

UC SANTA BARBARA



Not your Type! Detecting Storage Collision Vulnerabilities in Ethereum Smart Contracts

Nicola Ruardo

Nicola Ruardo, Fabio Gritti, Robert McLaughlin, Ilya Grishchenko,
Christopher Kruegel, Giovanni Vigna



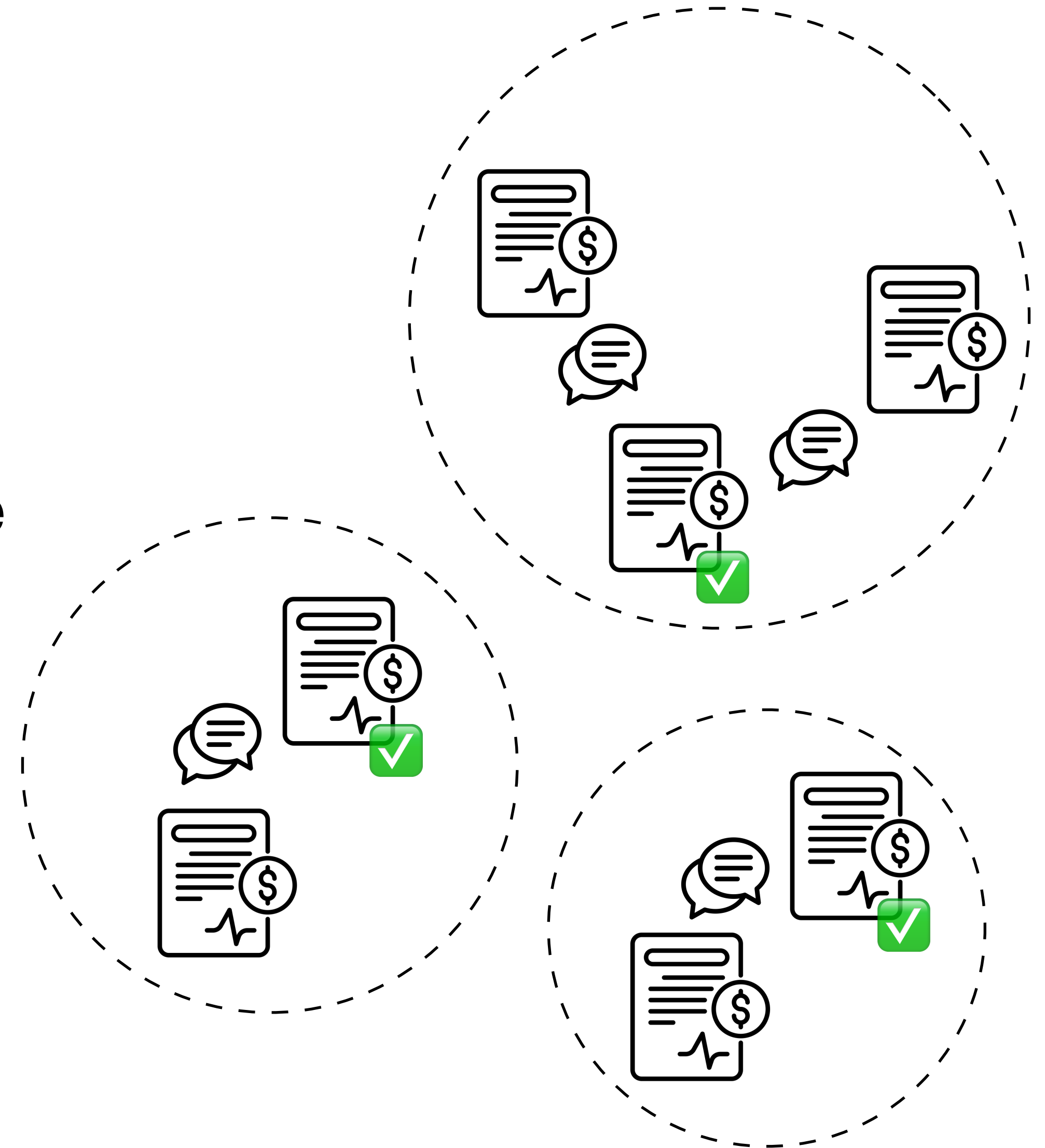
Motivation

- Classic contract attacks are well-studied (tainted calls, re-entrancy...)



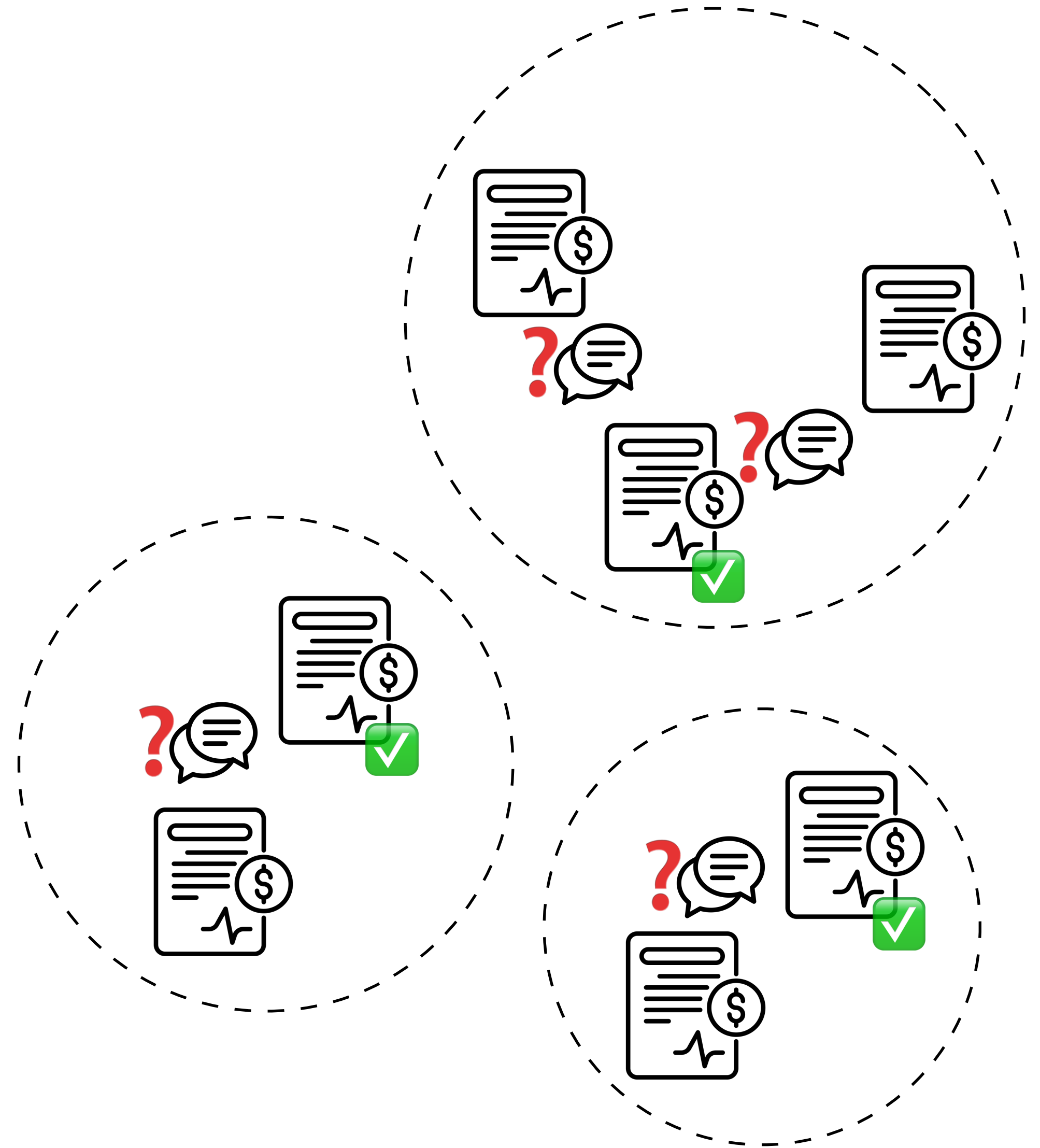
Motivation

- Classic contract attacks are well-studied (tainted calls, re-entrancy...)
- Decentralized Finance → **interactions** are increasingly complex (DeFi Protocols)



Motivation

- Classic contract attacks are well-studied (tainted calls, re-entrancy...)
- Decentralized Finance → **interactions** are increasingly complex (DeFi Protocols)
- This **attack surface** is under-studied:
 - Privilege escalation
 - Oracle manipulation
 - **Storage collision**



Smart Contracts



Blockchain State

Balance (ETH)

Storage

Code

Contract

Code

Stack

Memory

Contract

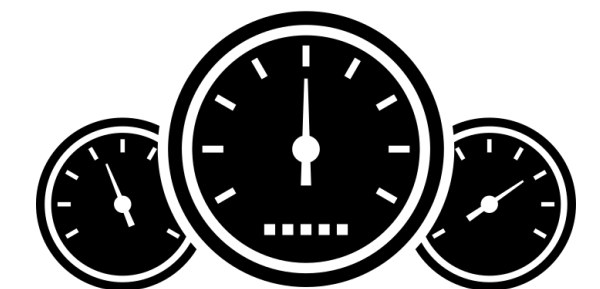
Code

Stack

Memory

Program Counter

Gas



EVM

Smart Contracts



Blockchain State

Balance (ETH)

Storage

Code

Tx

Data

Value (ETH)

Gas

Origin



Contract

Code

Stack

Memory

Contract

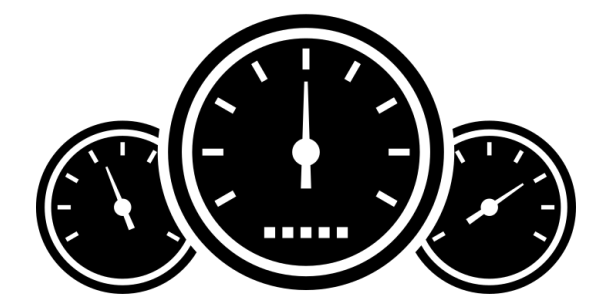
Code

Stack

Memory

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Gas



EVM

Smart Contracts



Blockchain State

Balance (ETH)

Storage

Code

Tx

Data

Value (ETH)

Gas

Origin



```
CALLDATALOAD
PUSH 0x20
TIMESTAMP
MSTORE
PUSH 0x20
MLOAD
PUSH 0x1
SSTORE
...
(DELEGATE) CALL
```

EVM bytecode

Contract

Code

Stack

Memory

Contract

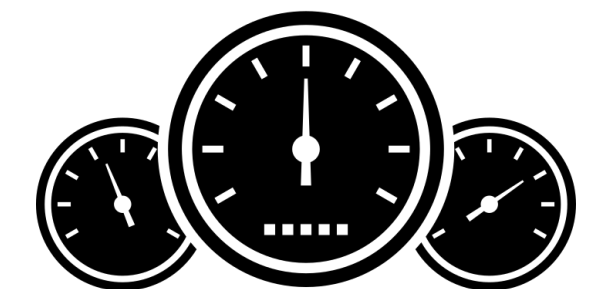
Code

Stack

Memory

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Gas



EVM

Smart Contracts

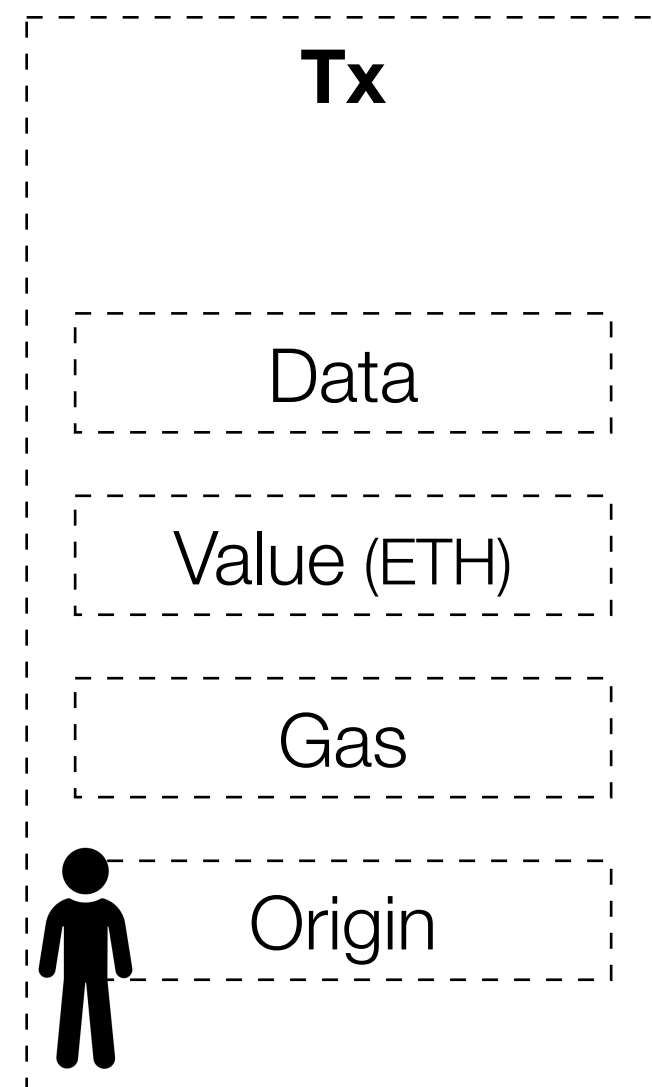


Blockchain State

Balance (ETH)

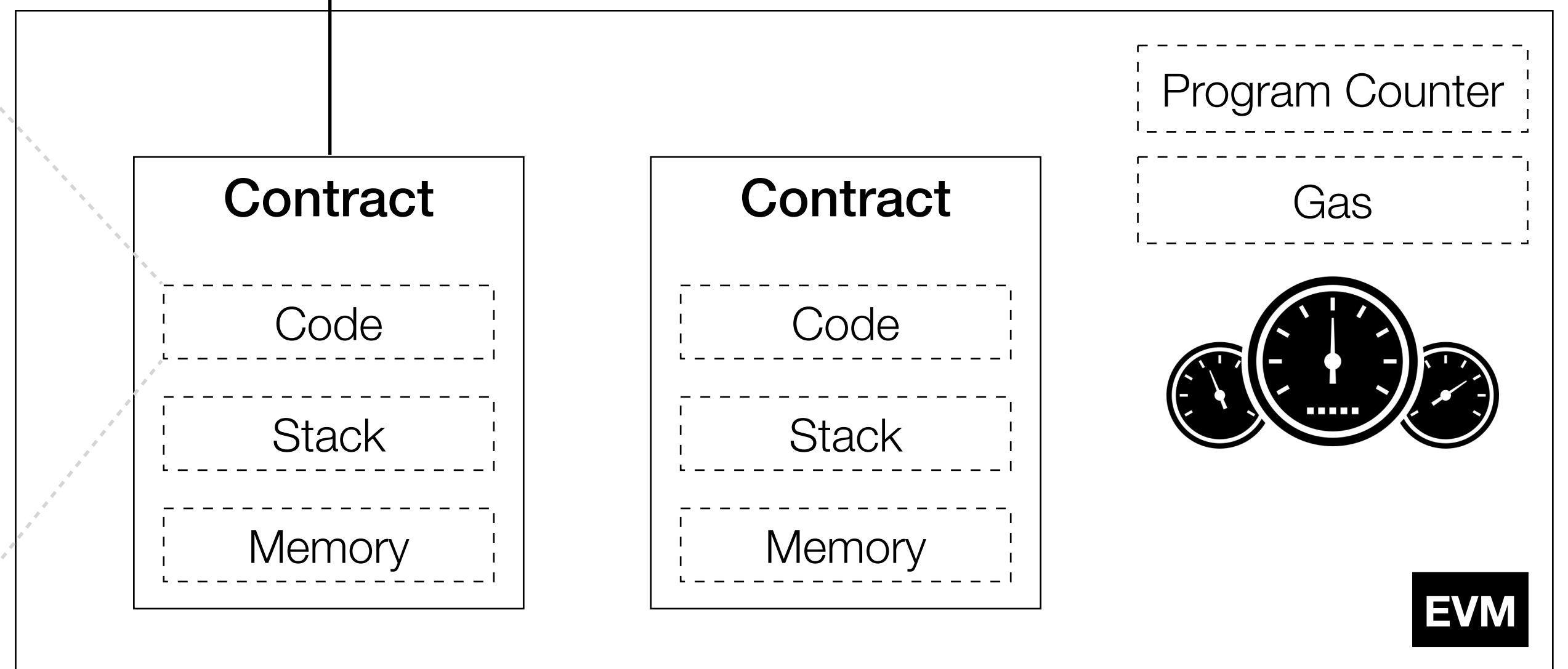
Storage
{ slot : value }

Code

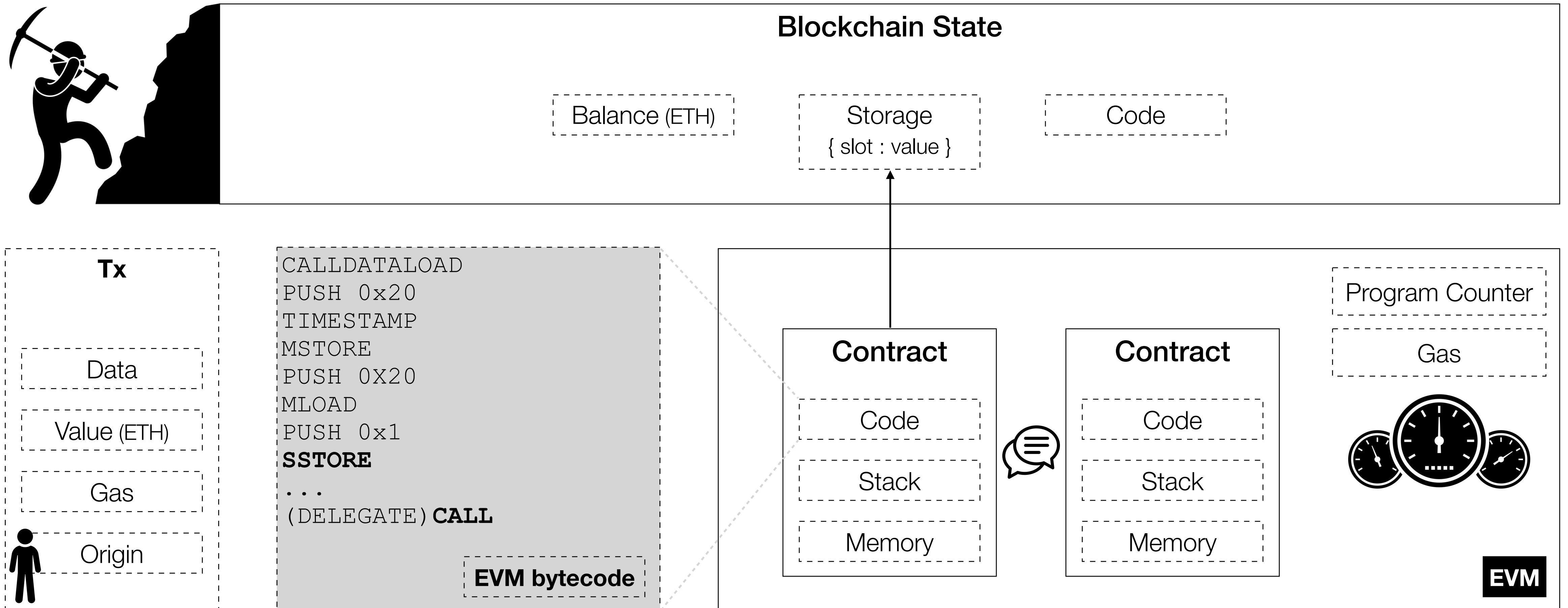


```
CALLDATALOAD
PUSH 0x20
TIMESTAMP
MSTORE
PUSH 0x20
MLOAD
PUSH 0x1
SSTORE
...
(DELEGATE) CALL
```

