Machine-Level Programming V: Advanced Topics

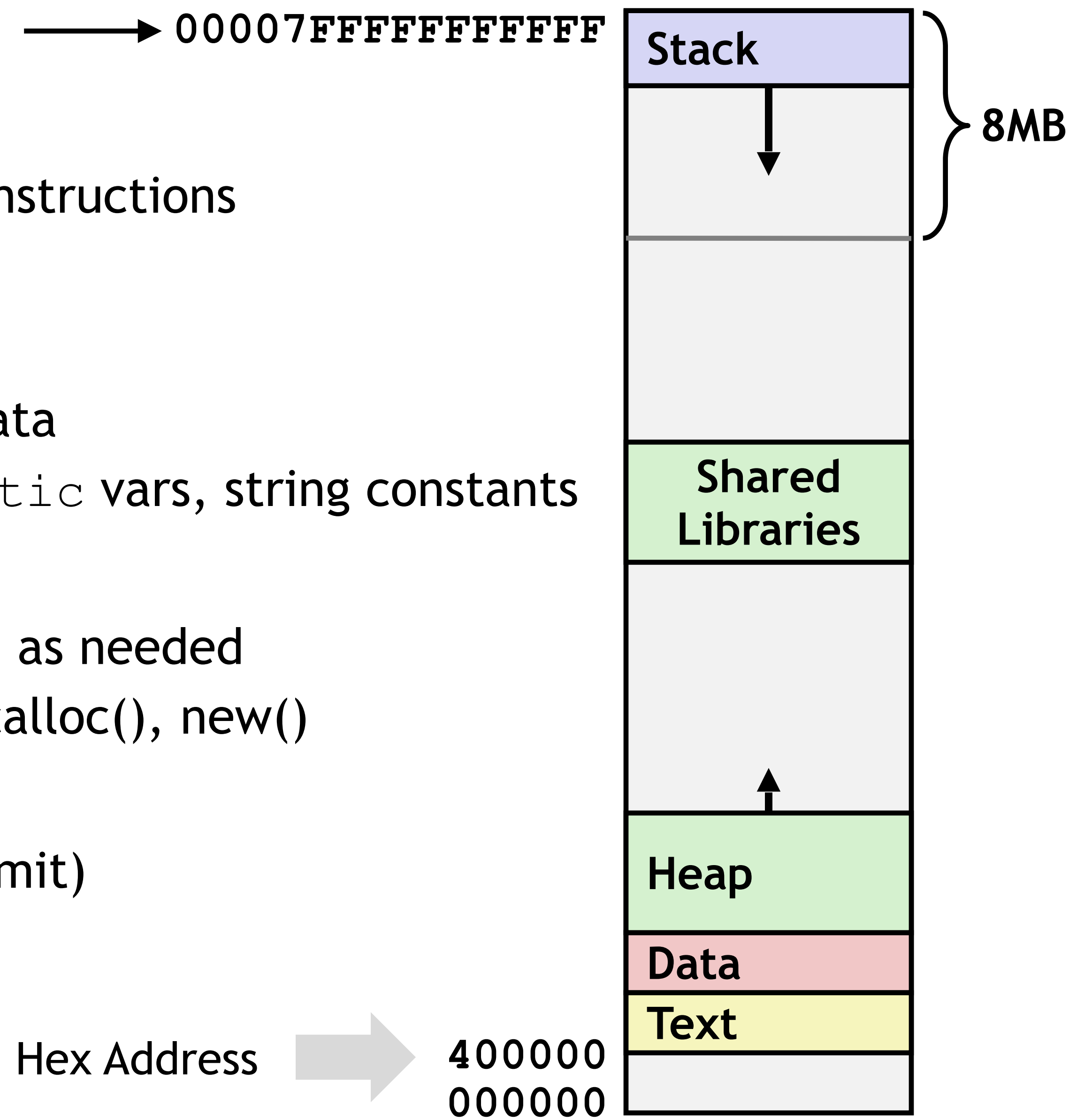
Today

- **Memory Layout**
- **Buffer Overflow**
  - Vulnerability
- **Buffer Overflow Prevention**

x86-64 Linux Memory Layout

not drawn to scale

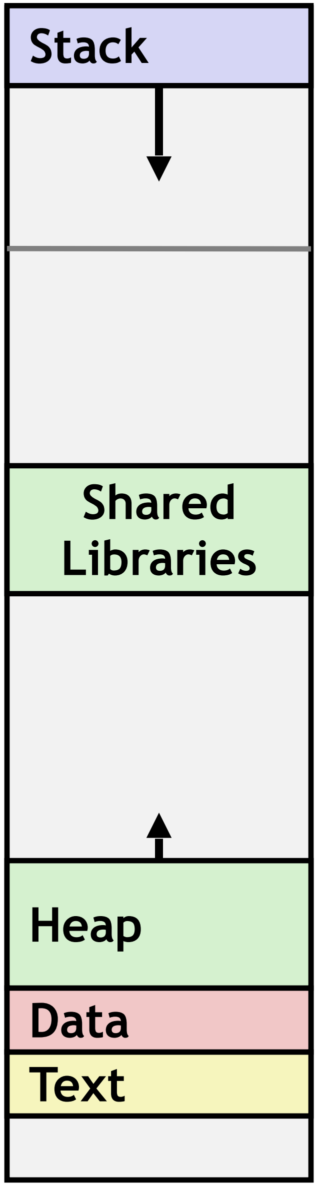
- **Text**
  - Executable machine instructions
  - Read-only
- **Data**
  - Statically allocated data
  - E.g., global vars, `static` vars, string constants
- **Heap**
  - Dynamically allocated as needed
  - When call malloc(), calloc(), new()
- **Stack**
  - Runtime stack (8MB limit)
  - E. g., local variables



Memory Allocation Example

not drawn to scale

```
char big_array[1L<<24];  /* 16 MB */
char huge_array[1L<<31]; /*  2 GB */

int global = 0;

int useless() { return 0; }

int main ()
{
    int local = 0;

    void * p1 = malloc(1L << 28); /* 256 MB */
    void * p2 = malloc(1L << 8);  /* 256  B */
    void * p3 = malloc(1L << 32); /*   4 GB */
    void * p4 = malloc(1L << 8);  /* 256  B */
}
```



