

# Code Generation for Data Processing

## Lecture 9: Unwinding and Debuginfo

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# Motivation: Meta-Information on Program

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# Motivation: Meta-Information on Program

- ▶ Machine code suffices for execution → not true
- ▶ Needs program headers and entry point
- ▶ Linking with shared libraries needs dynamic symbols and interpreter
- ▶ Stack unwinding needs information about the stack
  - ▶ Size of each stack frame, destructors to be called, etc.
  - ▶ Vital for C++ exceptions, even for non-C++ code
- ▶ Stack traces require stack information to find return addresses
  - ▶ Use cases: coredumps, debuggers, profilers
- ▶ Debugging experience enhanced by variables, files, lines, statements, etc.

# Adding Meta-Information with GCC

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— 09

## Adding Meta-Information with GCC

```
-g  
-fexceptions
```



## Adding Meta-Information with GCC

```
-g  
-fexceptions  
-fasynchronous-unwind-tables
```

# Adding Meta-Information with GCC

`-g`  
`-fexceptions`  
`-fasynchronous-unwind-tables`

- ▶ `-g` supports different formats and levels (and GNU extensions)
- ▶ Exceptions must work without `debuginfo`
- ▶ Unwinding through code without exception-support must work

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  - ▶ May depend on exception type, ask *personality function*
  - ▶ Personality function needs extra language-specific data
  - ▶ Stop once an exception handler is found

# Stack Unwinding

- ▶ Needed for exceptions (`_Unwind_RaiseException`) or forced unwinding
- ▶ Search phase: walk through the stack, check whether to stop at each frame
  - ▶ May depend on exception type, ask *personality function*
  - ▶ Personality function needs extra language-specific data
  - ▶ Stop once an exception handler is found
- ▶ Cleanup phase: walk again, do cleanup and stop at handler
  - ▶ Personality function indicates whether handler needs to be called
  - ▶ Can be for exception handler or for calling destructors
  - ▶ If yes: personality function sets up registers/sp/pc for landing pad
  - ▶ Non-matching handler or destructor-only: landing pad calls `_Unwind_Resume`

# Stack Unwinding: Requirements

- ▶ Given: current register values in unwind function
- ▶ Need: iterate through stack frames
  - ▶ Get address of function of the stack frame
  - ▶ Get pc and sp for *this function*
  - ▶ Find personality function and language-specific data
  - ▶ Maybe get some registers from the stack frame
  - ▶ Update some registers with exception data

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  - ▶ Find personality function and language-specific data
  - ▶ Maybe get some registers from the stack frame
  - ▶ Update some registers with exception data
- ▶ Increased difficulty: stepping through signal handler

## Stack Unwinding: `setjmp/longjmp`

- ▶ Simple idea – all functions that run code during unwinding do:
  - ▶ Register their handler at function entry
  - ▶ Deregister their handler at function exit
- ▶ Personality function sets `jmpbuf` to landing pad
- ▶ Unwinder does `longjmp`



## Stack Unwinding: `setjmp/longjmp`

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    - ▶ Register their handler at function entry
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  - ▶ Personality function sets `jmpbuf` to landing pad
  - ▶ Unwinder does `longjmp`
- + Needs no extra information
- High overhead in non-exceptional case

# Stack Unwinding: Frame Pointer

- ▶ Frame pointers allow for fast unwinding
  - ▶ fp points to stored caller's fp
  - ▶ Return address stored adjacent to frame pointer
- + Fast and simple, also without exception

```
x86_64:  
    push rbp  
    mov rbp, rsp  
    // ...  
    mov rsp, rbp  
    pop rbp  
    ret
```

```
aarch64:  
    stp x29, x30, [sp, -32]!  
    mov x29, sp  
    // ...  
    ldp x29, x30, [sp], 32  
    ret
```

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- Not all programs have frame pointers
- ▶ Overhead of creating full stack frame
  - ▶ Causes loss of one register (esp. x86)