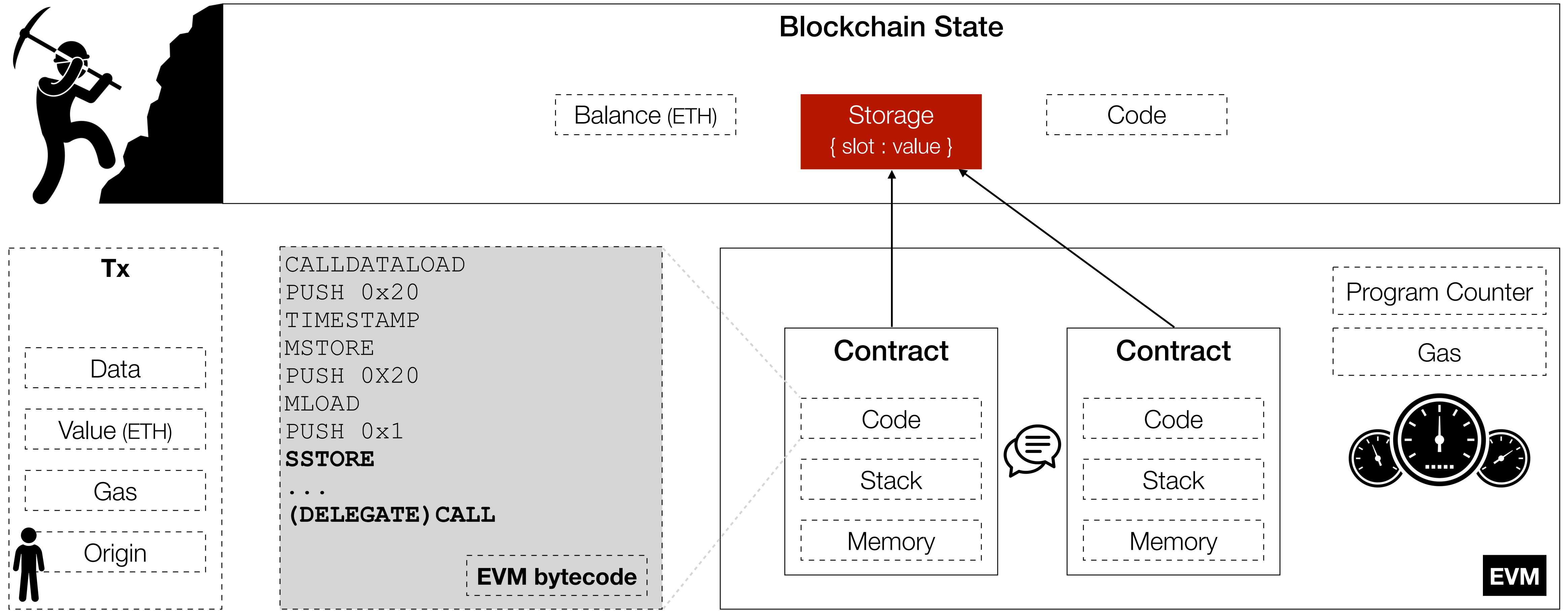
EVM bytecode



Smart Contracts



Smart Contracts



Blockchain Streaming Platform Audius Victim of \$6M Hack

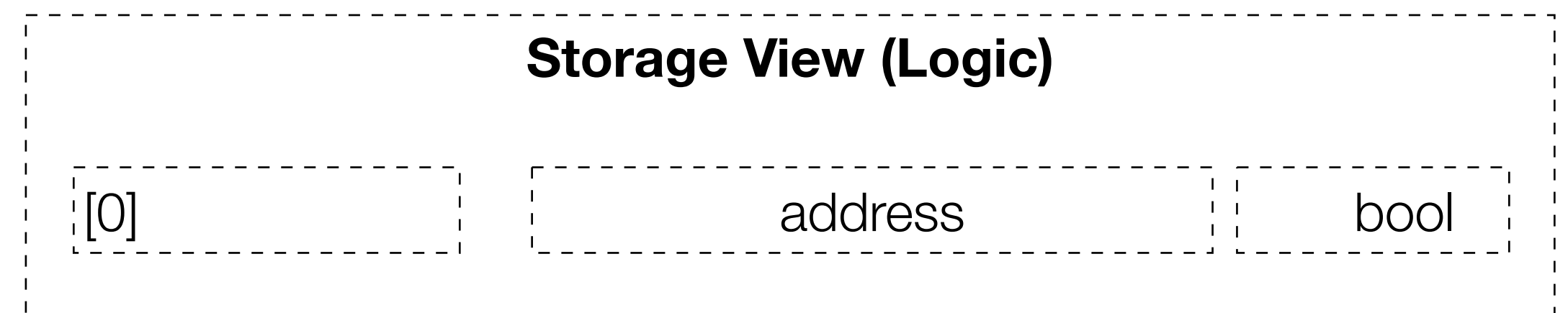
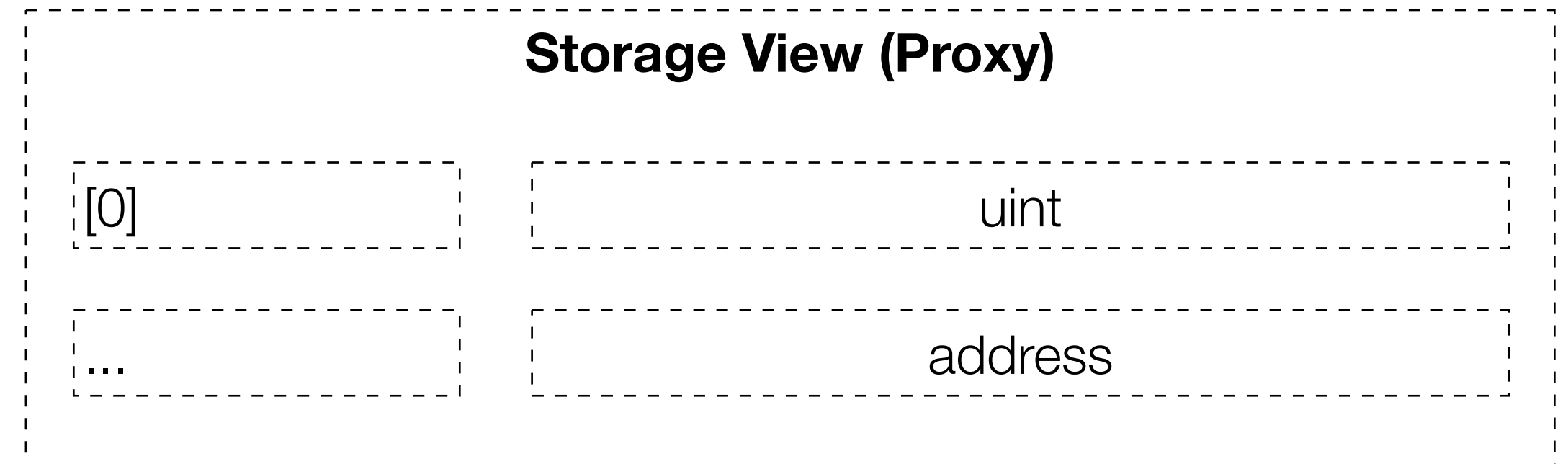
The hacker was able to exploit a bug in the company's smart contract.

Storage Collisions

```
1  contract Proxy {
2      uint visits;          // storage slot [0x0]
3      address LOGIC;       // storage slot [...]
4
5      constructor() {
6          LOGIC = [...];
7          visits = 0;
8          LOGIC.initialize();
9      }
10     fallback() external {
11         visits += 1;
12         LOGIC.delegatecall(msg.data);
13     }
14 }
15
16 contract Logic {
17     bool initialized;     // storage slot [0x0]
18     address admin;       // storage slot [0x0]
19
20     function initialize() external {
21         require(!initialized);
22         initialized = 1;
23         admin = msg.sender;
24     }
25     function withdraw() external {
26         require(msg.sender == admin);
27         payable(admin).transfer(this.balance);
28     }
29 }
```

