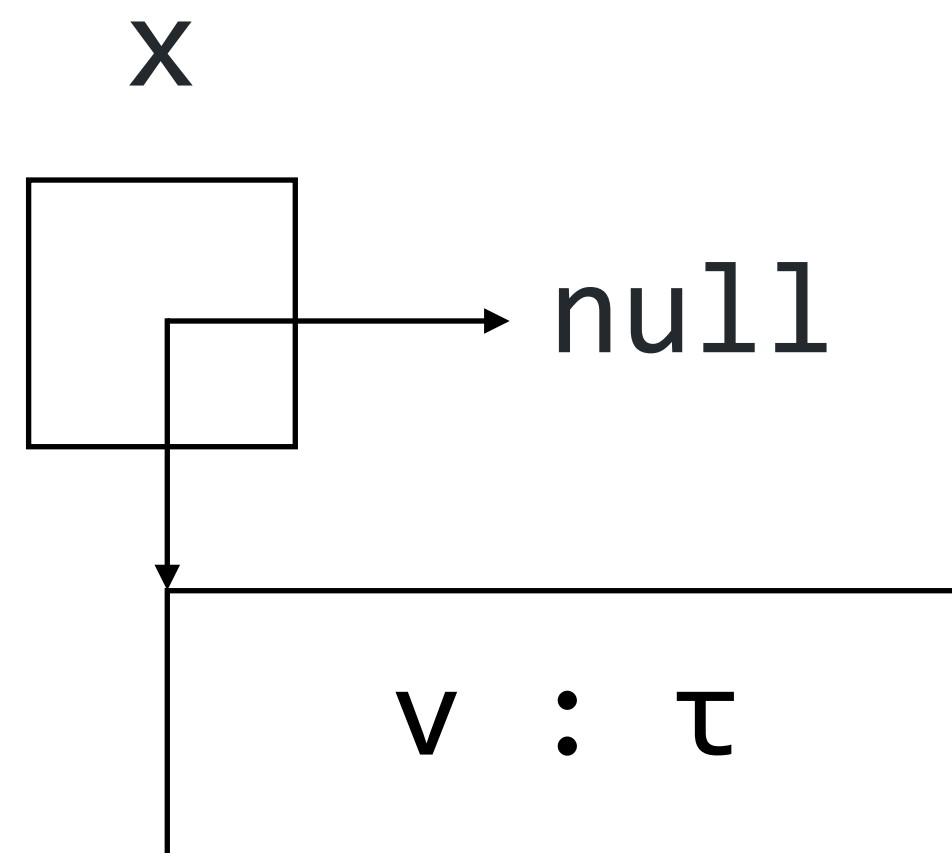
Safe pointers are either null or valid.

$$\text{Rep}(\tau * \text{SAFE}) = \text{Rep}(\tau) *$$


$$x : \tau * \text{SAFE}$$

Safe pointers need null checks.

$$Rep(\tau * \text{SAFE}) = Rep(\tau) *$$



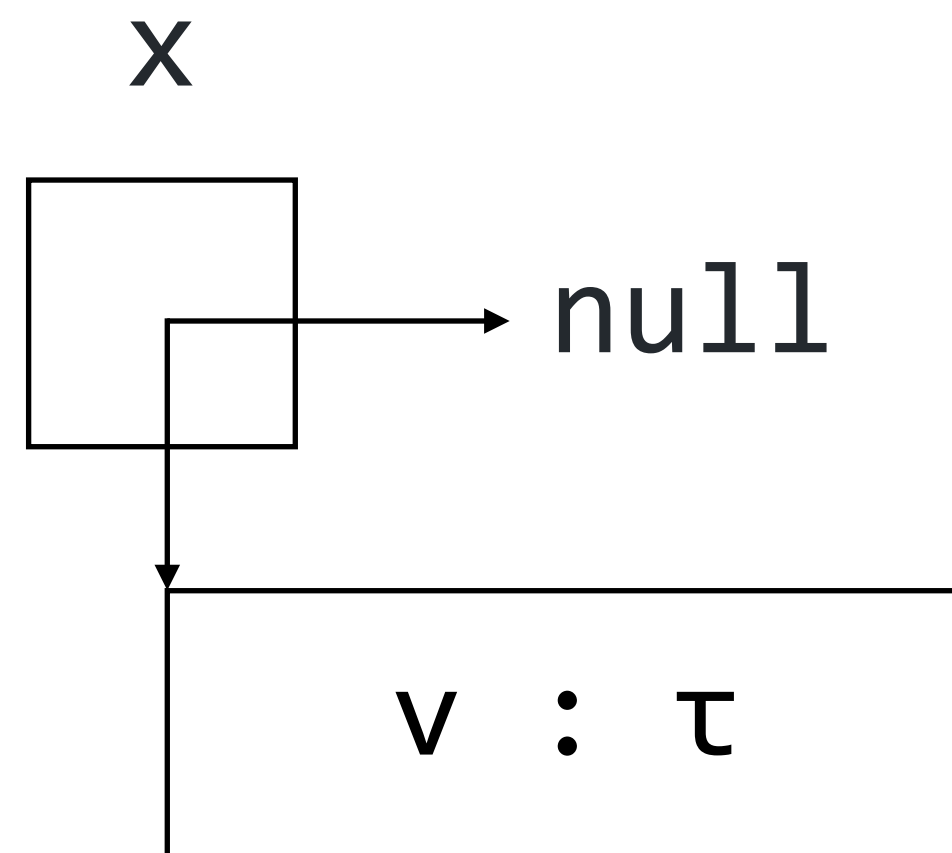
$$x : \tau * \text{SAFE}$$

$$*x \rightsquigarrow$$

$$*x$$

Safe pointers need null checks.

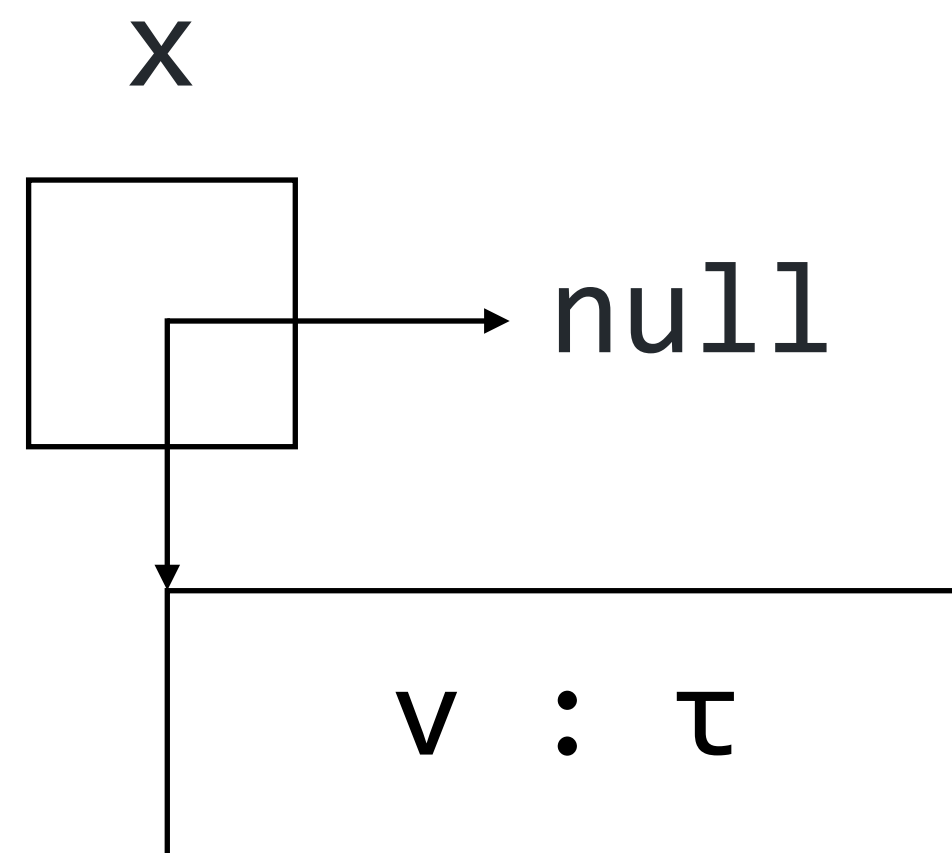
$$\text{Rep}(\tau * \text{SAFE}) = \text{Rep}(\tau) *$$



$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SAFE}}{*x \rightsquigarrow \text{assert}(x \neq \text{null}); *x}$$

Safe pointers need null checks.

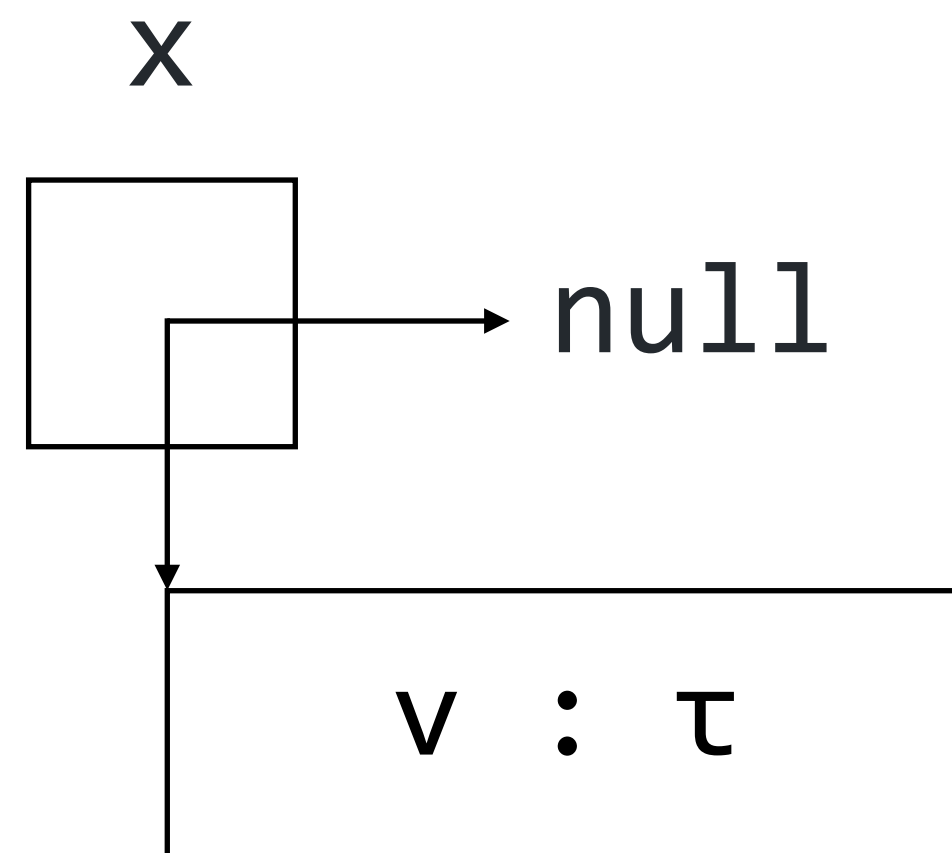
$$\text{Rep}(\tau * \text{SAFE}) = \text{Rep}(\tau) *$$



$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SAFE} \quad y : \tau}{*x = y \leadsto *x = y}$$

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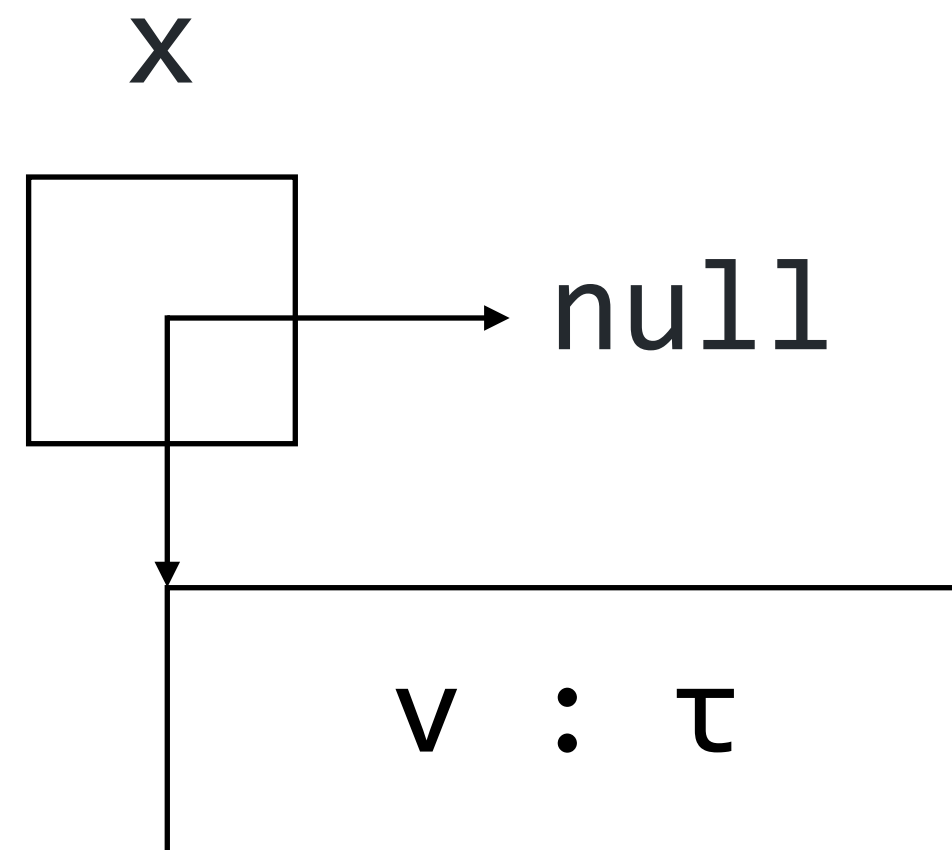


$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SAFE} \quad y : \tau}{*x = y \leadsto \text{assert}(x \neq \text{null}); *x = y}$$

Zero can be casted to a safe pointer.

$$Rep(\tau * \text{SAFE}) = Rep(\tau) *$$

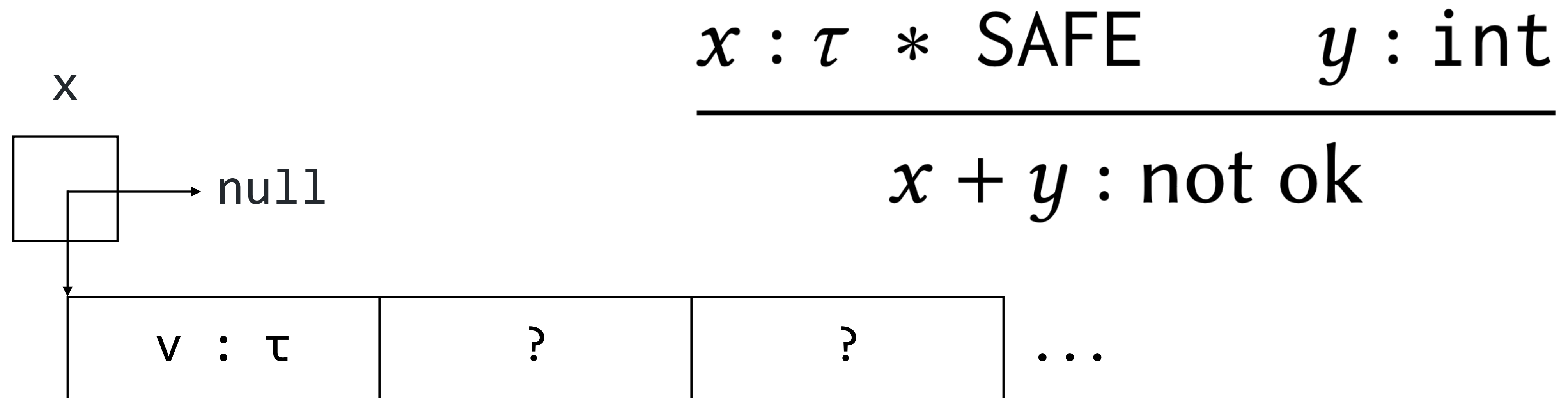
$$(\tau * \text{SAFE})0 \rightsquigarrow \text{null}$$



$$\frac{x : \text{int} \quad x \neq 0}{(\tau * \text{SAFE})x : \text{not ok}}$$

Pointer arithmetic is disallowed for safe pointers.

$$Rep(\tau * \text{SAFE}) = Rep(\tau) *$$



Sequence pointers refer to elements in arrays.

$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$

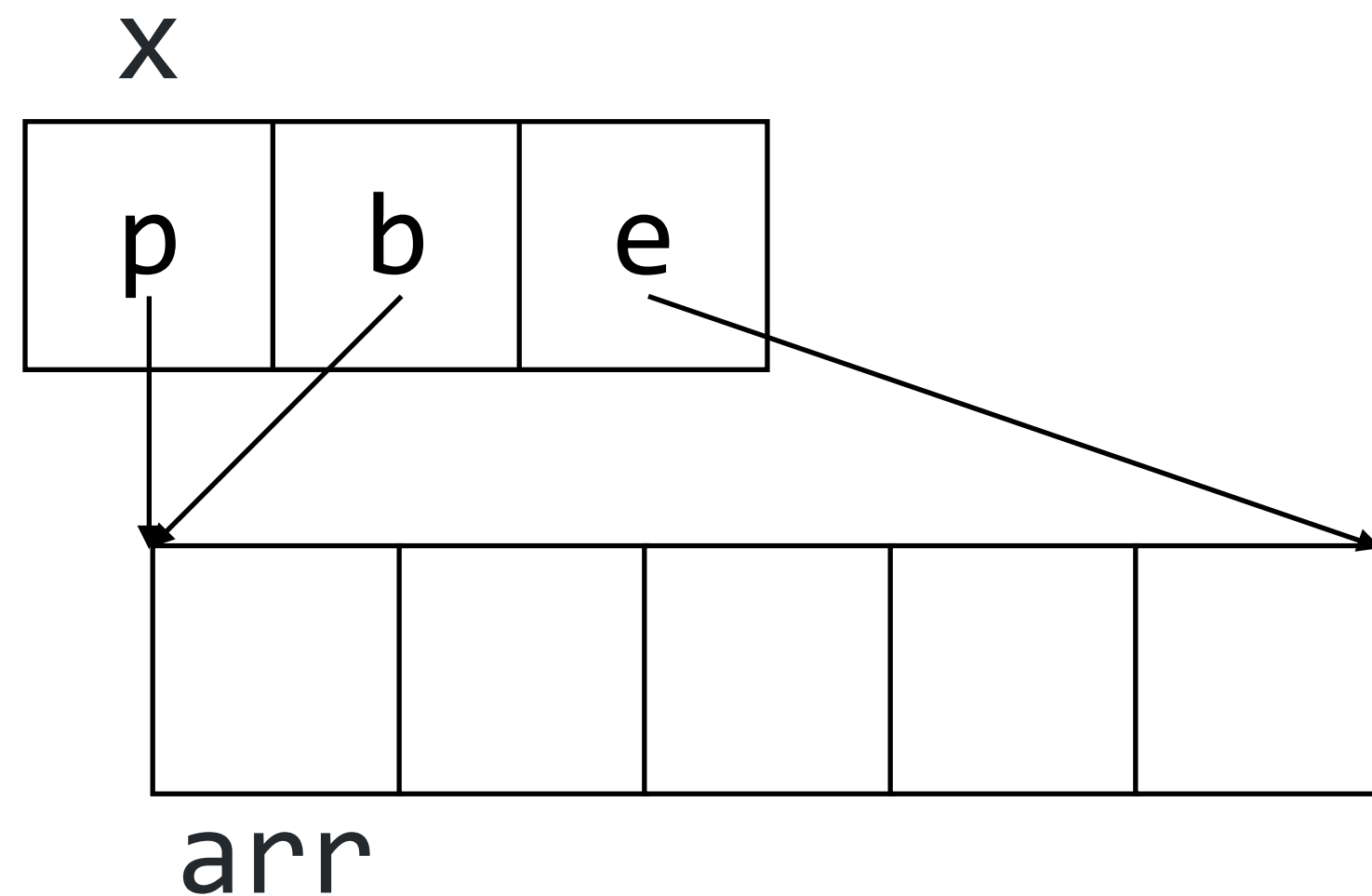
```
int arr[5];
```



Sequence pointers refer to elements in arrays.

$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$

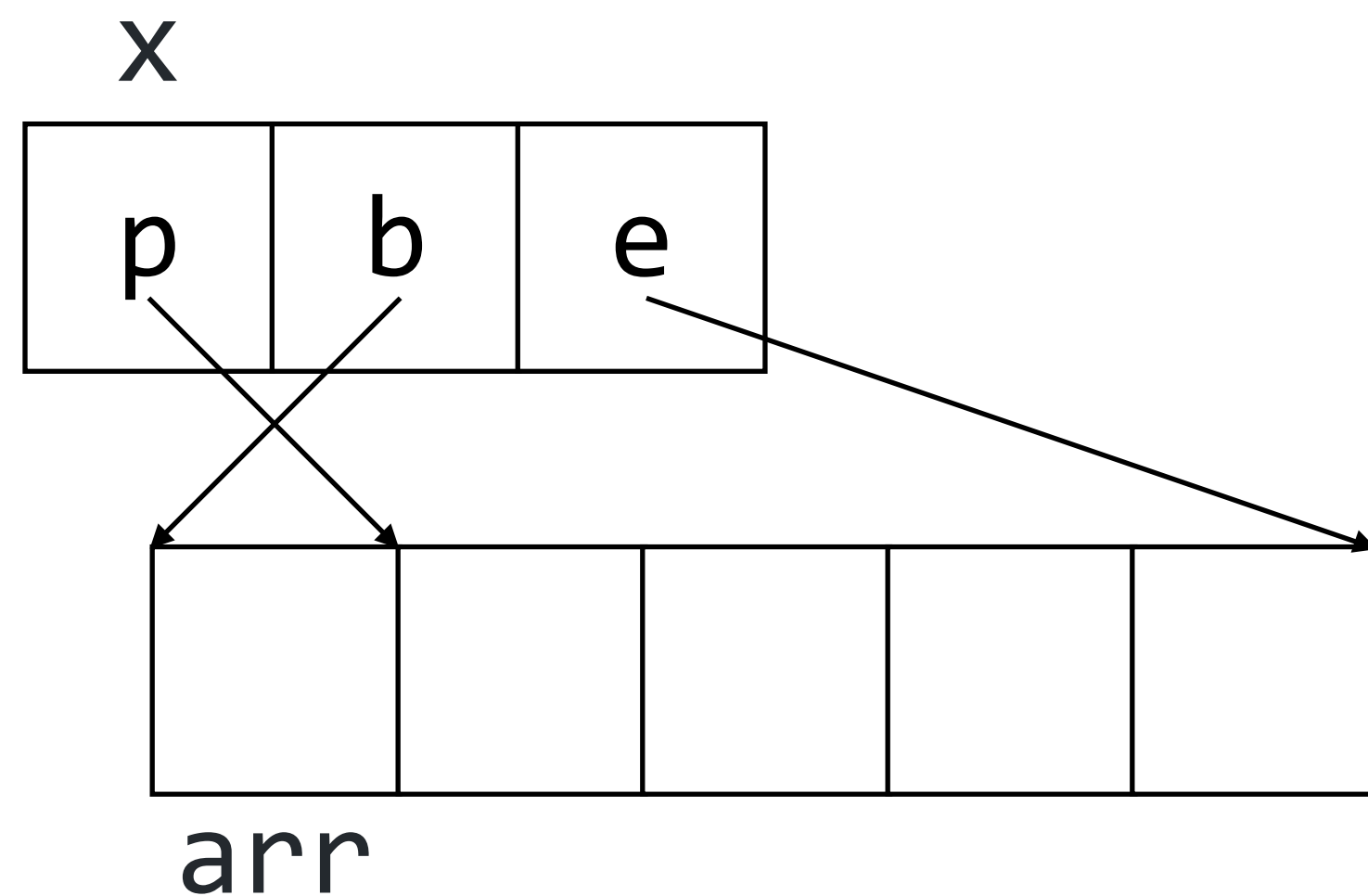
```
int arr[5];  
int * SEQ x = arr;
```



Sequence pointers refer to elements in arrays.

$$\text{Rep}(\tau * \text{SEQ}) = \text{struct}\{\text{Rep}(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$

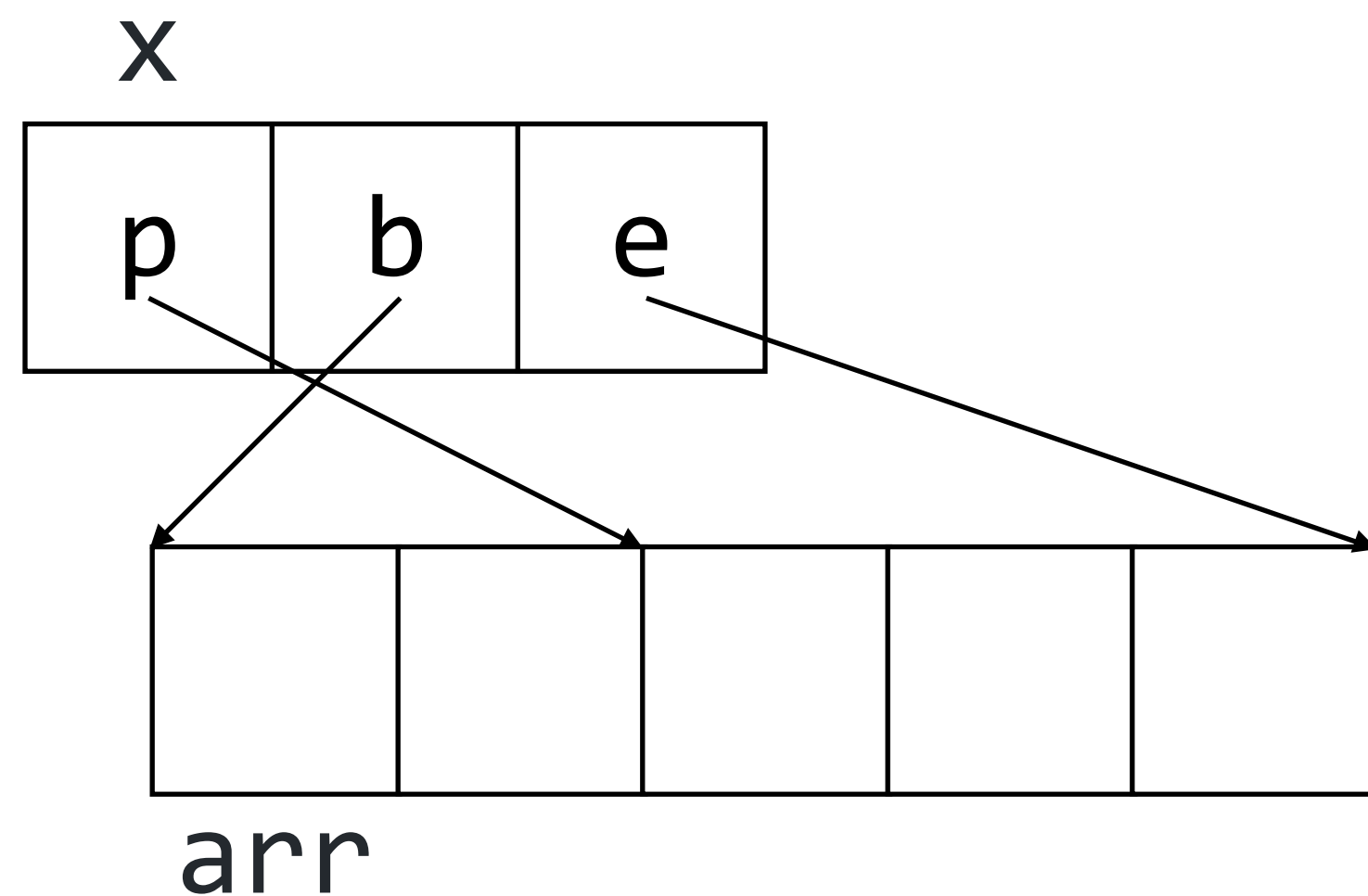
```
int arr[5];  
int * SEQ x = arr;  
x++;
```



Sequence pointers refer to elements in arrays.