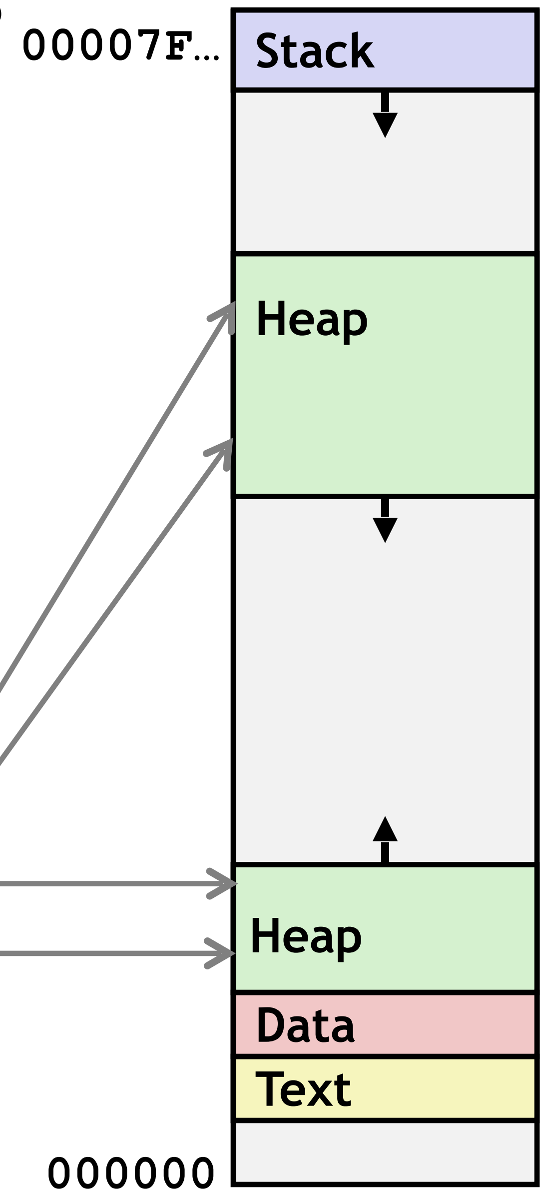
Where does everything go?

x86-64 Example Addresses

not drawn to scale

```
char big_array[1L<<24];  /* 16 MB */
char huge_array[1L<<31]; /*  2 GB */

int global = 0;

int useless() { return 0; }

int main ()
{
    int local = 0;

    void * p1 = malloc(1L << 28); /* 256 MB */
    void * p2 = malloc(1L << 8);  /* 256  B */
    void * p3 = malloc(1L << 32); /*   4 GB */
    void * p4 = malloc(1L << 8);  /* 256  B */
}
```

local	0x00007ffe4d3be87c
p1	0x00007f7262a1e010
p3	0x00007f7162a1d010
p4	0x000000008359d120
p2	0x000000008359d010
big_array	0x0000000080601060
huge_array	0x0000000000601060
main()	0x000000000040060c
useless()	0x0000000000400590



Today

- Memory Layout
- **Buffer Overflow**
  - Vulnerability
- Buffer Overflow Prevention

Memory Referencing Bug Example

```
typedef struct {
  int a[2];
  double d;
} struct_t;

double fun(int i) {
  struct_t s;
  s.d = 3.14;
  s.a[i] = 1073741824; /* Possibly out of bounds */
  return s.d;
}
```

```
fun(0)  →   3.14
fun(1)  →   3.14
fun(2)  →   3.1399998664856
fun(3)  →   2.00000061035156
fun(4)  →   3.14
fun(6)  →   Segmentation fault
```

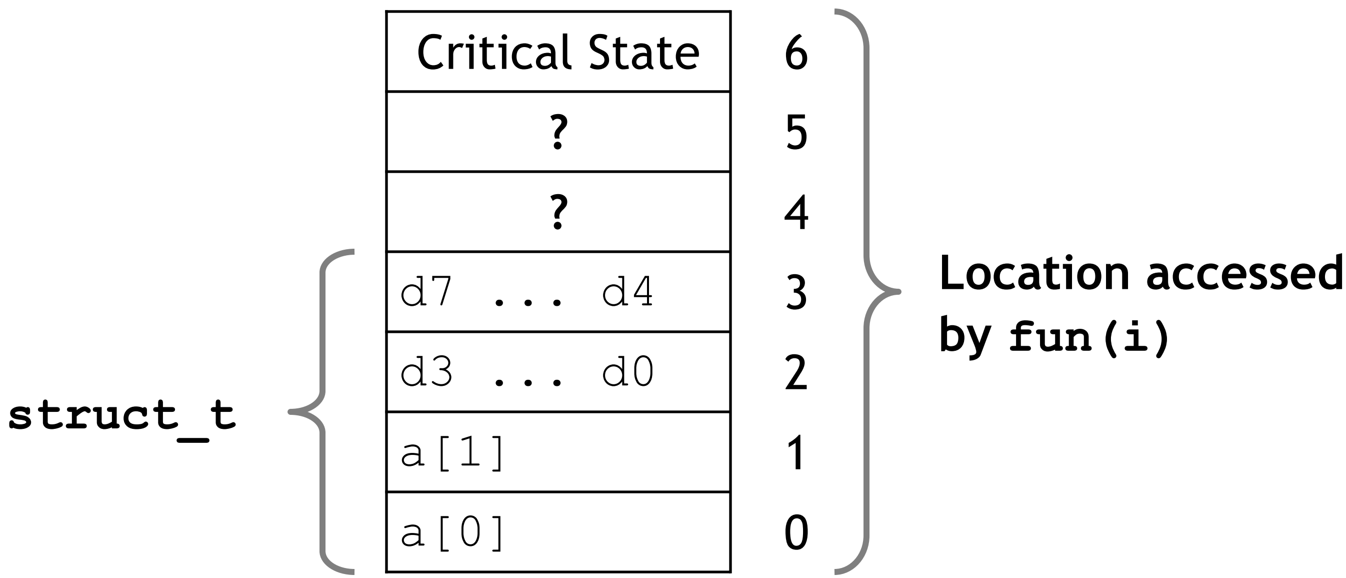
- Result is system specific

Memory Referencing Bug Example

```
typedef struct {
  int a[2];
  double d;
} struct_t;
```

```
fun(0)  →  3.14
fun(1)  →  3.14
fun(2)  →  3.1399998664856
fun(3)  →  2.00000061035156
fun(4)  →  3.14
fun(6)  →  Segmentation fault
```

Explanation:



Such problems are a BIG deal

- **Generally called a “buffer overflow”**
  - When exceeding the memory size allocated for an array
- **Why a big deal?**
  - It’s the #1 technical cause of security vulnerabilities
    - #1 overall cause is social engineering / user ignorance
- **Most common form**
  - Unchecked lengths on string inputs
  - Particularly for bounded character arrays on the stack

String Library Code

- Implementation of Unix function **`gets()`**

```
/* Get string from stdin */
char *gets(char *dest)
{
    int c = getchar();
    char *p = dest;
    while (c != EOF && c != '\n') {
        *p++ = c;
        c = getchar();
    }
    *p = '\0';
    return dest;
}
```