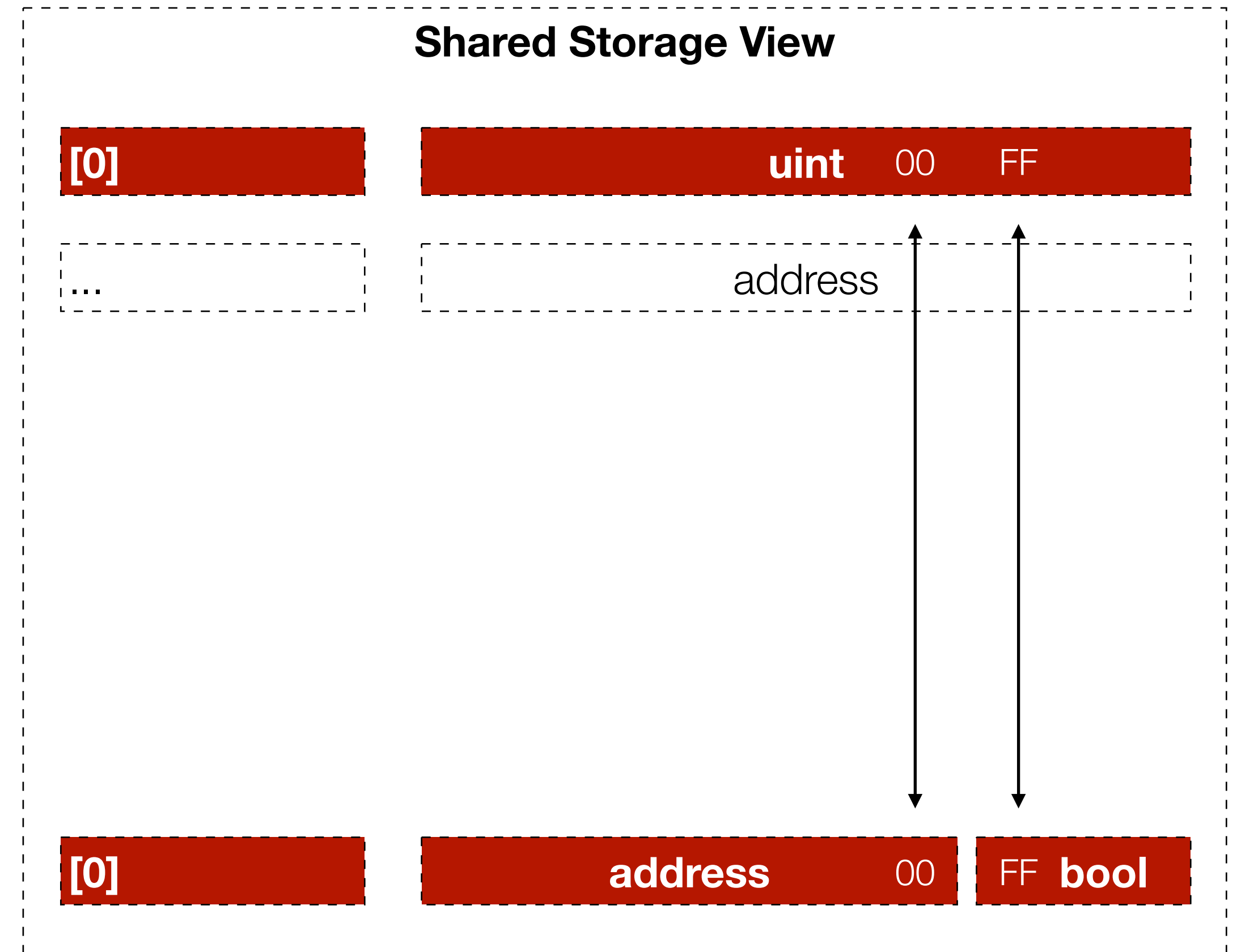
Storage Collisions

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```



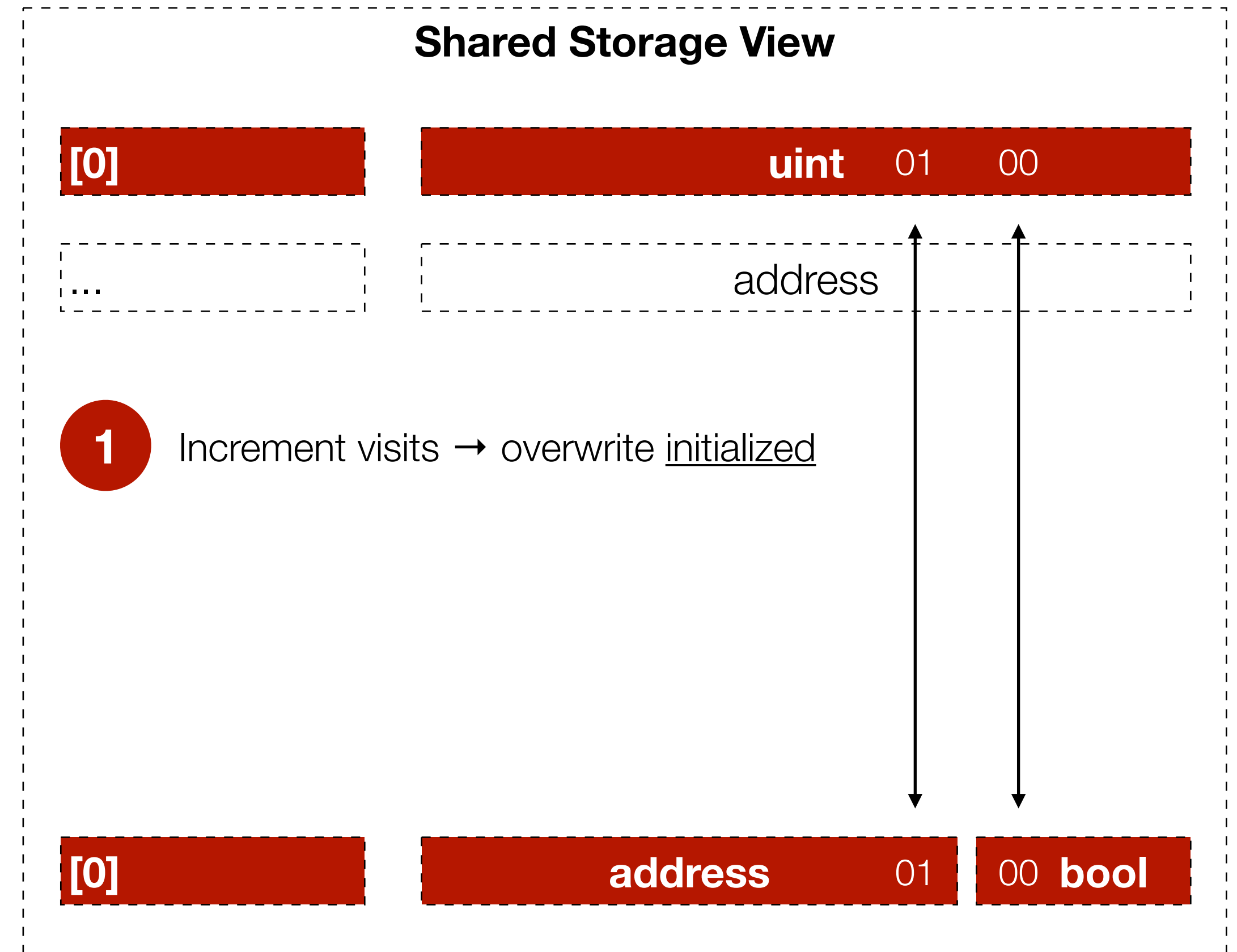
Storage Collisions

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```



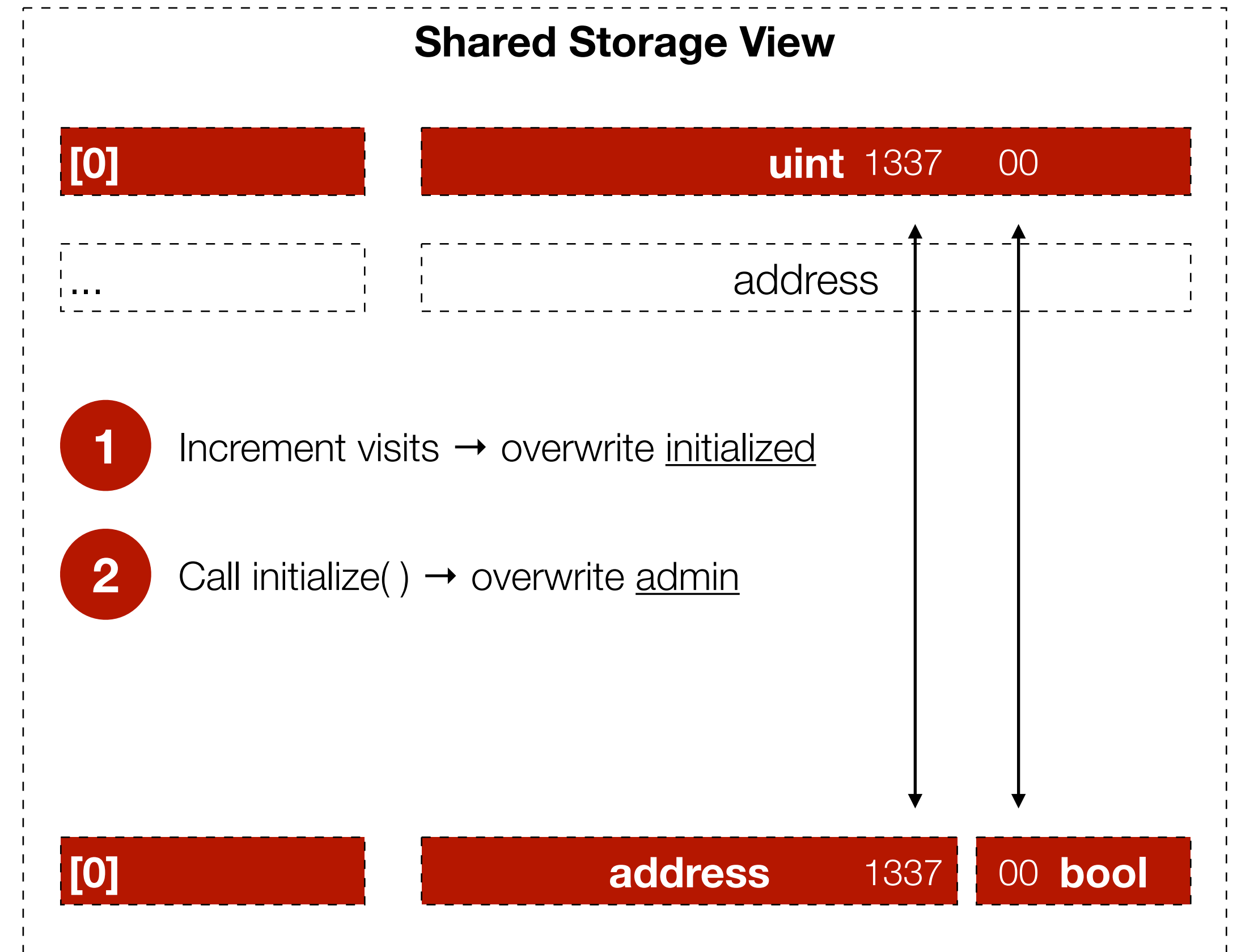
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29 }
```



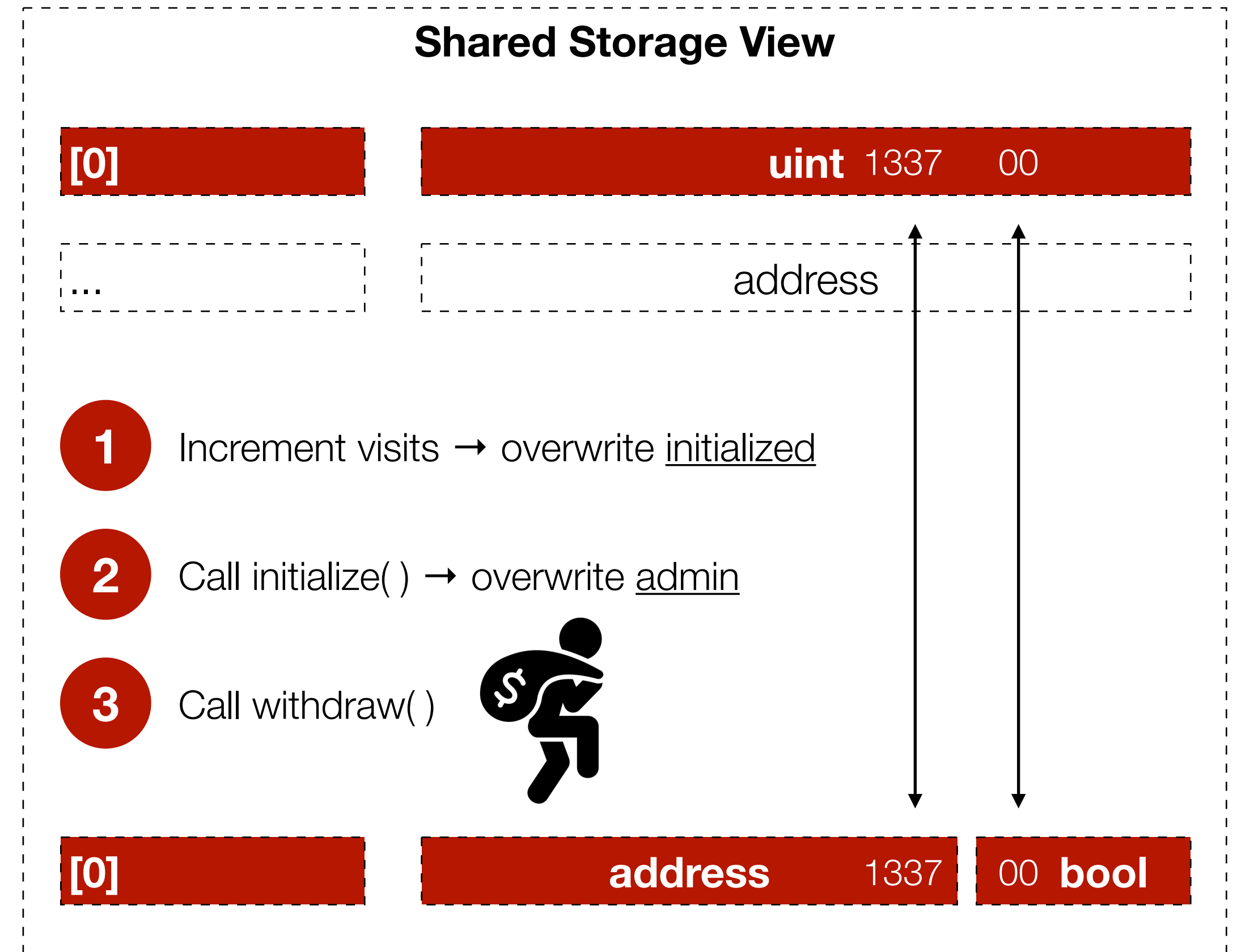
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```

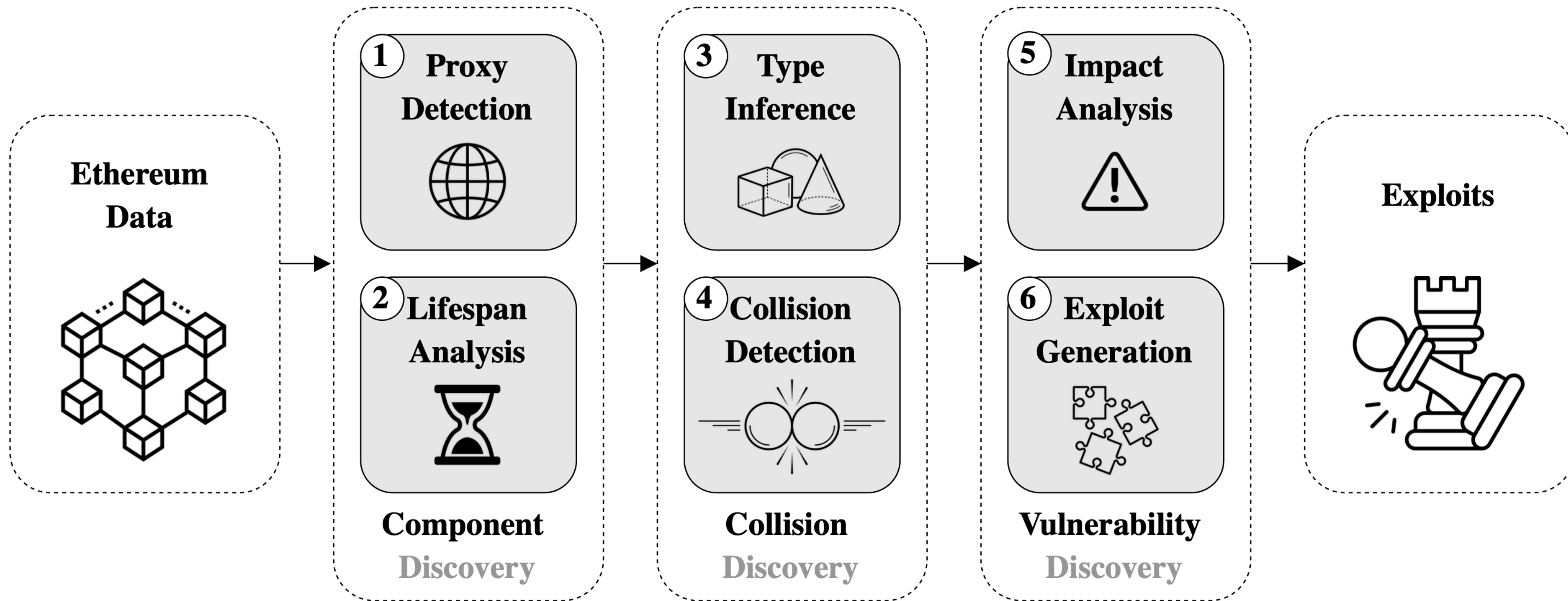


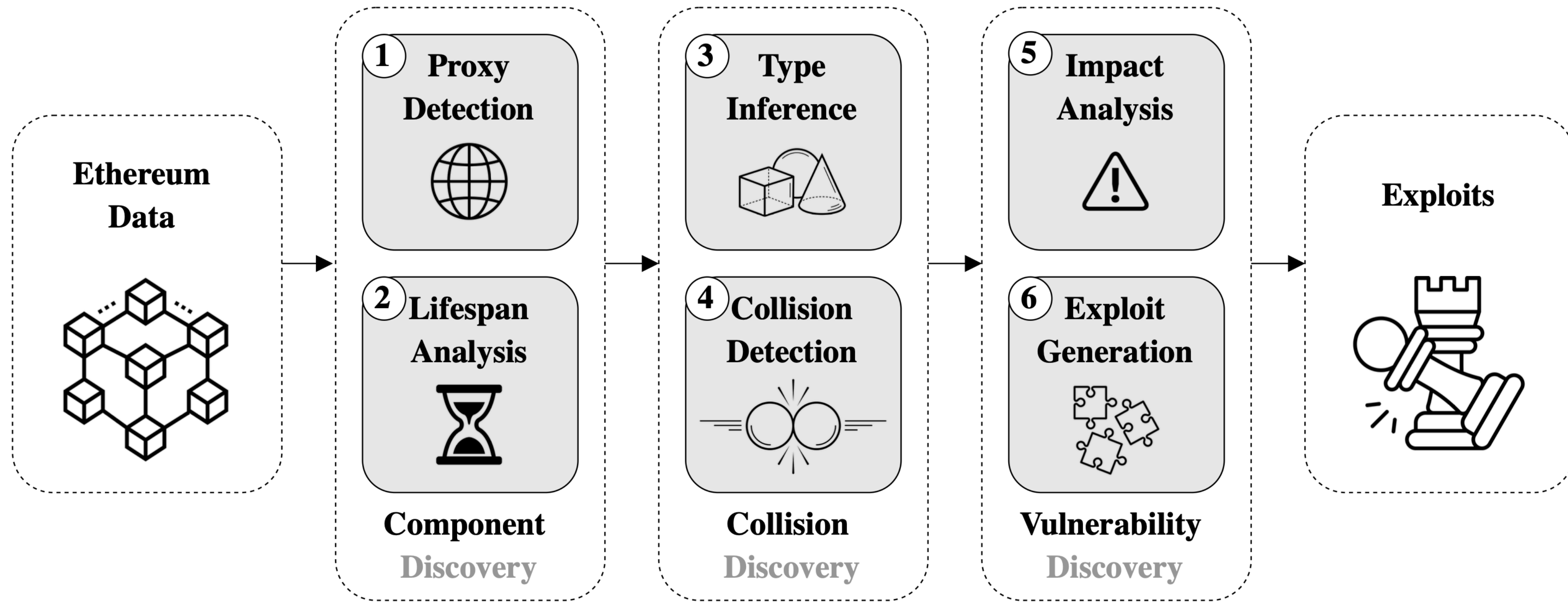
Storage Collisions

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26    require(msg.sender == admin);
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28  }
29 }
```



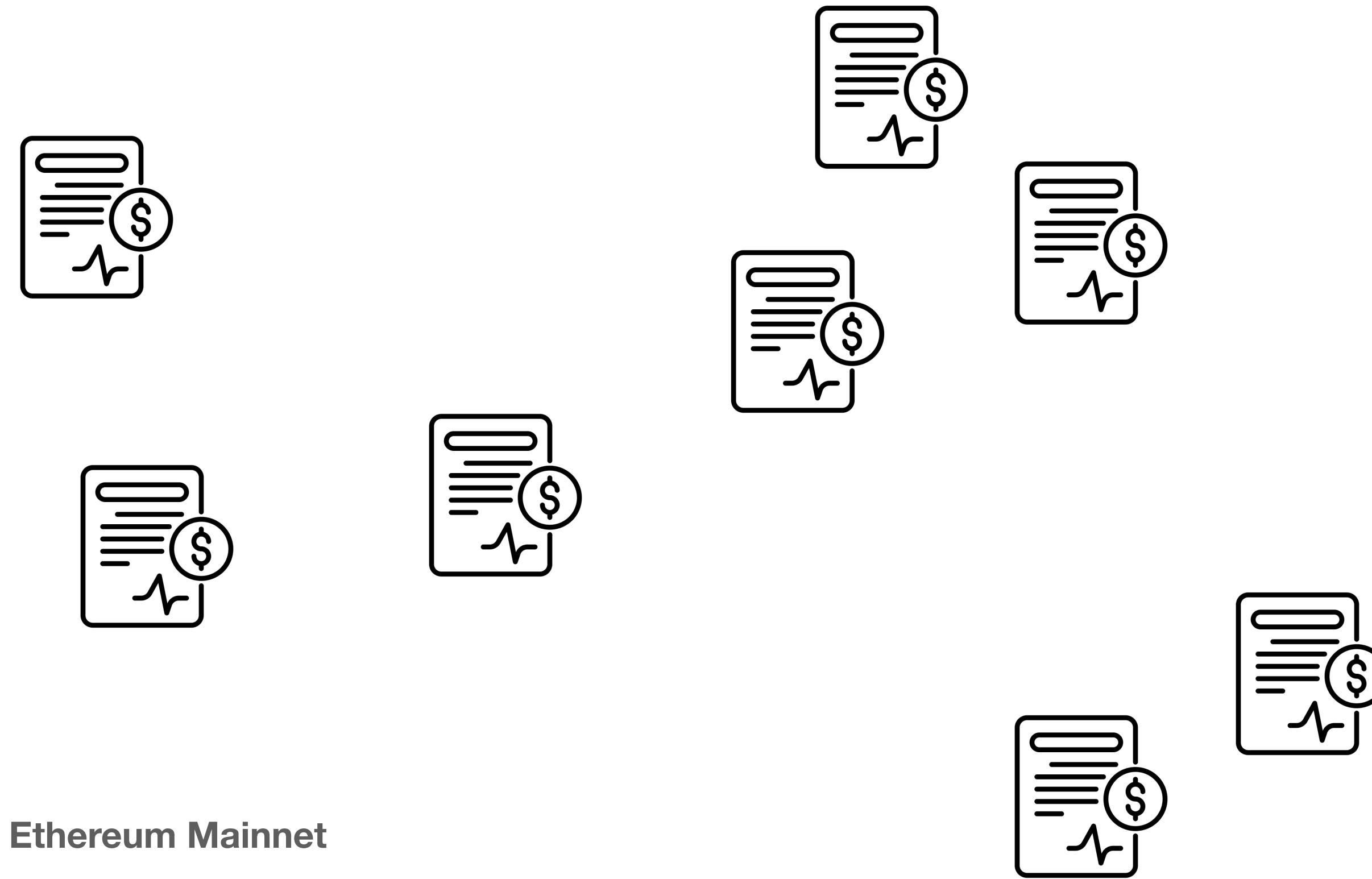
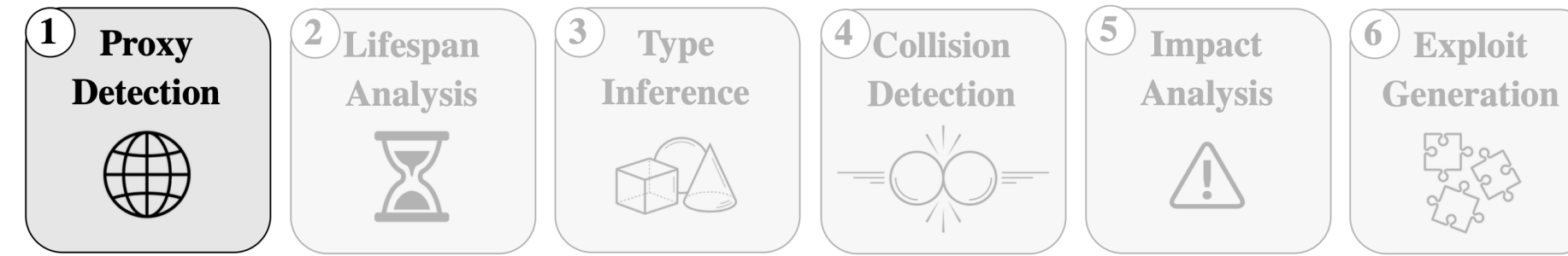
Detecting Storage Collisions: CRUSH



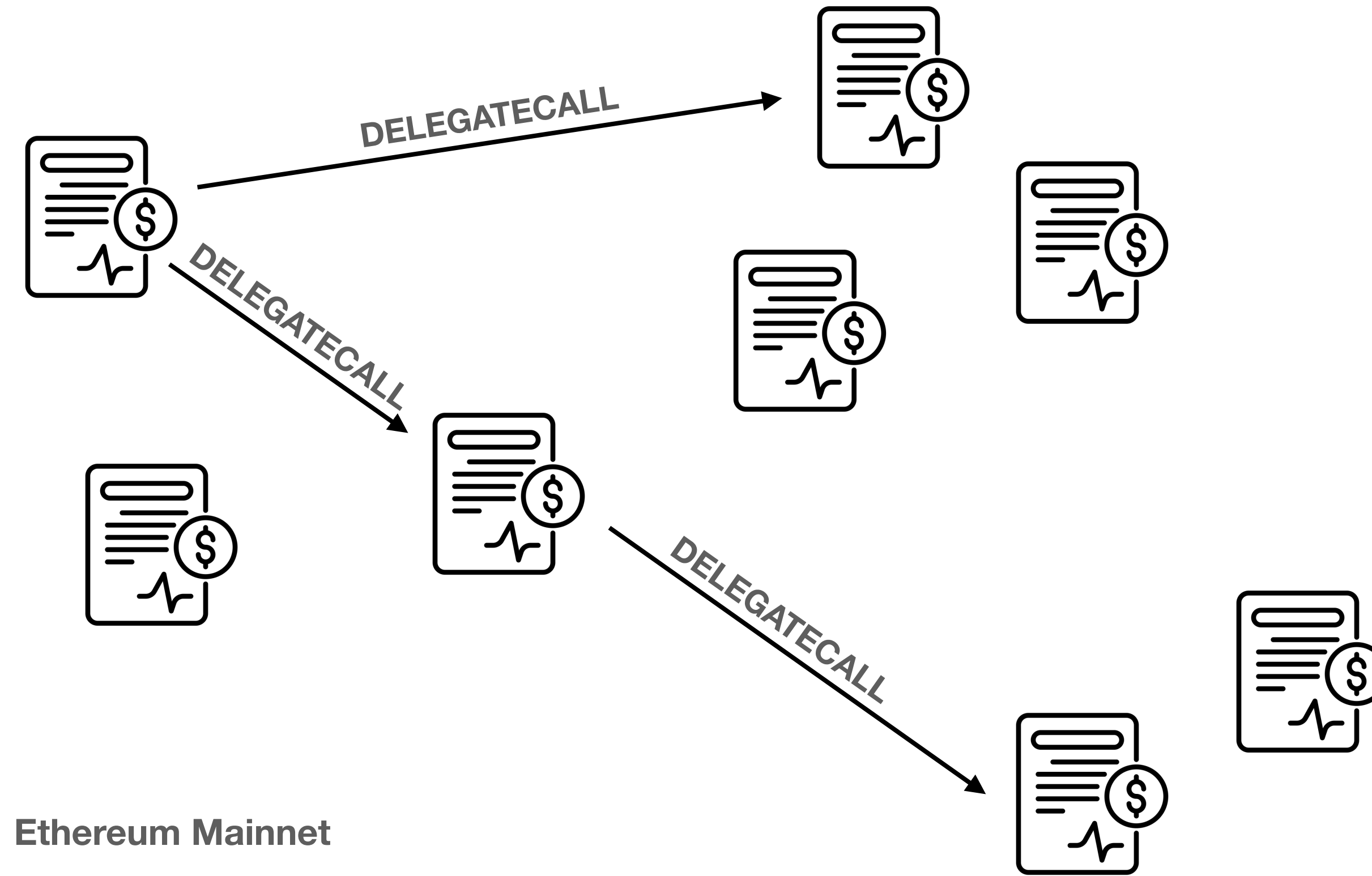
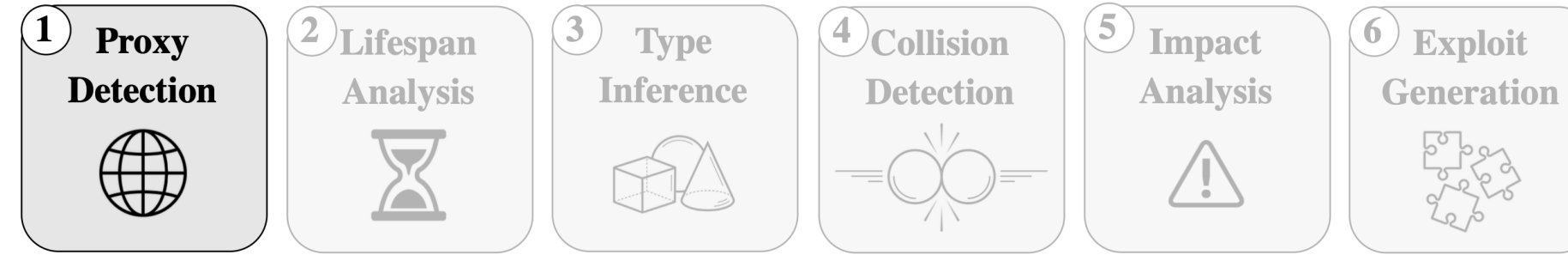