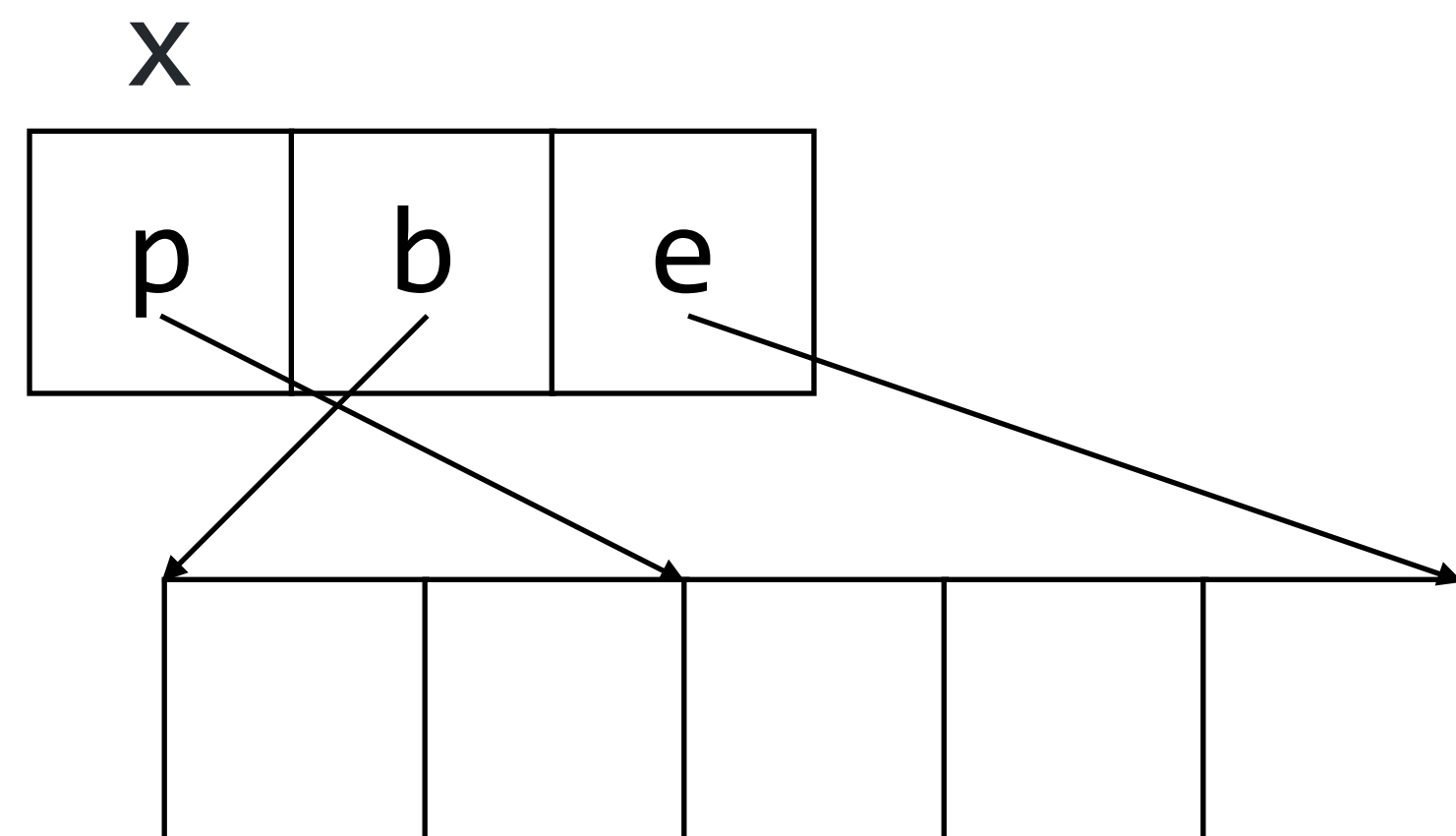
$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$

```
int arr[5];  
int * SEQ x = arr;  
x++; x++;
```



Sequence pointers need bounds checks.

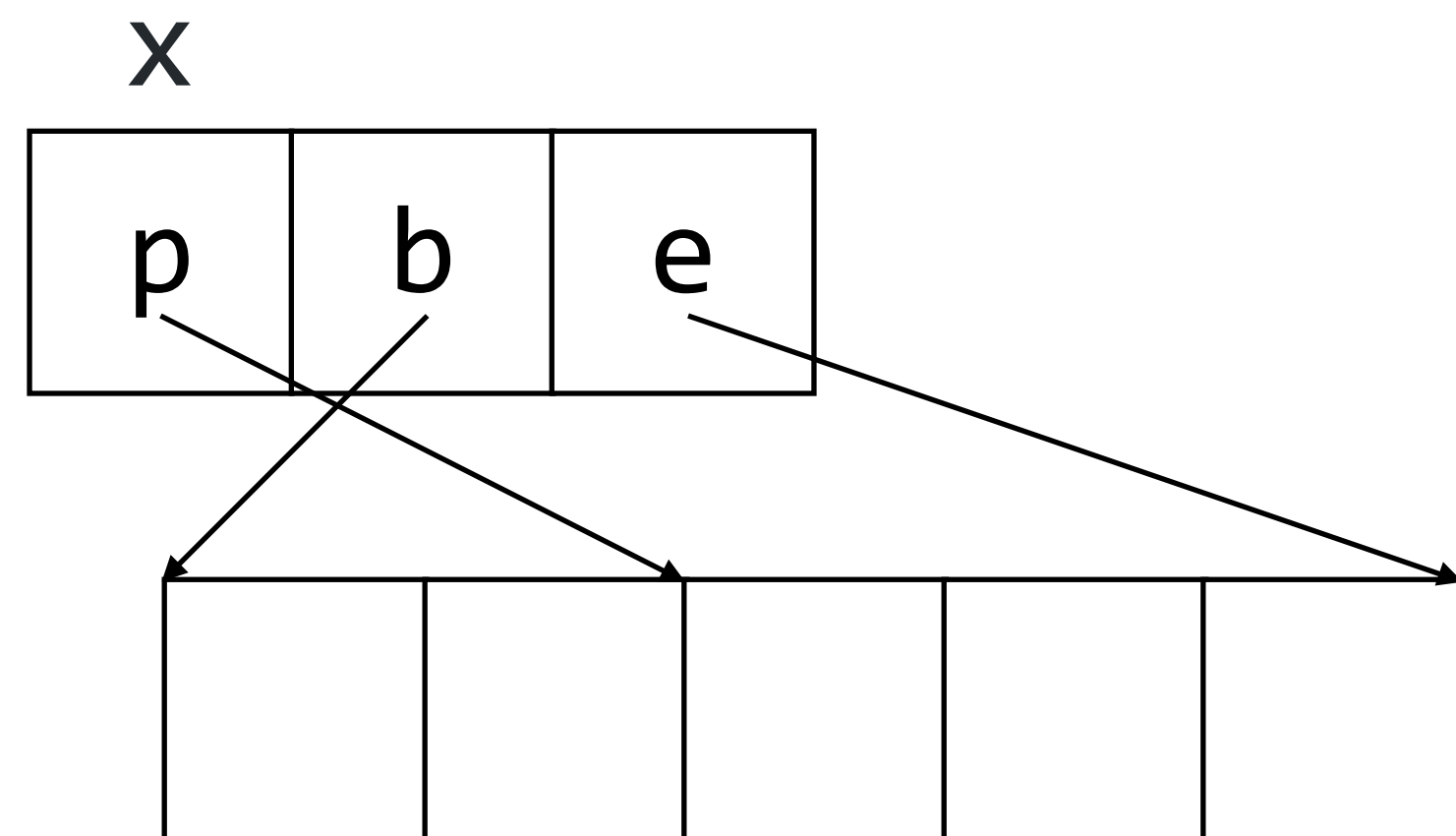
$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \tau * SEQ}{*x \rightsquigarrow *x.p}$$

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$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$

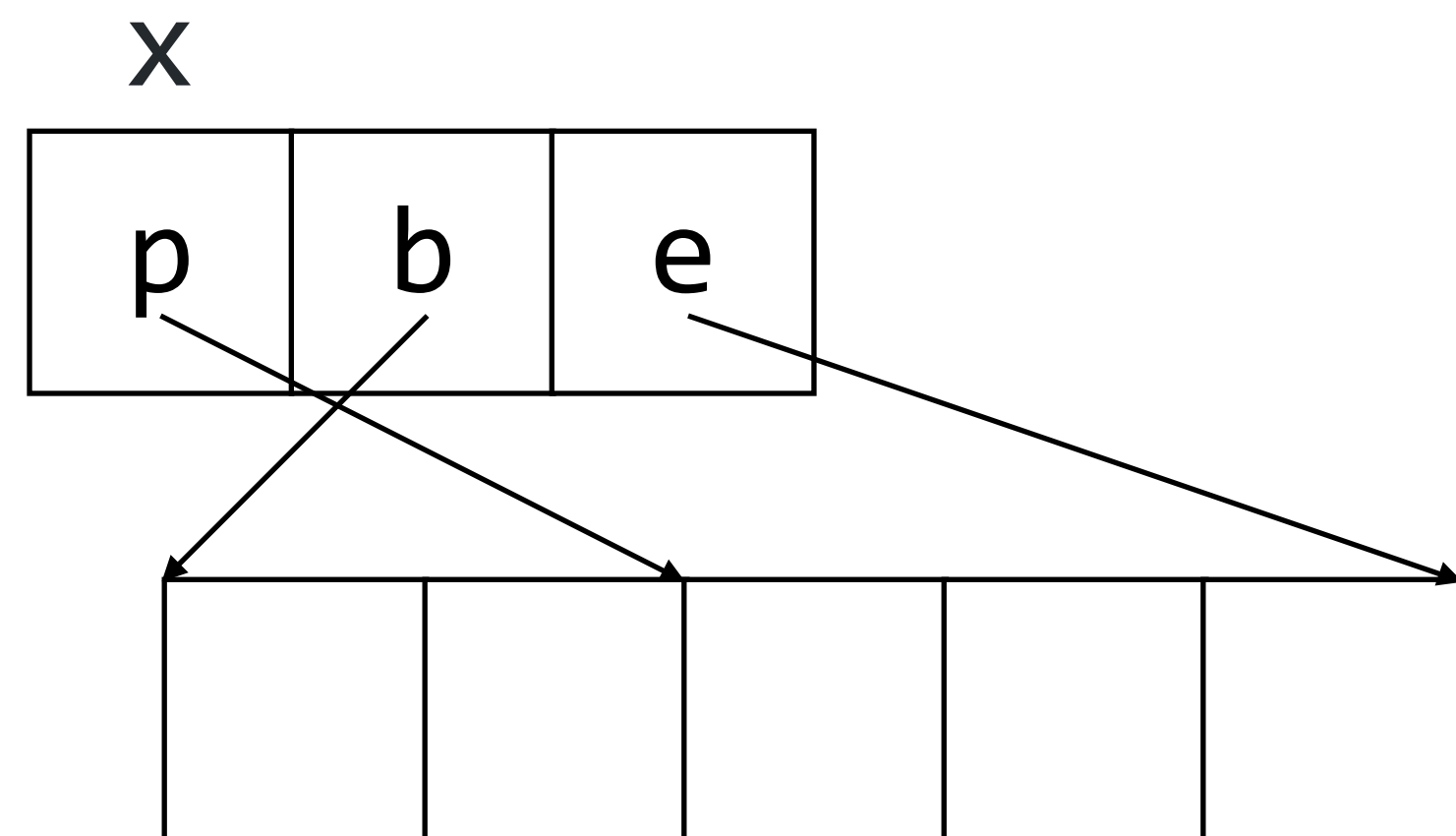


$x : \tau * SEQ$

$*x \rightsquigarrow$ $\text{assert}(x.b \leq x.p \leq x.e - \text{sizeof}(\tau));$
 $*x.p$

Sequence pointers need bounds checks.

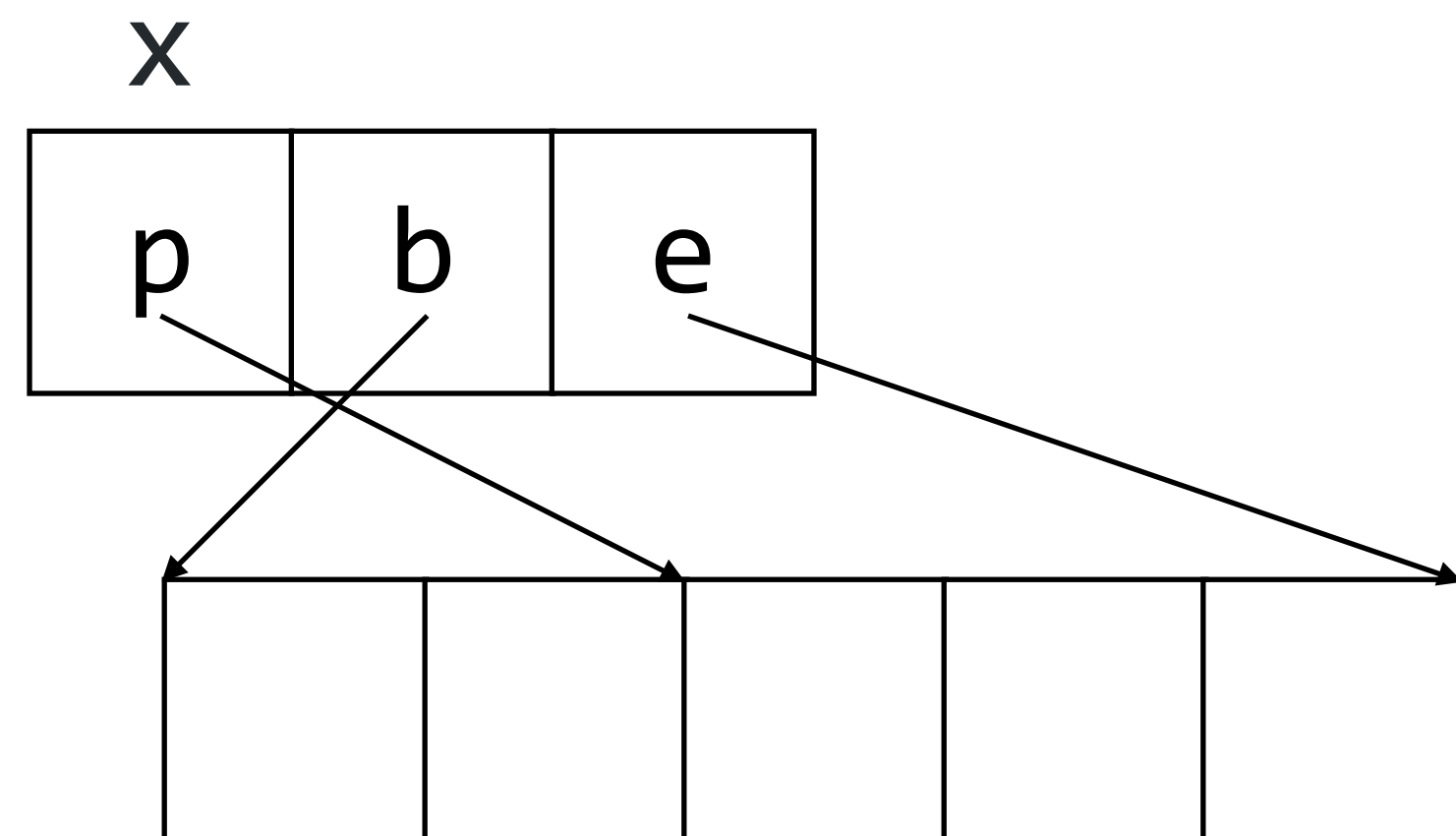
$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \tau * SEQ \quad y : \tau}{*x = y \leadsto *x.p = y}$$

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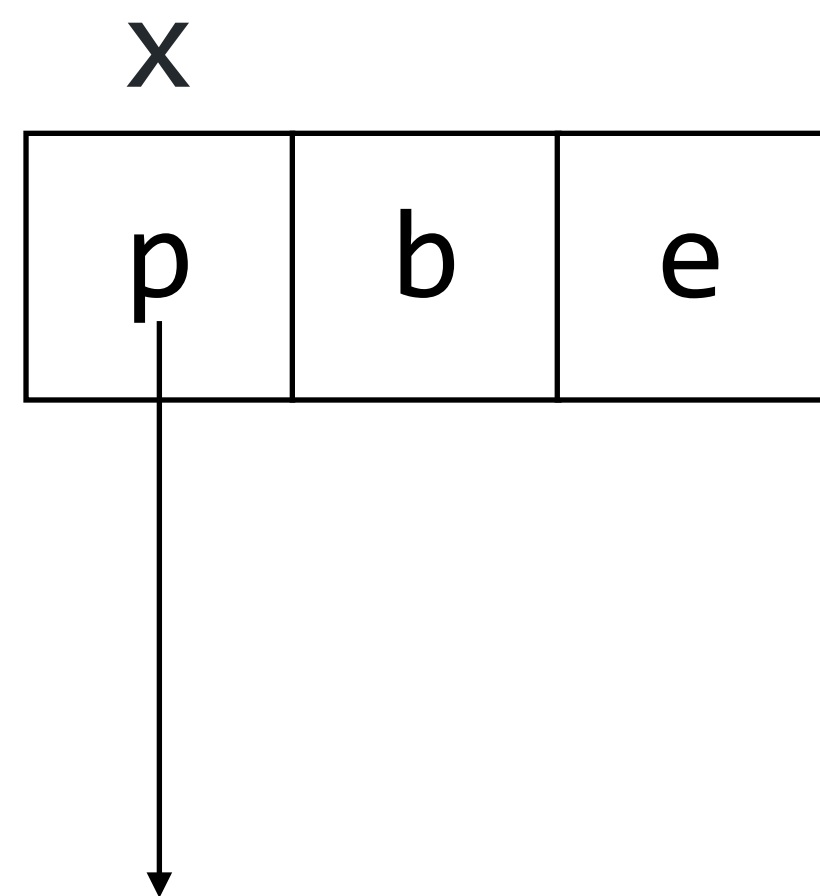
$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \tau * SEQ \quad y : \tau}{*x = y \leadsto \begin{array}{l} \text{assert}(x.b \leq x.p \leq x.e - \text{sizeof}(\tau)); \\ *x.p = y \end{array}}$$

Integers can be casted to sequence pointers.

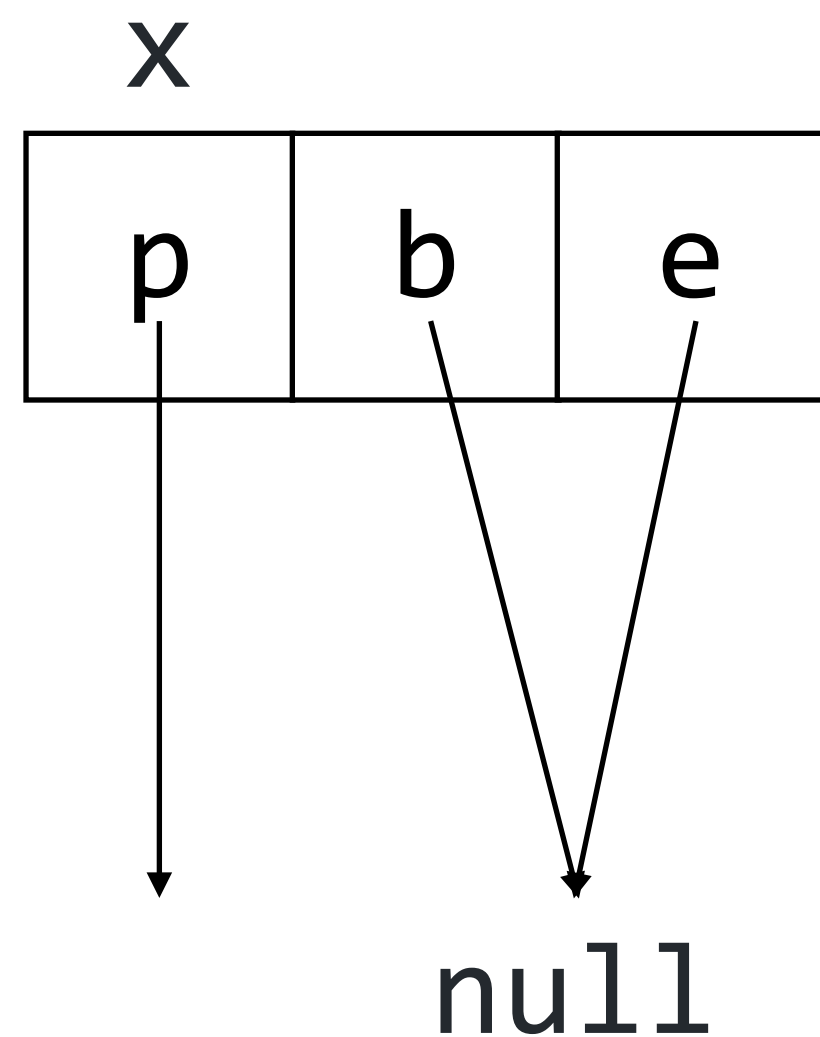
$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \text{int}}{(\tau * SEQ)x \rightsquigarrow \{p = x\}}$$

Integers can be casted to sequence pointers.