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- ▶ Overhead of creating full stack frame
- ▶ Causes loss of one register (esp. x86)
- ▶ Still needs to find meta-information
- ▶ Need to distinguish prologue with wrong info

```
x86_64:  
    push rbp  
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    // ...  
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## Stack Unwinding: Without Frame Pointer

- ▶ Given: `pc` and `sp` (bottom of stack frame/call frame)
  - ▶ In parent frames:  $retaddr - 1 \sim pc$  and  $CFA \sim sp$
- ▶ Need to map `pc` to stack frame size
  - ▶  $sp + framesize = CFA$  (canonical frame address – `sp` at call)
  - ▶ Stack frame size varies throughout function, e.g. prologue

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- ▶ Case 1: some register used as frame pointer –  $CFA$  constant offset to  $fp$ 
  - ▶ E.g., for variable stack frame size
- ▶ Case 2: no frame pointer:  $CFA$  is constant offset to  $sp$

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    - ▶ In parent frames:  $retaddr - 1 \sim pc$  and  $CFA \sim sp$
  - ▶ Need to map `pc` to stack frame size
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    - ▶ E.g., for variable stack frame size
  - ▶ Case 2: no frame pointer:  $CFA$  is constant offset to `sp`
- ↪ Unwinding *must* restore register values
- ▶ Other reg. can act as frame pointer, register saved in other register, ...
  - ▶ Need to know where return address is stored

# Call Frame Information

- ▶ Table mapping each instr. to info about registers and CFA
- ▶ CFA: register with signed offset (or arbitrary expression)
- ▶ Register:
  - ▶ Undefined – unrecoverable (default for caller-saved reg)
  - ▶ Same – unmodified (default for callee-saved reg)
  - ▶ Offset(N) – stored at address CFA+N
  - ▶ Register(reg) – stored in other register
  - ▶ or arbitrary expressions



## Call Frame Information – Example 1

	CFA	rip	rbx	rbp	...
foo:					
0x0: push rbx					
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## Call Frame Information – Example 1

	CFA	rip	rbx	rbp	...
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0xb: ret	rsp+0x08				

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0xb: ret	rsp+0x08	[CFA-0x08]	same	same	

## Call Frame Information – Example 2

	CFA	rip	rbx	rbp	...
foo:					
0x0:	push rbp				
0x1:	mov rbp, rsp				
0x4:	shl rdi, 4				
0x8:	sub rsp, rdi				
0xb:	mov rdi, rsp				
0xe:	call bar				
0x13:	leave				
0x14:	ret				



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0x4:	shl rdi, 4	rbp+0x10	[CFA-0x08]	same	[CFA-0x10]	
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	CFA	rip	rbx	rbp	...
foo:					
0x0:					
0x4:					
0x6:					
0x8:					
0xd:					
0x11:					
0x12:					
0x17:					
0x1a:					

## Call Frame Information – Example 3

	CFA	rip	rbx	rbp	...
foo:					
0x0: sub rsp, 8	rsp+0x08	[CFA-0x08]	same	same	
0x4: test edi, edi					
0x6: js 0x12					
0x8: call positive					
0xd: add rsp, 8					
0x11: ret					
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0xd:	add rsp, 8	rsp+0x10	[CFA-0x08]	same	same	
0x11:	ret	rsp+0x08	[CFA-0x08]	same	same	
0x12:	call negative	rsp+0x10	[CFA-0x08]	same	same	
0x17:	add rsp, 8	rsp+0x10	[CFA-0x08]	same	same	
0x1a:	ret	rsp+0x08	[CFA-0x08]	same	same	

## Call Frame Information: Encoding

- ▶ Expanded table can be huge
- ▶ Contents change rather seldomly
  - ▶ Mainly in prologue/epilogue, but mostly constant in-between



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- ▶ Expanded table can be huge
- ▶ Contents change rather seldomly
  - ▶ Mainly in prologue/epilogue, but mostly constant in-between
- ▶ Idea: encode table as bytecode
- ▶ Bytecode has instructions to create a new row
  - ▶ Advance machine code location
- ▶ Bytecode has instructions to define CFA value
- ▶ Bytecode has instructions to define register location
- ▶ Bytecode has instructions to remember and restore state

# Call Frame Information: Bytecode – Example 1

	CFA	rip	rbx	
foo:				DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8
0: push rbx				DW_CFA_offset: RIP -8
1: mov ebx, edi				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 1
3: call bar				DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
8: mov eax, ebx				DW_CFA_offset: RBX -16
a: pop rbx				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 10
b: ret				DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +8

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3: call bar	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
8: mov eax, ebx	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_offset: RBX -16
a: pop rbx	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	=> DW_CFA_advance_loc: 10
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3: call bar	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
8: mov eax, ebx	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_offset: RBX -16
a: pop rbx	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 10
b: ret	rsp+8	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	=> DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +8

## Call Frame Information: Bytecode – Example 2

	CFA	rip	rbp	
foo:				DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8
0: push rbp				DW_CFA_offset: RIP -8
1: mov rbp, rsp				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 1
4: shl rdi, 4				DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
8: sub rsp, rdi				DW_CFA_offset: RBP -16
b: mov rdi, rsp				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 3
e: call bar				DW_CFA_def_cfa_register: RBP
13: leave				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 16
14: ret				DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8

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				=> DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8
foo:				DW_CFA_offset: RIP -8
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1: mov rbp, rsp				DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