~~SOURCE CODE~~ → **EVM BYTECODE**

CRUSH

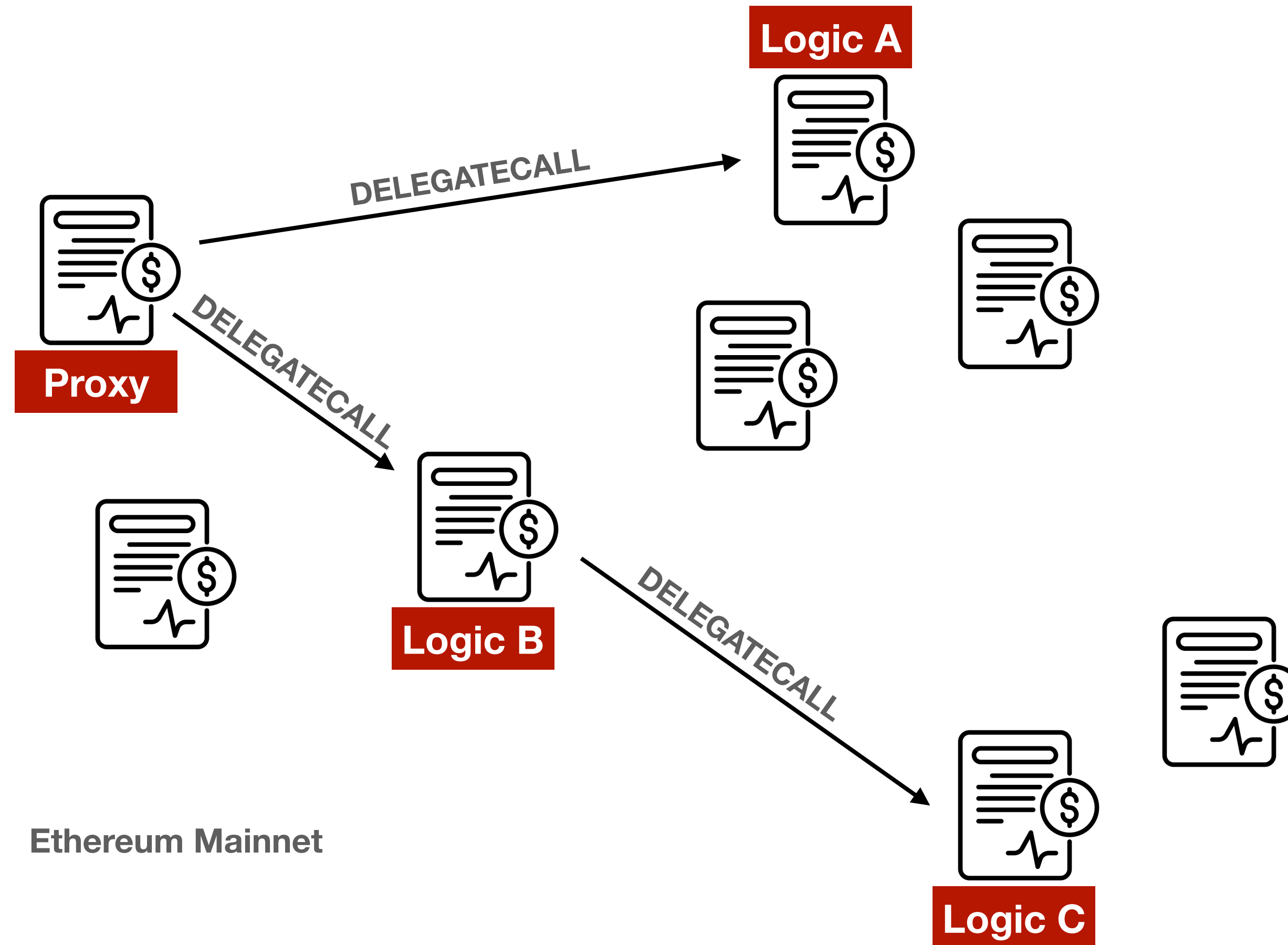


CRUSH

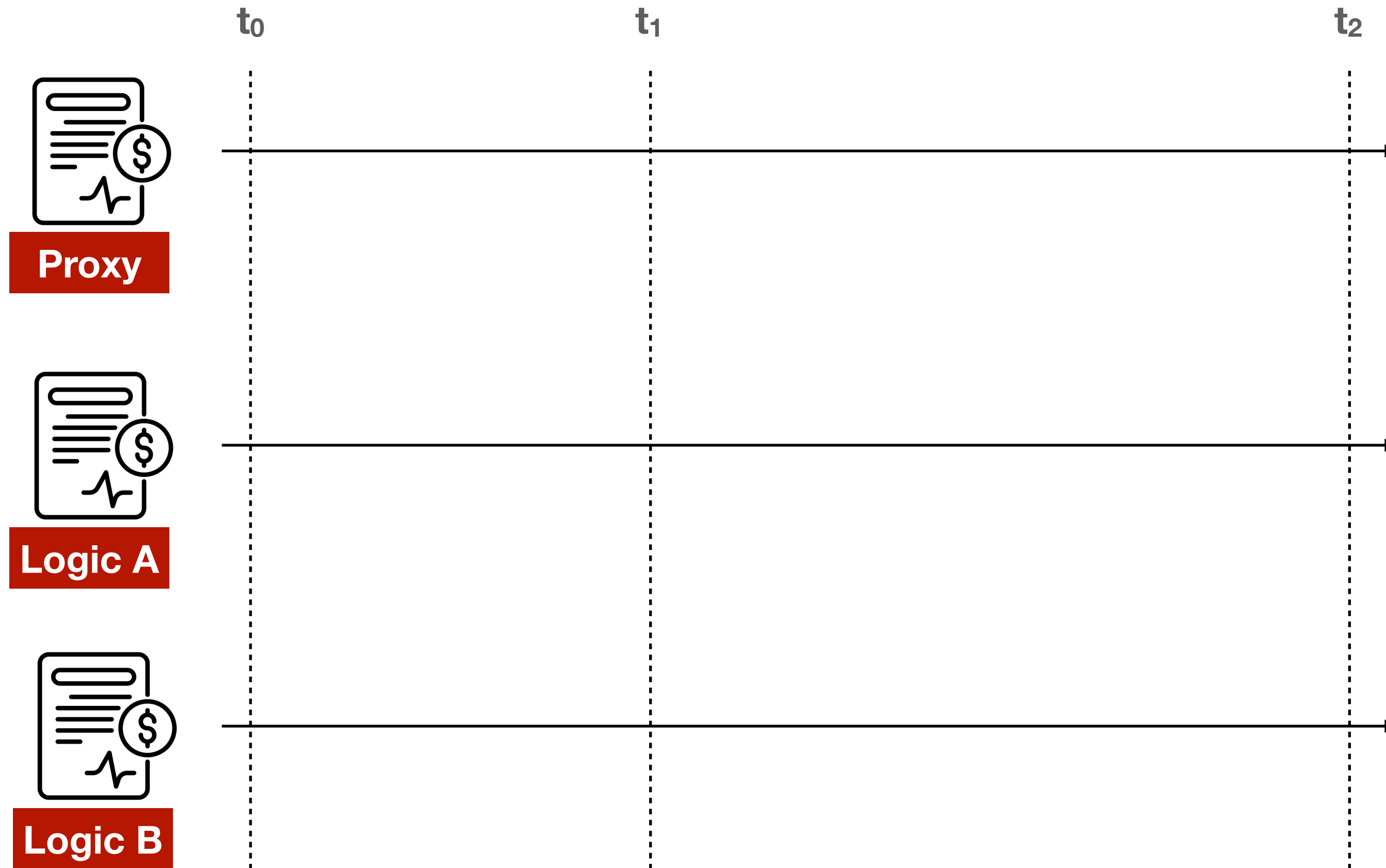
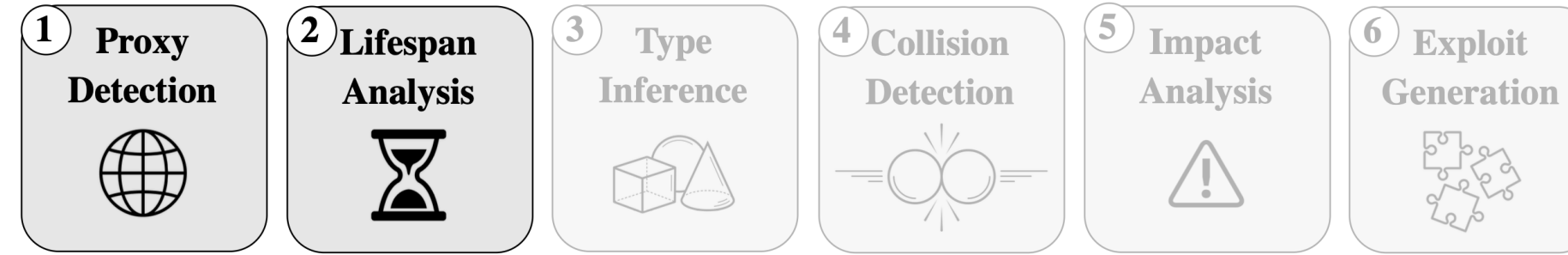


CRUSH

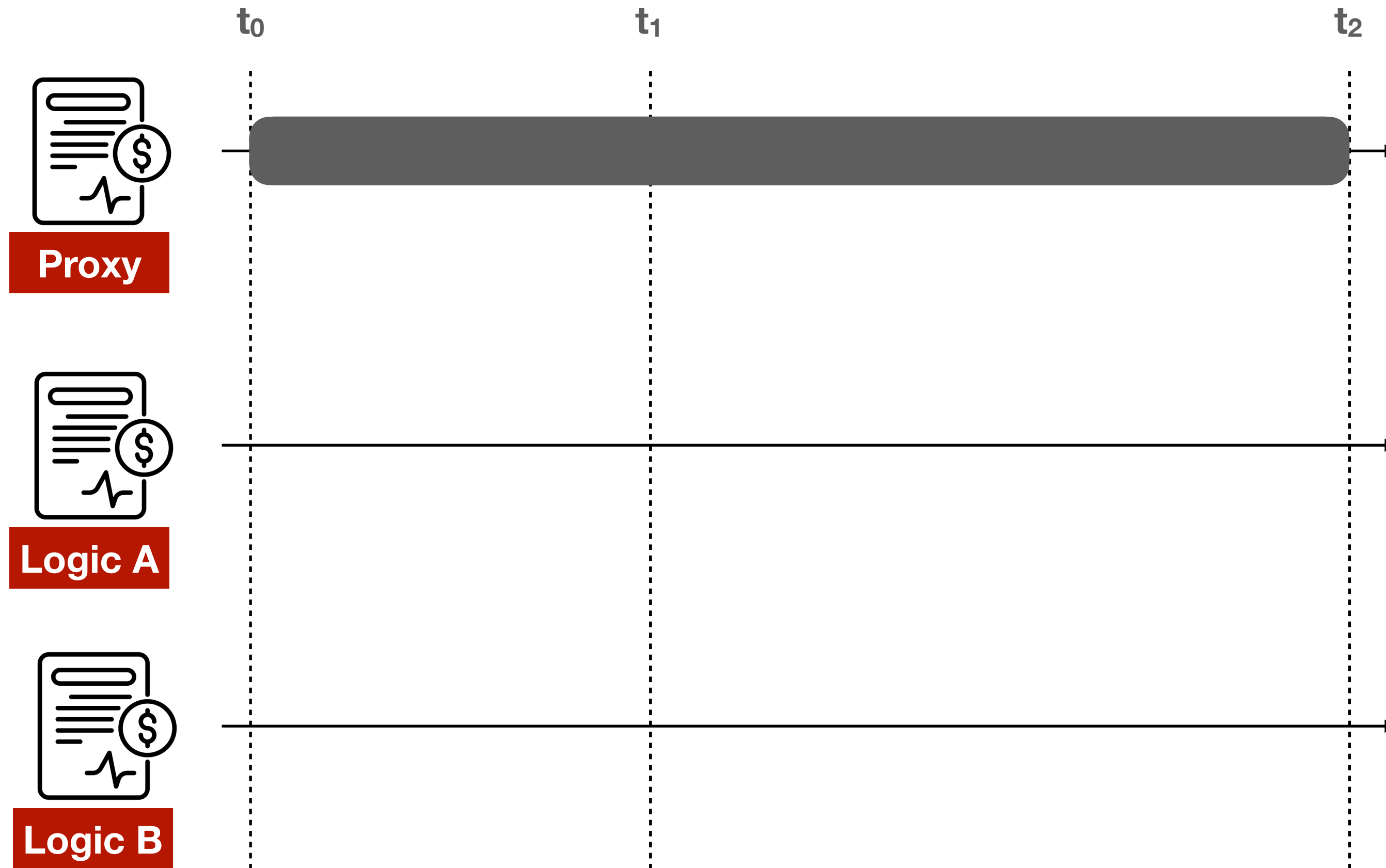
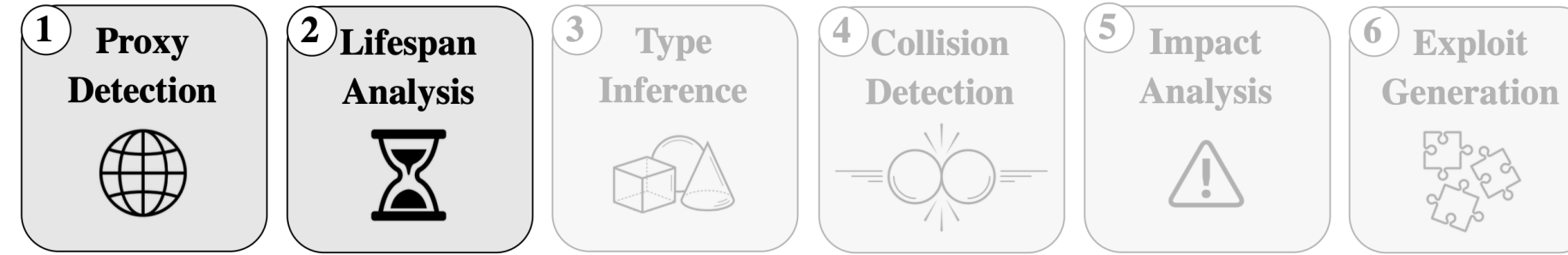
- 1 Proxy Detection
- 2 Lifespan Analysis
- 3 Type Inference
- 4 Collision Detection
- 5 Impact Analysis
- 6 Exploit Generation



CRUSH

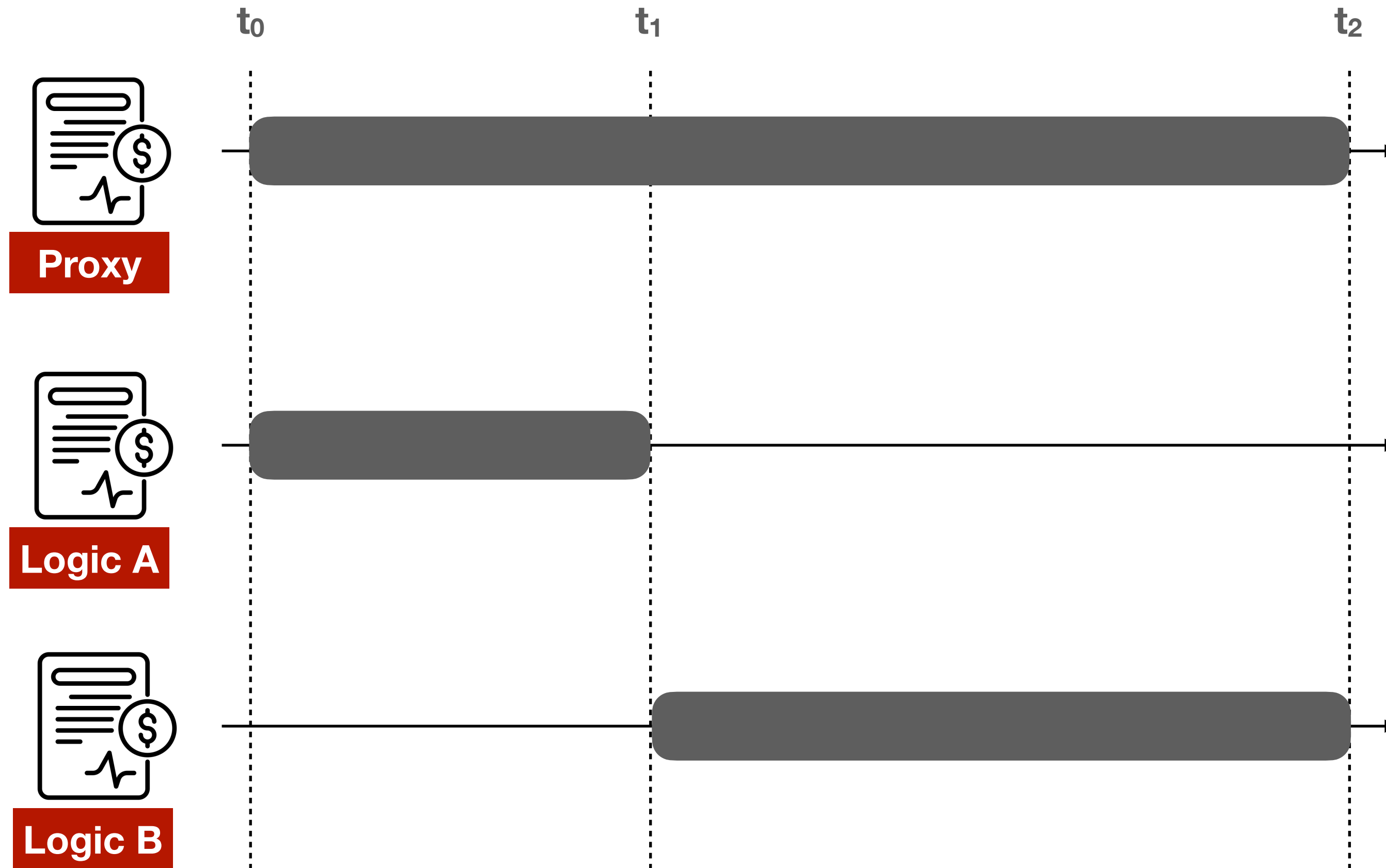
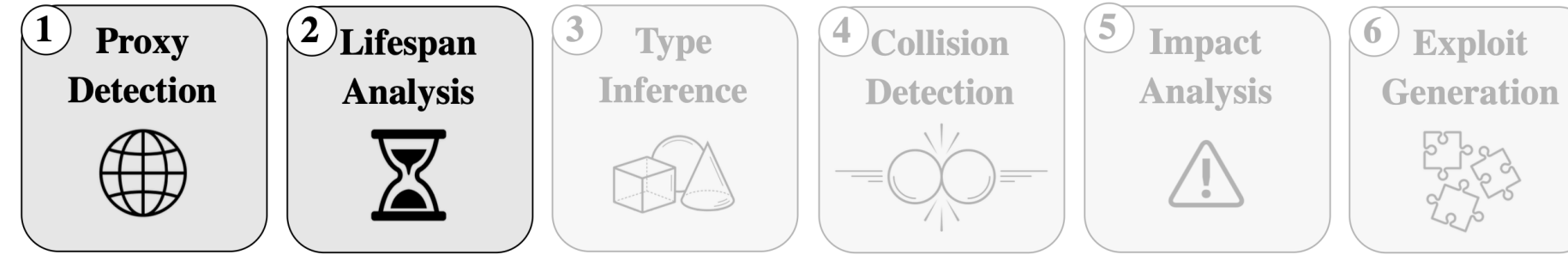