  - No way to specify limit on number of characters to read

- **Similar problems with other library functions**
  - **`strcpy`**, **`strcat`**: Copy strings of arbitrary length
  - **`scanf`**, **`fscanf`**, **`sscanf`**, when given **`%s`** conversion specification

Vulnerable Buffer Code

```
/* Echo Line */
void echo()
{
    char buf[4];  /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

```
void call_echo() {
    echo();
}
```

```
unix>./bufdemo-nsp
Type a string:012345678901234567890123
012345678901234567890123
```

```
unix>./bufdemo-nsp
Type a string:0123456789012345678901234
Segmentation Fault
```

Buffer Overflow Disassembly

echo:

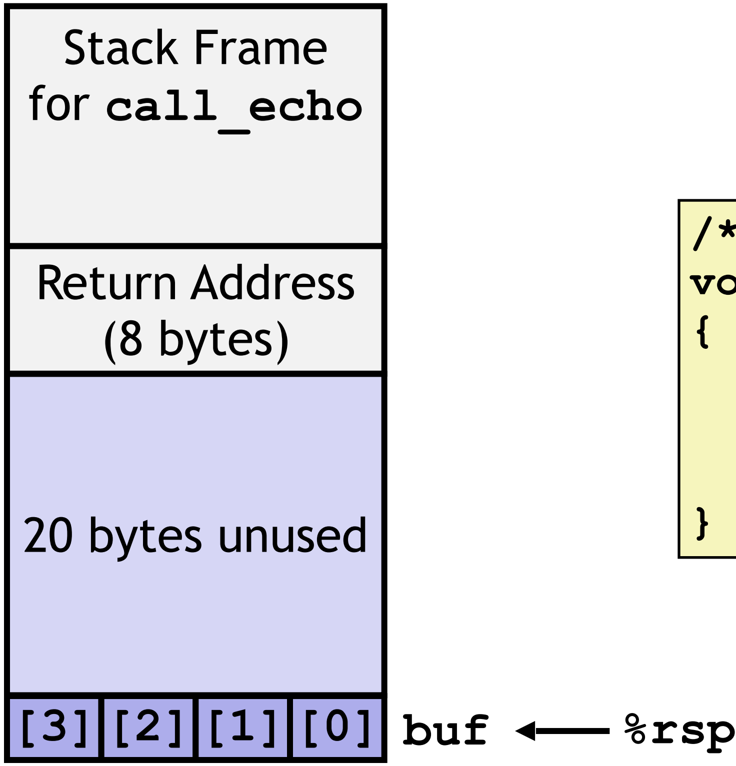
```
00000000004006cf <echo>:
 4006cf:   48 83 ec 18                  sub    $0x18,%rsp
 4006d3:   48 89 e7                     mov    %rsp,%rdi
 4006d6:   e8 a5 ff ff ff               callq  400680 <gets>
 4006db:   48 89 e7                     mov    %rsp,%rdi
 4006de:   e8 3d fe ff ff               callq  400520 <puts@plt>
 4006e3:   48 83 c4 18                  add    $0x18,%rsp
 4006e7:   c3                           retq
```

call_echo:

```
4006e8:   48 83 ec 08                  sub    $0x8,%rsp
 4006ec:  b8 00 00 00 00               mov    $0x0,%eax
 4006f1:  e8 d9 ff ff ff               callq  4006cf <echo>
 4006f6:  48 83 c4 08                  add    $0x8,%rsp
 4006fa:  c3                           retq
```

Buffer Overflow Stack

Before call to gets

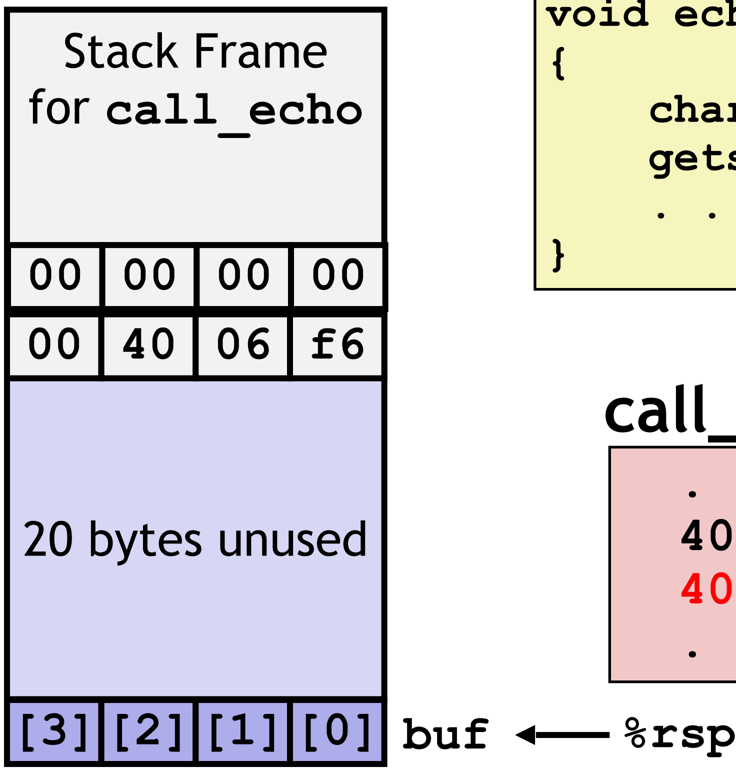



```
/* Echo Line */
void echo()
{
    char buf[4];  /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

```
echo:
  subq  $24, %rsp
  movq  %rsp, %rdi
  call  gets
  . . .
```

Buffer Overflow Stack Example

Before call to gets




```
void echo()
{
    char buf[4];
    gets(buf);
    . . .
}
```

```
echo:
  subq   $24, %rsp
  movq   %rsp, %rdi
  call   gets
  . . .
```

call_echo:

```
  . . .
  4006f1:  callq   4006cf <echo>
  4006f6:  add     $0x8,%rsp
  . . .
```

Buffer Overflow Stack Example #1

After call to gets

Stack Frame for `call_echo`			
00	00	00	00
00	40	06	f6
00	32	31	30
39	38	37	36
35	34	33	32
31	30	39	38
37	36	35	34
33	32	31	30

`buf` ← `%rsp`

```
void echo()
{
    char buf[4];
    gets(buf);
    . . .
}
```

```
echo:
  subq  $24, %rsp
  movq  %rsp, %rdi
  call  gets
  . . .
```

call_echo:

```
  . . .
  4006f1:  callq  4006cf <echo>
  4006f6:  add    $0x8,%rsp
  . . .
```

```
unix>./bufdemo-nsp
Type a string:01234567890123456789012
01234567890123456789012
```