4: shl rdi, 4				DW_CFA_offset: RBP -16
8: sub rsp, rdi				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 3
b: mov rdi, rsp				DW_CFA_def_cfa_register: RBP
e: call bar				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 16
13: leave				DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8
14: ret				

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				=> DW_CFA_offset: RIP -8
				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 1
				DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
				DW_CFA_offset: RBP -16
				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 3
				DW_CFA_def_cfa_register: RBP
				DW_CFA_advance_loc: 16
				DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8
foo:				
0: push rbp	rsp+8	[CFA-8]		
1: mov rbp, rsp				
4: shl rdi, 4				
8: sub rsp, rdi				
b: mov rdi, rsp				
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1: mov rbp, rsp	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 1
4: shl rdi, 4				DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
8: sub rsp, rdi				=> DW_CFA_offset: RBP -16
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1: mov rbp, rsp	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 1
4: shl rdi, 4	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
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				DW_CFA_offset: RIP -8
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0: push rbp	rsp+8	[CFA-8]		DW_CFA_offset: RBP -16
1: mov rbp, rsp	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 3
4: shl rdi, 4	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_def_cfa_register: RBP
8: sub rsp, rdi	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	=> DW_CFA_advance_loc: 16
b: mov rdi, rsp	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8
e: call bar	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	
13: leave	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	
14: ret	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	

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	CFA	rip	rbp	
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foo:				DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
0: push rbp	rsp+8	[CFA-8]		DW_CFA_offset: RBP -16
1: mov rbp, rsp	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 3
4: shl rdi, 4	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_def_cfa_register: RBP
8: sub rsp, rdi	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 16
b: mov rdi, rsp	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	
e: call bar	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	=> DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8
13: leave	rbp+16	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	
14: ret	rsp+8	[CFA-8]	[CFA-16]	

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	CFA	rip
foo:		
0: sub rsp, 8		DW_CFA_def_cfa: RSP +8
4: test edi, edi		DW_CFA_offset: RIP -8
6: js 0x12		DW_CFA_advance_loc: 4
8: call positive		DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
d: add rsp, 8		DW_CFA_advance_loc: 13
11: ret		DW_CFA_remember_state:
12: call negative		DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +8
17: add rsp, 8		DW_CFA_advance_loc: 1
1a: ret		DW_CFA_restore_state:
		DW_CFA_advance_loc: 9
		DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +8

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Remember stack: {CFA=rsp+16; rip=[CFA-8]}

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4: test edi, edi	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 4
6: js 0x12	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +16
8: call positive	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 13
d: add rsp, 8	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	DW_CFA_remember_state:
11: ret	rsp+8	[CFA-8]	DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +8
12: call negative	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 1
17: add rsp, 8	rsp+16	[CFA-8]	DW_CFA_restore_state:
1a: ret	rsp+8	[CFA-8]	DW_CFA_advance_loc: 9
			=> DW_CFA_def_cfa_offset: +8

Remember stack: {}

## Call Frame Information: Bytecode

- ▶ DWARF<sup>41</sup> specifies bytecode for call frame information
- ▶ Self-contained section `.eh_frame` (or `.debug_frame`)
- ▶ Series of entries; two possible types distinguished using header
- ▶ Frame Description Entry (FDE): description of a function
  - ▶ Code range, instructions, pointer to CIE, language-specific data
- ▶ Common Information Entry (CIE): shared information among multiple FDEs
  - ▶ Initial instrs. (prepended to all FDE instrs.), personality function, alignment factors (constants factored out of instrs.), ...
- ▶ `readelf --debug-dump=frames <file>`  
`llvm-dwarfdump --debug-frame <file>`

<sup>41</sup>DWARF Debugging Information Committee. *DWARF Debugging Information Format Version 5*. Feb. 2017. 



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- ▶ Unwinder does binary search to find matching FDE

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- ▶ Idea: create binary search table over FDEs at link-time
- ▶ Ordered list of all function addresses and their FDE
- ▶ Unwinder does binary search to find matching FDE
- ▶ Separate program header entry: `PT_GNU_EH_FRAME`
- ▶ Unwinder needs loader support to find these
  - ▶ `_dl_find_object` or `dl_iterate_phdr`
- ▶ FDEs and indices are cached to avoid redundant lookups

## Call Frame Information: Assembler Directives

- ▶ Compilers produces textual CFI
- ▶ Assembler encodes CFI into binary format
  - ▶ Allows for integration of annotated inline assembly
  - ▶ Inline-asm also needs CFI directives
- ▶ Register numbers specified by psABI
  
- ▶ Wrap function with `.cfi_startproc/.cfi_endproc`
- ▶ Many directives map straight to DWARF instructions
  - ▶ `.cfi_def_cfa_offset 16; .cfi_offset %rbp, -16;`  
`.cfi_def_cfa_register %rbp`

## Call Frame Information: Assembler Directives – Example