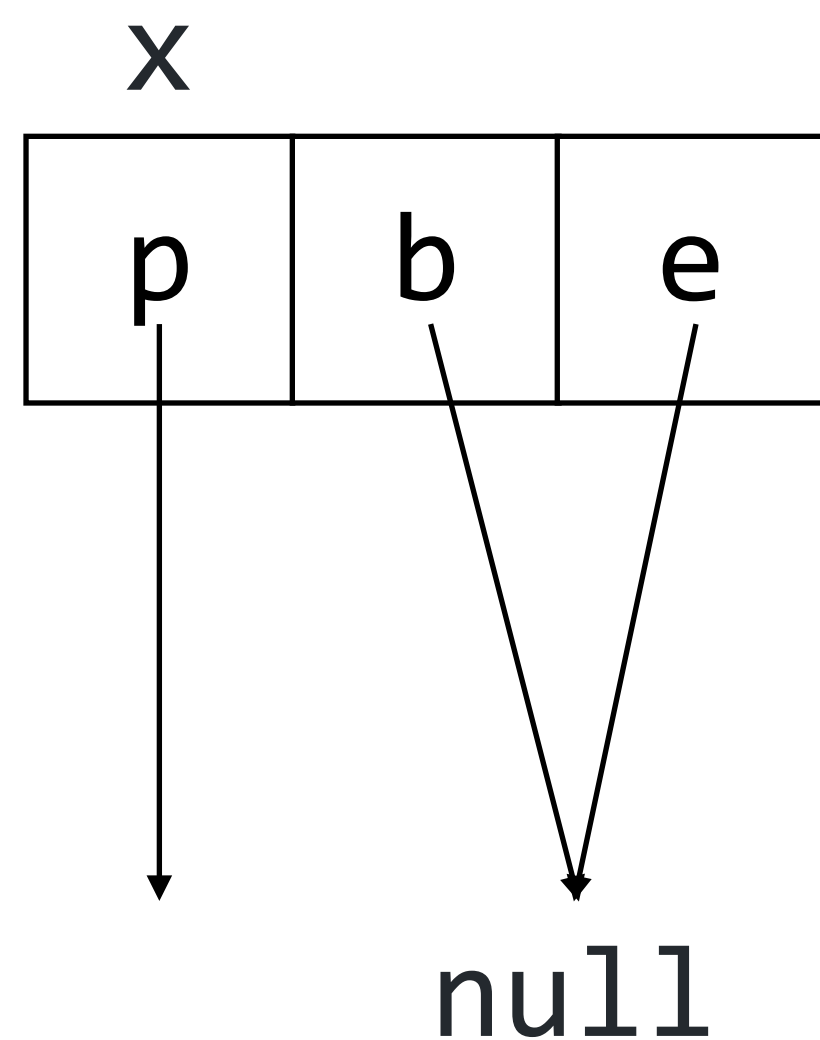
$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \text{int}}{(\tau * SEQ)x \rightsquigarrow \{p = x, b = \text{null}, e = \text{null}\}}$$

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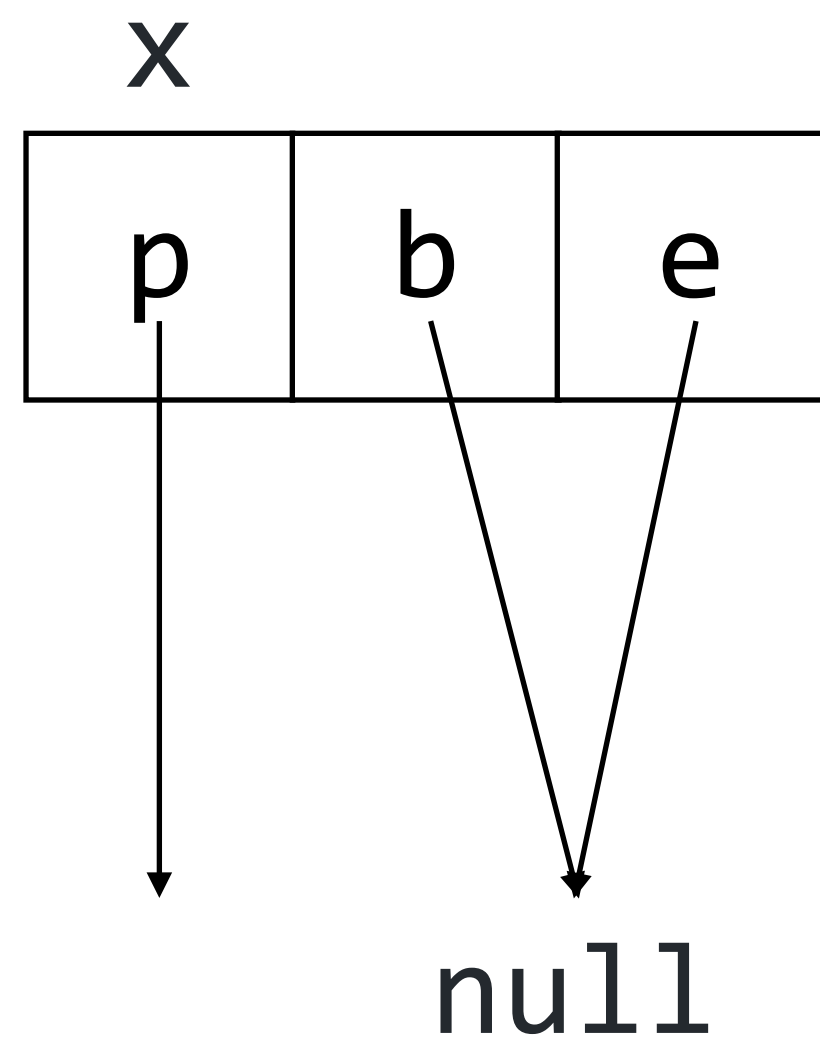


$$\frac{x : \text{int}}{(\tau * SEQ)x \rightsquigarrow \{p = x, b = \text{null}, e = \text{null}\}}$$

```
int n = N;
int * SEQ x = (int * SEQ) n;
*x = M;
```

Integers can be casted to sequence pointers.

$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$



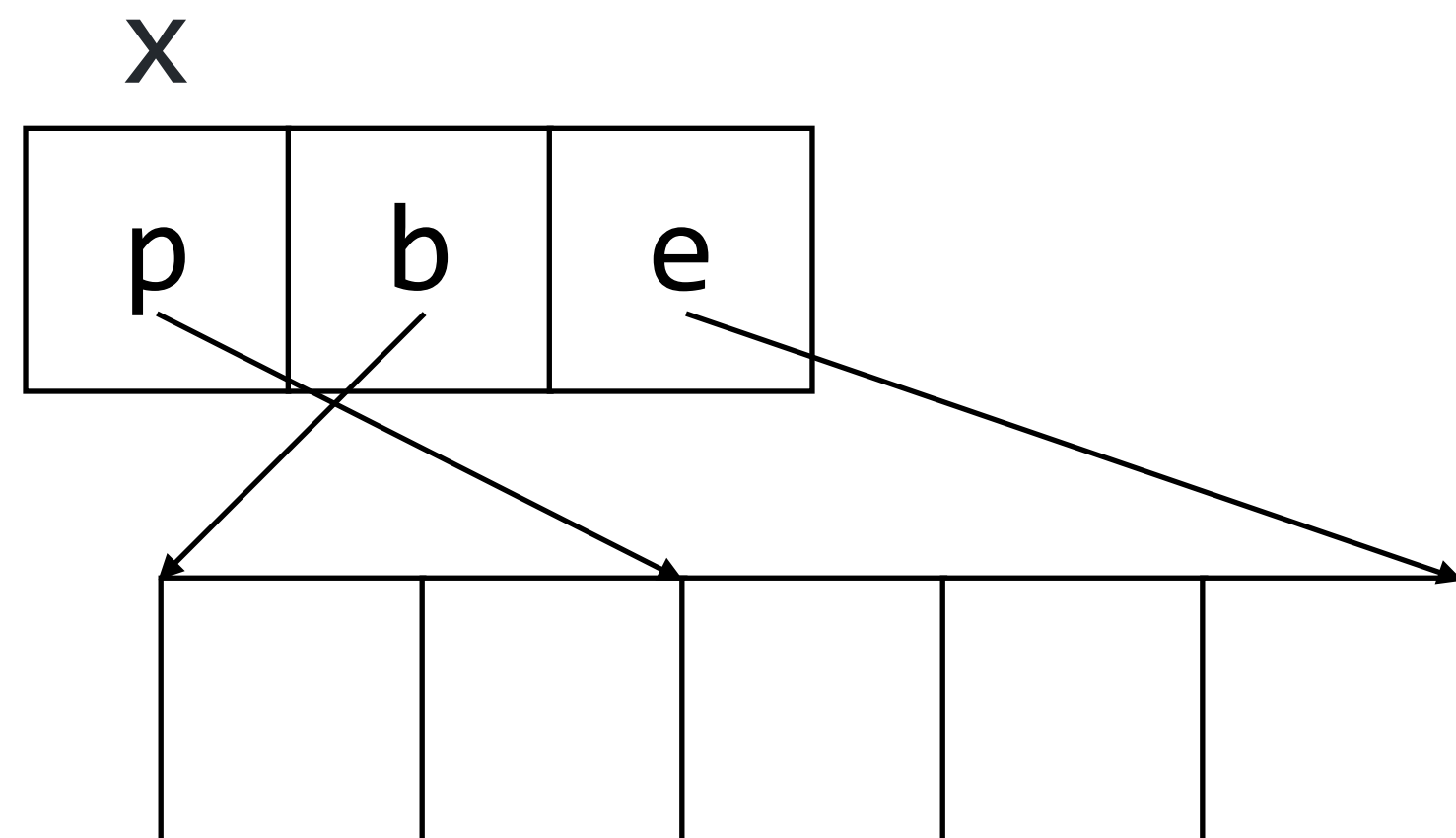
$$\frac{x : \text{int}}{(\tau * SEQ)x \rightsquigarrow \{p = x, b = \text{null}, e = \text{null}\}}$$

```
int n = N;
int * SEQ x = (int * SEQ) n;
int m = (int) x;
```

$$\frac{x : \tau * SEQ}{(\text{int})x \rightsquigarrow x.p}$$

Pointer arithmetic is allowed for sequence pointers.

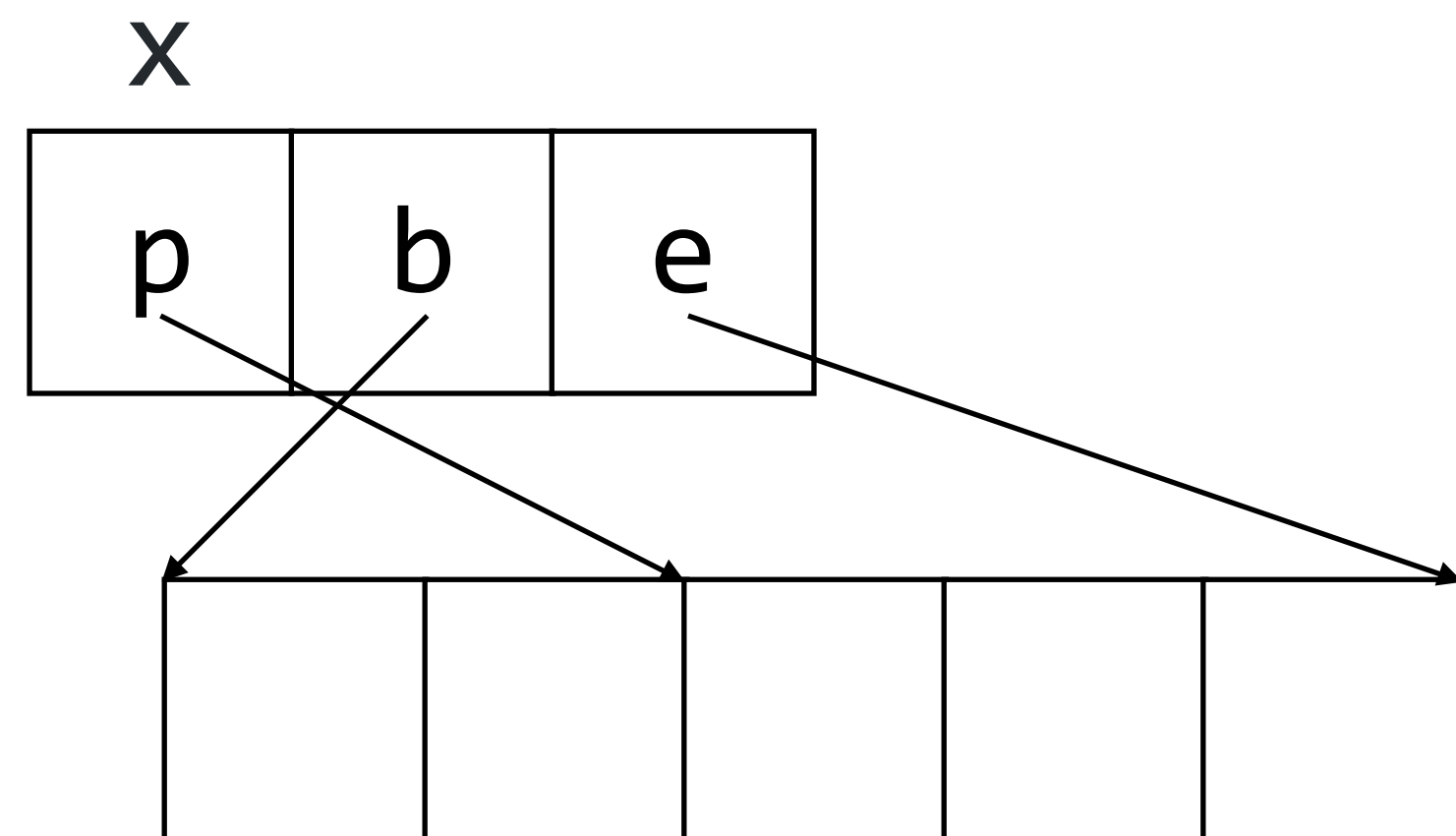
$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \tau * SEQ \quad y : \text{int}}{x + y \leadsto \{p = x.p + y \times \text{sizeof}(\tau), b = x.b, e = x.e\}}$$

Sequence pointers can be cast to safe pointers.

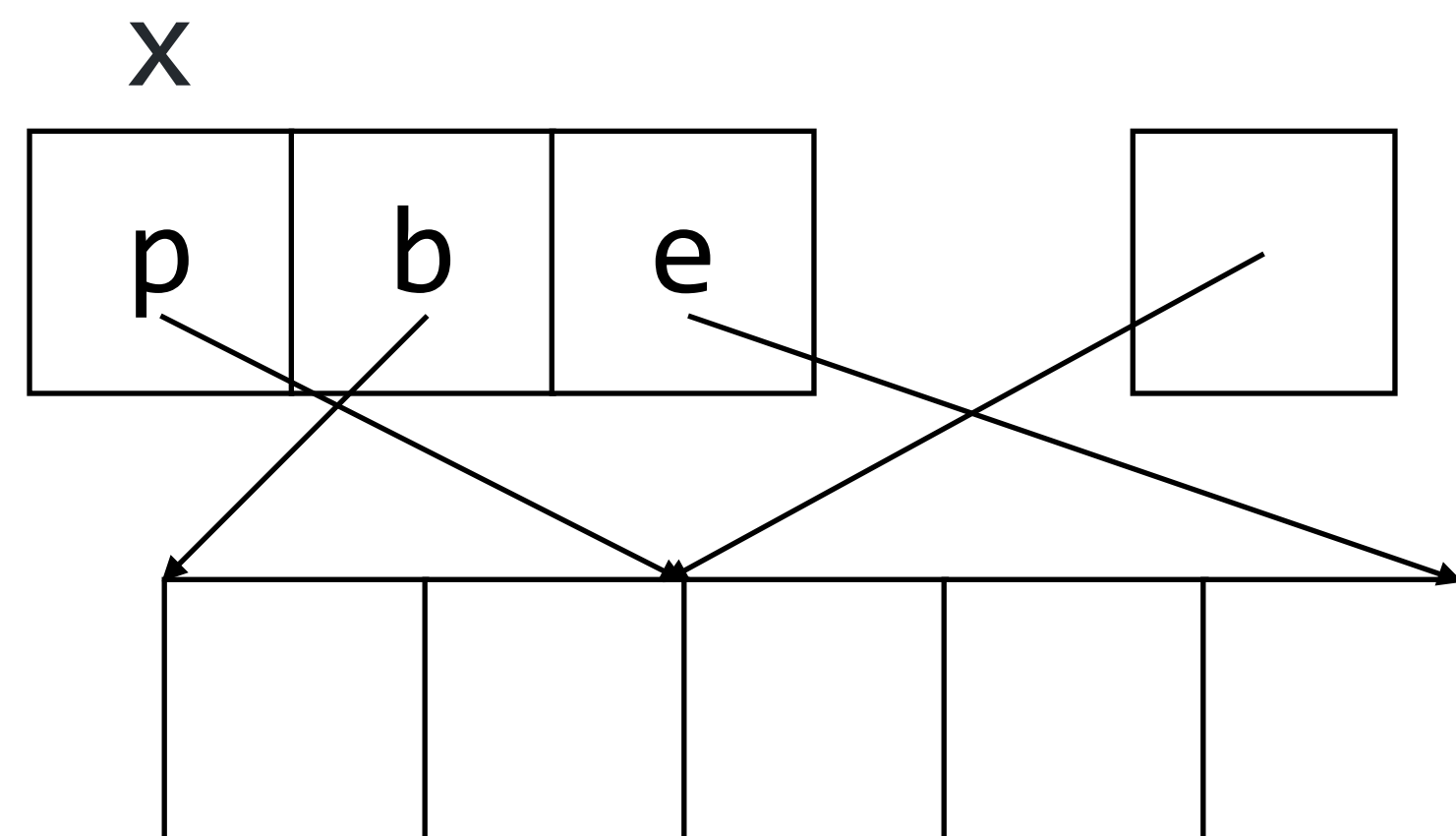
$$Rep(\tau * SEQ) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b, e;\}$$



 $x : \tau * SEQ$
 $(\tau * \text{SAFE})x \rightsquigarrow$

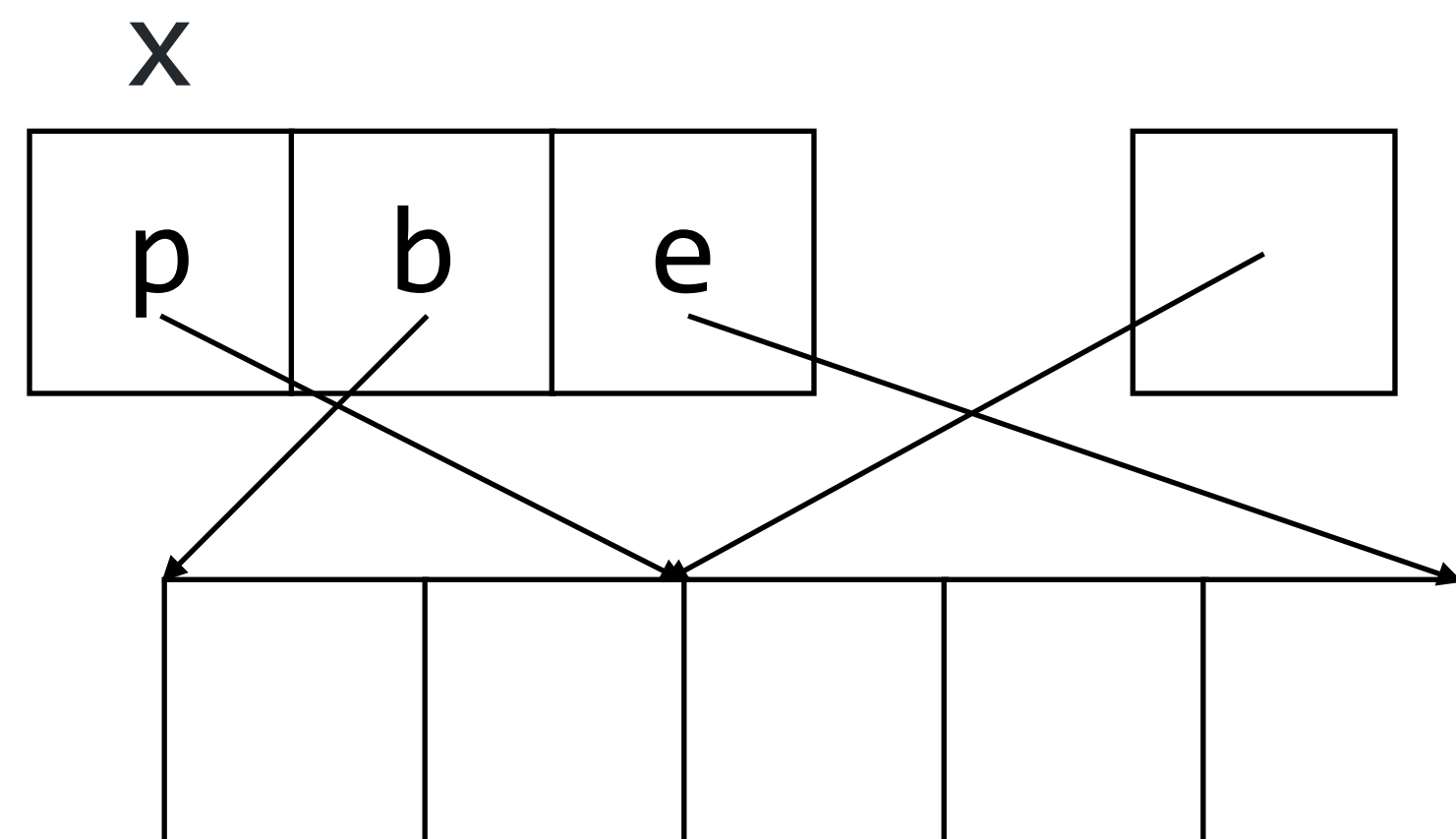
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$$\frac{x : \tau * SEQ}{(\tau * \text{SAFE})x \rightsquigarrow \text{assert}(x.p = \text{null} \vee x.b \leq x.p \leq x.e - \text{sizeof}(\tau)); x.p}$$

Wild pointers can refer to any values.

```
struct a { int x, y; };  
struct b { int *p, n; };  
  
struct b sb;  
struct a *sa = (struct a *) &sb;  
sa->y = N;  
sb.n;
```

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struct a { int x, y; };
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```

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SAFE} \quad \tau \neq \tau'}{(\tau' * \text{SAFE})x : \text{not ok}}$$

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SEQ} \quad \tau \neq \tau'}{(\tau' * \text{SEQ})x : \text{not ok}}$$

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$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{WILD}}{(\tau' * \text{WILD})x \rightsquigarrow x}$$

Wild pointers can refer to any values.

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struct a { int x, y; };
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sa->x = N;
*sb.p = M;

```

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Wild pointers can refer to any values.

```
int * SEQ foo;
int * SEQ * WILD p = &foo;
bool * SEQ * WILD q =
    (bool * SEQ * WILD) p;
bool * SEQ bar = *q;
```

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SAFE} \quad \tau \neq \tau'}{(\tau' * \text{SAFE})x : \text{not ok}}$$

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int * SEQ foo;
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bool * SEQ * WILD q =
    (bool * SEQ * WILD) p;
bool * SEQ bar = *q;
```

$$\frac{q \neq \text{WILD}}{\tau * q * \text{WILD} : \text{wrong type}}$$

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SAFE} \quad \tau \neq \tau'}{(\tau' * \text{SAFE})x : \text{not ok}}$$

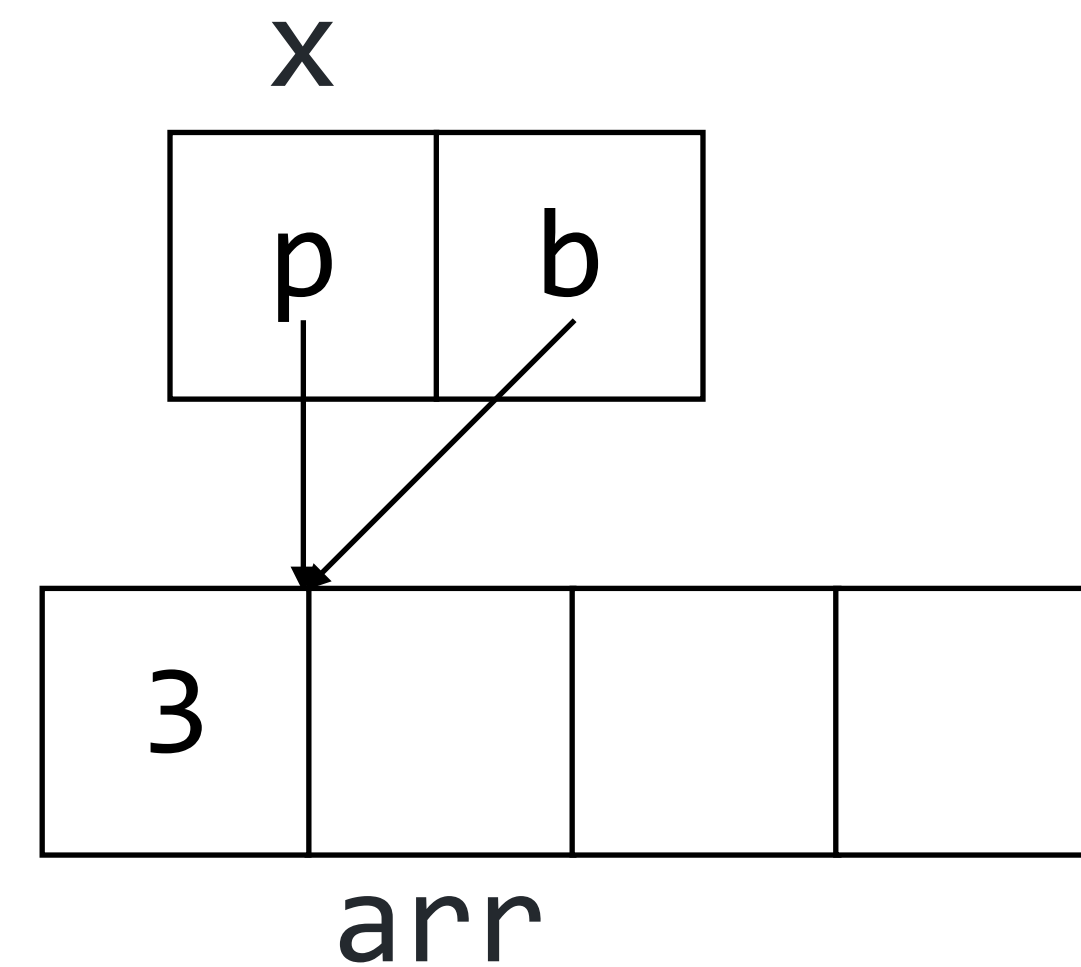
$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SEQ} \quad \tau \neq \tau'}{(\tau' * \text{SEQ})x : \text{not ok}}$$

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{WILD}}{(\tau' * \text{WILD})x \rightsquigarrow x}$$

Wild pointers can refer to any values.