CRUSH



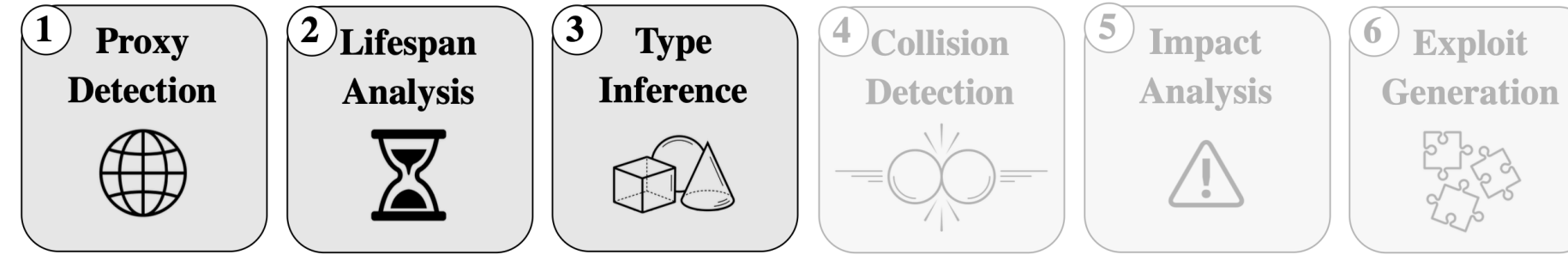
- **Proxy** - always active

CRUSH



- **Proxy** - always active
- **Logic** - historical values

CRUSH



Proxy



Logic A



Logic B

Storage View (Proxy)

[0]

uint

Storage View (Logic A)

[0]

uint

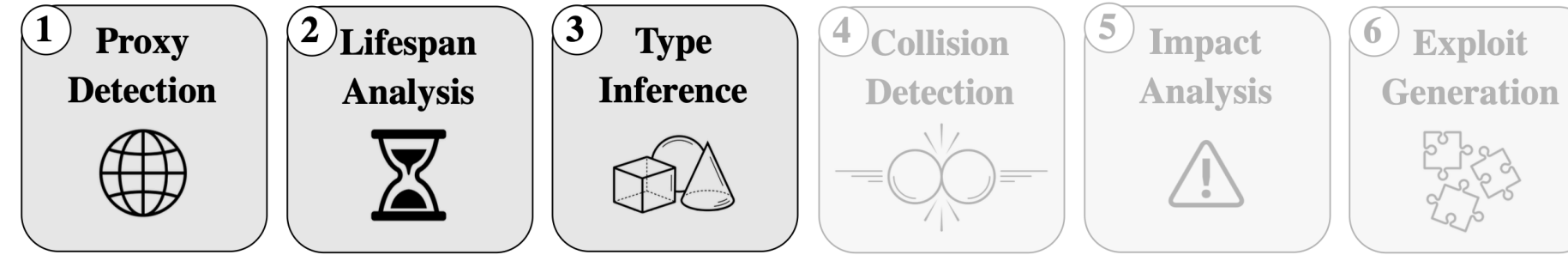
Storage View (Logic B)

[0]

address

bool

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

Storage View (Proxy)

[0]

uint



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

Storage View (Logic A)

[0]

uint



Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

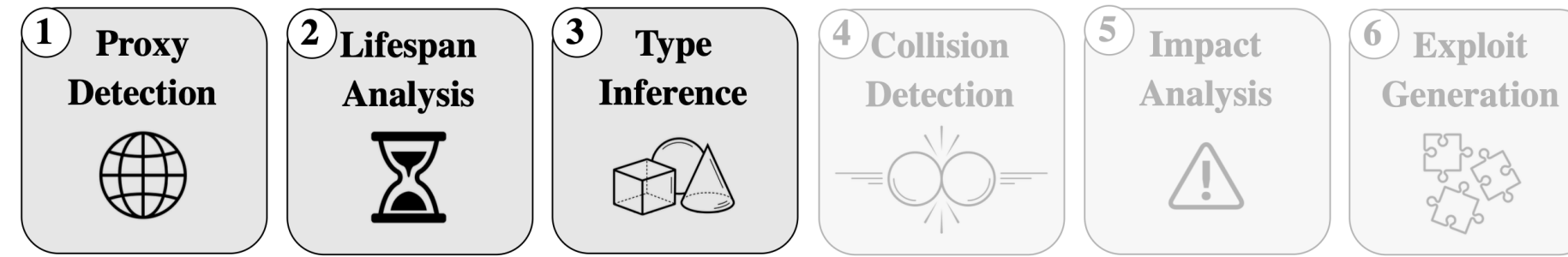
Storage View (Logic B)

[0]

address

bool

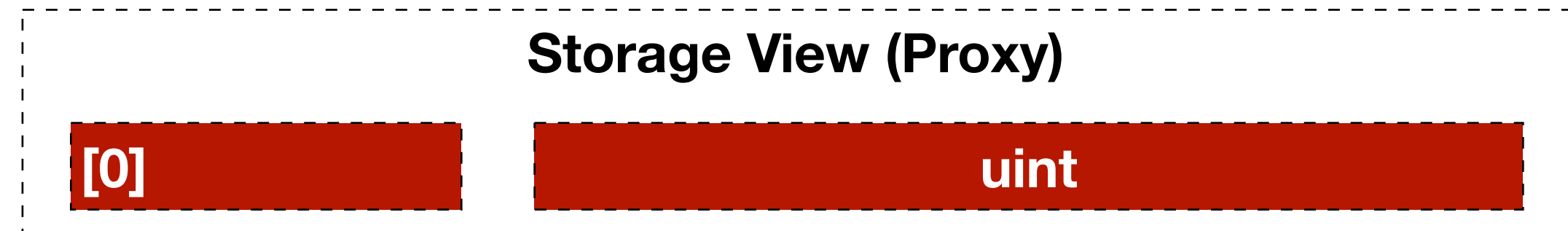
CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```



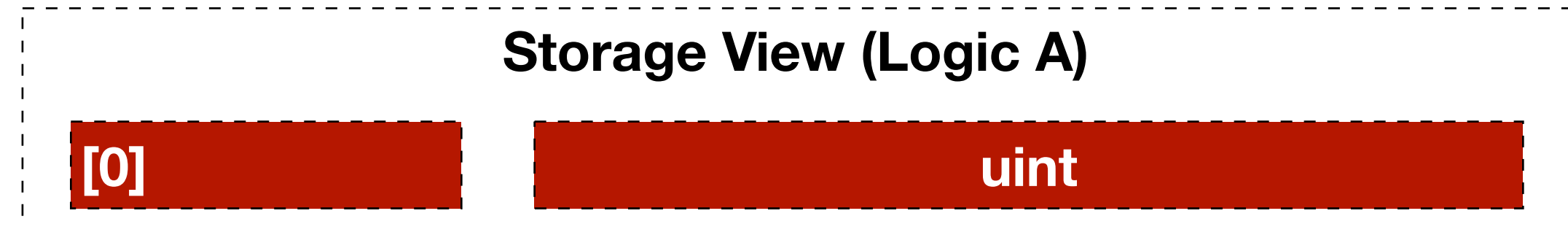
MASK (uint): ff ff ff ff



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```



MASK (uint): ff ff ff ff



Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

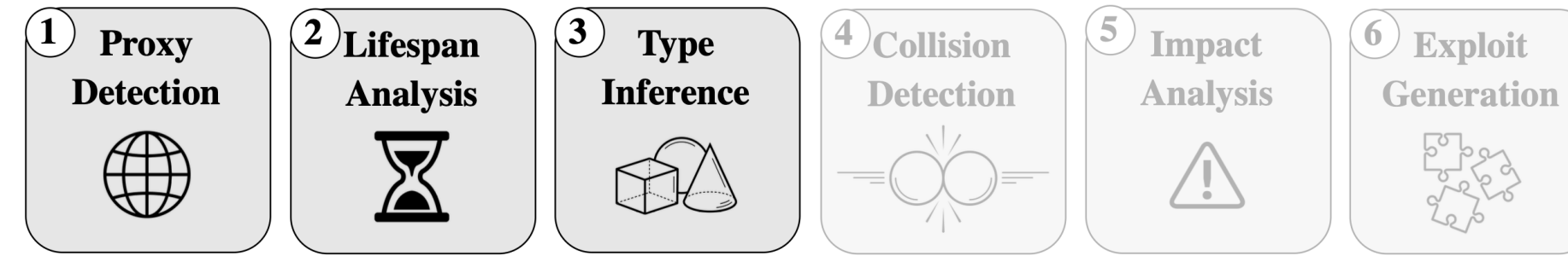
```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```



MASK (addr): ff ff ff 00

MASK (bool): 00 00 00 ff

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations (SLOAD, SSTORE)



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

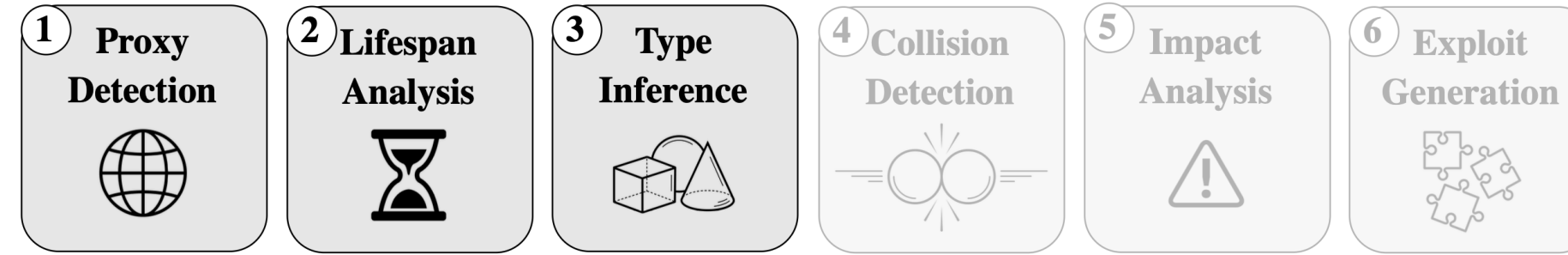


Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations (SLOAD, SSTORE)

2. Backward slice on SSTORE



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

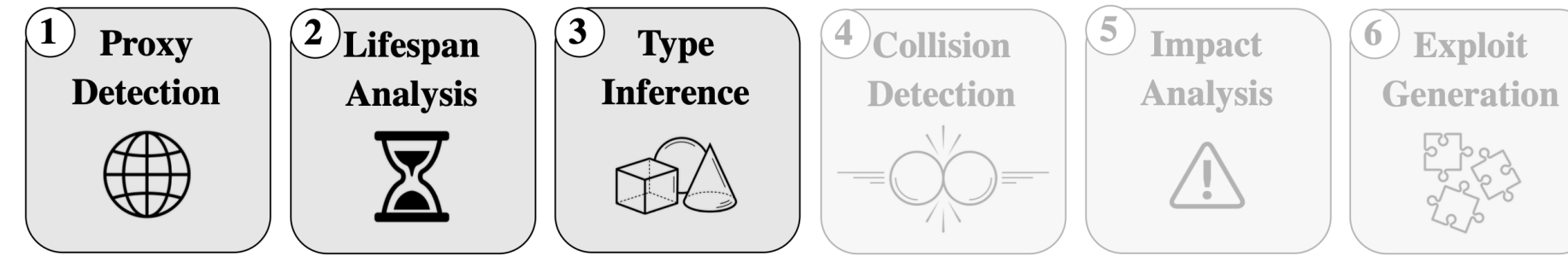


Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations
(SLOAD, SSTORE)

2. Backward slice on SSTORE



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

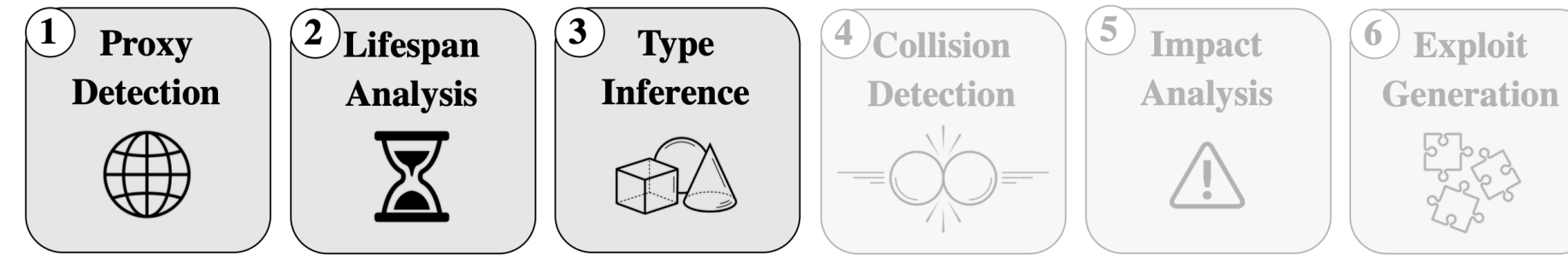


Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
V2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```


CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations (SLOAD, SSTORE)

2. Backward slice on SSTORE



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

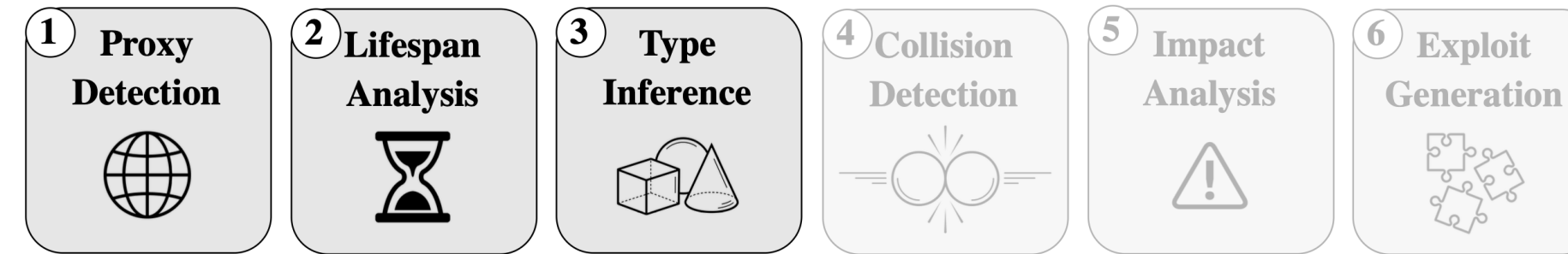


Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
v1 = CONST 0x0  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations (SLOAD, SSTORE)



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

2. Backward slice on SSTORE
3. Forward slice on SLOAD

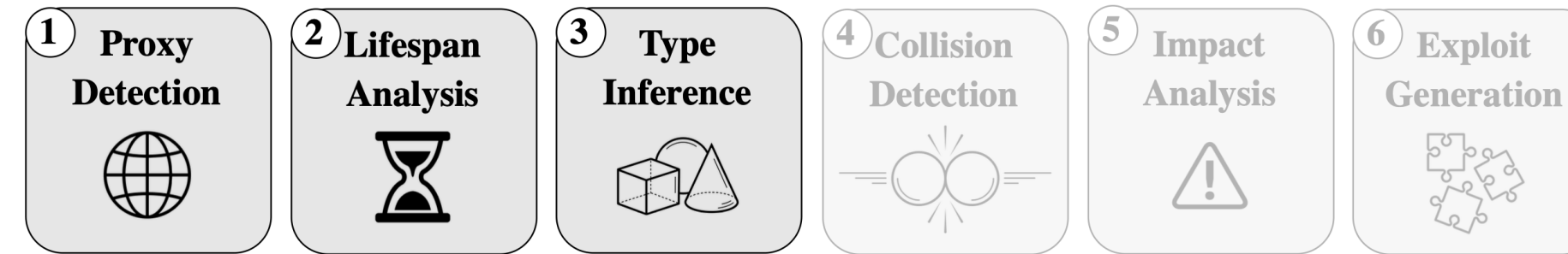


Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0
```

```
v1 = CONST 0x0  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
CALL v1 ...
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations
(SLOAD, SSTORE)



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
CALL v1 ...
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

2. Backward slice on SSTORE
3. Forward slice on SLOAD

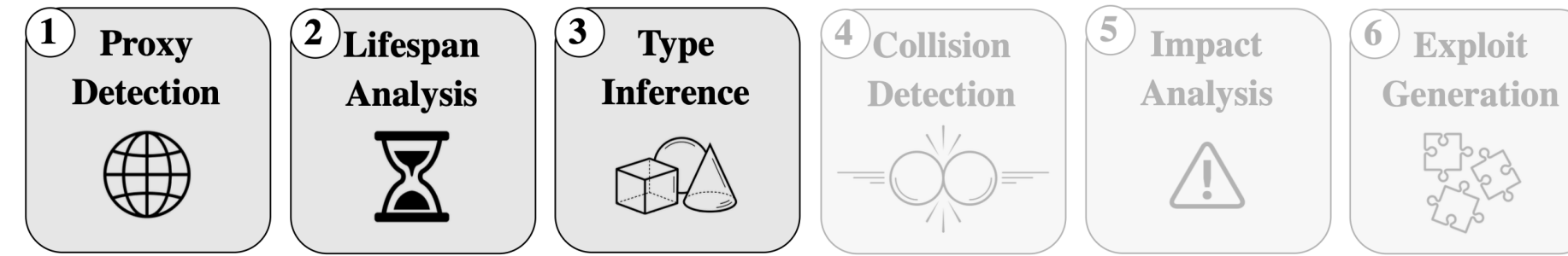


Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8
```

```
v1 = CONST 0x0  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
CALL v1 ...
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations
(SLOAD, SSTORE)



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
CALL v1 ...
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

2. Backward slice on SSTORE
3. Forward slice on SLOAD

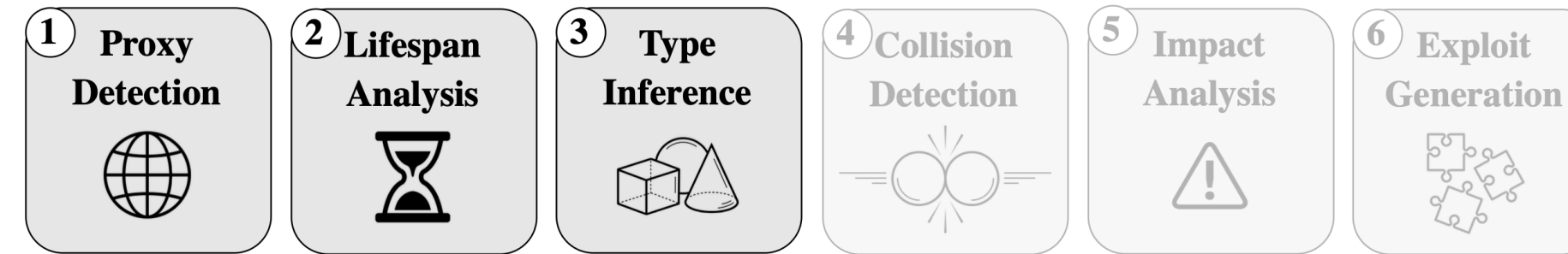


Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8  
CALL v2 ...
```

```
v1 = CONST 0x0  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
CALL v1 ...
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
CALL v1 ...
```

```
v2 = CONST 0x0  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```



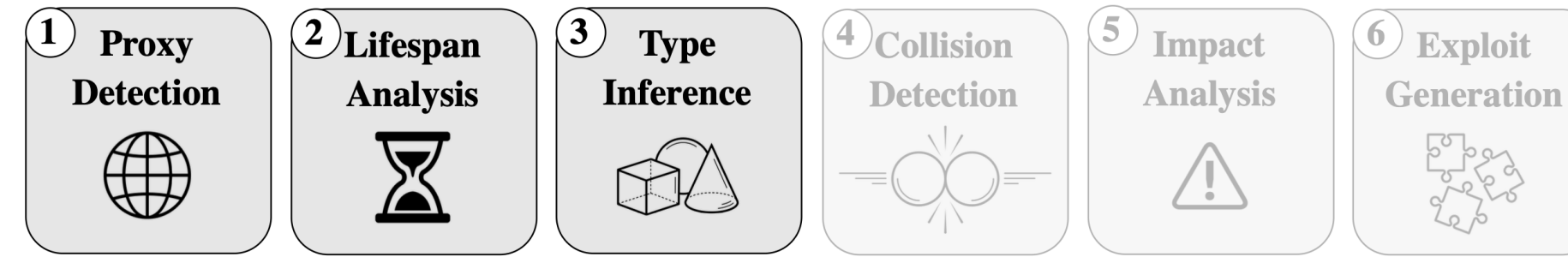
Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8  
CALL v2 ...
```

```
v1 = CONST 0x0  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations (SLOAD, SSTORE)
2. Backward slice on SSTORE
3. Forward slice on SLOAD
4. Symbolic Execution to track **access mask**

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```



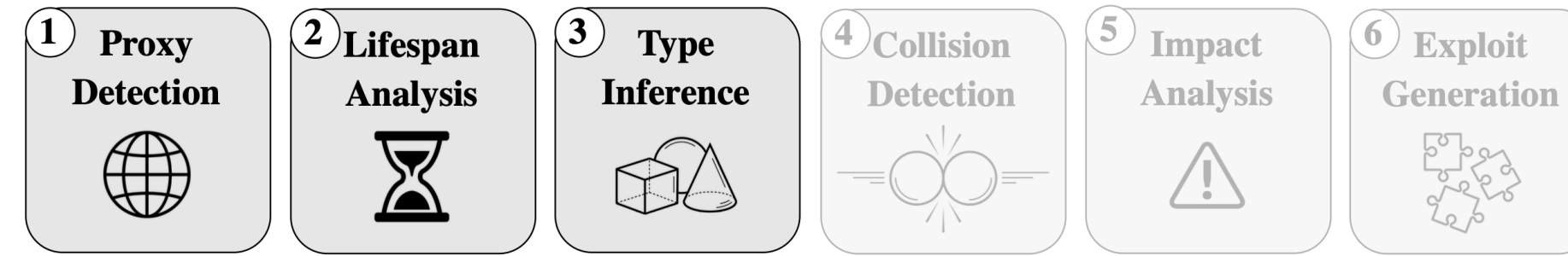
Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8  
<sink>
```

```
v1 = <source>  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

1. Find storage operations (SLOAD, SSTORE)
2. Backward slice on SSTORE
3. Forward slice on SLOAD
4. Symbolic Execution to track **access mask**

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff



Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8  
<sink>
```