Overflowed buffer, but did not corrupt state

Buffer Overflow Stack Example #2

After call to gets

Stack Frame for call_echo			
00	00	00	00
00	40	00	34
33	32	31	30
39	38	37	36
35	34	33	32
31	30	39	38
37	36	35	34
33	32	31	30

buf ← %rsp

```
void echo()
{
    char buf[4];
    gets(buf);
    . . .
}
```

```
echo:
  subq  $24, %rsp
  movq  %rsp, %rdi
  call  gets
  . . .
```

call_echo:

```
  . . .
  4006f1:  callq  4006cf <echo>
  4006f6:  add    $0x8,%rsp
  . . .
```

```
unix>./bufdemo-nsp
Type a string:01234567890123456789012340
Segmentation Fault
```

Overflowed buffer and corrupted return pointer

Code Injection Attacks

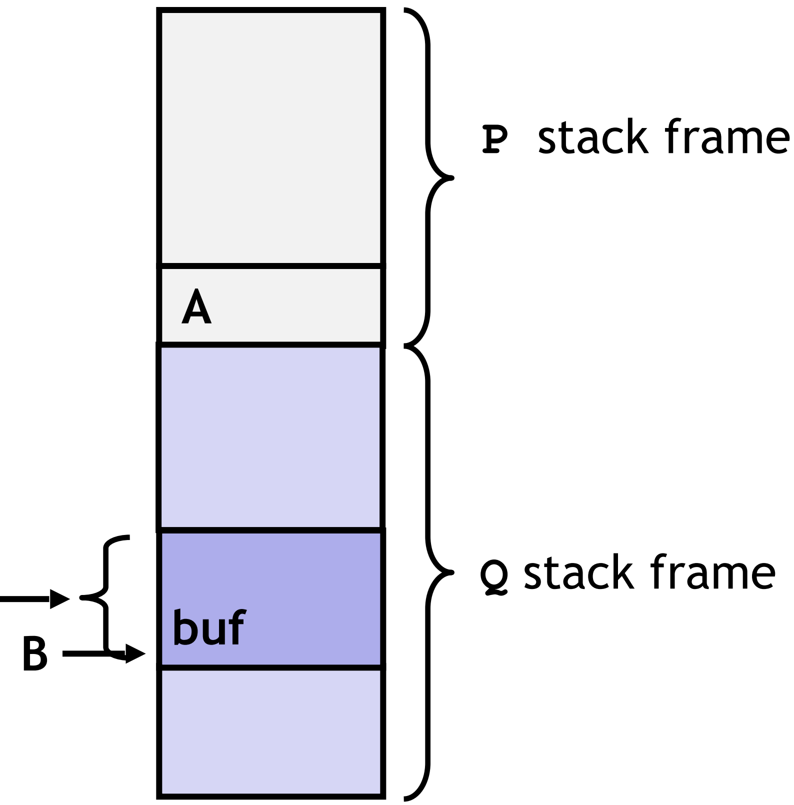
```
void P(){
  Q();
  ...
}
```

return
address A

```
int Q() {
  char buf[64];
  gets(buf);
  ...
  return ...;
}
```

data
written
by **gets()**

Stack after call to **gets()**

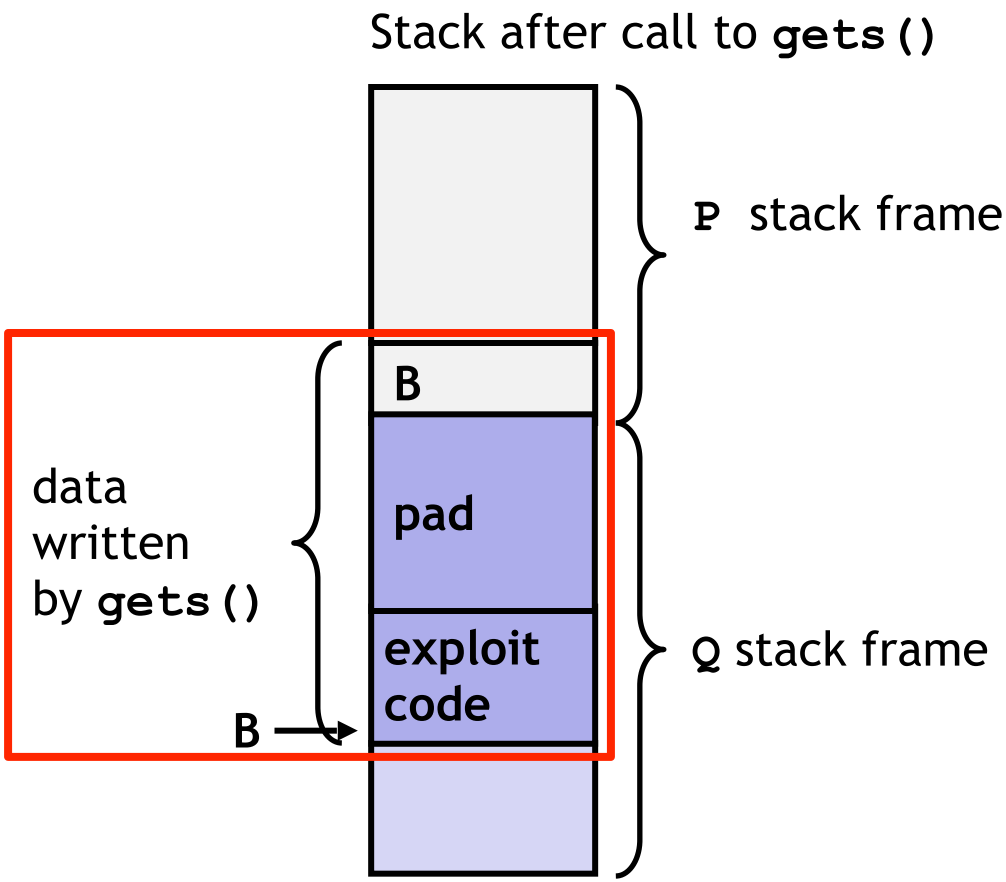


Code Injection Attacks

```
void P(){
  Q();
  ...
}
```

return address A

```
int Q() {
  char buf[64];
  gets(buf);
  ...
  return ...;
}
```



- Input string contains byte representation of executable code
- Overwrite return address A with address of buffer B
- When `Q` executes `ret`, will jump to exploit code