$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$

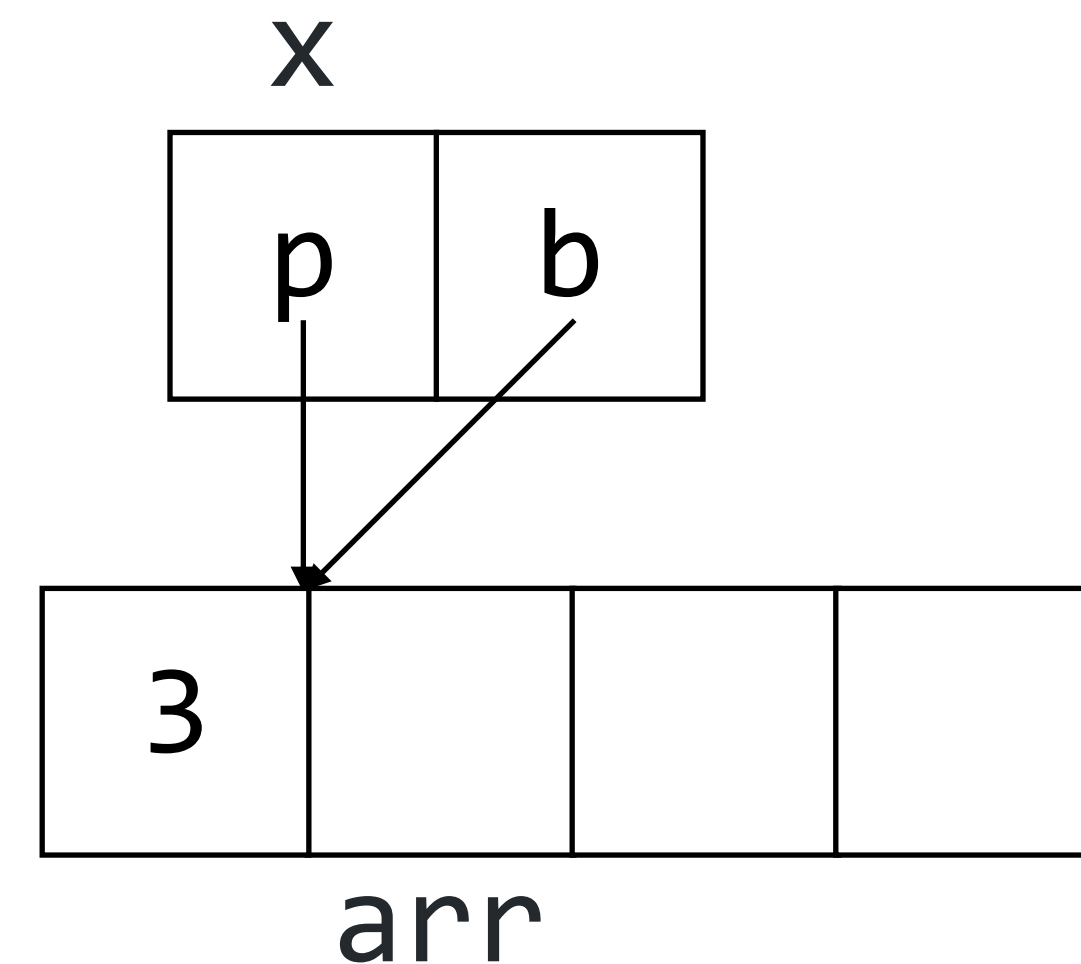
```
int arr[3];  
int * WILD x = arr;
```



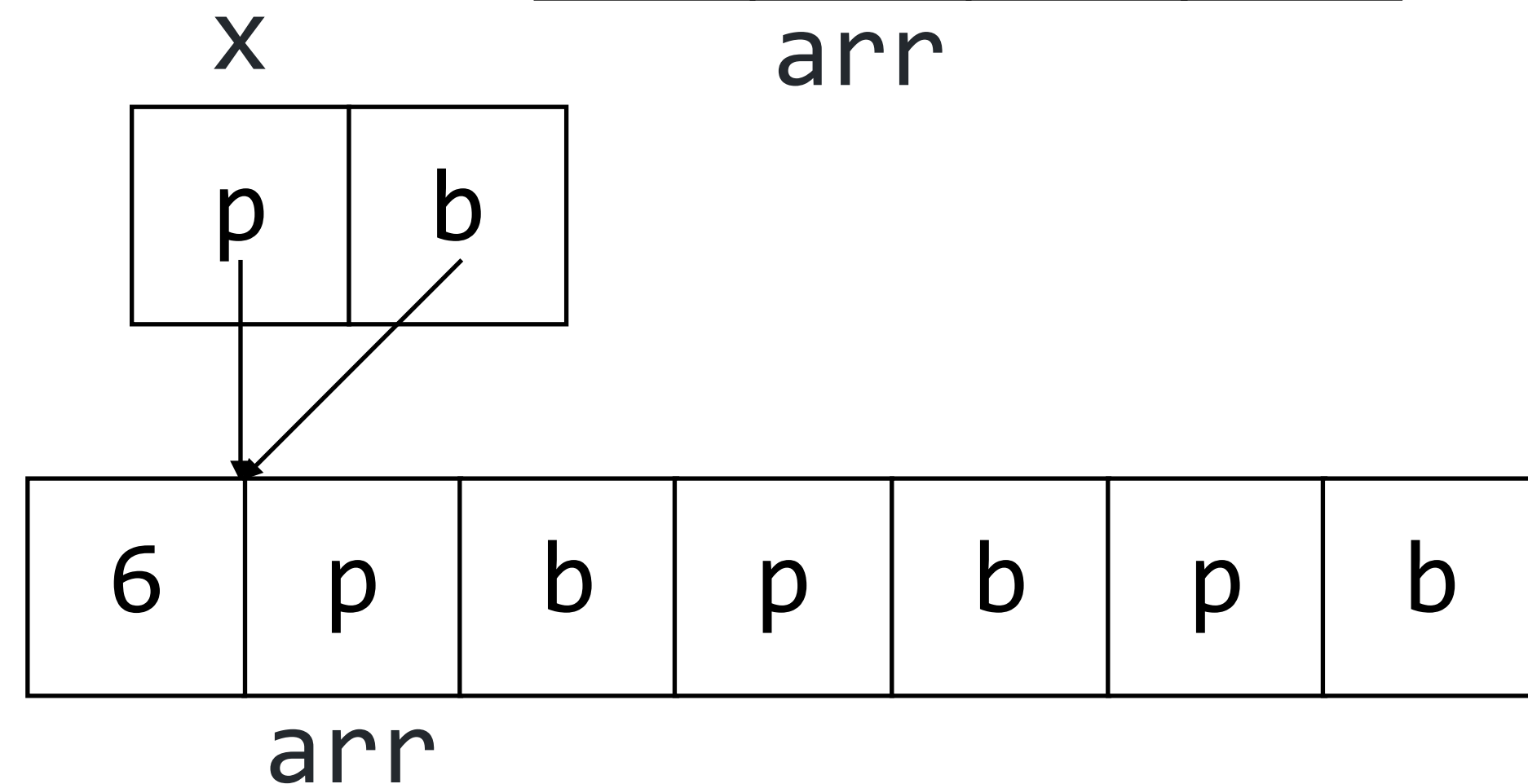
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int arr[3];
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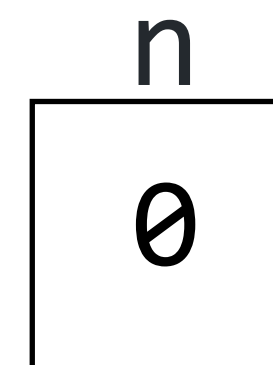
```
int (* WILD arr)[3];
int * WILD * WILD x = arr;
```



Wild pointers can refer to any values.

$$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

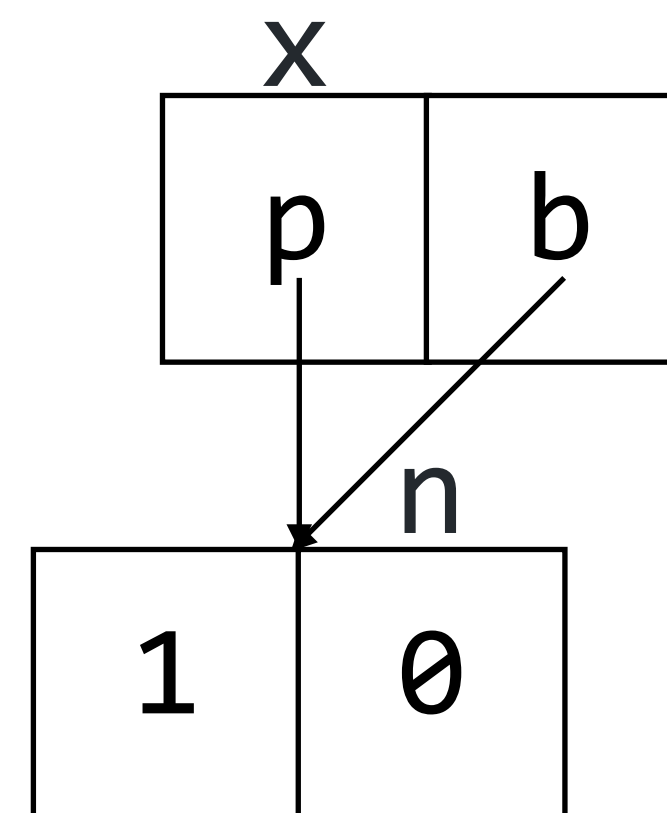
```
int n = 0;
```



Wild pointers can refer to any values.

$$\text{Rep}(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{\text{Rep}(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

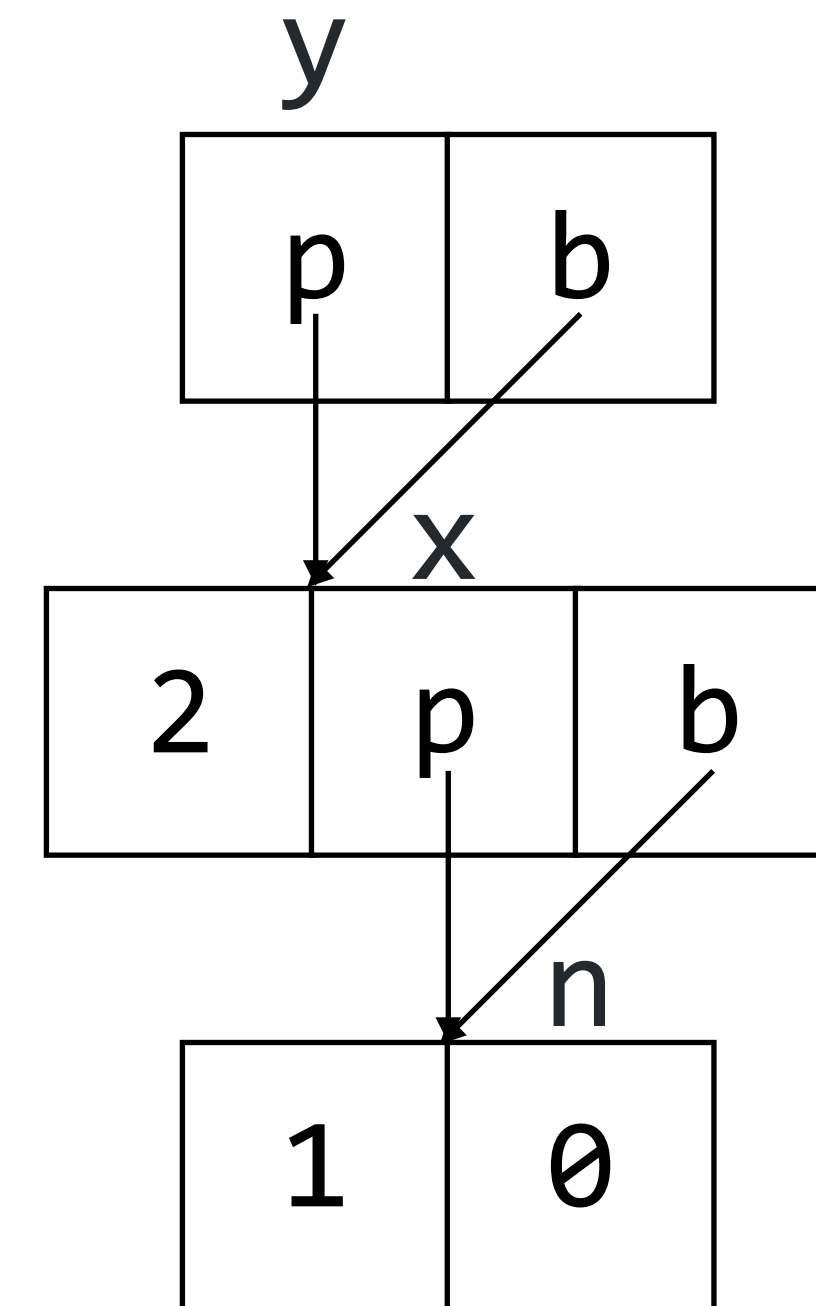
```
int n = 0;  
int * WILD x = &n;
```



Wild pointers can refer to any values.

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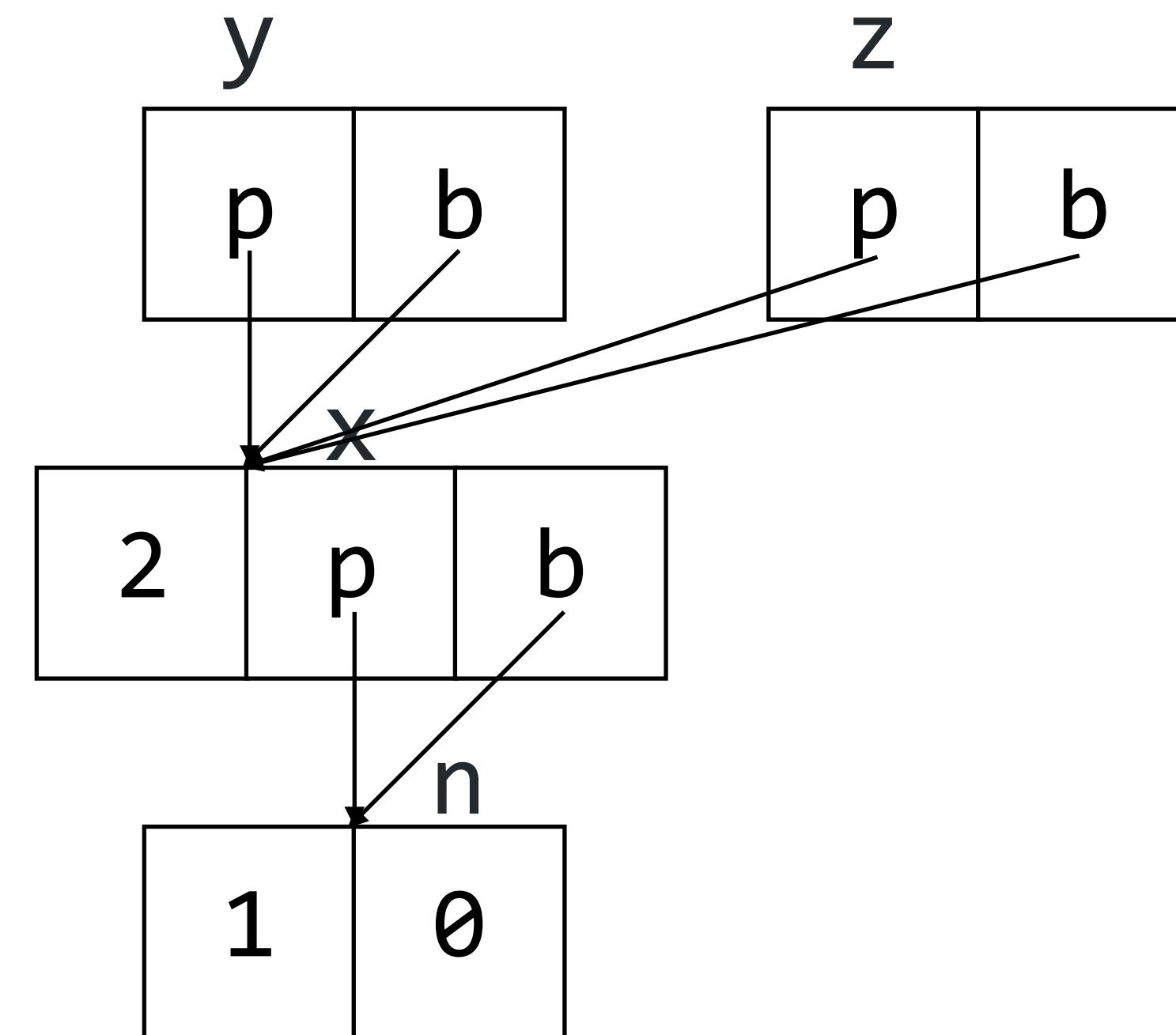
```
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
```



Wild pointers can refer to any values.

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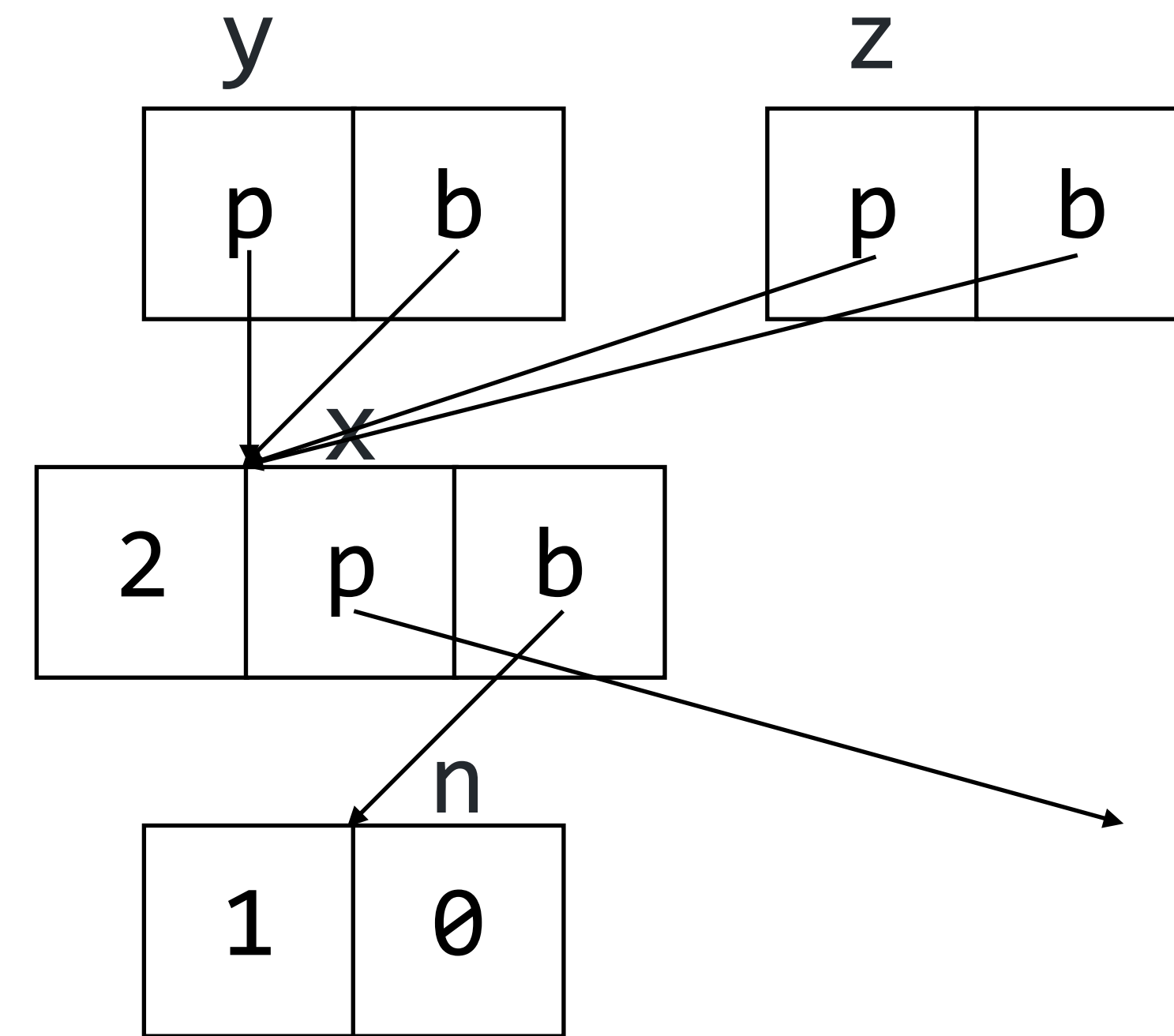
```
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;
```



Wild pointers can refer to any values.

$$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

```
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;
*z = N;
```



Wild pointers can refer to any values.