```
int bar(int*);
int foo(unsigned long x) {
    int arr[x * 4];
    return bar(arr);
}
```

```
gcc -O -S foo.c
```

```
        .globl foo
        .type foo, @function

foo:

        .cfi_startproc
        push rbp
        .cfi_def_cfa_offset 16
        .cfi_offset 6, -16
        mov rbp, rsp
        .cfi_def_cfa_register 6
        shl rdi, 4
        sub rsp, rdi
        mov rdi, rsp
        call bar
        leave
        .cfi_def_cfa 7, 8
        ret
        .cfi_endproc
        .size foo, .-foo
```

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---

Needs to work reliably for exception handling

# Debugging: Wanted Features

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- ▶ Get back trace
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  - ▶ Local variables need scope information, e.g. shadowing
  - ▶ Data type information, e.g. int, string, struct, enum
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- ▶ Map instruction to: file/line/column; start of stmt; start of basic block; is prologue/epilogue; ISA mode
- ▶ Table can be huge; idea: encode as bytecode
- ▶ Extracted information are bytecode registers
- ▶ Conceptually similar to CFI encoding
- ▶ `llvm-dwarfdump -v --debug-line` or `readelf -wLL`

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- ▶ Set break point at line/function ↪ Line Table/??
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# DWARF: Hierarchical Program Description

- ▶ Extensible, flexible, Turing-complete<sup>42</sup> format to describe program
- ▶ Forest of Debugging Information Entries (DIEs)
  - ▶ Tag: indicates what the DIE describes
  - ▶ Set of attributes: describe DIE (often constant, range, or arbitrary expression)
  - ▶ Optionally children

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  - ▶ Optionally children
- ▶ Rough classification:
  - ▶ DIEs for types: base types, typedef, struct, array, enum, union, ...
  - ▶ DIEs for data objects: variable, parameter, constant
  - ▶ DIEs for program scope: compilation unit, function, block, ...

<sup>42</sup>J Oakley and S Bratus. "Exploiting the Hard-Working DWARF: Trojan and Exploit Techniques with No Native Executable Code". In: *WOOT*. 2011. 

# DWARF: Data Types

```
DW_TAG_base_type [0x4a]  
  DW_AT_byte_size (0x04)  
  DW_AT_encoding  (DW_ATE_signed)  
  DW_AT_name      ("int")
```

# DWARF: Data Types

```
DW_TAG_structure_type [0x2e]
  DW_AT_byte_size (0x08)
  DW_AT_sibling (0x4a)
  DW_TAG_member [0x37]
    DW_AT_name ("x")
    DW_AT_type (0x4a "int")
    DW_AT_data_member_location (0x00)
  DW_TAG_member [0x40]
    DW_AT_name ("y")
    DW_AT_type (0x4a "int")
    DW_AT_data_member_location (0x04)

DW_TAG_base_type [0x4a]
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# DWARF: Data Types

DW\_TAG\_structure\_type [0x2e]

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DW\_TAG\_member [0x37]

DW\_AT\_name ("x")

DW\_AT\_type (0x4a "int")

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DW\_TAG\_member [0x40]

DW\_AT\_name ("y")

DW\_AT\_type (0x4a "int")

DW\_AT\_data\_member\_location (0x04)

DW\_TAG\_base\_type [0x4a]

DW\_AT\_byte\_size (0x04)

DW\_AT\_encoding (DW\_ATE\_signed)

DW\_AT\_name ("int")