Exploits Based on Buffer Overflows

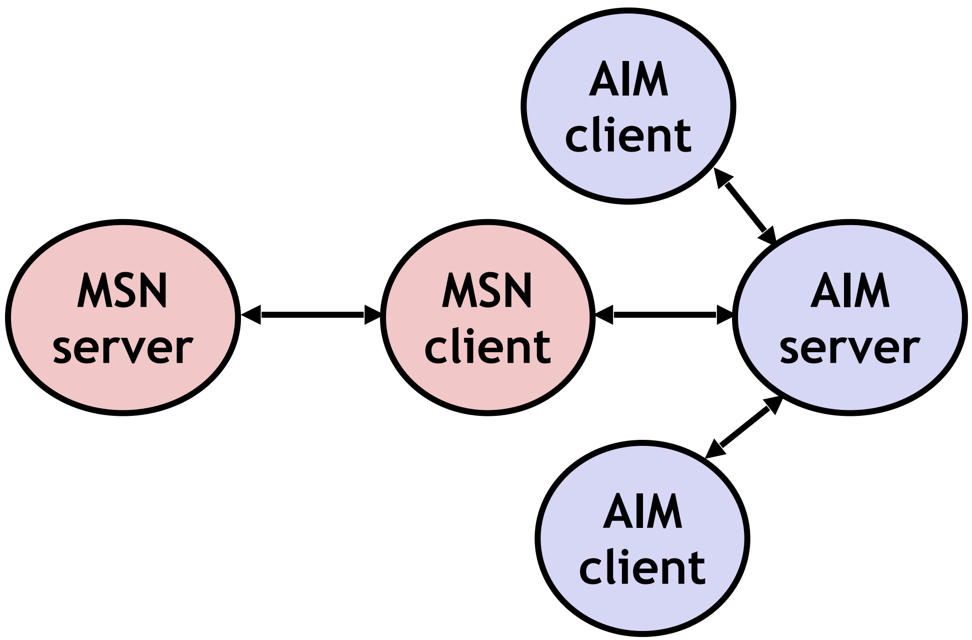
- *This attack allows the attacker to run arbitrary code on victim machines*
- **Common in real programs**
  - Programmers keep making the same mistakes ☹
  - Recent measures make these attacks much more difficult
- **Examples across the decades**
  - Original "Internet worm" (1988), by Robert Morris (Y-combinator co-founder)
- **You will learn some of the tricks in attacklab**
  - Hopefully to convince you to never leave such holes in your programs!!

Example: the original Internet worm (1988)

- **Exploited a few vulnerabilities to spread**
  - Early versions of the finger server used `gets()` to read the argument sent by the client:
    - `finger droh@cs.nyu.edu`
  - Provides information of currently logged in users
  - Worm attacked fingerd server by sending:
    - **finger "*exploit-code padding new-return-address*"**
    - exploit code: executed a root shell on the victim machine with a direct TCP connection to the attacker
- **Once on a machine, scanned for other machines to attack**
  - invaded ~6000 computers in hours (10% of the Internet ☺)
  - the young author of the worm was prosecuted…

Example 2: IM War

- **July, 1999**
  - Microsoft launches MSN Messenger (instant messaging system).
  - Messenger clients can access popular AOL Instant Messaging Service (AIM) servers



IM War (cont.)

- **August 1999**
  - Mysteriously, Messenger clients can no longer access AIM servers
  - Microsoft and AOL begin the IM war:
    - AOL changes server to disallow Messenger clients
    - Microsoft makes changes to clients to defeat AOL changes
    - At least 13 such skirmishes
  - What was really happening?
    - AOL had discovered a buffer overflow bug in their own AIM clients
    - They exploited it to detect and block Microsoft: the exploit code returned a 4-byte signature (the bytes at some location in the AIM client) to server
    - When Microsoft changed code to match signature, AOL changed signature location

```
Date: Wed, 11 Aug 1999 11:30:57 -0700 (PDT)
From: Phil Bucking <philbucking@yahoo.com>
Subject: AOL exploiting buffer overrun bug in their own software!
To: rms@pharlap.com

Mr. Smith,

I am writing you because I have discovered something that I think you
might find interesting because you are an Internet security expert with
experience in this area. I have also tried to contact AOL but received
no response.

I am a developer who has been working on a revolutionary new instant
messaging client that should be released later this year.
...
It appears that the AIM client has a buffer overrun bug. By itself
this might not be the end of the world, as MS surely has had its share.
But AOL is now *exploiting their own buffer overrun bug* to help in
its efforts to block MS Instant Messenger.
....
Since you have significant credibility with the press I hope that you
can use this information to help inform people that behind AOL's
friendly exterior they are nefariously compromising peoples' security.

Sincerely,
Phil Bucking
Founder, Bucking Consulting
philbucking@yahoo.com
```

It was later determined that this email originated from within Microsoft!

Today

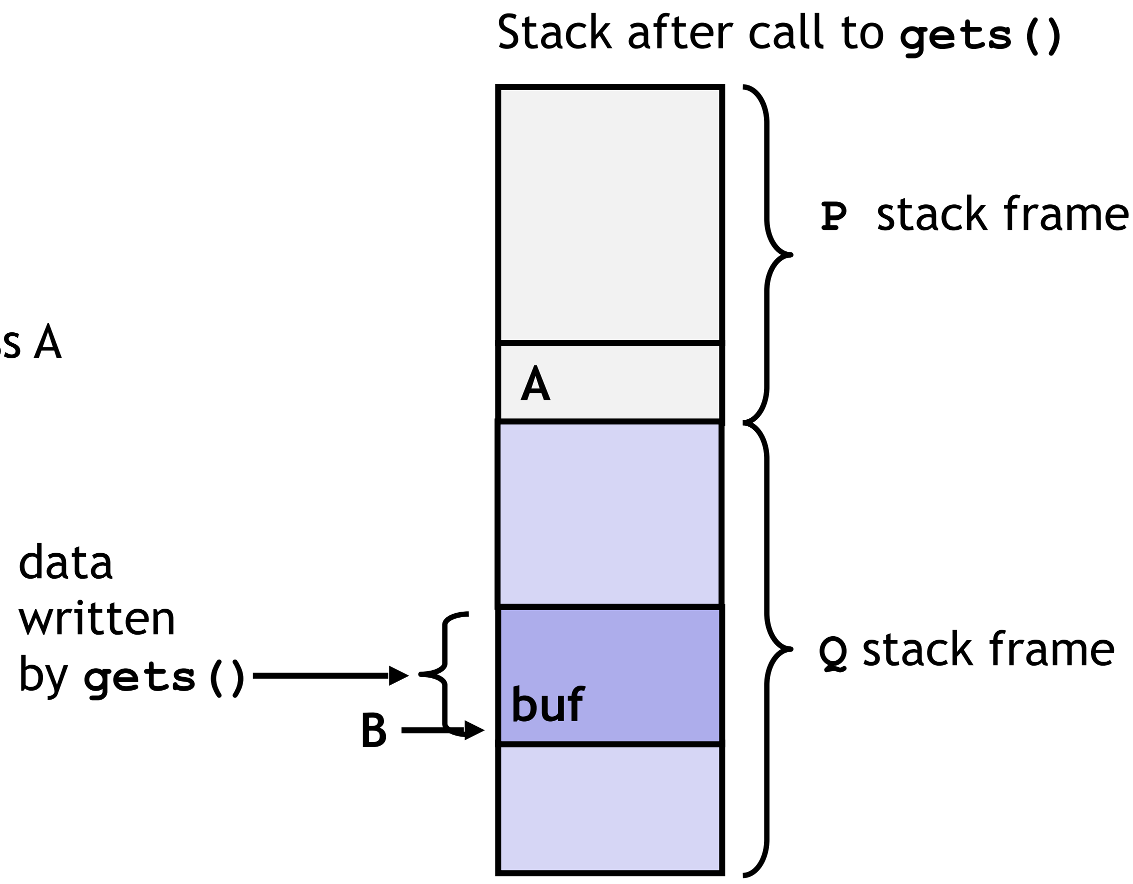
- Memory Layout
- Buffer Overflow
  - Vulnerability
- **Buffer Overflow Prevention**