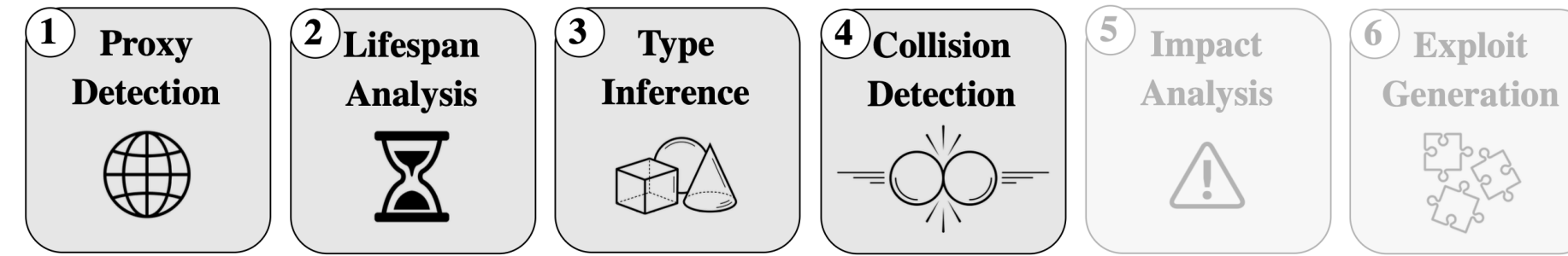
MASK: ff ff ff 00

```
v1 = <source>  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: 00 00 00 ff

1. Find storage operations (SLOAD, SSTORE)
2. Backward slice on SSTORE
3. Forward slice on SLOAD
4. Symbolic Execution to track **access mask**

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff



Logic B

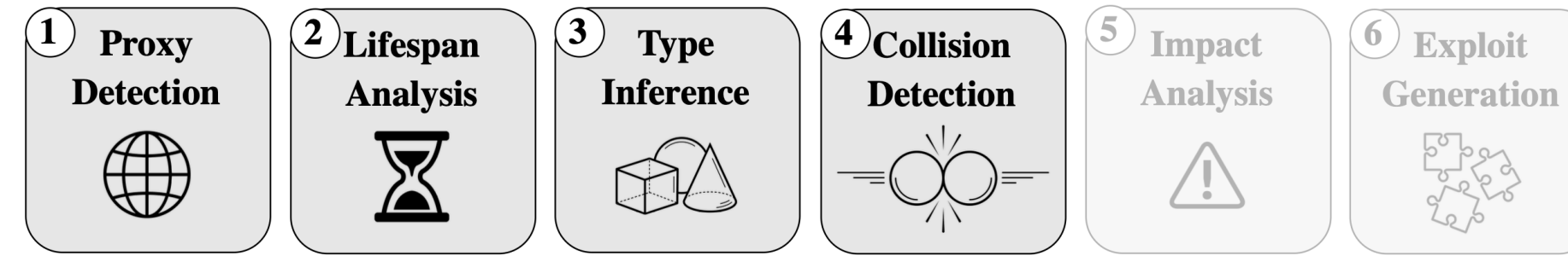
```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff 00

```
v1 = <source>  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: 00 00 00 ff

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

- Detected collision at slot 0x0



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff



Logic B

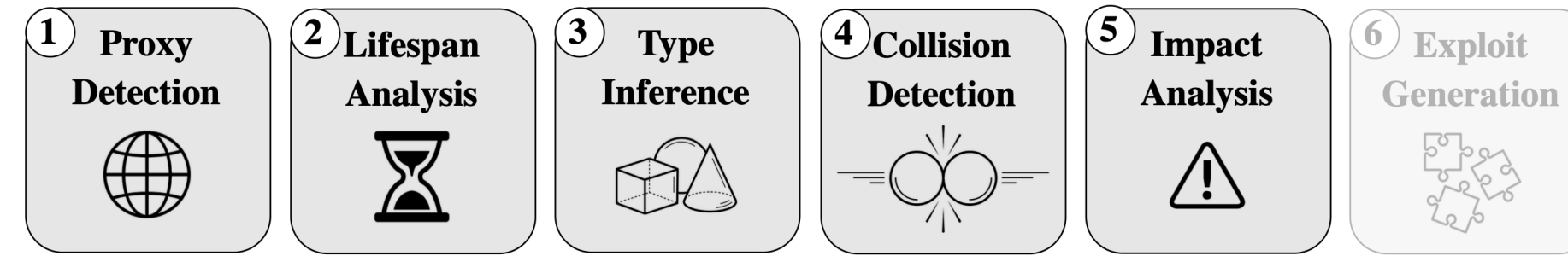
```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff 00

```
v1 = <source>  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: 00 00 00 ff

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

- Detected collision at slot 0x0



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff



Logic B

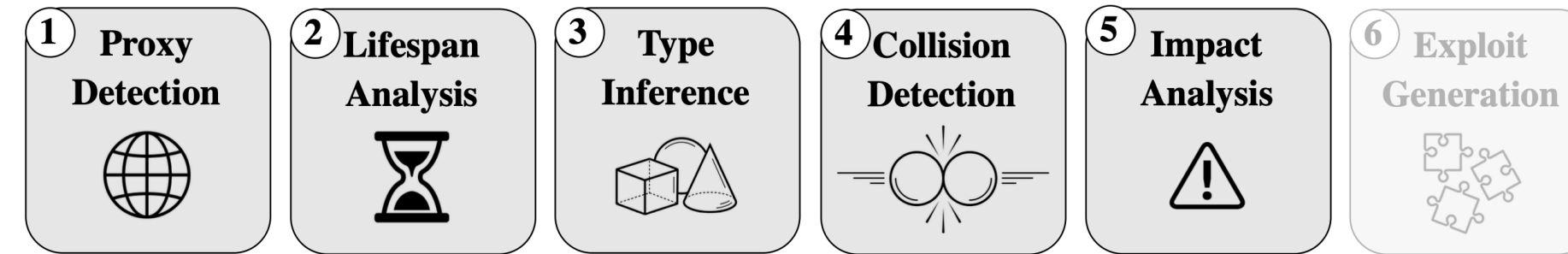
```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff 00

```
v1 = <source>  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: 00 00 00 ff

CRUSH



Proxy

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff



Logic A

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
<sink>
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff

```
v2 = <source>  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: ff ff ff ff



Logic B

```
v1 = SLOAD 0x0  
v2 = SHR v1, 0x8  
<sink>
```

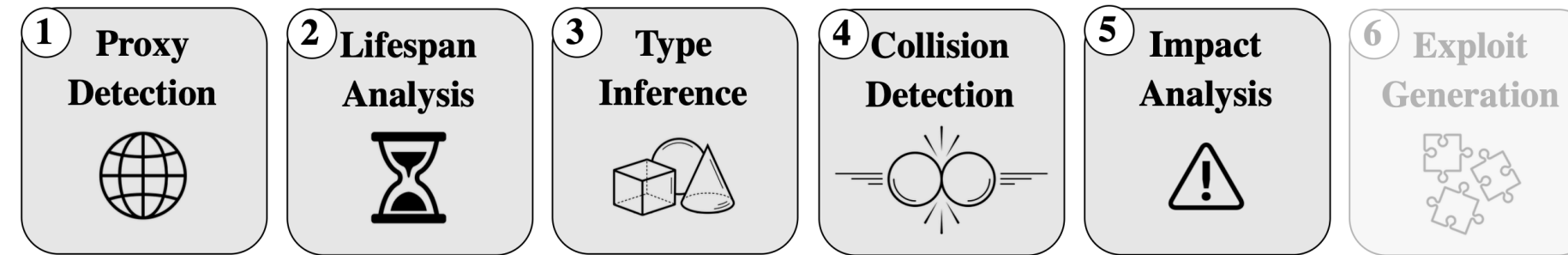
MASK: ff ff ff 00

```
v1 = <source>  
v2 = AND v1, 0xff  
SSTORE v2, 0x0
```

MASK: 00 00 00 ff

- Detected collision at slot 0x0
- Is the slot used in any **sensitive** operation?

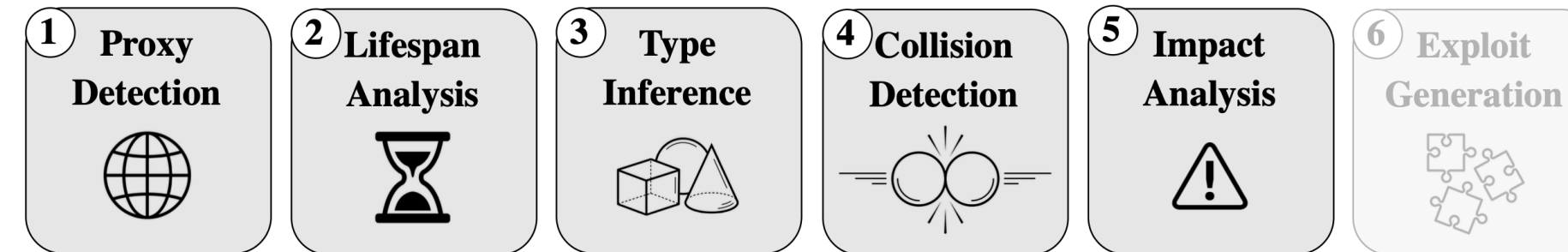
CRUSH



```
1 contract Proxy {
2     uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
3     address LOGIC; // storage slot [...]
4
5     constructor() {
6         LOGIC = [...];
7         visits = 0;
8         LOGIC.initialize();
9     }
10    fallback() external {
11        visits += 1;
12        LOGIC.delegatecall(msg.data);
13    }
14 }
15
16 contract LogicA {
17     uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
18     [...]
19 }
20
21 contract LogicB {
22     bool initialized; // storage slot [0x0]
23     address admin; // storage slot [0x0]
24
25     function initialize() external {
26         require(!initialized);
27         initialized = 1;
28         admin = msg.sender;
29     }
30     function withdraw() external {
31         require(msg.sender == admin);
32         payable(admin).transfer(this.balance);
33     }
34 }
```

- Detected collision at slot 0x0
- Is the slot used in any **sensitive** operation?

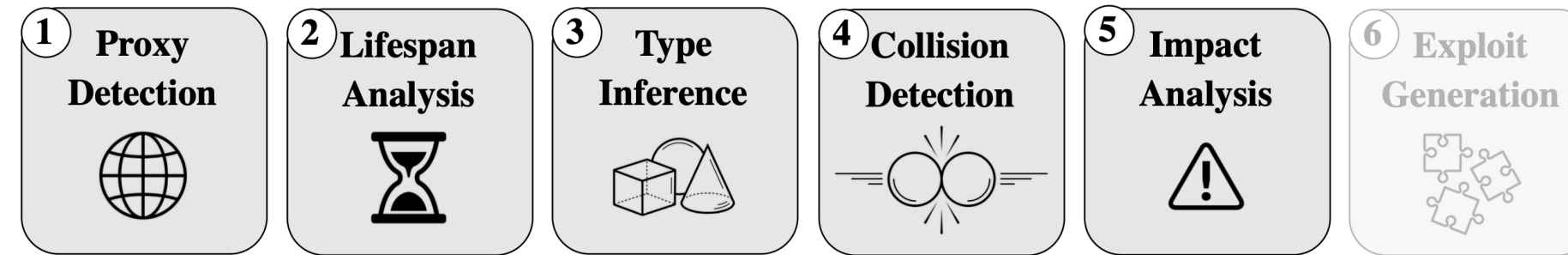
CRUSH



```
1 contract Proxy {
2     uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
3     address LOGIC; // storage slot [...]
4
5     constructor() {
6         LOGIC = [...];
7         visits = 0;
8         LOGIC.initialize();
9     }
10    fallback() external {
11        visits += 1;
12        LOGIC.delegatecall(msg.data);
13    }
14 }
15
16 contract LogicA {
17     uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
18     [...]
19 }
20
21 contract LogicB {
22     bool initialized; // storage slot [0x0]
23     address admin; // storage slot [0x0]
24
25     function initialize() external {
26         require(!initialized);
27         initialized = 1;
28         admin = msg.sender;
29     }
30     function withdraw() external {
31         require(msg.sender == admin);
32         payable(admin).transfer(this.balance);
33     }
34 }
```

- Detected collision at slot 0x0
- Is the slot used in any **sensitive** operation?
 - **NO** in Proxy/LogicA, **YES** in LogicB

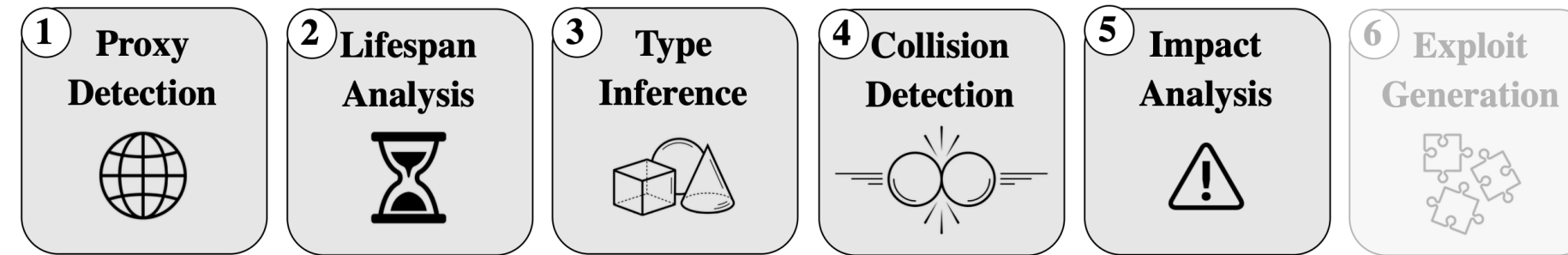
CRUSH



```
1 contract Proxy {
2     uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
3     address LOGIC; // storage slot [...]
4
5     constructor() {
6         LOGIC = [...];
7         visits = 0;
8         LOGIC.initialize();
9     }
10    fallback() external {
11        visits += 1;
12        LOGIC.delegatecall(msg.data);
13    }
14 }
15
16 contract LogicA {
17     uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
18     [...]
19 }
20
21 contract LogicB {
22     bool initialized; // storage slot [0x0]
23     address admin; // storage slot [0x0]
24
25     function initialize() external {
26         require(!initialized);
27         initialized = 1;
28         admin = msg.sender;
29     }
30     function withdraw() external {
31         require(msg.sender == admin);
32         payable(admin).transfer(this.balance);
33     }
34 }
```

- Detected collision at slot 0x0
- Is the slot used in any **sensitive** operation?
 - **NO** in Proxy/LogicA, **YES** in LogicB
- Is the slot **guarding** any sensitive operation?