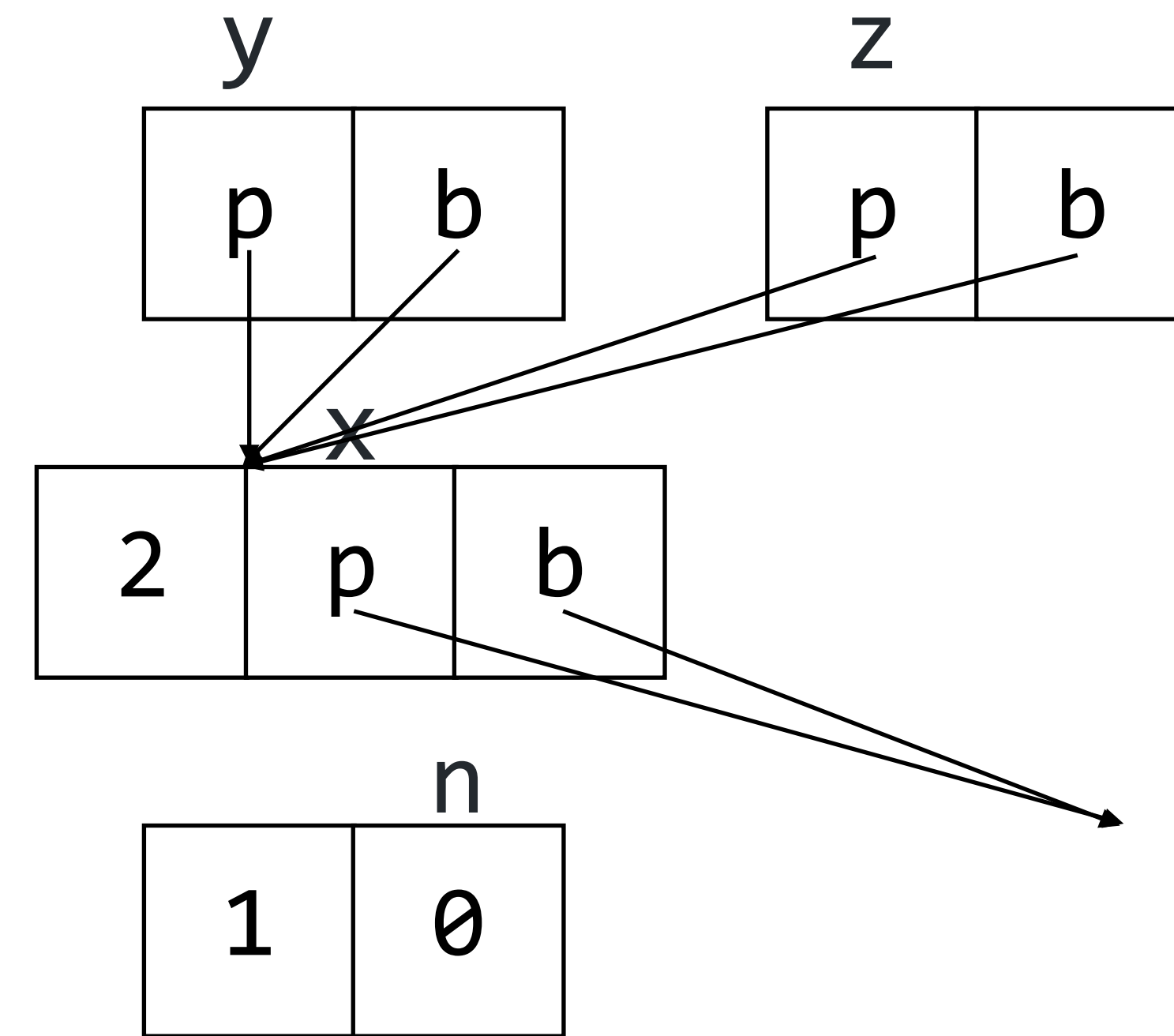
$$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

```

int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;

*z = N;
*(z + 1) = N;

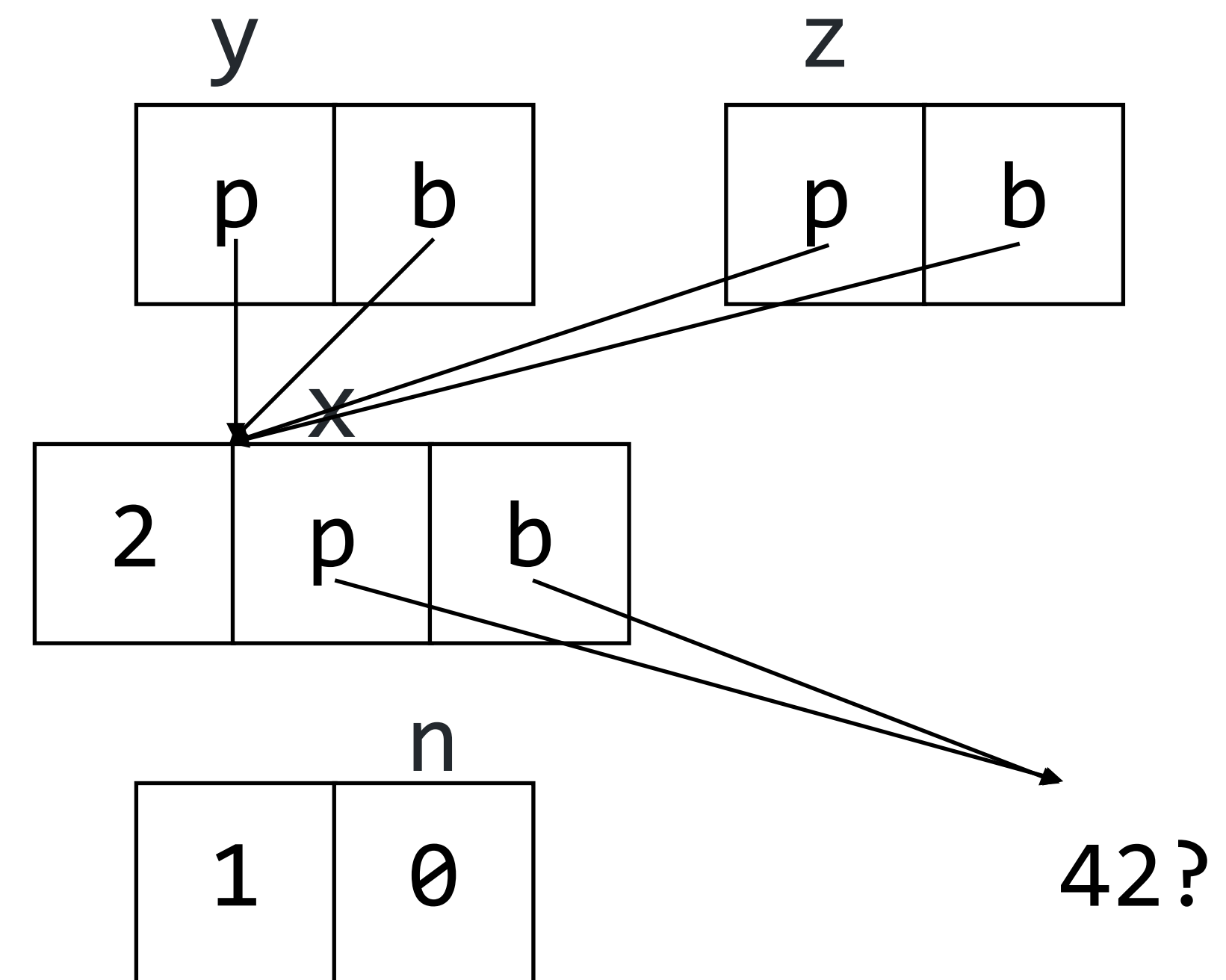
```



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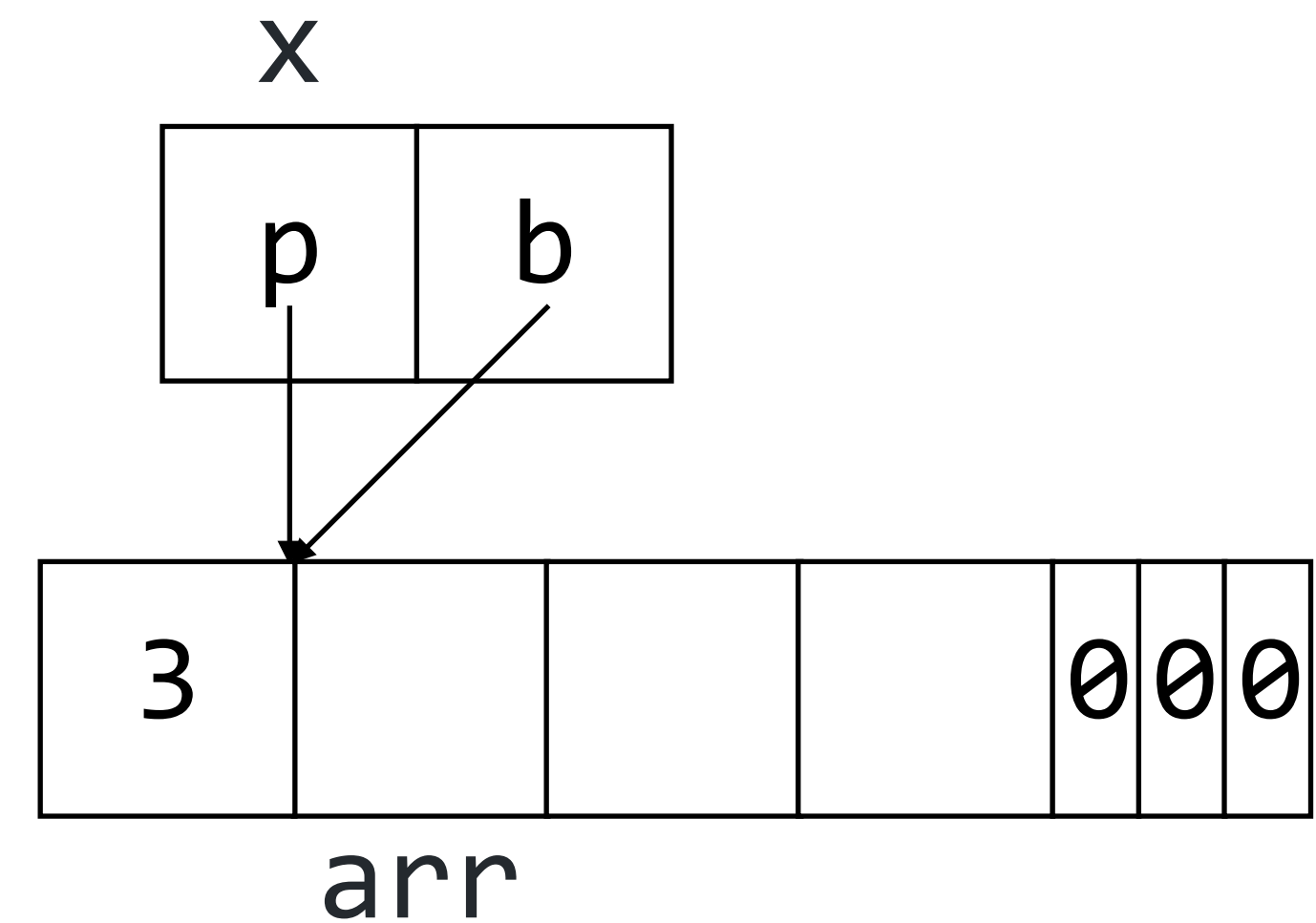
```
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;
*z = N;
*(z + 1) = N;
**y = 42;
```



Wild pointers need tag bits.

$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$

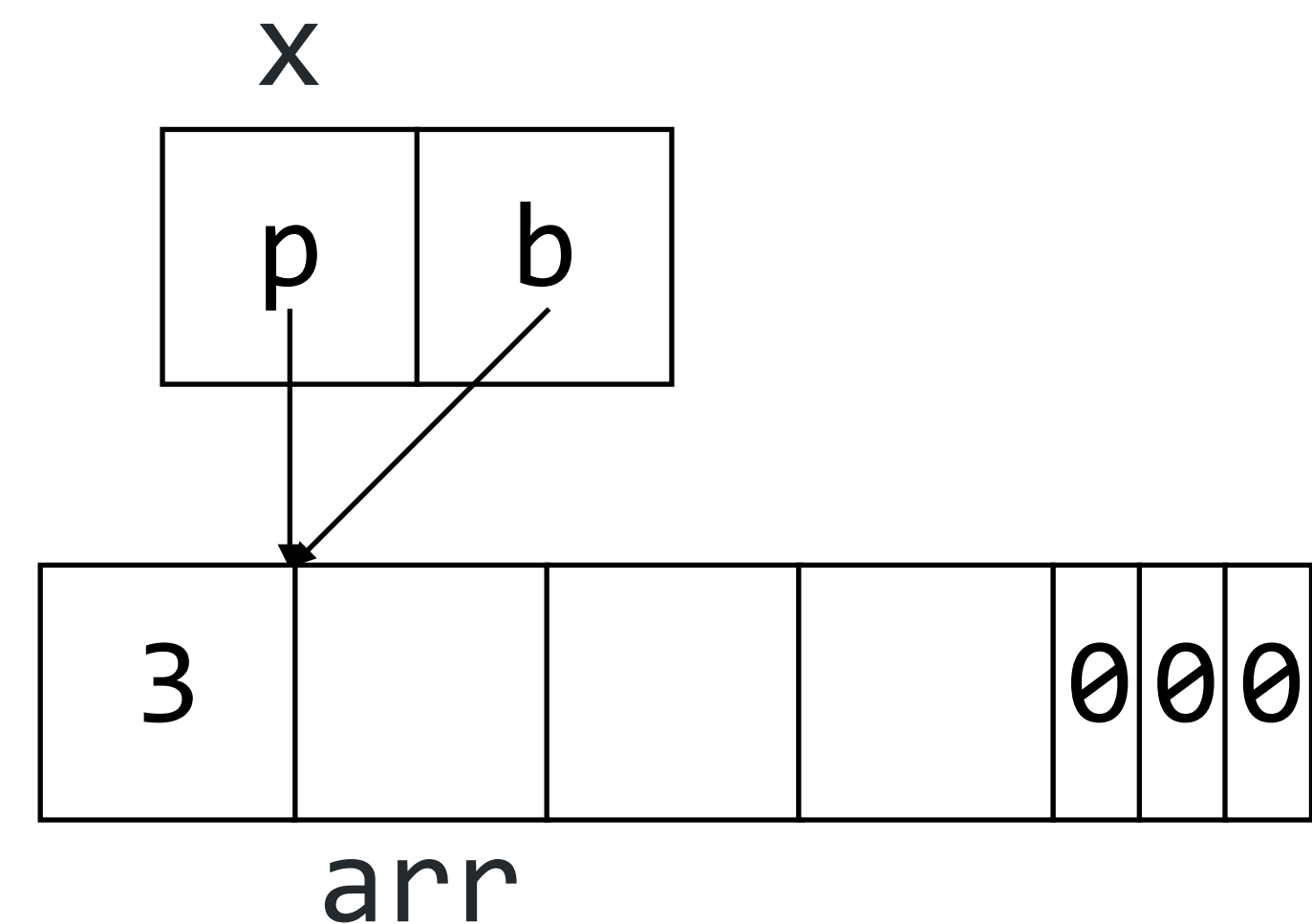
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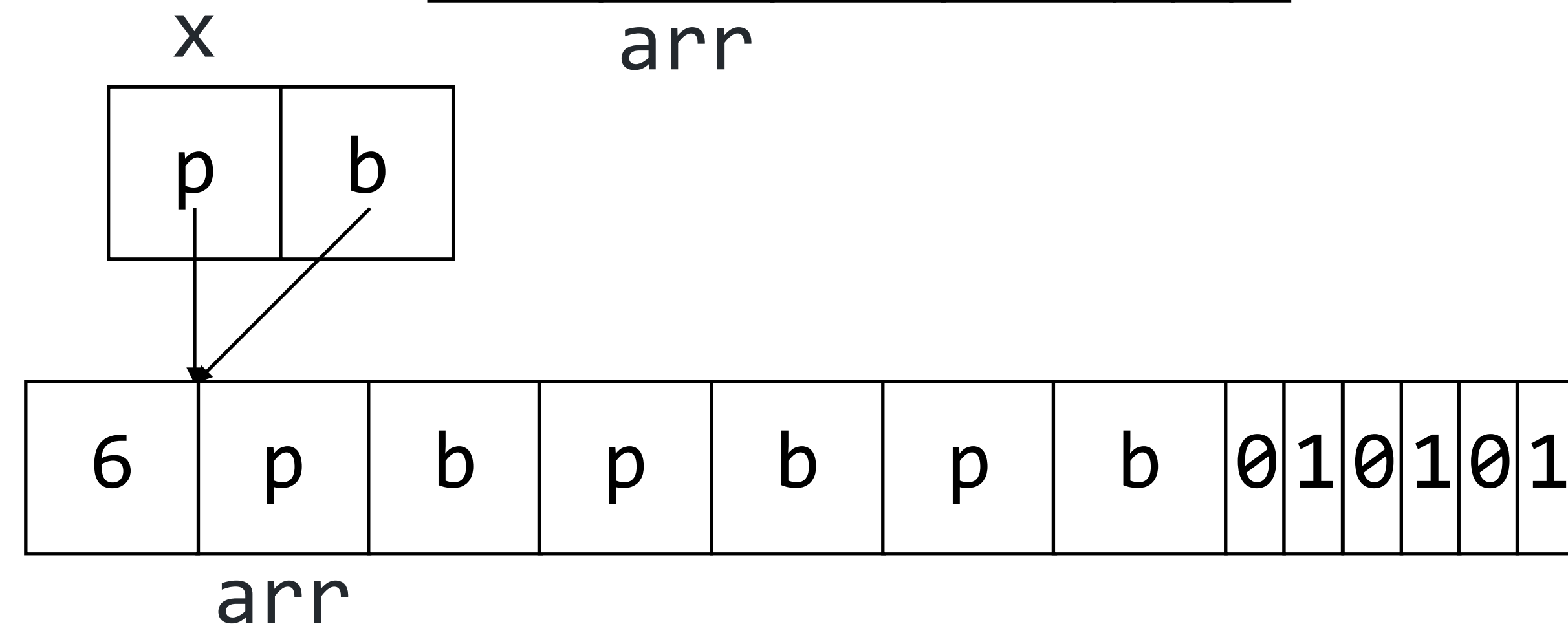
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```
int arr[3];
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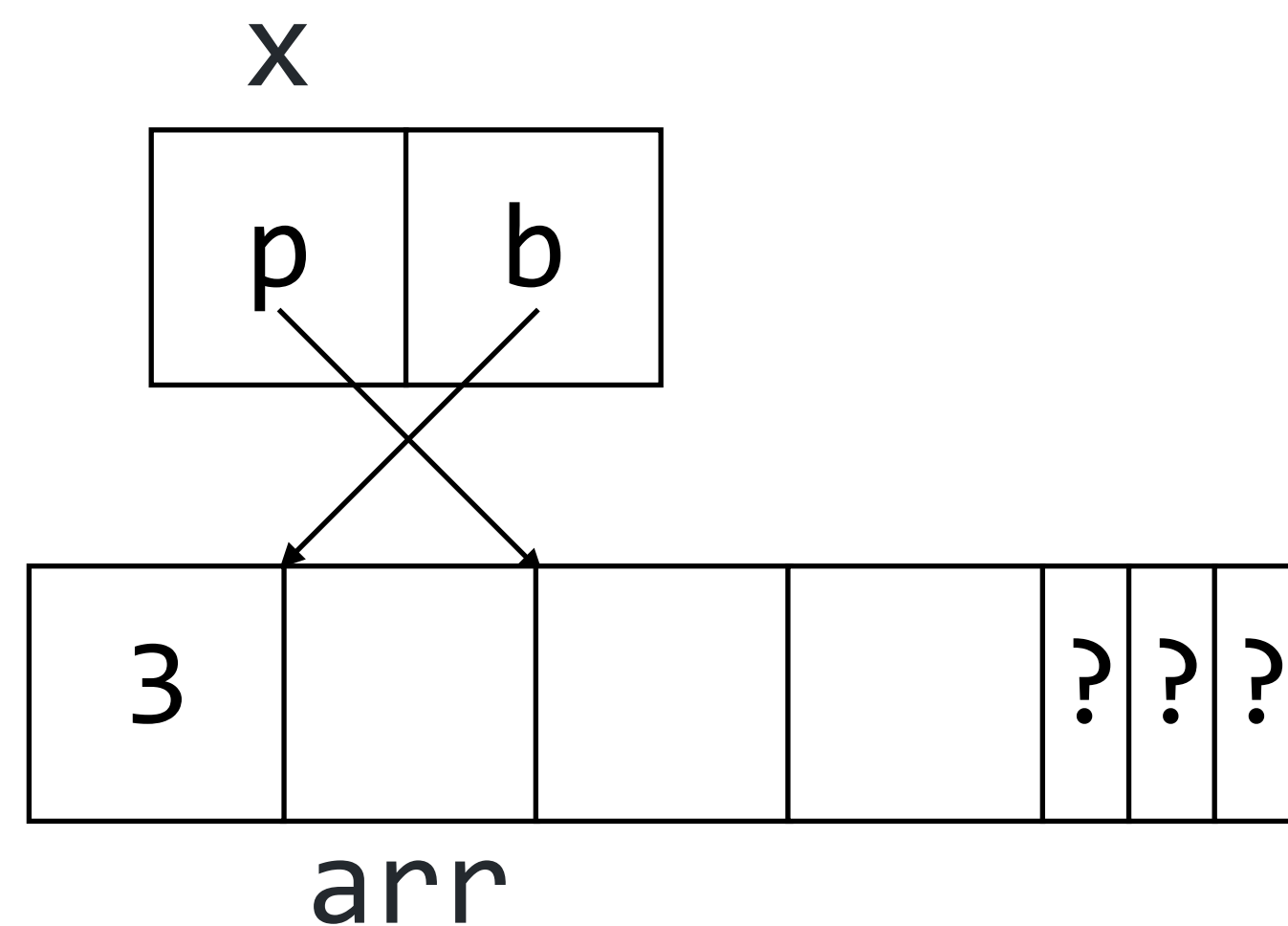


```
int (* WILD arr)[3];
int * WILD * WILD x = arr;
```



Wild pointers need tag bits.

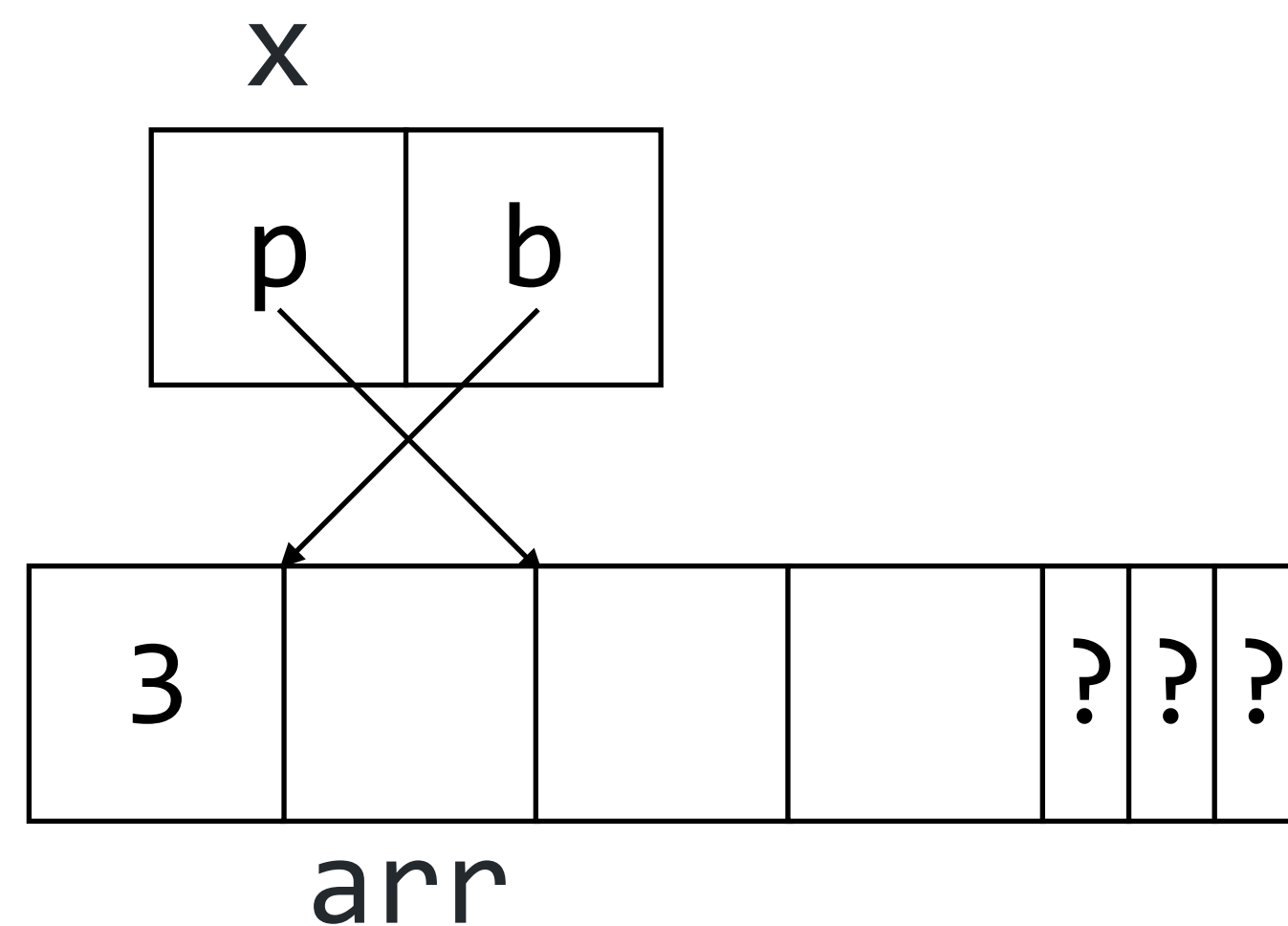
$$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \text{int} * \text{WILD} \quad y : \text{int}}{\begin{array}{l} \text{assert}(x.b \neq \text{null}); \\ \text{assert}(x.b \leq x.p \leq \text{len}(x.b) - \text{sizeof}(\text{int})); \\ *x = y \leadsto \\ *x.p = y \end{array}}$$

Wild pointers need tag bits.