Code Injection Attacks

```
void P(){
  Q();
  ...
}
```

return
address A

```
int Q() {
  char buf[64];
  gets(buf);
  ...
  return ...;
}
```

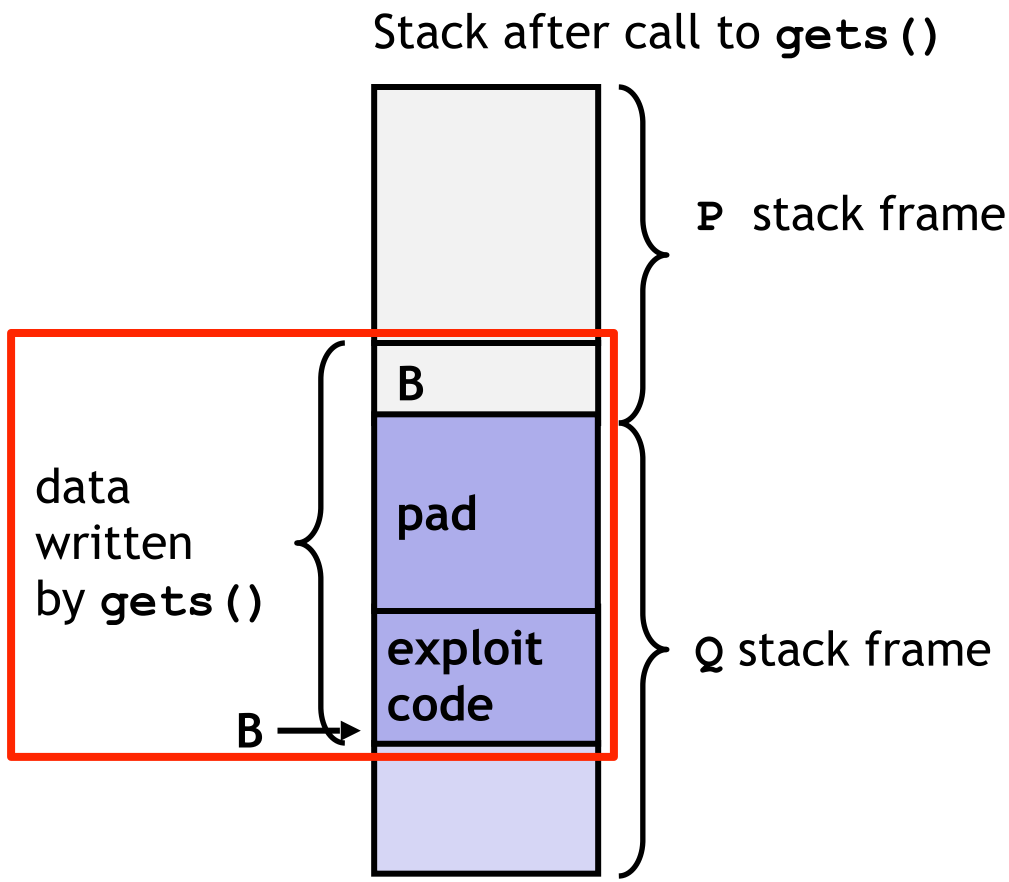


Code Injection Attacks

```
void P(){
  Q();
  ...
}
```

return address A

```
int Q() {
  char buf[64];
  gets(buf);
  ...
  return ...;
}
```



- Input string contains byte representation of executable code
- Overwrite return address A with address of buffer B
- When `Q` executes `ret`, will jump to exploit code

OK, what to do about buffer overflow attacks

- Avoid overflow vulnerabilities
- Employ system-level protections
- Have compiler use “stack canaries”
- Lets talk about each…

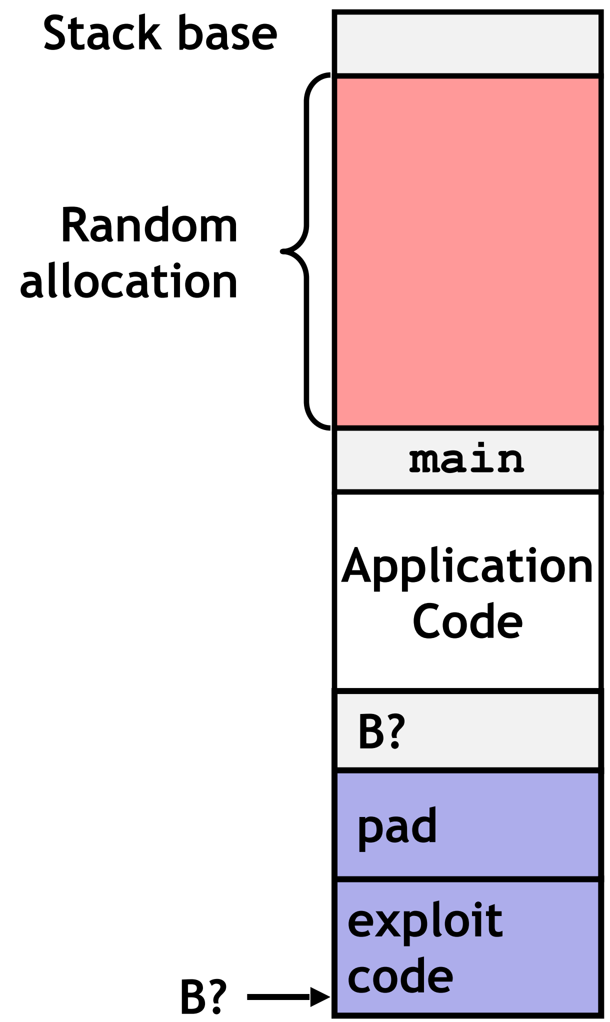
1. Avoid Overflow Vulnerabilities in Code (!)

```
/* Echo Line */
void echo()
{
    char buf[4];  /* Way too small! */
    fgets(buf, 4, stdin);
    puts(buf);
}
```

- For example, use library routines that limit string lengths
  - **`fgets`** instead of **`gets`**
  - **`strncpy`** instead of **`strcpy`**
  - Don't use **`scanf`** with **`%s`** conversion specification
    - Use **`fgets`** to read the string
    - Or use **`%ns`** where **`n`** is a suitable integer