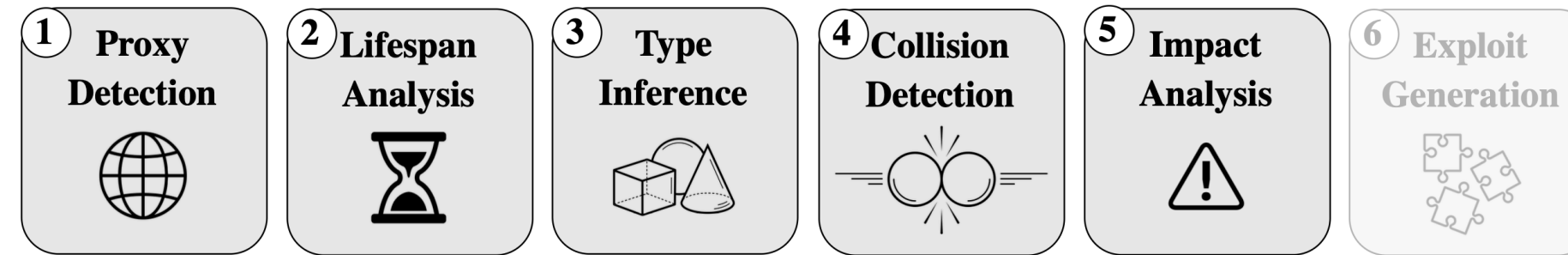
CRUSH



```
1 contract Proxy {
2   uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
3   address LOGIC; // storage slot [...]
4
5   constructor() {
6     LOGIC = [...];
7     visits = 0;
8     LOGIC.initialize();
9   }
10  fallback() external {
11    visits += 1;
12    LOGIC.delegatecall(msg.data);
13  }
14 }
15
16 contract LogicA {
17   uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
18   [...]
19 }
20
21 contract LogicB {
22   bool initialized; // storage slot [0x0]
23   address admin; // storage slot [0x0]
24
25   function initialize() external {
26     require(!initialized);
27     initialized = 1;
28     admin = msg.sender;
29   }
30   function withdraw() external {
31     require(msg.sender == admin);
32     payable(admin).transfer(this.balance);
33   }
34 }
```

- Detected collision at slot 0x0
- Is the slot used in any **sensitive** operation?
 - **NO** in Proxy/LogicA, **YES** in LogicB
- Is the slot **guarding** any sensitive operation?
 - **NO** in Proxy/LogicA, **YES** in LogicB

CRUSH

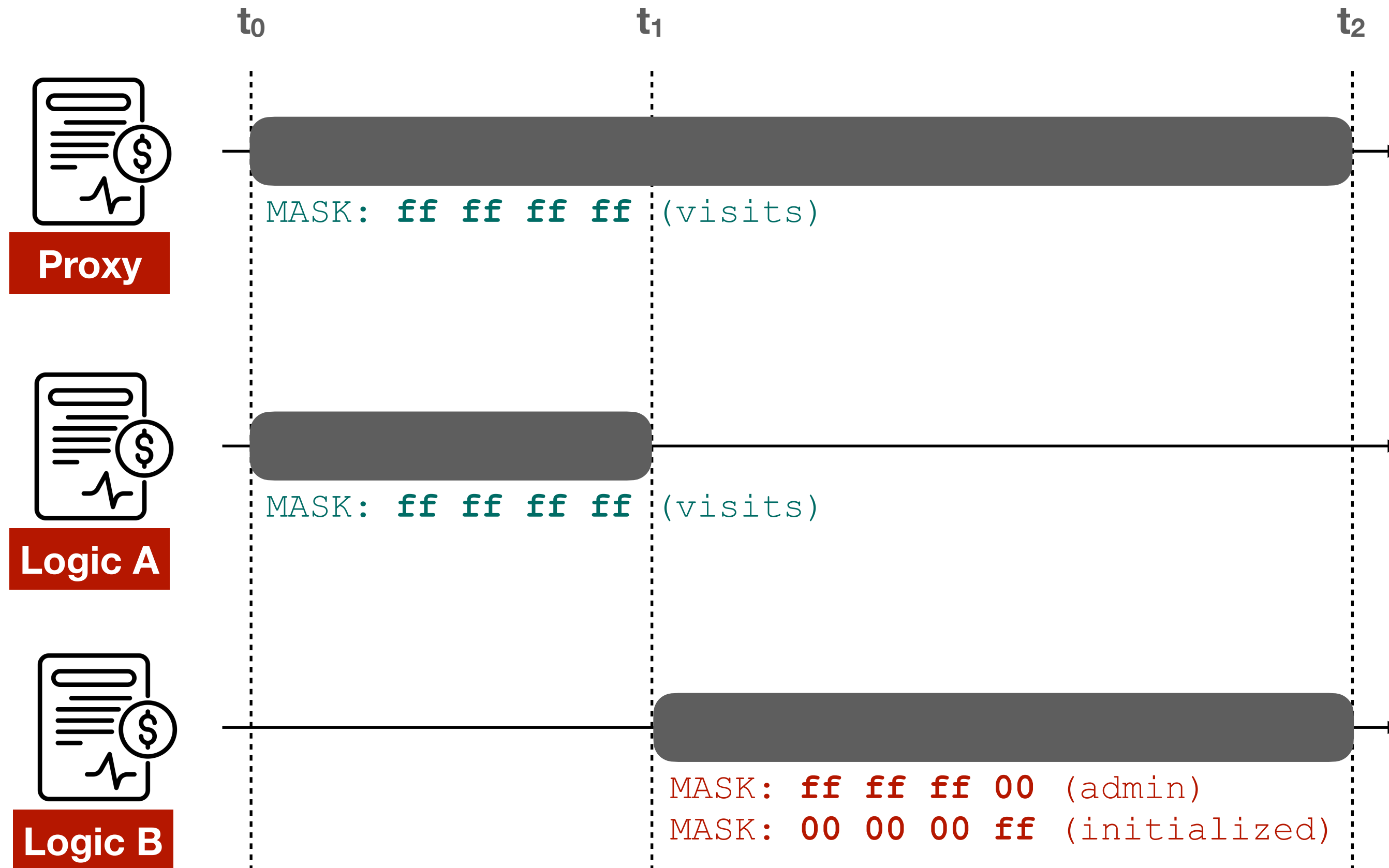
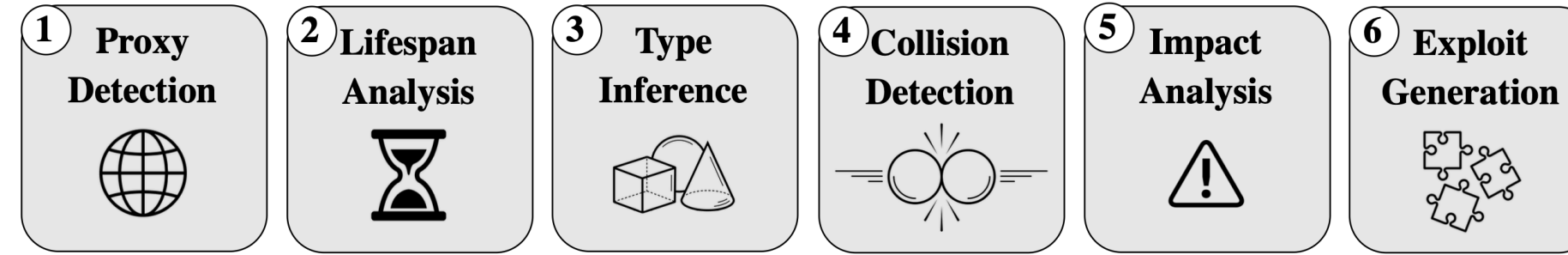


```
1 contract Proxy {
2     uint visits; // storage slot [0x0]
3     address LOGIC; // storage slot [...]
4
5     constructor() {
6         LOGIC = [...];
7         visits = 0;
8         LOGIC.initialize();
9     }
10    fallback() external {
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22     bool initialized; // storage slot [0x0]
23     address admin; // storage slot [0x0]
24
25     function initialize() external {
26         require(!initialized);
27         initialized = 1;
28         admin = msg.sender;
29     }
30     function withdraw() external {
31         require(msg.sender == admin);
32         payable(admin).transfer(this.balance);
33     }
34 }
```

SOURCE-CODE → EVM BYTECODE

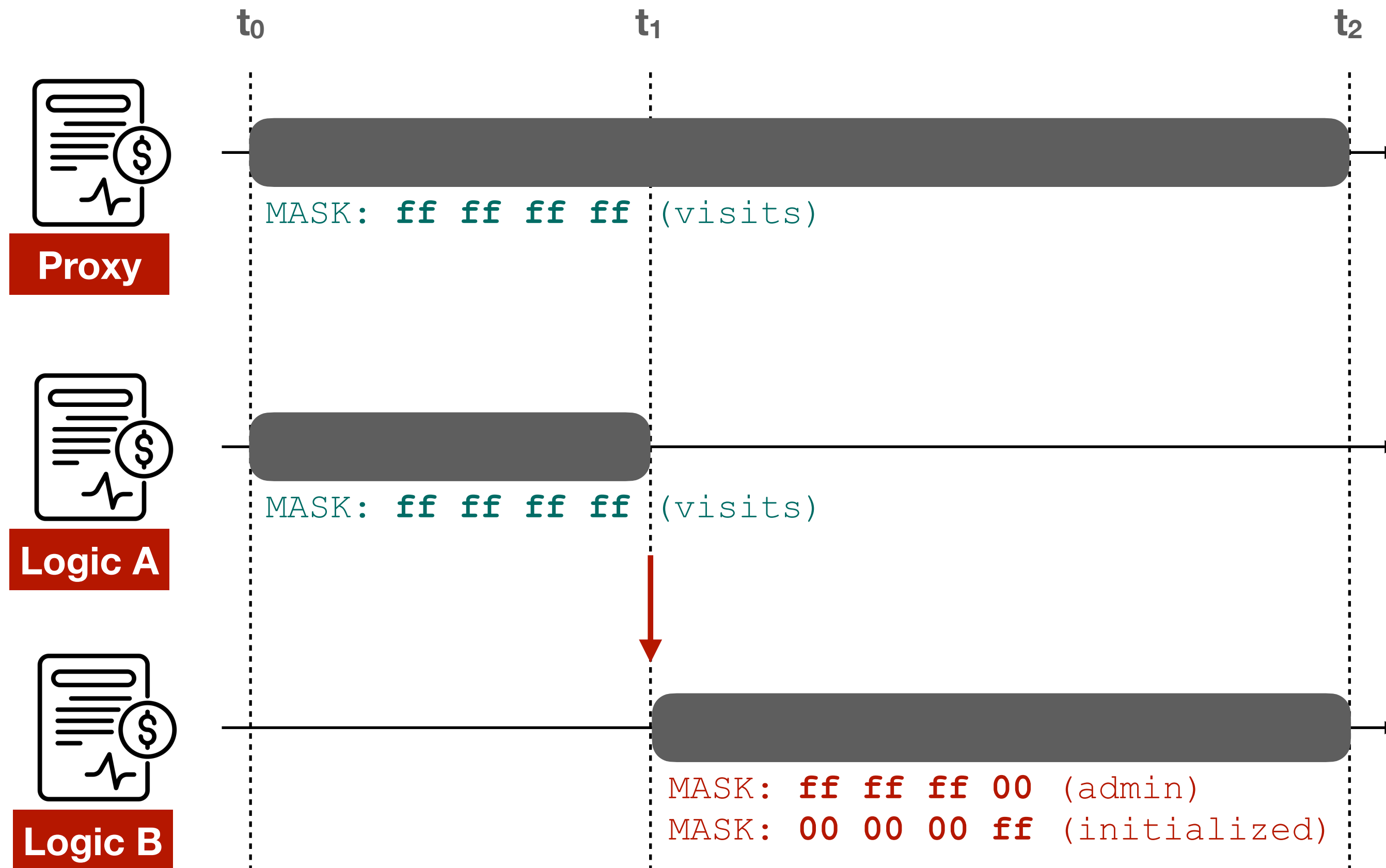
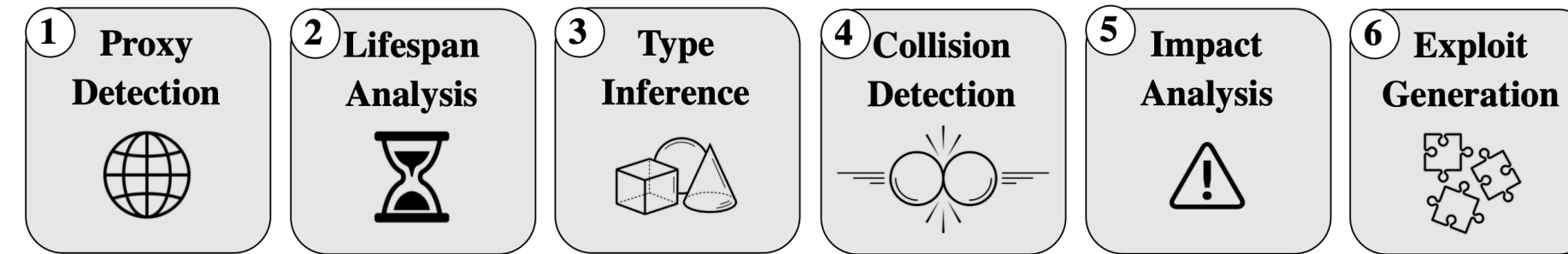
- Detected collision at slot 0x0
- Is the slot used in any **sensitive** operation?
 - **NO** in Proxy/LogicA, **YES** in LogicB
- Is the slot **guarding** any sensitive operation?
 - **NO** in Proxy/LogicA, **YES** in LogicB

CRUSH



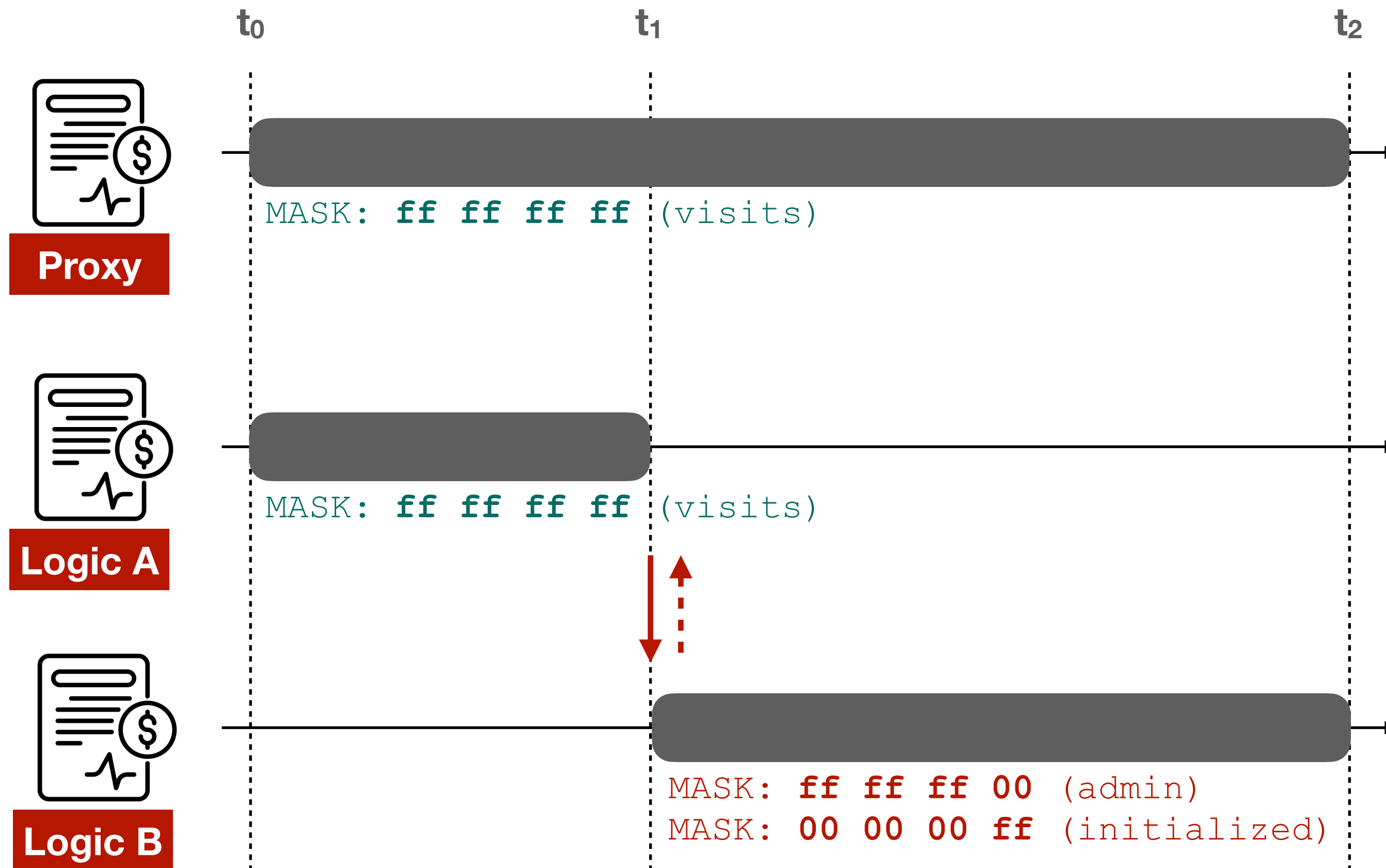
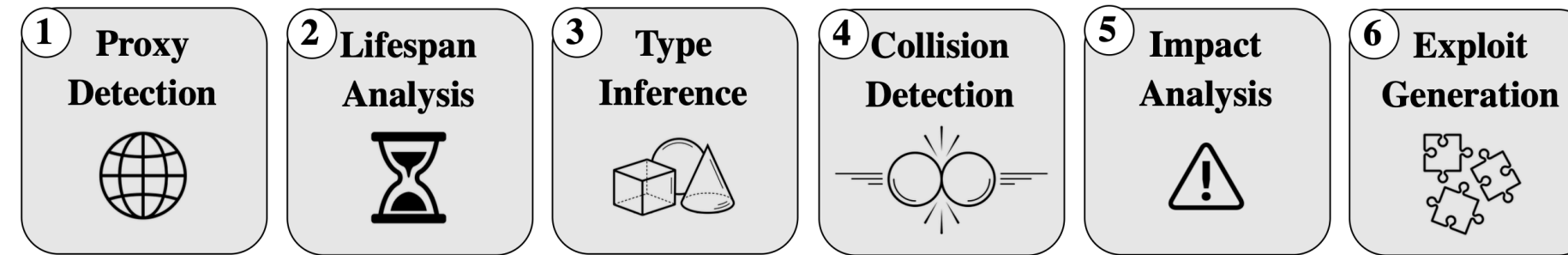
- Consider all possible attack scenarios for slot 0x0