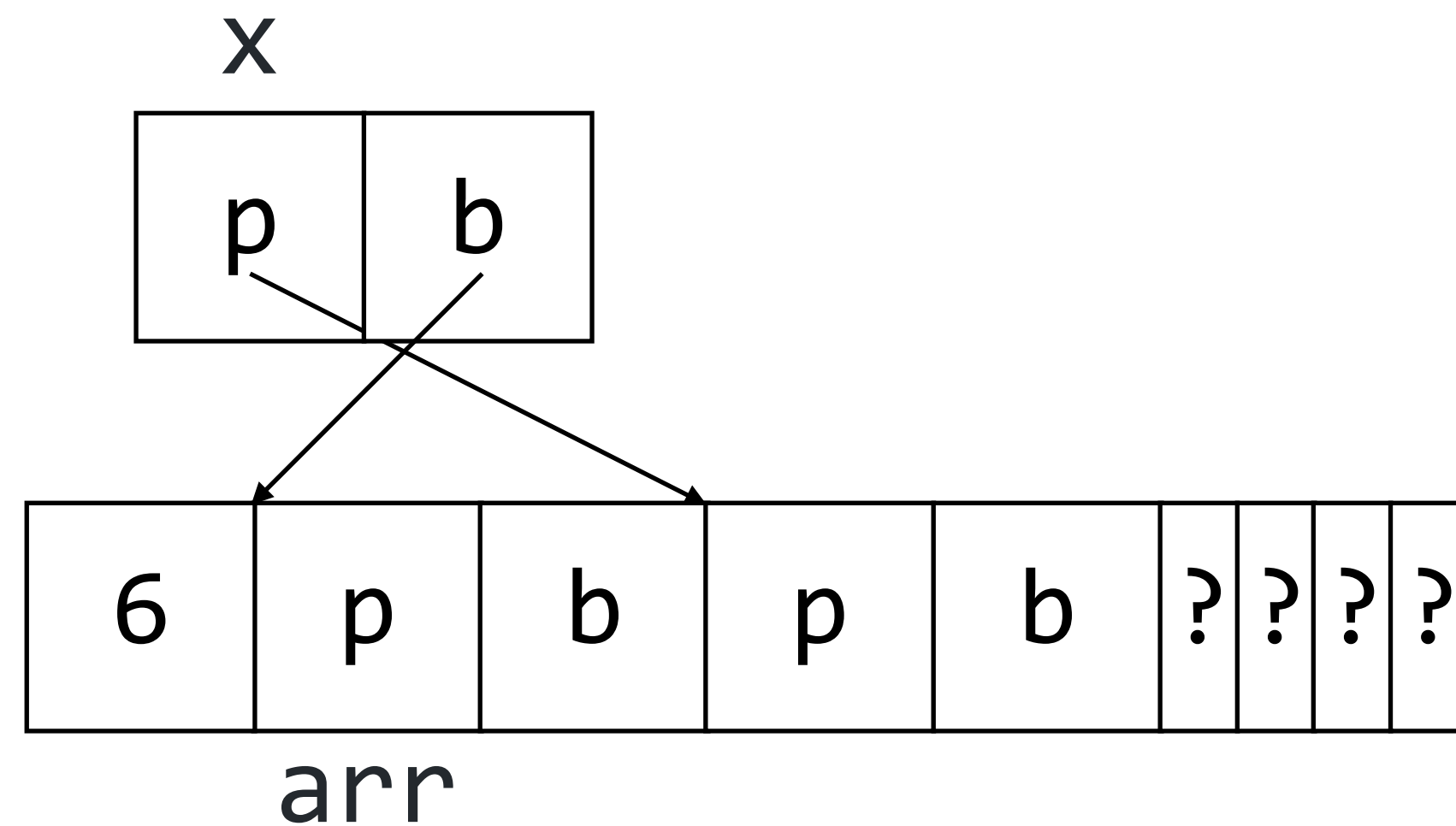
$$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \text{int} * WILD \quad y : \text{int}}{\begin{array}{l} *x = y \rightsquigarrow \\ \text{assert}(x.b \neq \text{null}); \\ \text{assert}(x.b \leq x.p \leq \text{len}(x.b) - \text{sizeof}(\text{int})); \\ \text{tag}(x.b, x.p) = 0; \\ *x.p = y \end{array}}$$

Wild pointers need tag bits.

$$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

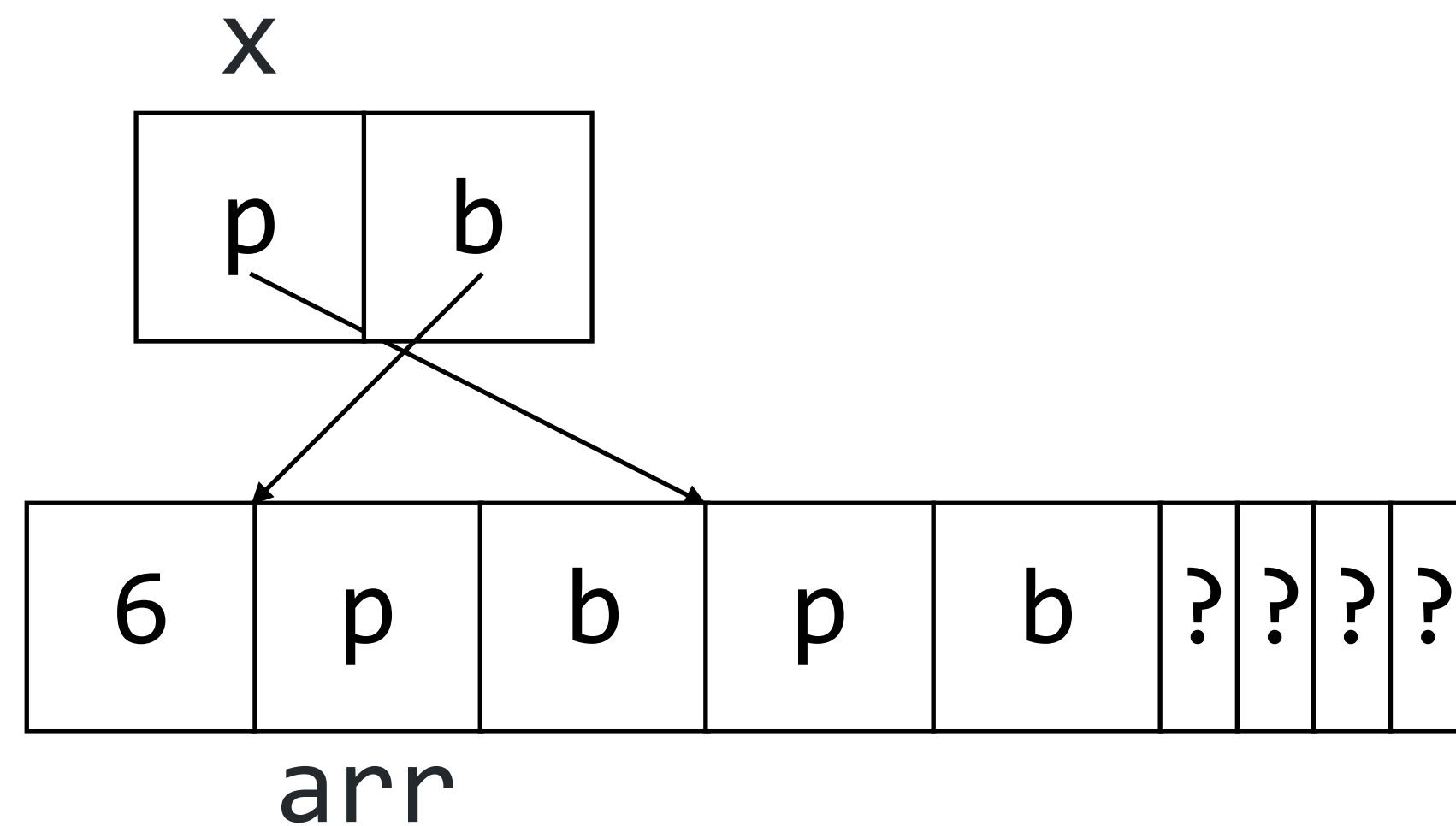


$$\frac{x : \tau * WILD * WILD \quad y : \tau * WILD}{\text{assert}(x.b \neq \text{null}); \\ \text{assert}(x.b \leq x.p \leq \text{len}(x.b) - \text{sizeof}(\tau * WILD)); \\ \text{assert}(\text{tag}(x.b, x.p + 1) = 1); \\ *x = y \rightsquigarrow}$$

$$*x.p = y$$

Wild pointers need tag bits.

$$Rep(\tau * WILD) = struct\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$



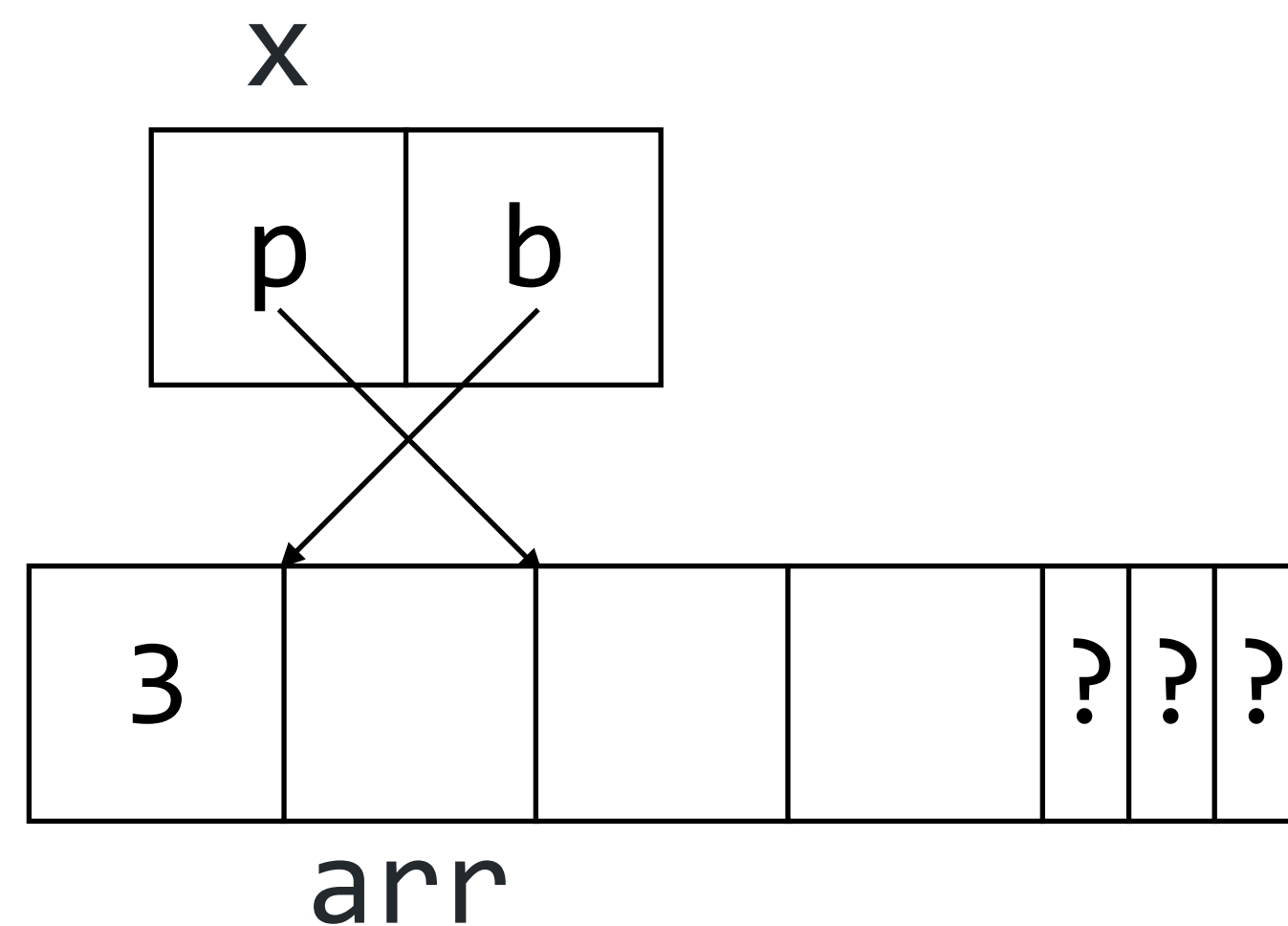
$*x = y \rightsquigarrow$

$x : \tau * WILD * WILD \quad y : \tau * WILD$

```
assert( $x.b \neq \text{null}$ );
assert( $x.b \leq x.p \leq \text{len}(x.b) - \text{sizeof}(\tau * WILD)$ );
assert(tag( $x.b, x.p + 1$ ) = 1);
tag( $x.b, x.p$ ) = 0;
tag( $x.b, x.p + 1$ ) = 1;
 $*x.p = y$ 
```


Wild pointers need tag bits.

$$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

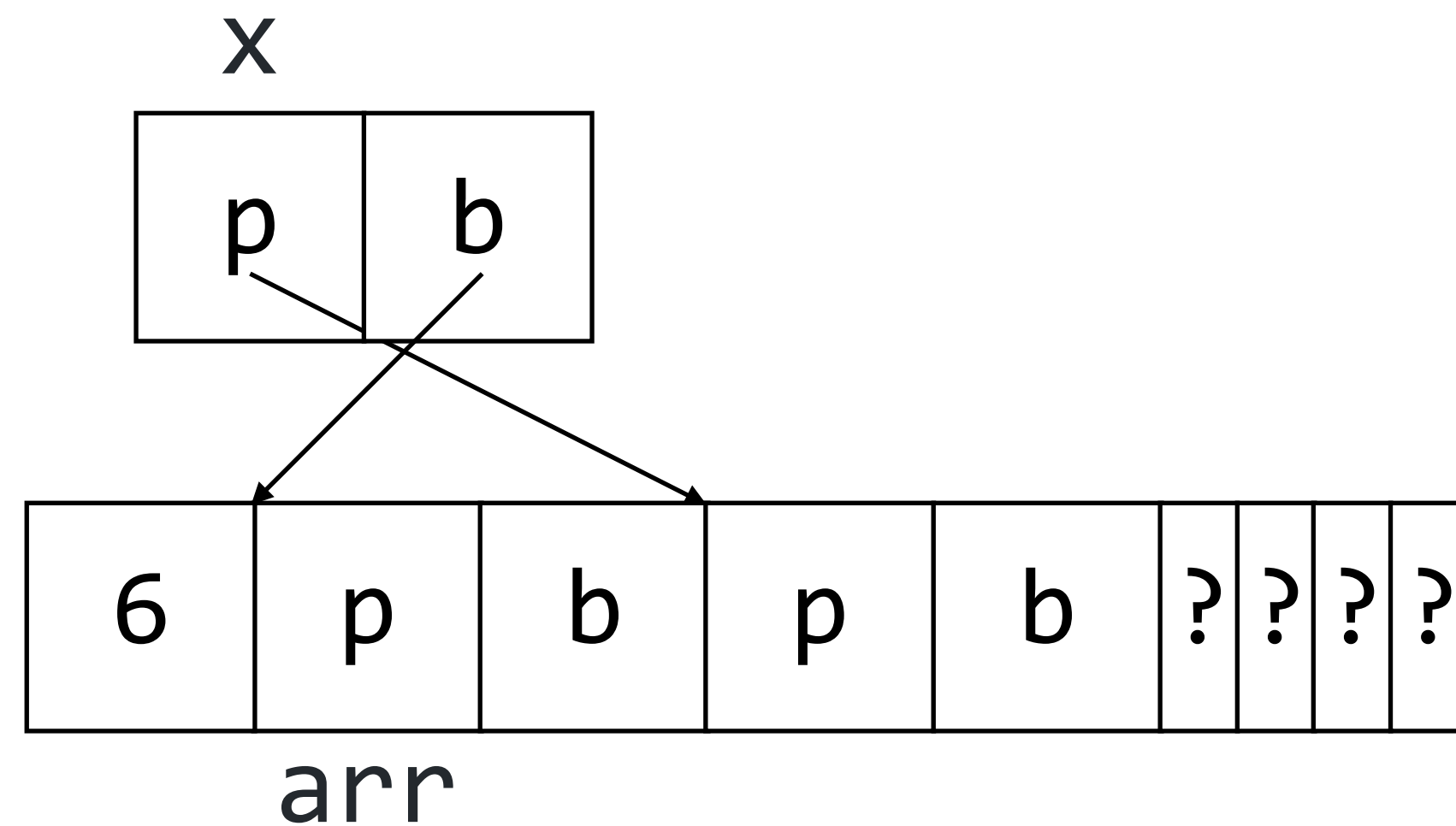


$x : \text{int} * \text{WILD}$

$*x \rightsquigarrow$
 $\text{assert}(x.b \neq \text{null});$
 $\text{assert}(x.b \leq x.p \leq \text{len}(x.b) - \text{sizeof}(\text{int}));$
 $*x.p$

Wild pointers need tag bits.

$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$



$x : \tau * WILD * WILD$

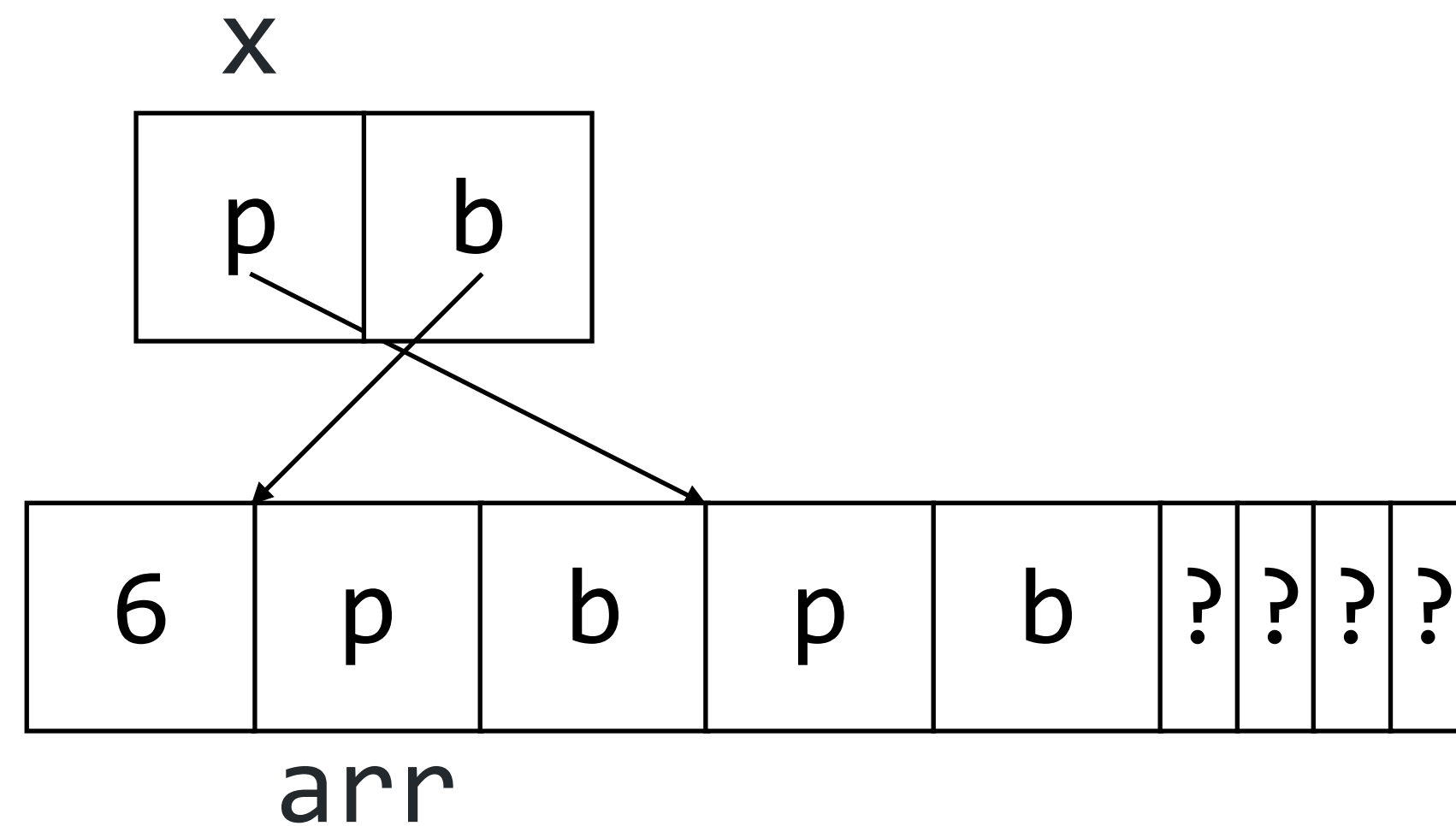
$*x \rightsquigarrow$

```
assert( $x.b \neq \text{null}$ );
assert( $x.b \leq x.p \leq \text{len}(x.b) - \text{sizeof}(\tau * WILD)$ );
```

$*x.p$

Wild pointers need tag bits.

$$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$



$x : \tau * WILD * WILD$

$*x \rightsquigarrow$

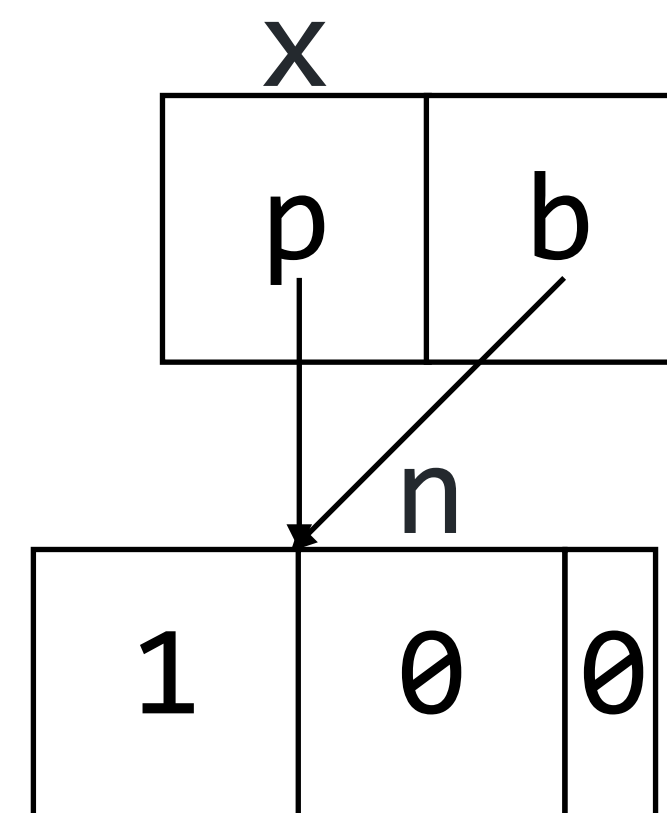
```
assert( $x.b \neq \text{null}$ );
assert( $x.b \leq x.p \leq \text{len}(x.b) - \text{sizeof}(\tau * WILD)$ );
assert(tag( $x.b, x.p + 1$ ) = 1);
```

$*x.p$

Wild pointers need tag bits.

$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$

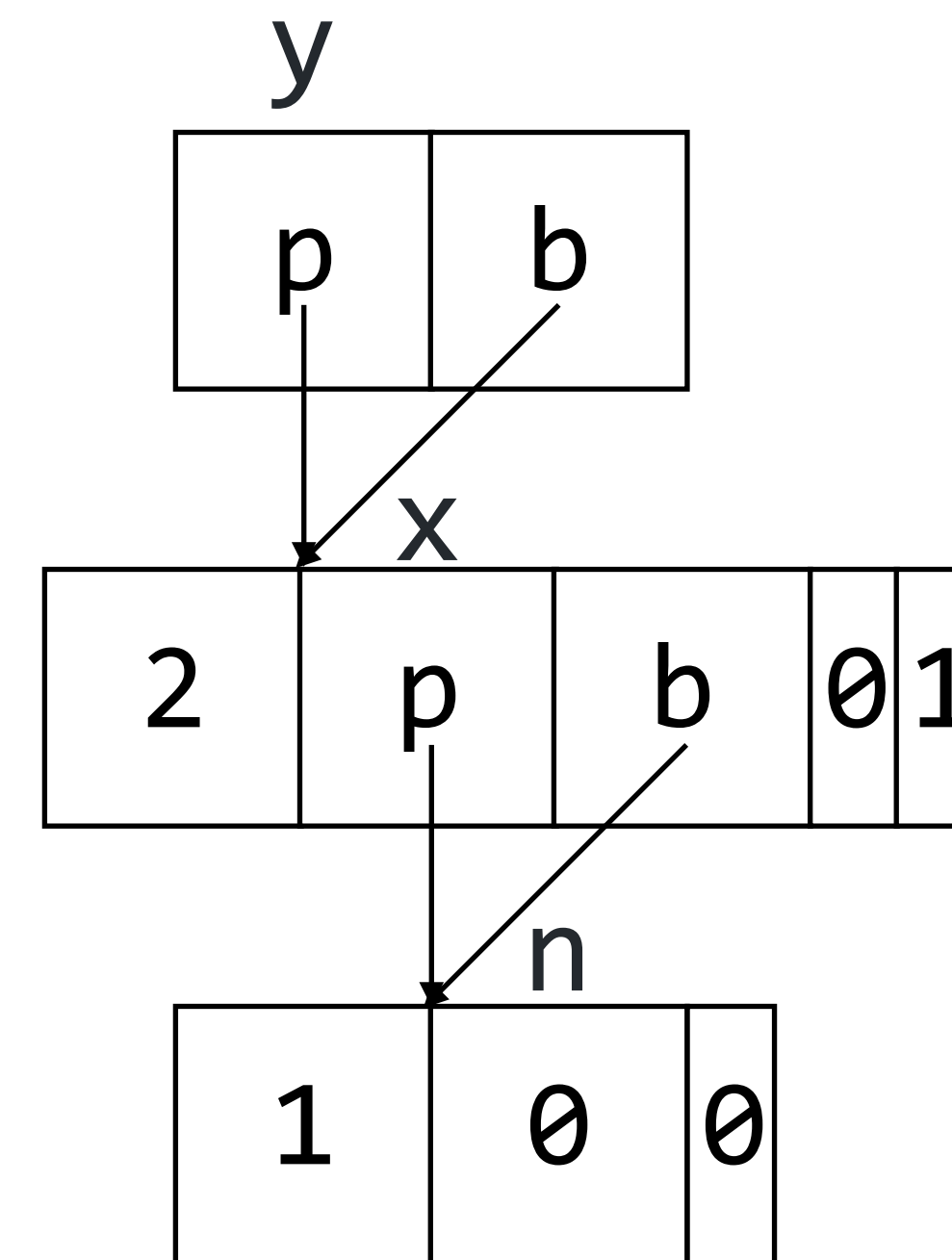
```
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
```



Wild pointers need tag bits.