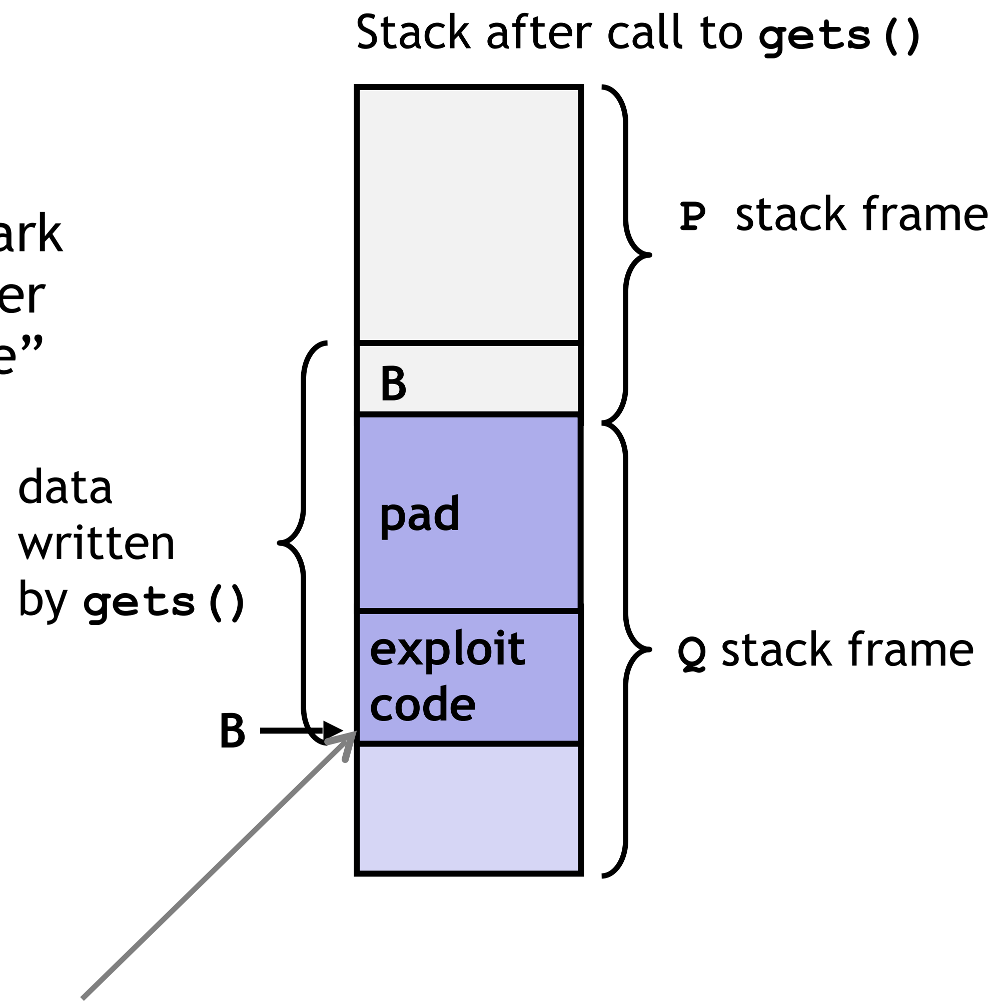
2. System-Level Protections can help

- **Randomized stack offsets**
  - At start of program, allocate random amount of space on stack
  - Shifts stack addresses for entire program
  - Makes it difficult for hacker to predict beginning of inserted code



2. System-Level Protections can help

- **Nonexecutable code segments**
  - In traditional x86, can mark region of memory as either "read-only" or "writeable"
    - Can execute anything readable
  - X86-64 added explicit "execute" permission
  - Stack marked as non-executable



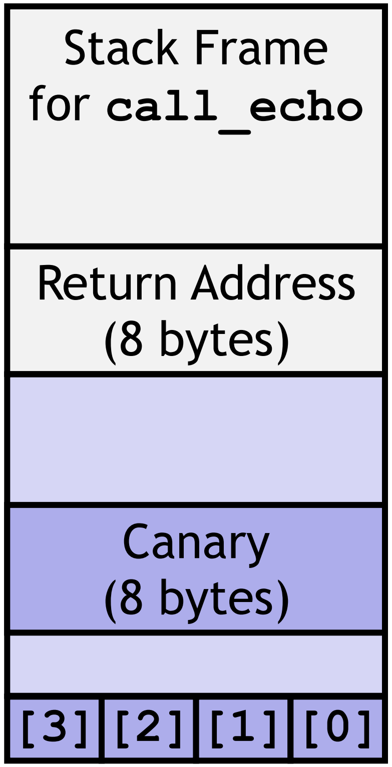
Any attempt to execute this code will fail

3. Stack Canaries can help

- **Idea**
  - Place special value ("canary") on stack just beyond buffer
  - Check for corruption before exiting function
- **GCC Implementation**
  - `-fstack-protector`
  - Now the default (disabled earlier)

```
unix>./bufdemo-sp
Type a string:0123456
0123456
```

```
unix>./bufdemo-sp
Type a string:01234567
*** stack smashing detected ***
```