DW\_TAG\_pointer\_type [0xb1]

DW\_AT\_byte\_size (8)

DW\_AT\_type (0xb6 "char \*")

DW\_TAG\_pointer\_type [0xb6]

DW\_AT\_byte\_size (8)

DW\_AT\_type (0xbb "char")

DW\_TAG\_base\_type [0xbb]

DW\_AT\_byte\_size (0x01)

DW\_AT\_encoding (DW\_ATE\_signed\_char)

DW\_AT\_name ("char")

# DWARF: Variables

```
DW_TAG_variable [0xa3]
  DW_AT_name      ("x")
  DW_AT_decl_file  ("/path/to/main.c")
  DW_AT_decl_line  (2)
  DW_AT_decl_column (0x2e)
  DW_AT_type       (0x4a "int")
  DW_AT_location   (0x3b:
    [0x08, 0x0c): DW_OP_breg3 RBX+0, DW_OP_lit1, DW_OP_shl, DW_OP_stack_value
    [0x0c, 0x0d): DW_OP_entry_value(DW_OP_reg5 RDI), DW_OP_lit1, \
                  DW_OP_shl, DW_OP_stack_value)

DW_TAG_formal_parameter [0x7f]
  DW_AT_name      ("argc")
  // ...
```

# DWARF: Expressions

- ▶ Very general way to describe location of value:



## DWARF: Expressions

- ▶ Very general way to describe location of value: bytecode
- ▶ Stack machine, evaluates to location or value of variable
  - ▶ Simple case: register or stack slot
  - ▶ But: complex expression to recover original value after optimization  
e.g., able to recover  $i$  from stored  $i - 1$
  - ▶ Unbounded complexity!
- ▶ Can contain control flow
- ▶ Can dereference memory, registers, etc.
- ▶ Used for: CFI locations, variable locations, array sizes, ...

# DWARF: Program Structure

- ▶ Follows structure of code
- ▶ Top-level: compilation unit
- ▶ Entries for namespaces, subroutines (functions)
  - ▶ Functions can contain inlined subroutines
- ▶ Lexical blocks to group variables
- ▶ Call sites and parameters
  
- ▶ Each node annotated with pc-range and source location

# Debugging: Wanted Features

- ▶ Get back trace ↪ CFI
- ▶ Map address to source file/line ↪ Line Table
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  - ▶ Data type information, e.g. int, string, struct, enum
- ▶ Set break point at line/function ↪ Line Table/??
  - ▶ Might require multiple actual breakpoints: inlining, template expansion
- ▶ Step through program by line/statement ↪ Line Table

# Debugging: Wanted Features

- ▶ Get back trace ↔ CFI
- ▶ Map address to source file/line ↔ Line Table
- ▶ Show global and local variables ↔ DIE tree
  - ▶ Local variables need scope information, e.g. shadowing
  - ▶ Data type information, e.g. int, string, struct, enum
- ▶ Set break point at line/function ↔ Line Table/DIE tree
  - ▶ Might require multiple actual breakpoints: inlining, template expansion
- ▶ Step through program by line/statement ↔ Line Table

## Other Debuginfo Formats

- ▶ DWARF is big despite compression
- ▶ Cannot run in time-constrained environments
  - ▶ Unsited for in-kernel backtrace generation
- ▶ Historically: STABS – string based encoding
  - ▶ Complexity increased significantly over time
- ▶ Microsoft: PDB for PE
- ▶ Linux kernel: CTF for simple type information
- ▶ Linux kernel: BTF for BPF programs

# Unwinding and Debuginfo – Summary

- ▶ Some languages/setups must be able to unwind the stack
- ▶ Needs meta-information on call frames
- ▶ DWARF encodes call frame information in bytecode program
- ▶ Runtime must efficiently find relevant information
- ▶ Stack unwinding typically done in two phases
- ▶ Functions have associated personality function to steer unwinding
- ▶ DWARF encodes debug info in tree structure of DIEs
- ▶ DWARF info can become arbitrarily complex

# Unwinding and Debuginfo – Questions

- ▶ What are alternatives to stack unwinding?
- ▶ What are the benefits of stack unwinding through metadata?
- ▶ What are the two phases of unwinding? Why is this separated?
- ▶ How to construct a CFI table for a given assembly code?
- ▶ How to construct DWARF ops for a CFI table?
- ▶ How to find the correct CFI table line for a given address?
- ▶ What is the general structure of DWARF debug info?