$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$

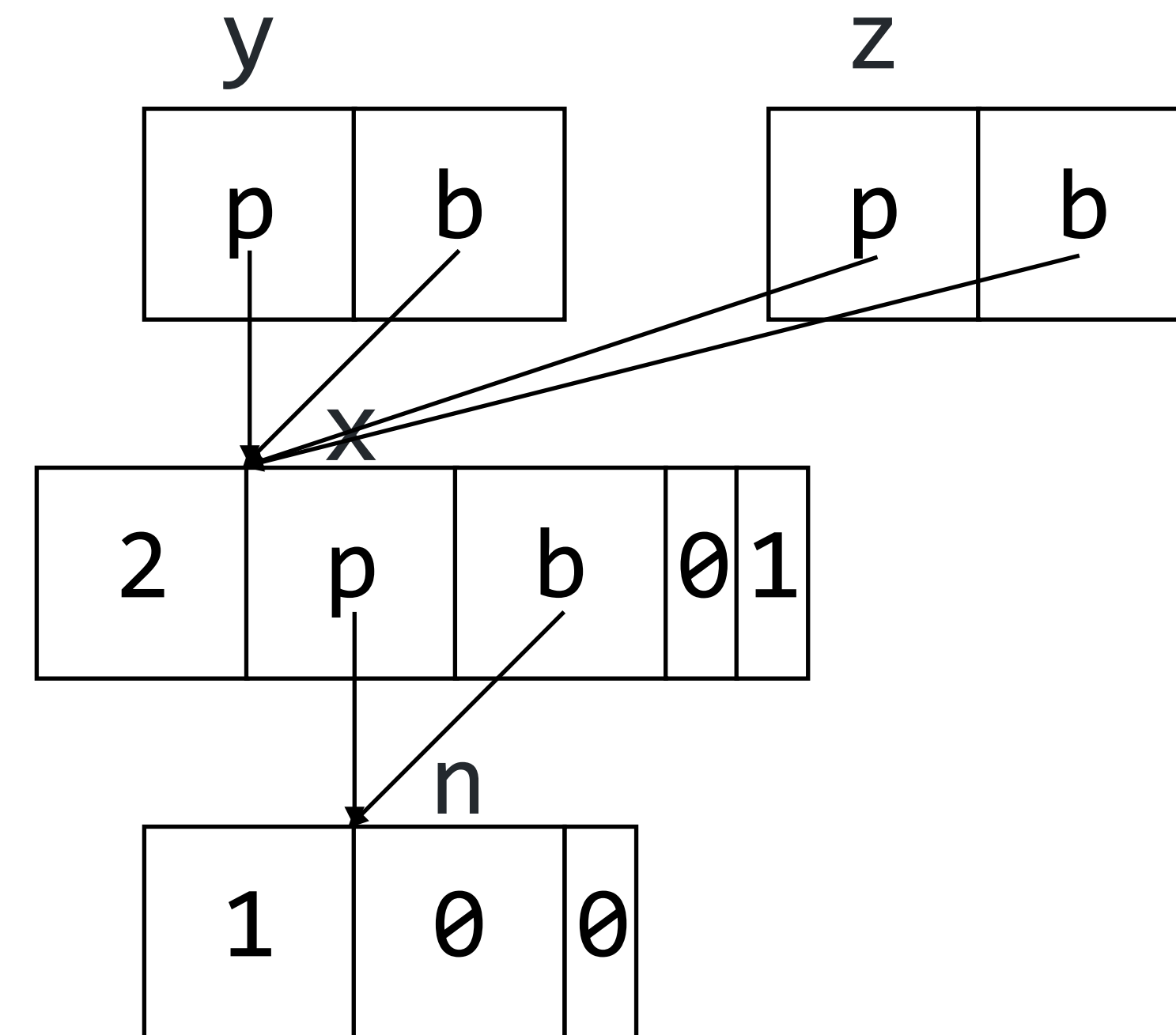
```
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
```



Wild pointers need tag bits.

$$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

```
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;
```



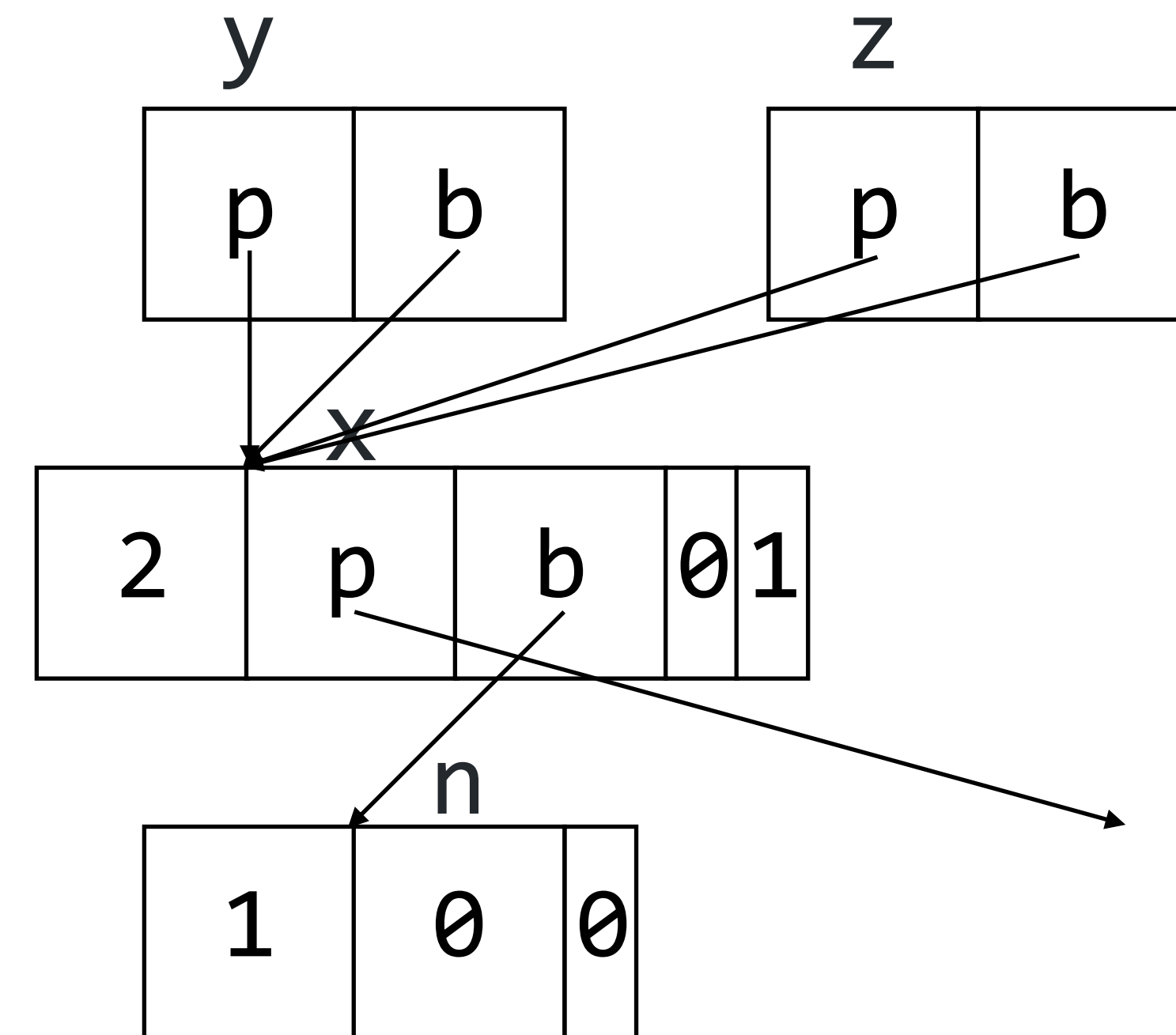
Wild pointers need tag bits.

$$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

```

int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;
*z = N;

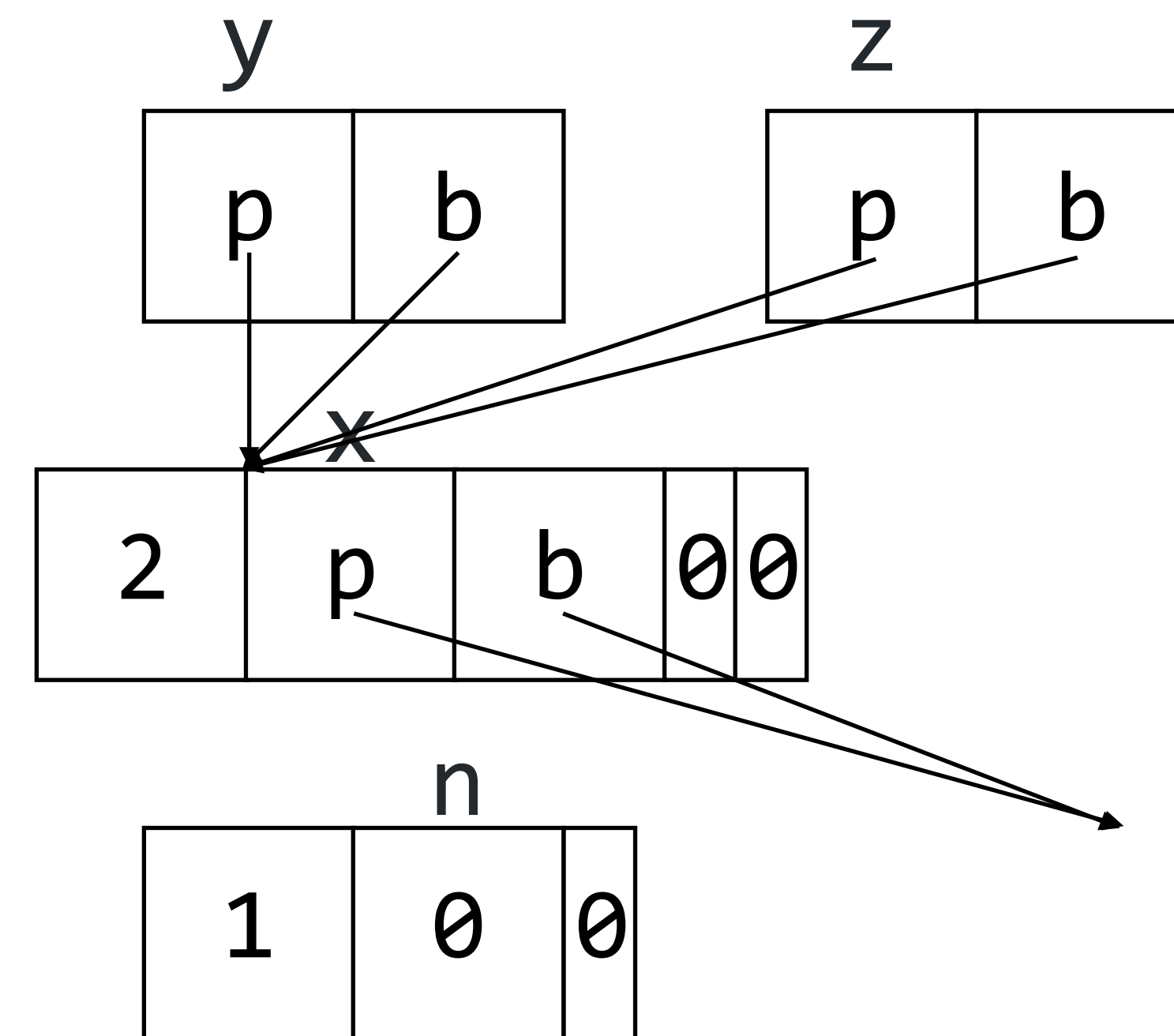
```



Wild pointers need tag bits.

$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$

```
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;
*z = N;
*(z + 1) = N;
```



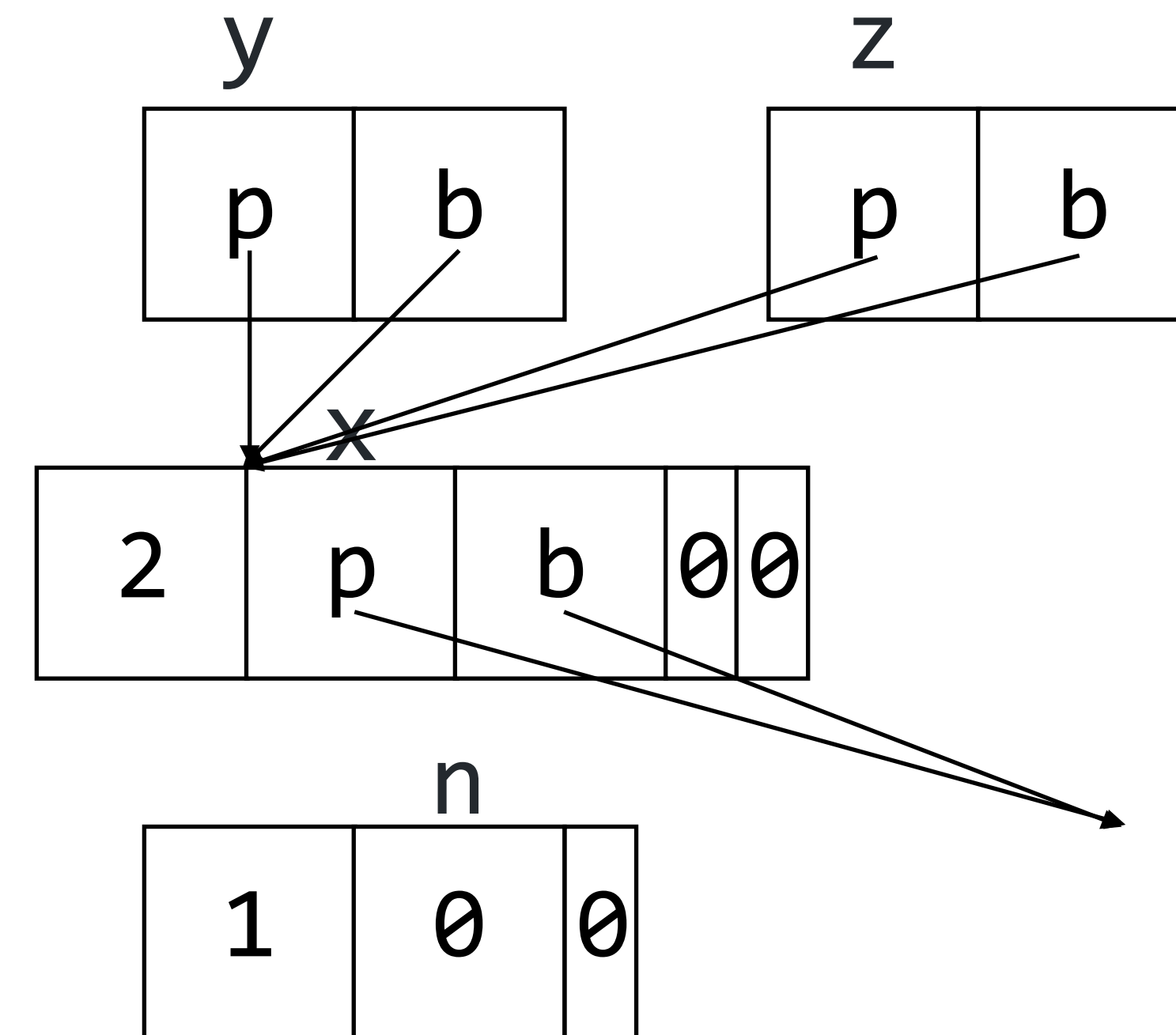
Wild pointers need tag bits.

$$Rep(\tau * WILD) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

```

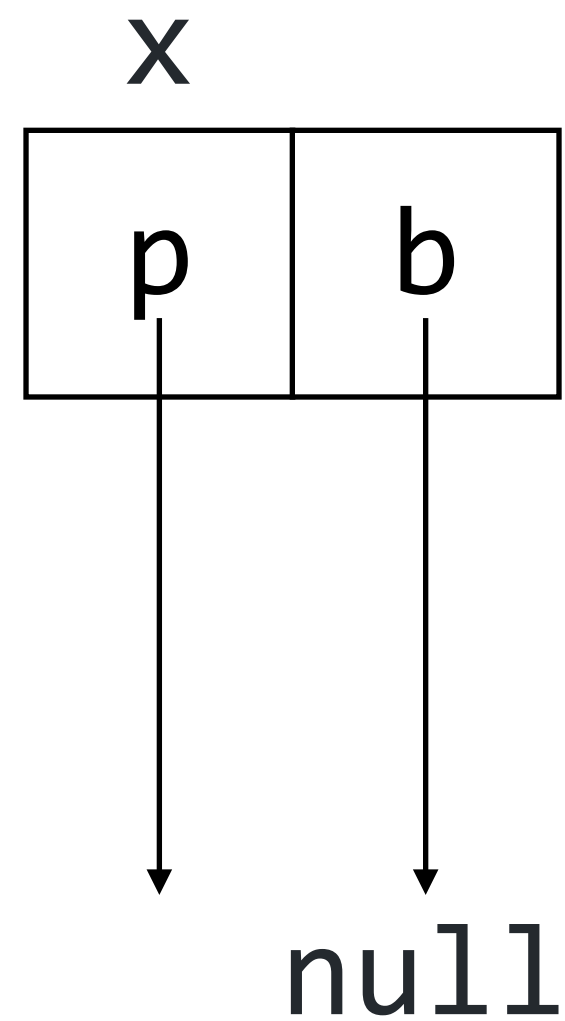
int n = 0;
int * WILD x = &n;
int * WILD * WILD y = &x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;
*z = N;
*(z + 1) = N;
**y = 42;

```



Integers can be casted to wild pointers.

$$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$

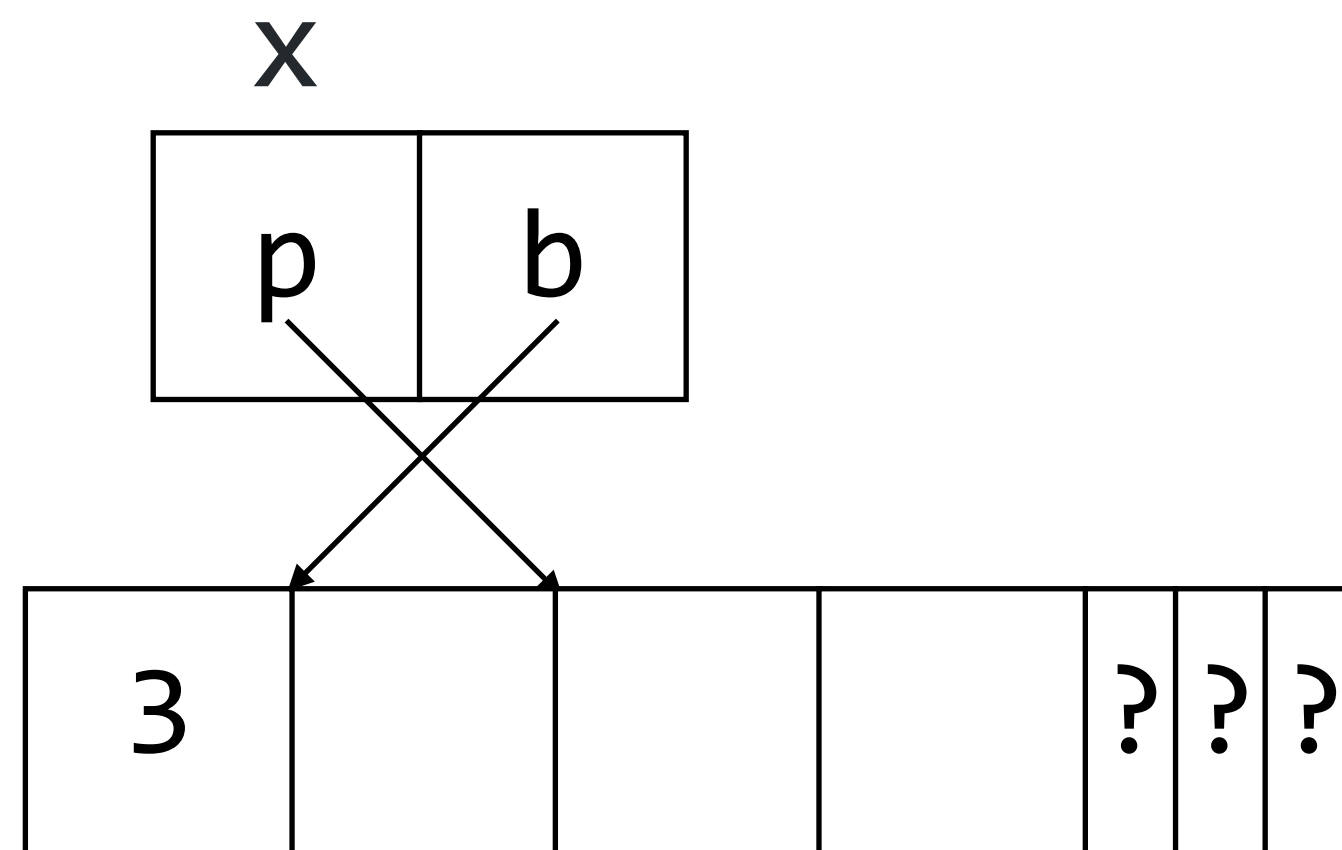


$$\frac{x : \text{int}}{(\tau * \text{WILD})x \rightsquigarrow \{p = x, b = \text{null}\}}$$

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{WILD}}{(\text{int})x \rightsquigarrow x.p}$$

Pointer arithmetic is allowed for wild pointers.

$$Rep(\tau * \text{WILD}) = \text{struct}\{Rep(\tau) * p, b;\}$$



$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{WILD} \quad y : \text{int}}{x + y \rightsquigarrow \{p = x.p + y \times \text{sizeof}(\tau), b = x.b\}}$$

Wild pointers can't be casted to/from the other kinds.

```

int * WILD * SAFE x;
int * WILD * WILD y =
    (int * WILD * WILD) x;
int * WILD z = (int * WILD) y;
*z = N;
*(z + 1) = N;
**x = 42;

```

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SAFE}}{(\tau' * \text{WILD})x : \text{not ok}}$$

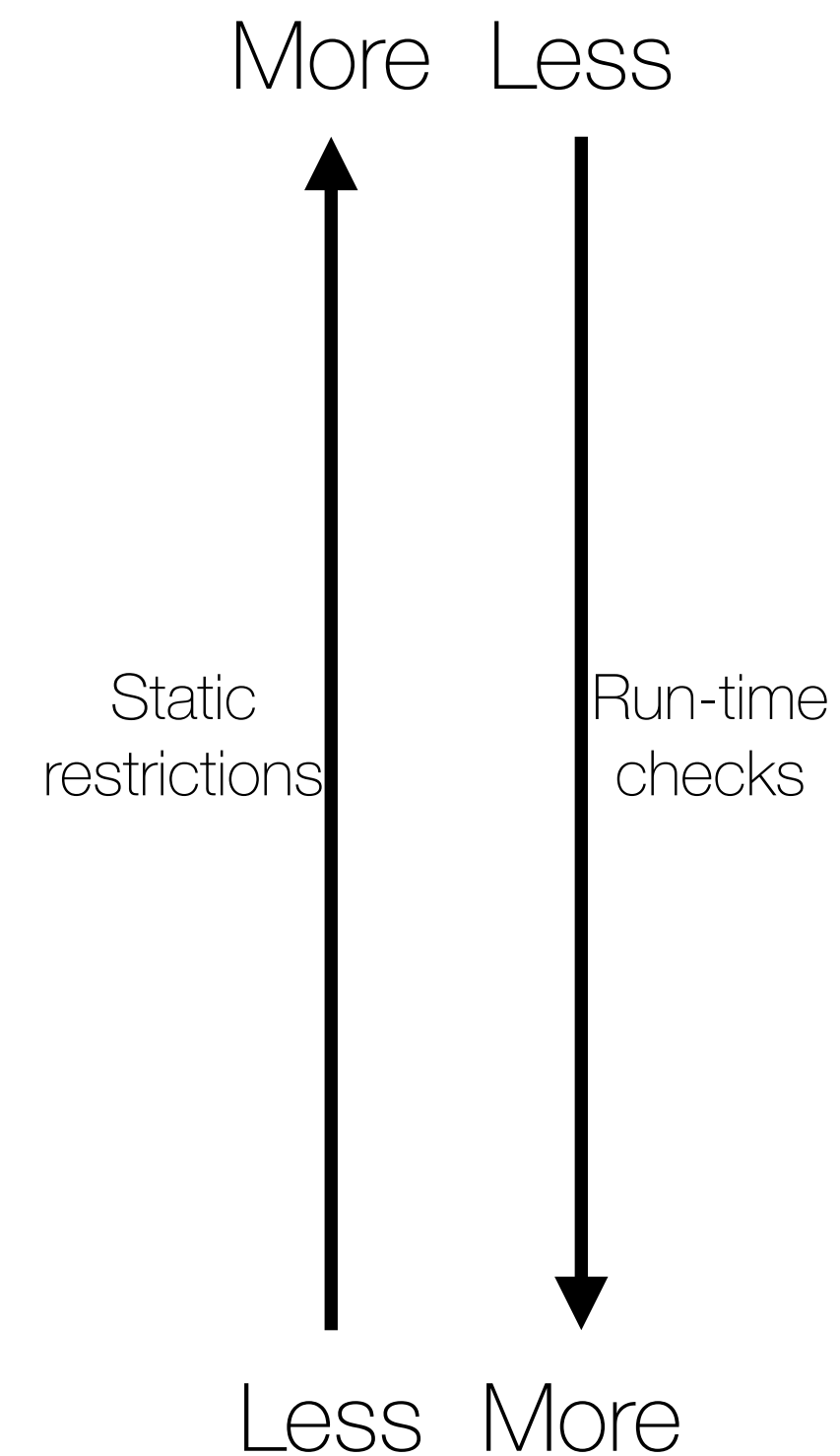
$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{SEQ}}{(\tau' * \text{WILD})x : \text{not ok}}$$

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{WILD}}{(\tau' * \text{SAFE})x : \text{not ok}}$$

$$\frac{x : \tau * \text{WILD}}{(\tau' * \text{SEQ})x : \text{not ok}}$$

CCured classifies pointers into 3 kinds.

| | Read/write | Pointer arithmetic | Arbitrary casts | Null checks | Bounds checks | Tags checks |
|------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| SAFE | ✓ | | | ⚙ | | |
| SEQ | ✓ | ✓ | | ⚙ | ⚙ | |
| WILD | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ⚙ | ⚙ | ⚙ |



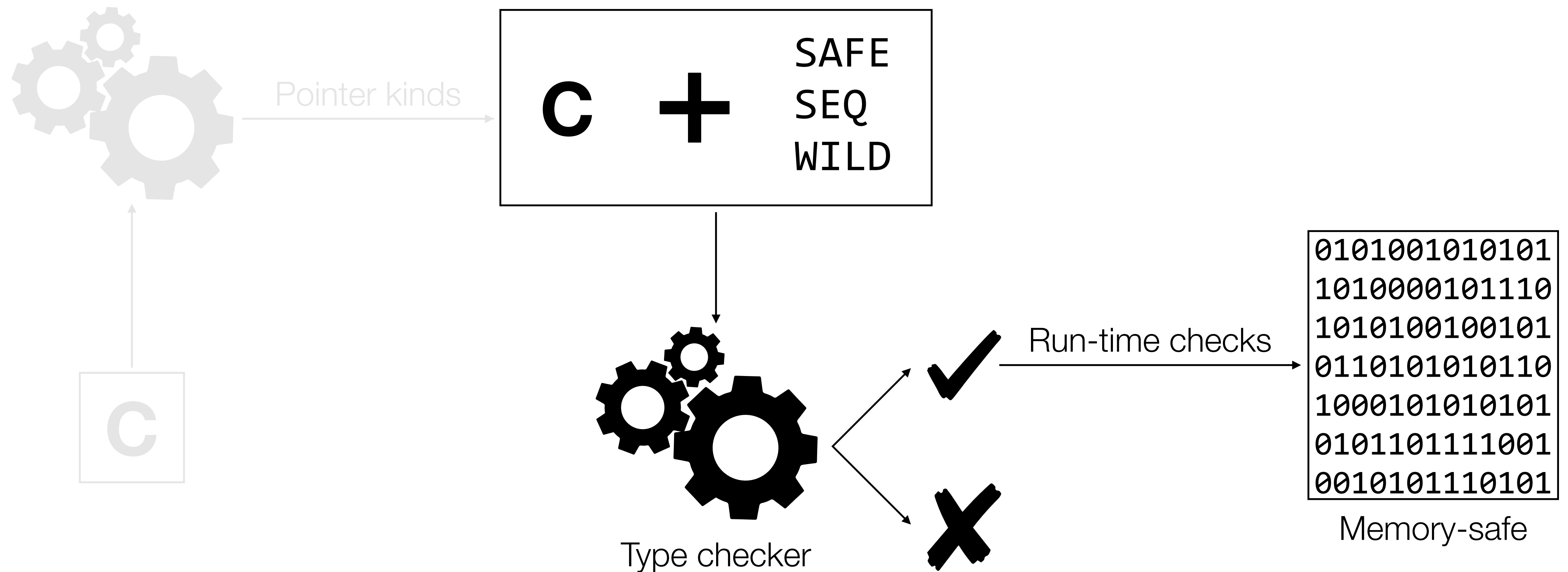
Theorem.