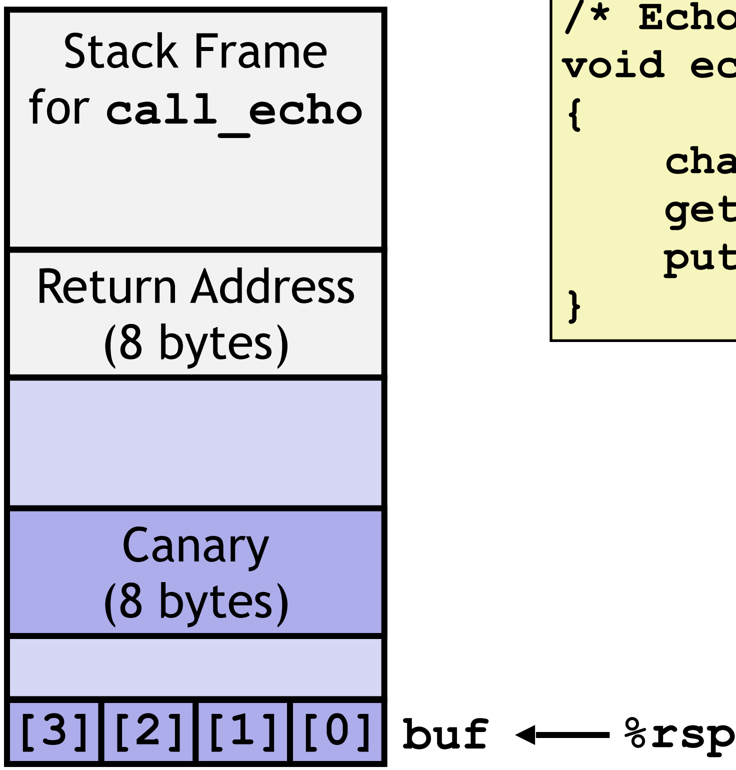
Protected Buffer Disassembly

echo:

```
40072f:  sub    $0x18,%rsp
400733:  mov    %fs:0x28,%rax
40073c:  mov    %rax,0x8(%rsp)
400741:  xor    %eax,%eax
400743:  mov    %rsp,%rdi
400746:  callq  4006e0 <gets>
40074b:  mov    %rsp,%rdi
40074e:  callq  400570 <puts@plt>
400753:  mov    0x8(%rsp),%rax
400758:  xor    %fs:0x28,%rax
400761:  je     400768 <echo+0x39>
400763:  callq  400580 <__stack_chk_fail@plt>
400768:  add    $0x18,%rsp
40076c:  retq
```

Setting Up Canary

Before call to gets

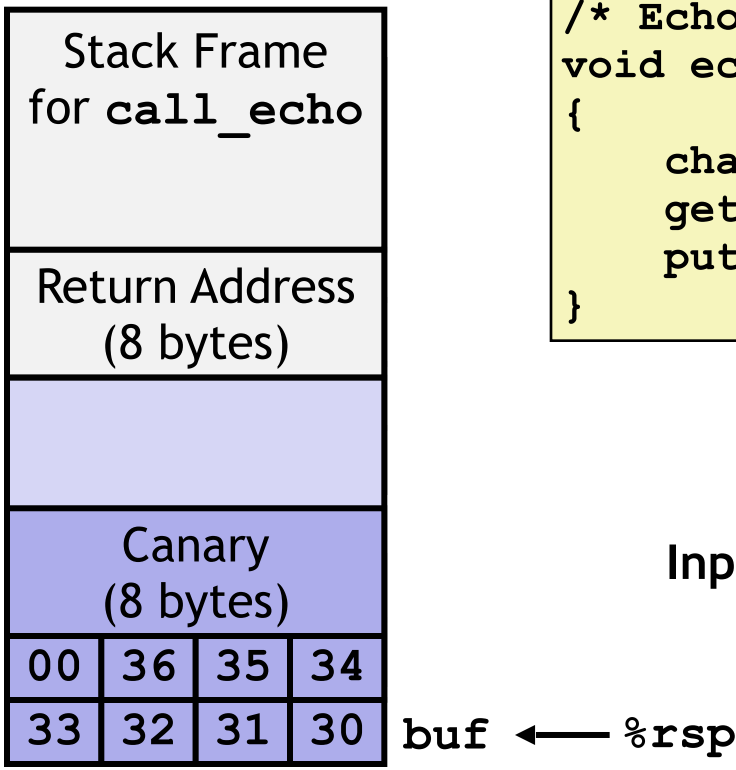



```
/* Echo Line */
void echo()
{
    char buf[4];  /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

```
echo:
    . . .
    movq    %fs:40, %rax   # Get canary
    movq    %rax, 8(%rsp)  # Place on stack
    xorl    %eax, %eax     # Erase canary
    . . .
```

Checking Canary

After call to gets




```
/* Echo Line */
void echo()
{
    char buf[4];   /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

Input: *0123456*

```
echo:
    . . .
    movq    8(%rsp), %rax       # Retrieve from stack
    xorq    %fs:40, %rax        # Compare to canary
    je      .L6                 # If same, OK
    call    __stack_chk_fail    # FAIL
.L6:        . . .
```

Return-Oriented Programming Attacks

- **Challenge (for hackers)**
  - Stack randomization makes it hard to predict buffer location
  - Marking stack nonexecutable makes it hard to insert binary code
- **Alternative Strategy**
  - Use existing code
    - E.g., library code from stdlib
  - String together fragments to achieve overall desired outcome
  - *Does not overcome stack canaries*
- **Construct program from *gadgets***
  - Sequence of instructions ending in `ret`
    - Encoded by single byte `0xc3`
  - Code positions fixed from run to run
  - Code is executable

Gadget Example #1

```
long ab_plus_c
  (long a, long b, long c)
{
   return a*b + c;
}
```

```
00000000004004d0 <ab_plus_c>:
  4004d0:  48 0f af fe  imul %rsi,%rdi
  4004d4:  48 8d 04 17  lea (%rdi,%rdx,1),%rax
  4004d8:  c3           retq
```

rax ← rdi + rdx

Gadget address = `0x4004d4`

- Use tail end of existing functions

Gadget Example #2

```
void setval(unsigned *p) {
    *p = 3347663060u;
}
```

Encodes `movq %rax, %rdi`

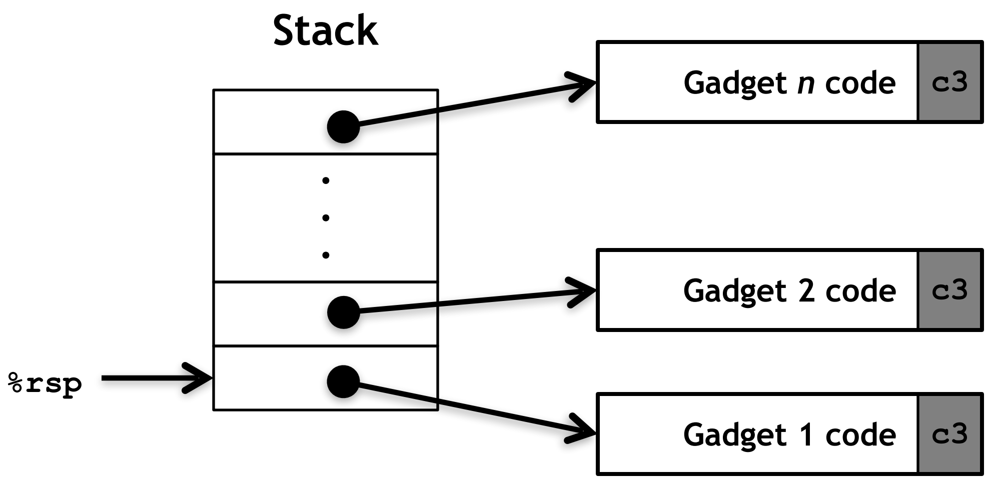
```
<setval>:
  4004d9:  c7 07 d4 48 89 c7  movl   $0xc78948d4,(%rdi)
  4004df:  c3                 retq
```

rdi ← rax

Gadget address = `0x4004dc`

- Repurpose byte codes

ROP Execution



- **Trigger with `ret` instruction**
  - Will start executing Gadget 1
- **Final `ret` in each gadget will start next one**