Every well-typed CCured program either

- terminates due to an assertion failure or
- runs without type/memory errors.

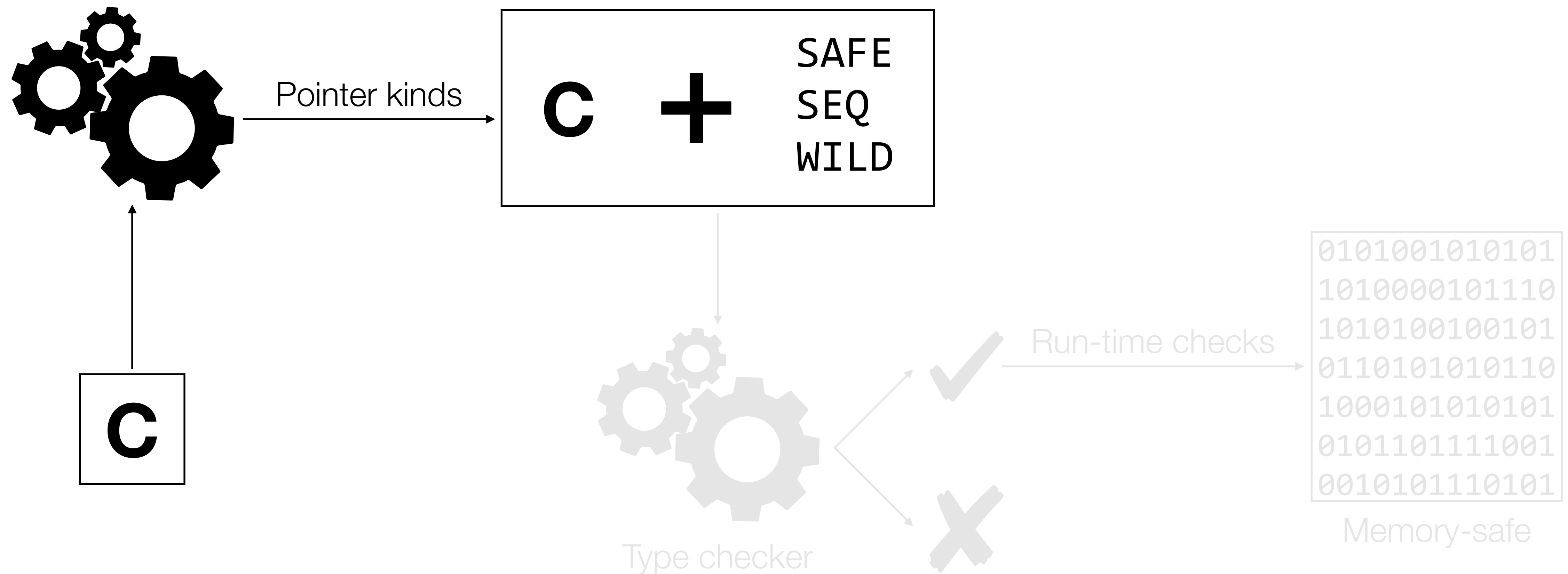
CCured transforms C programs to achieve memory safety guarantees.

Inference algorithm



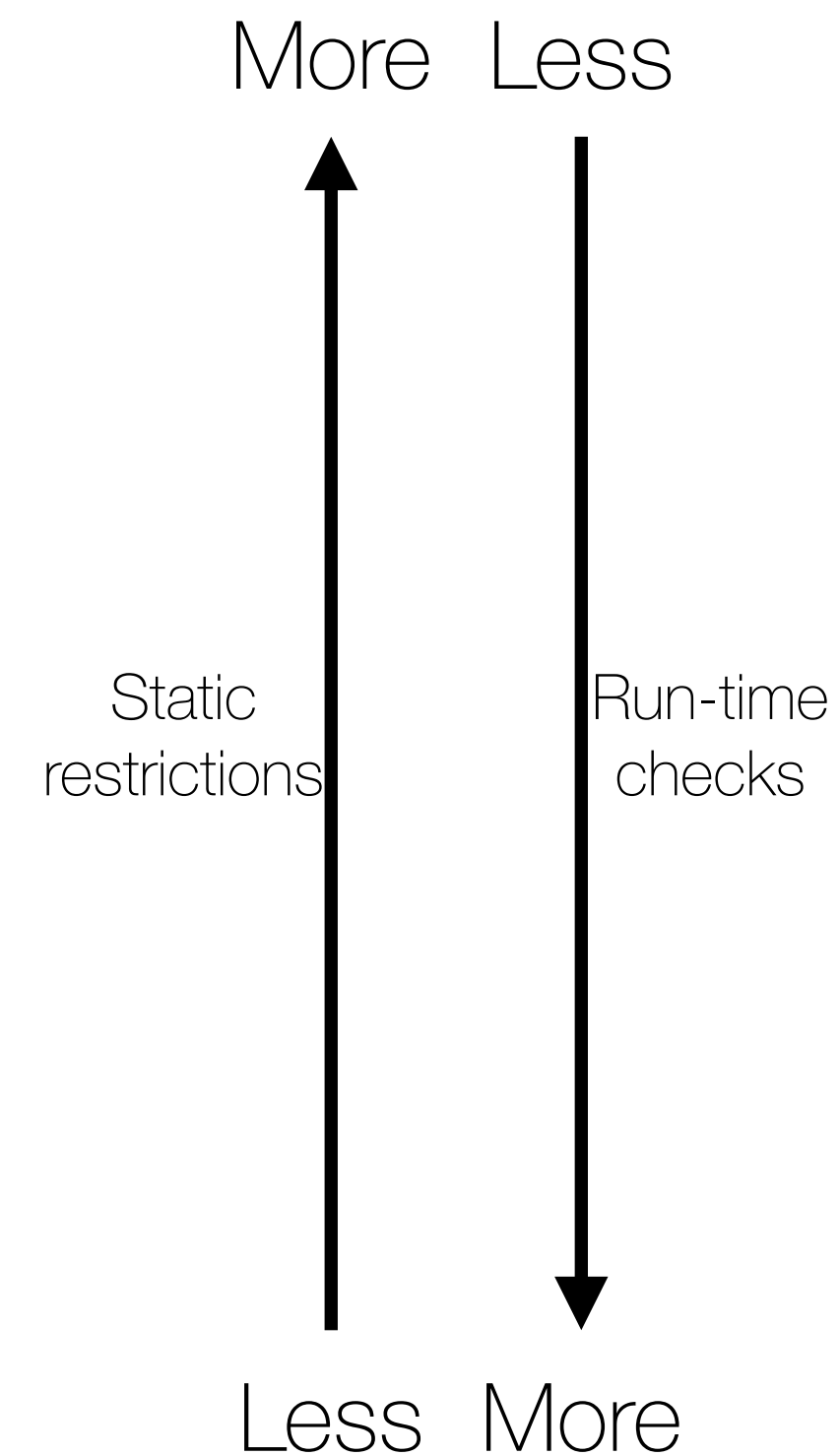
CCured transforms C programs to achieve memory safety guarantees.

Inference algorithm



Programs should use as few wild pointers as possible.

| | Read/write | Pointer arithmetic | Arbitrary casts | Null checks | Bounds checks | Tags checks |
|------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| SAFE | ✓ | | | ⚙ | | |
| SEQ | ✓ | ✓ | | ⚙ | ⚙ | |
| WILD | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ⚙ | ⚙ | ⚙ |



CCured collects constraints from C programs.

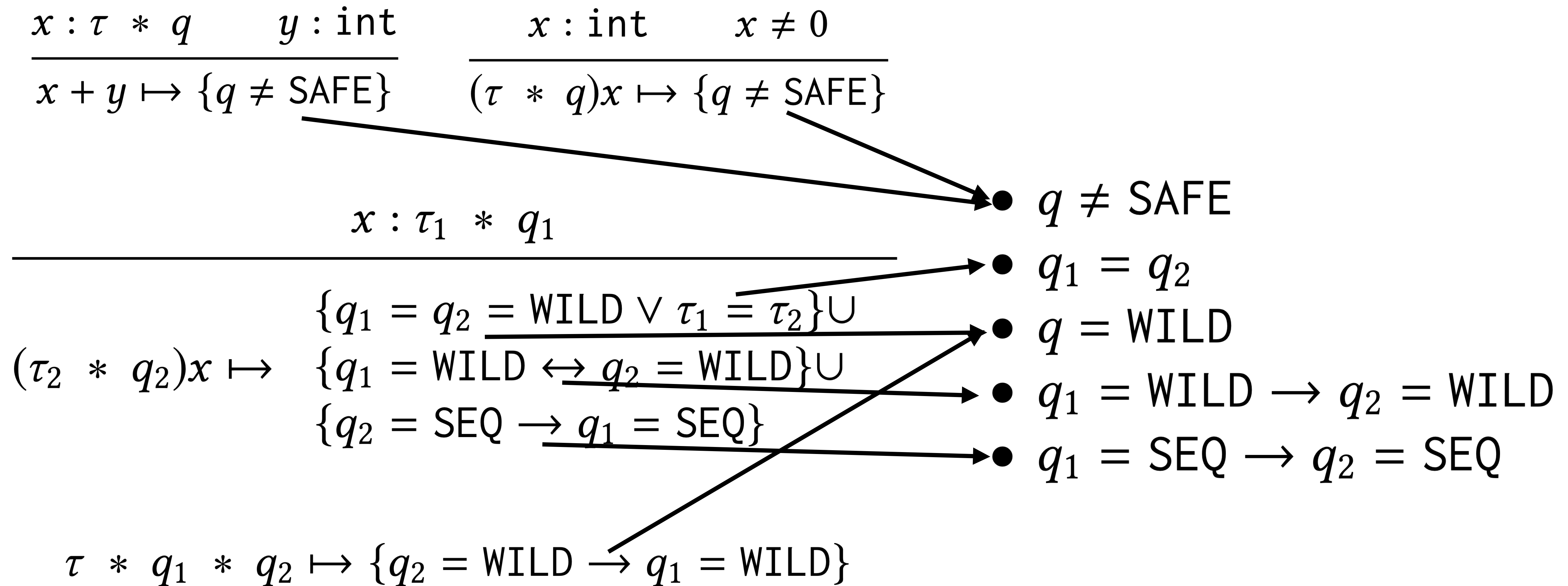
$$\frac{x : \tau * q \quad y : \text{int}}{x + y \mapsto \{q \neq \text{SAFE}\}} \quad \frac{x : \text{int} \quad x \neq 0}{(\tau * q)x \mapsto \{q \neq \text{SAFE}\}}$$

$$x : \tau_1 * q_1$$

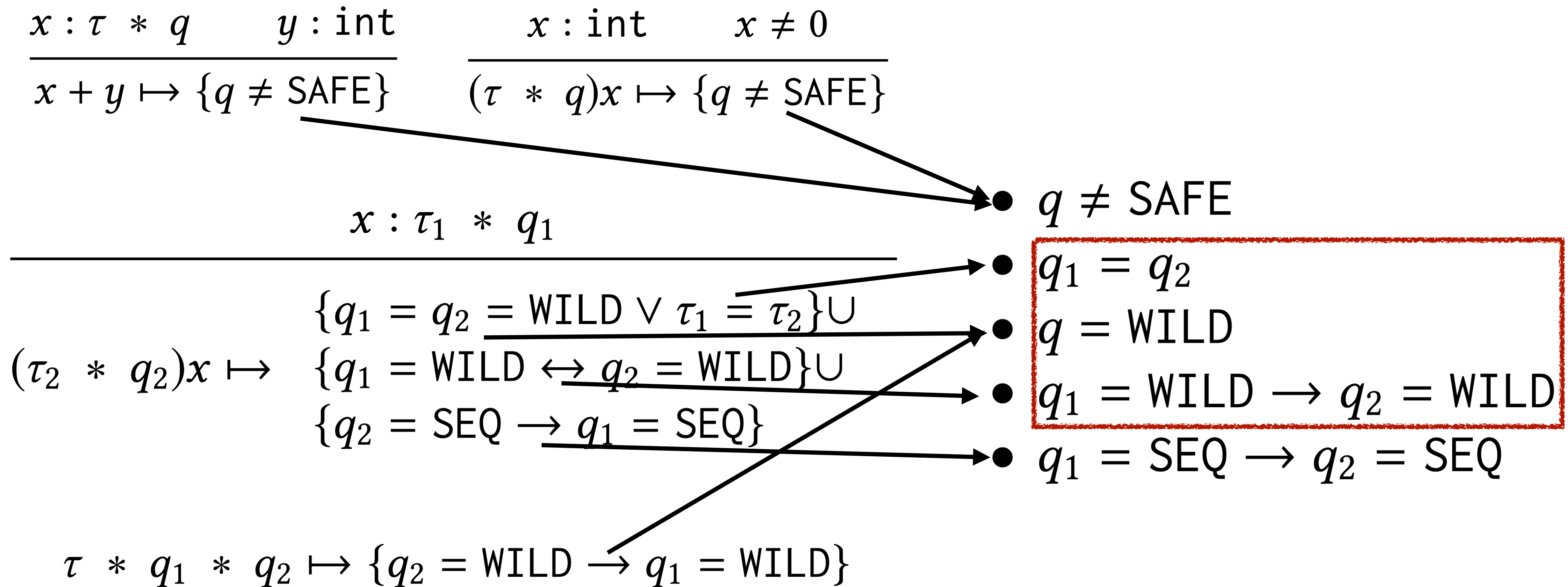
$$(\tau_2 * q_2)x \mapsto \{q_1 = q_2 = \text{WILD} \vee \tau_1 = \tau_2\} \cup \{q_1 = \text{WILD} \leftrightarrow q_2 = \text{WILD}\} \cup \{q_2 = \text{SEQ} \rightarrow q_1 = \text{SEQ}\}$$

$$\tau * q_1 * q_2 \mapsto \{q_2 = \text{WILD} \rightarrow q_1 = \text{WILD}\}$$

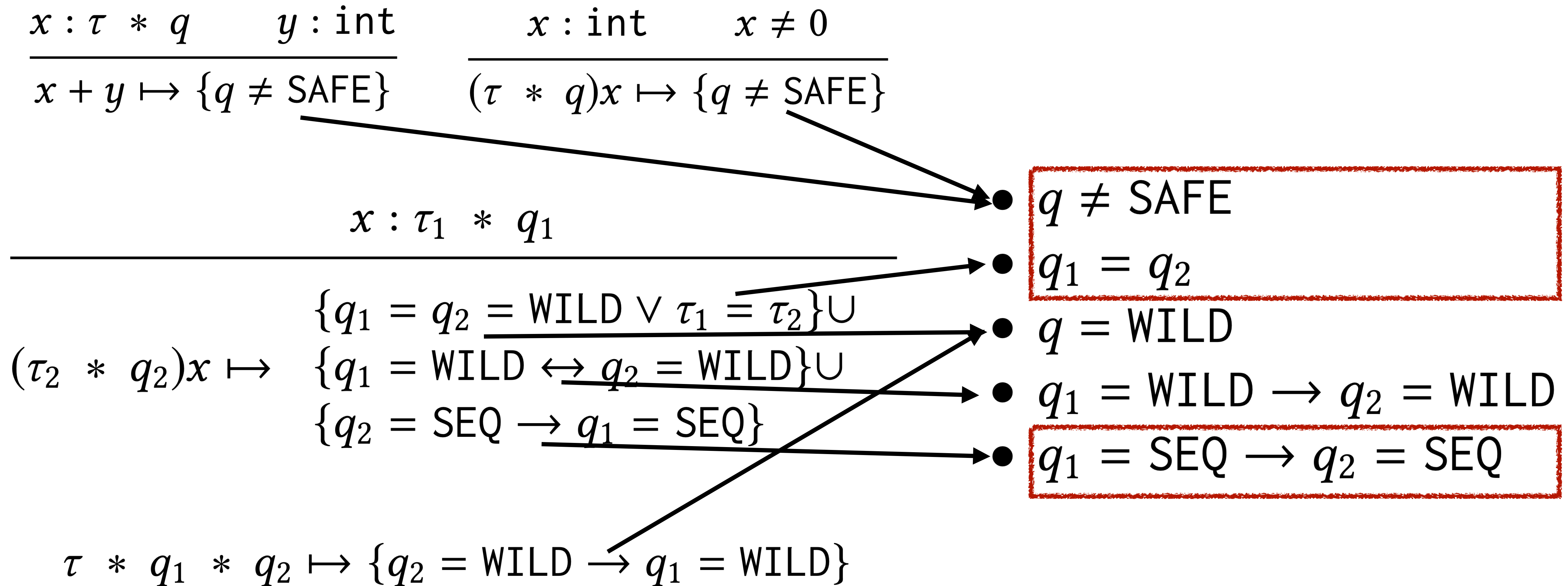
CCured normalizes constraints to 5 sorts.



CCured finds all the wild pointers.



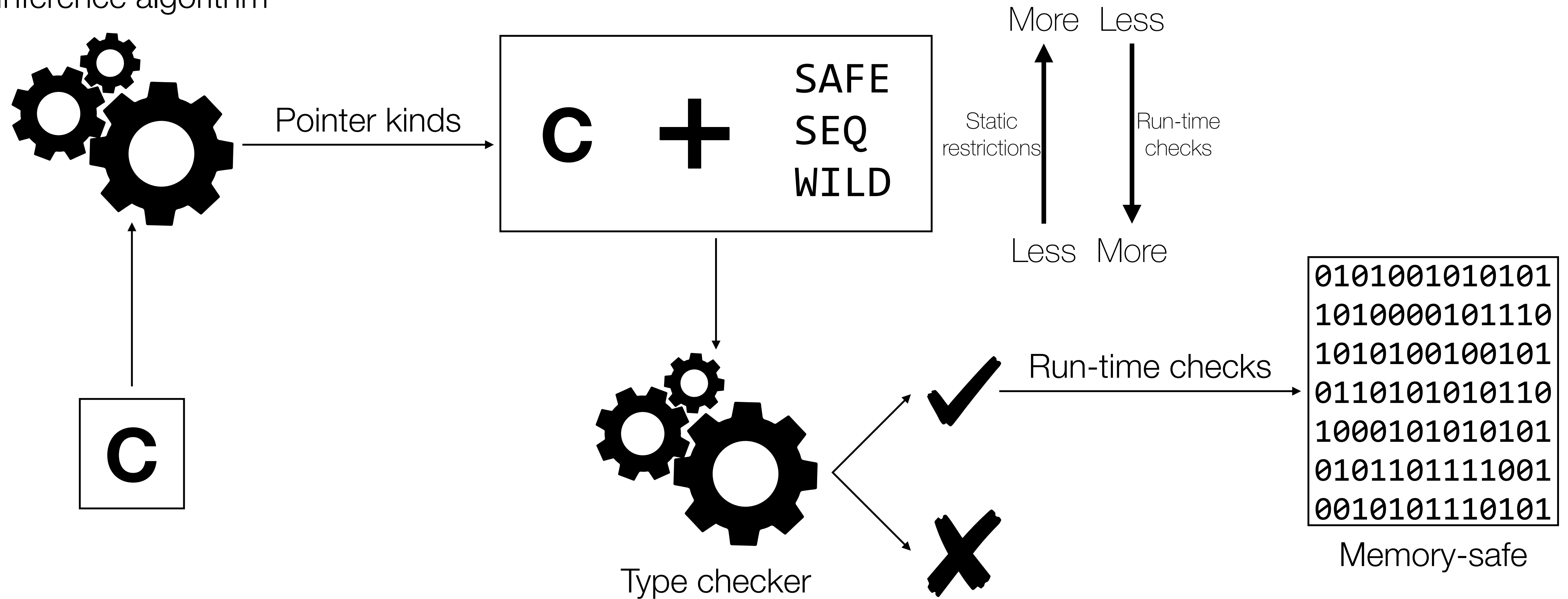
CCured finds all the sequence pointers.



CCured can cure existing C programs.

| Name | Lines of Code | % sf/sq/w/rt | CCured Ratio | Purify Ratio | Memory Ratio | Lines Changed |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| SPECINT95 | | | | | | |
| compress | 1590 | 90/10/0/0 | 1.17 | 28 | 1.01 | 36 |
| go | 29,315 | 94/06/0/0 | 1.22 | 51 | 1.60 | 117 |
| jpeg | 31,371 | 80/20/0/1 | 1.50 | 30 | 1.05 | 1103 |
| li | 7761 | 80/20/0/0 | 1.70 | 50 | 2.00 | 600 |
| Olden | | | | | | |
| bh | 2053 | 80/20/0/0 | 1.44 | 94 | 1.55 | 271 |
| bisort | 707 | 93/07/0/0 | 1.09 | 42 | 2.00 | 469 |
| em3d | 557 | 93/06/0/0 | 1.45 | 7 | 1.39 | 22 |
| health | 725 | 93/07/0/0 | 1.07 | 25 | 1.90 | 449 |
| mst | 617 | 97/03/0/0 | 1.87 | 5 | 1.15 | 44 |
| perimeter | 395 | 100/0/0/0 | 1.10 | 544 | 1.97 | 3 |
| power | 763 | 94/06/0/0 | 1.29 | 53 | 1.58 | 8 |
| treeadd | 385 | 96/04/0/0 | 1.15 | 500 | 2.61 | 14 |
| tsp | 561 | 100/0/0/0 | 1.06 | 66 | 2.54 | 7 |
| Ptrdist-1.1 | | | | | | |
| anagram | 661 | 88/12/0/0 | 1.43 | 34 | 1.52 | 37 |
| bc | 7323 | 77/23/0/0 | 9.91 | 100 | 2.18 | 58 |
| ft | 2194 | 98/02/0/0 | 1.03 | 12 | 2.12 | 59 |
| ks | 793 | 88/12/0/0 | 1.11 | 31 | 1.65 | 22 |
| yacr2 | 3999 | 88/12/0/0 | 1.56 | 26 | 1.63 | 30 |

Inference algorithm



CCured: Type-Safe Retrofitting of Legacy Software