CRUSH



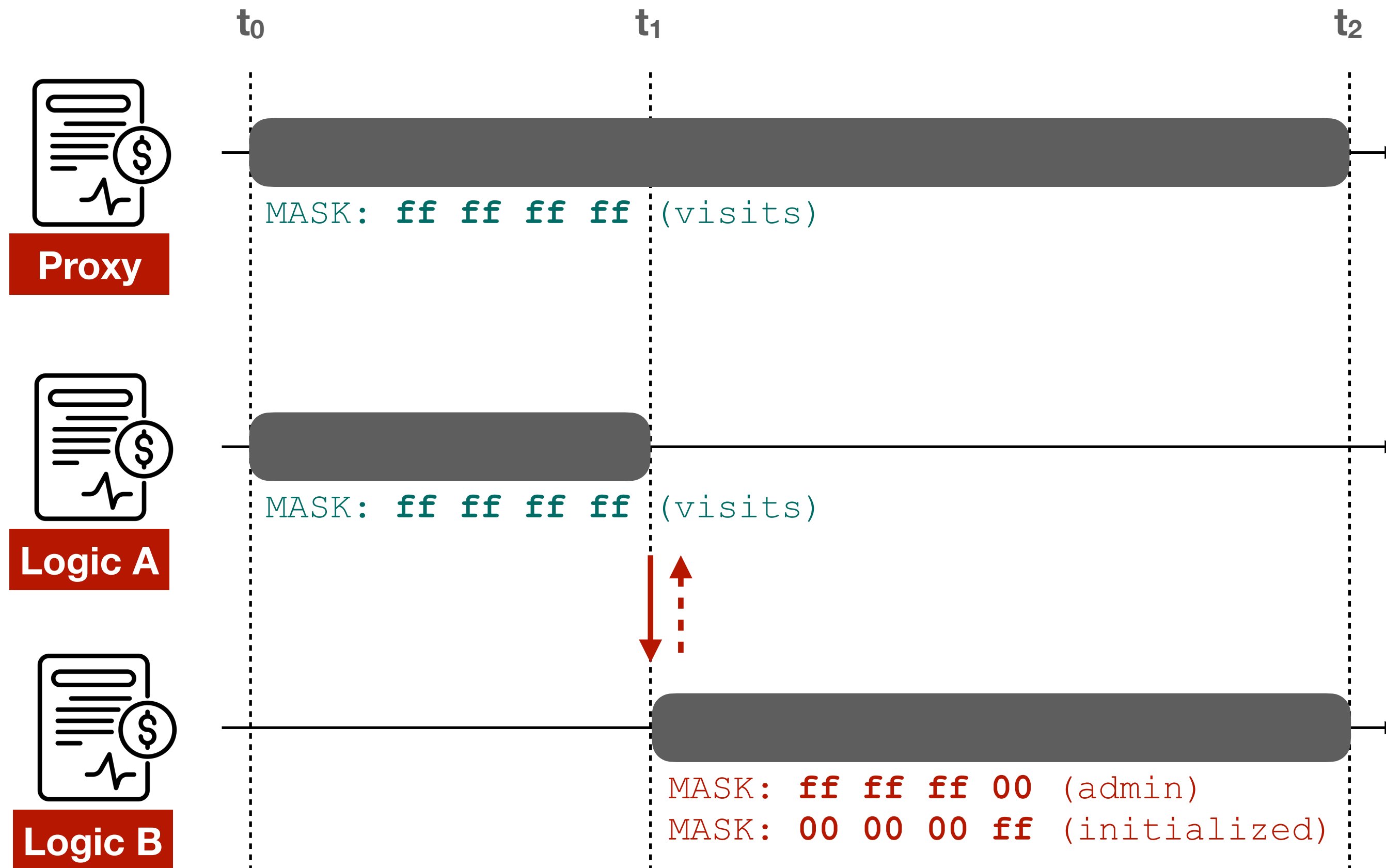
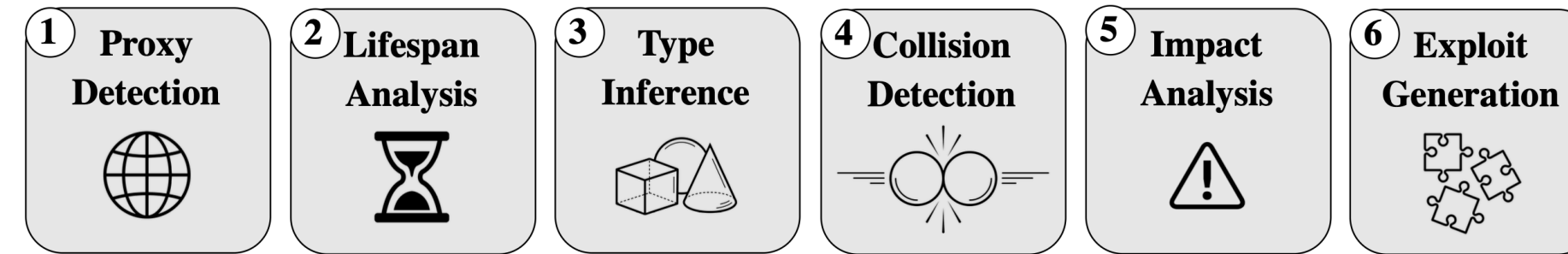
- Consider all possible attack scenarios for slot 0x0
- (t₁) Write_{LogicA} → Read_{LogicB}

CRUSH



- Consider all possible attack scenarios for slot 0x0
- (t₁) Write_{LogicA} → Read_{LogicB}
- (t₁) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{LogicA}

CRUSH



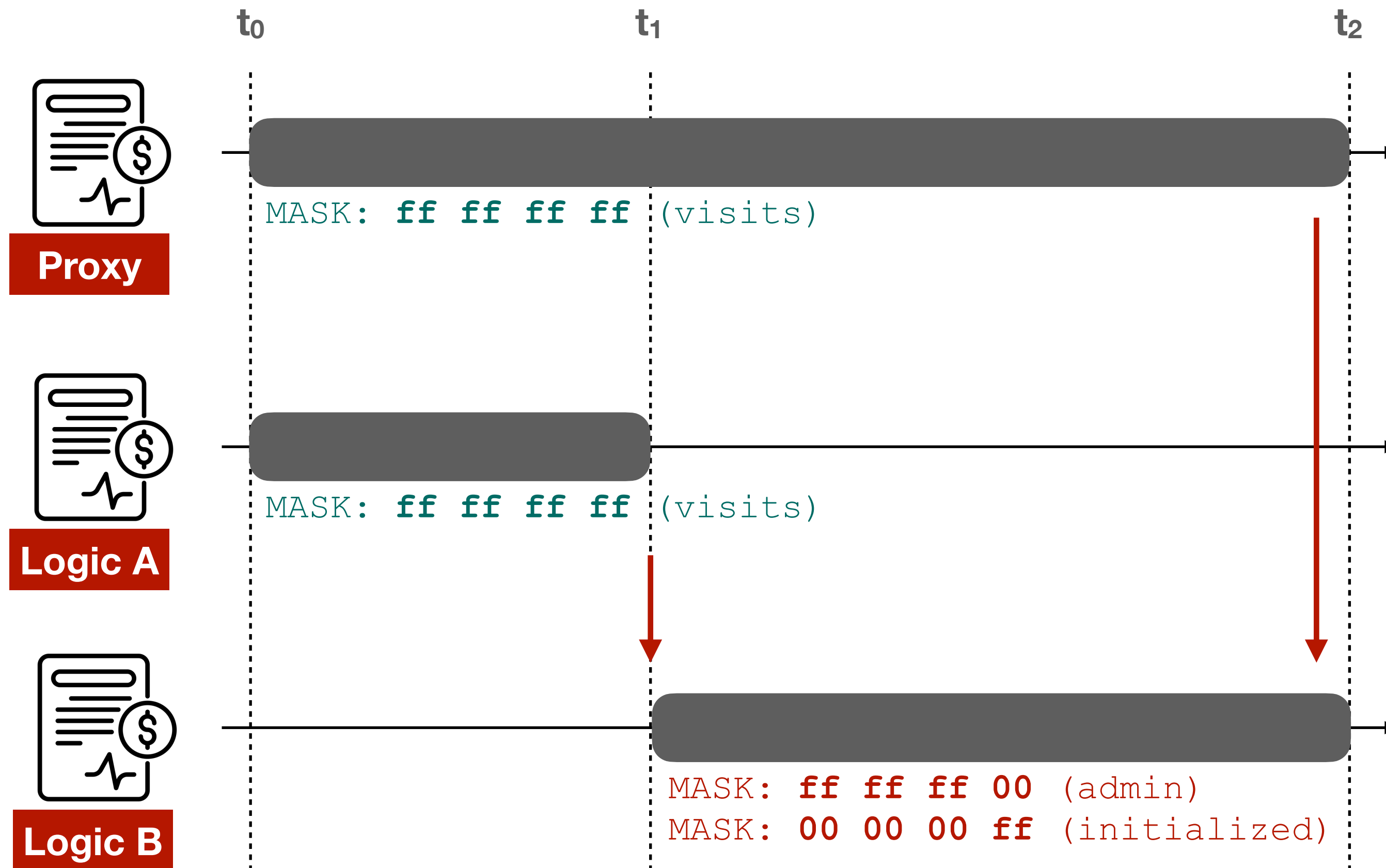
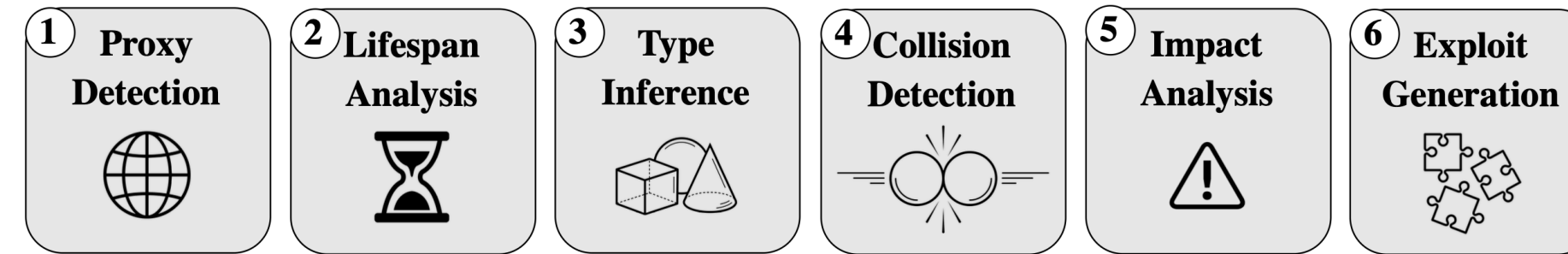
- Consider all possible attack scenarios for slot 0x0

- (t_1) Write_{LogicA} → Read_{LogicB}

- × (t_1) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{LogicA}

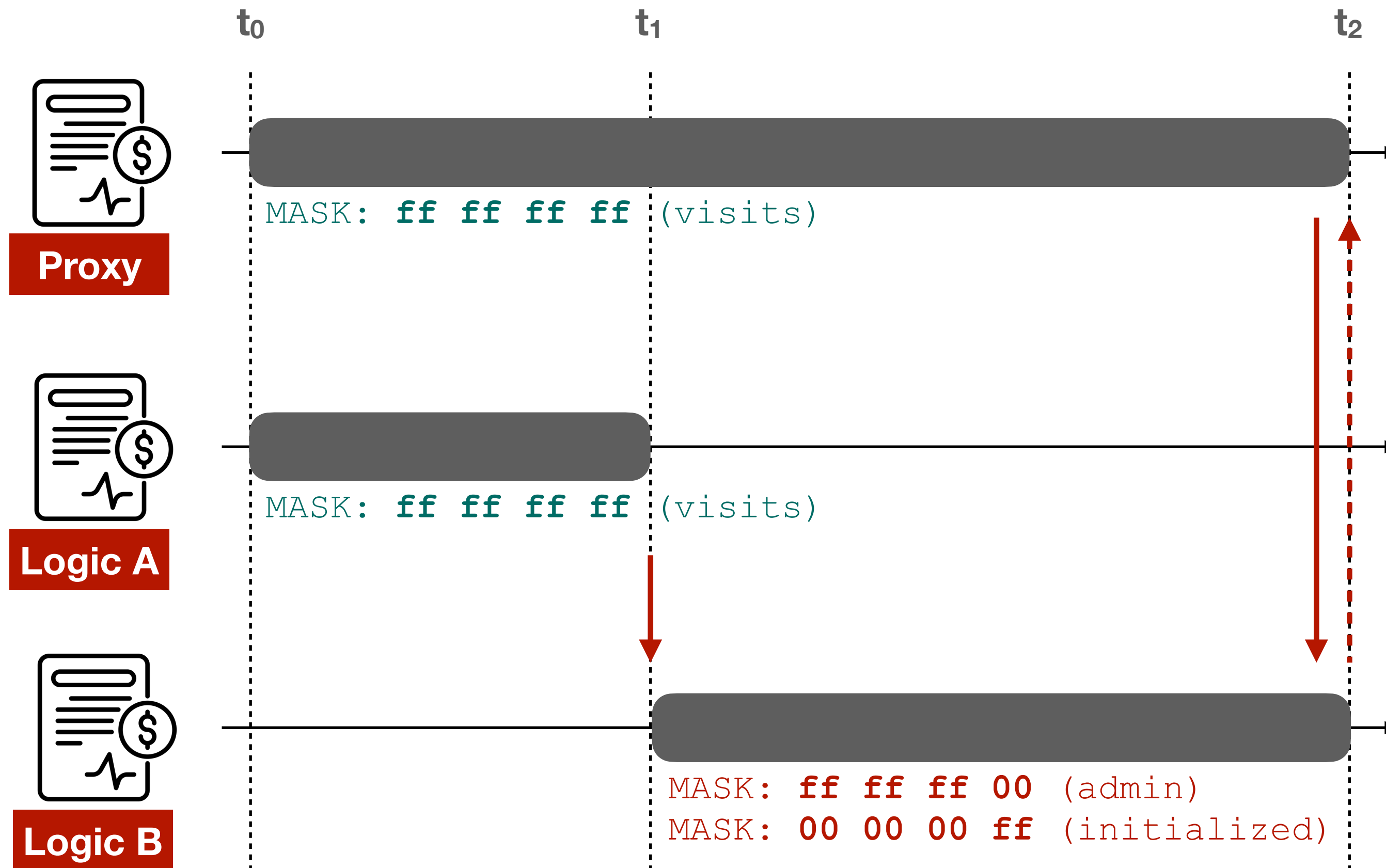
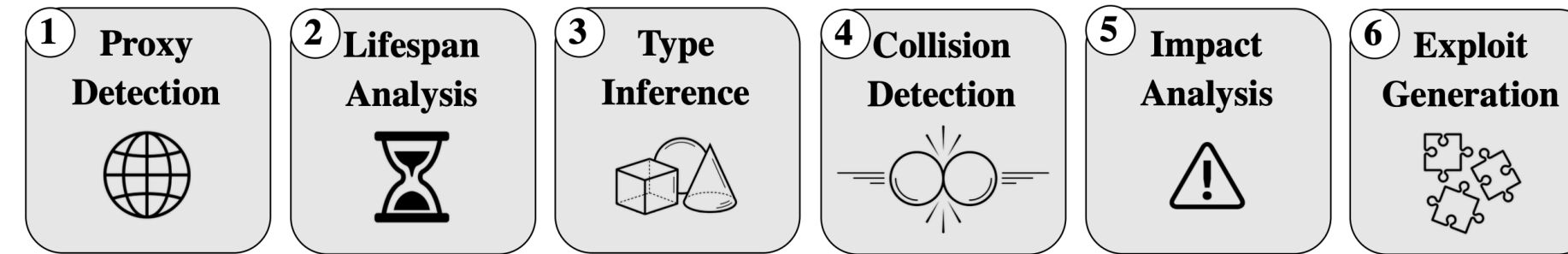
IMPOSSIBLE: LogicA is upgraded to LogicB and cannot read a value written by LogicB

CRUSH



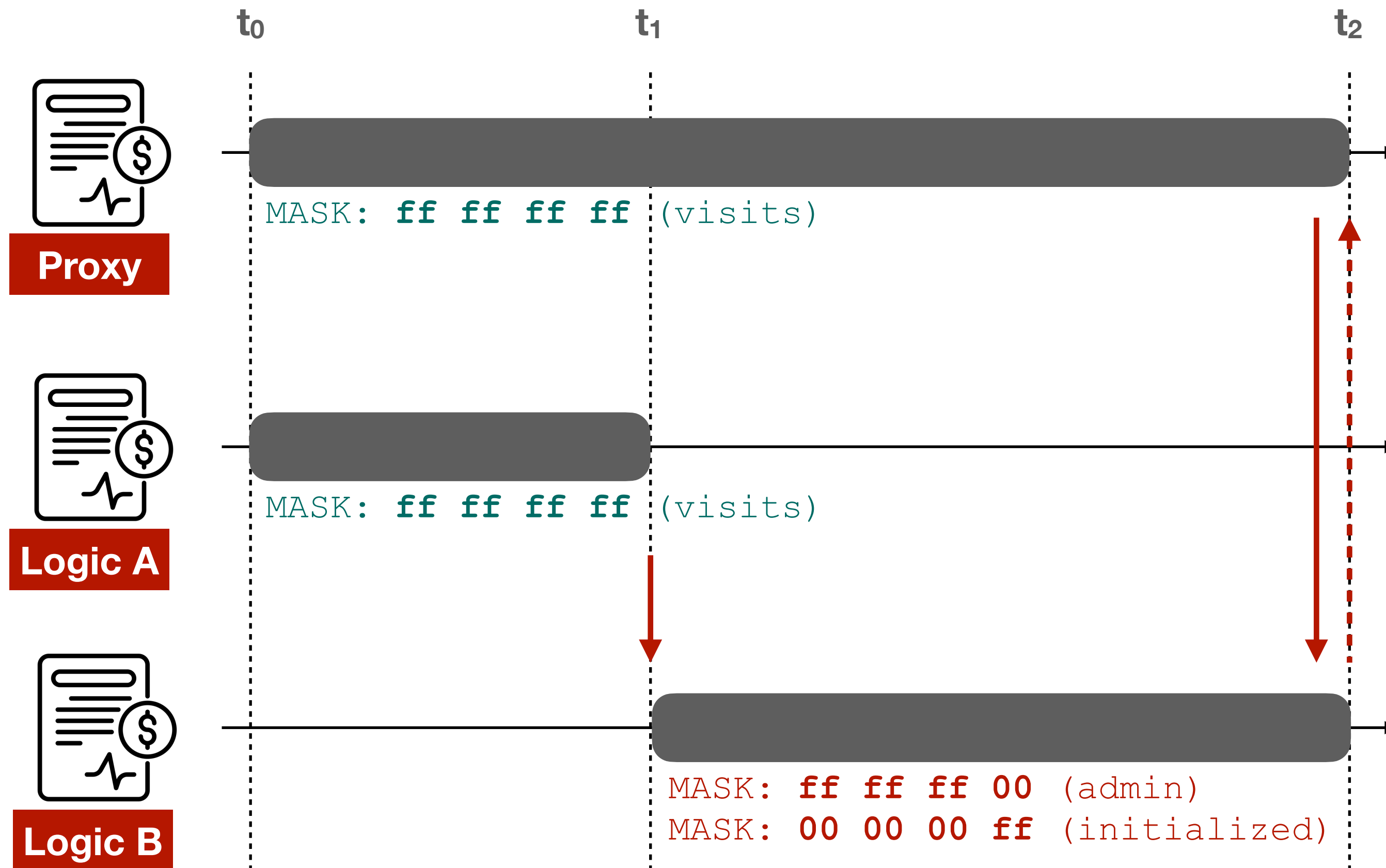
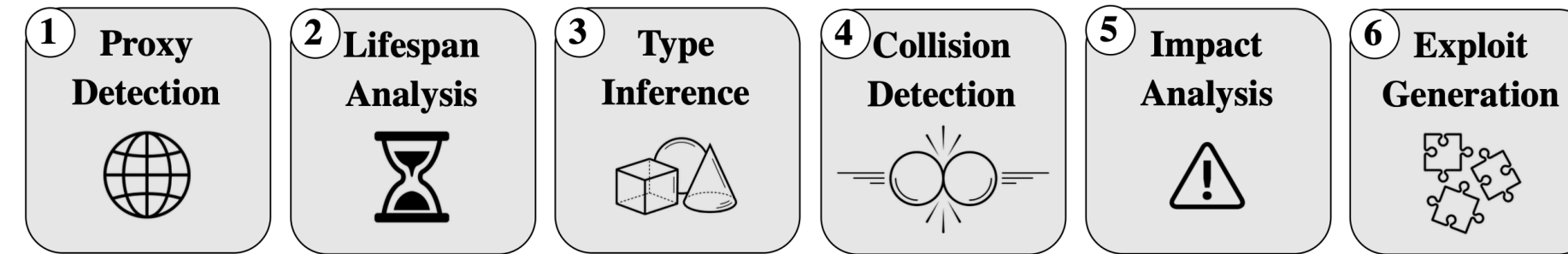
- Consider all possible attack scenarios for slot 0x0
- (t₁) Write_{LogicA} → Read_{LogicB}
- × (t₁) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{LogicA}
- (t₂) Write_{Proxy} → Read_{LogicB}

CRUSH



- Consider all possible attack scenarios for slot 0x0
- (t₁) Write_{LogicA} → Read_{LogicB}
- × (t₁) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{LogicA}
- (t₂) Write_{Proxy} → Read_{LogicB}
- (t₂) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{Proxy}

CRUSH



- Consider all possible attack scenarios for slot 0x0

- (t₁) Write_{LogicA} → Read_{LogicB}

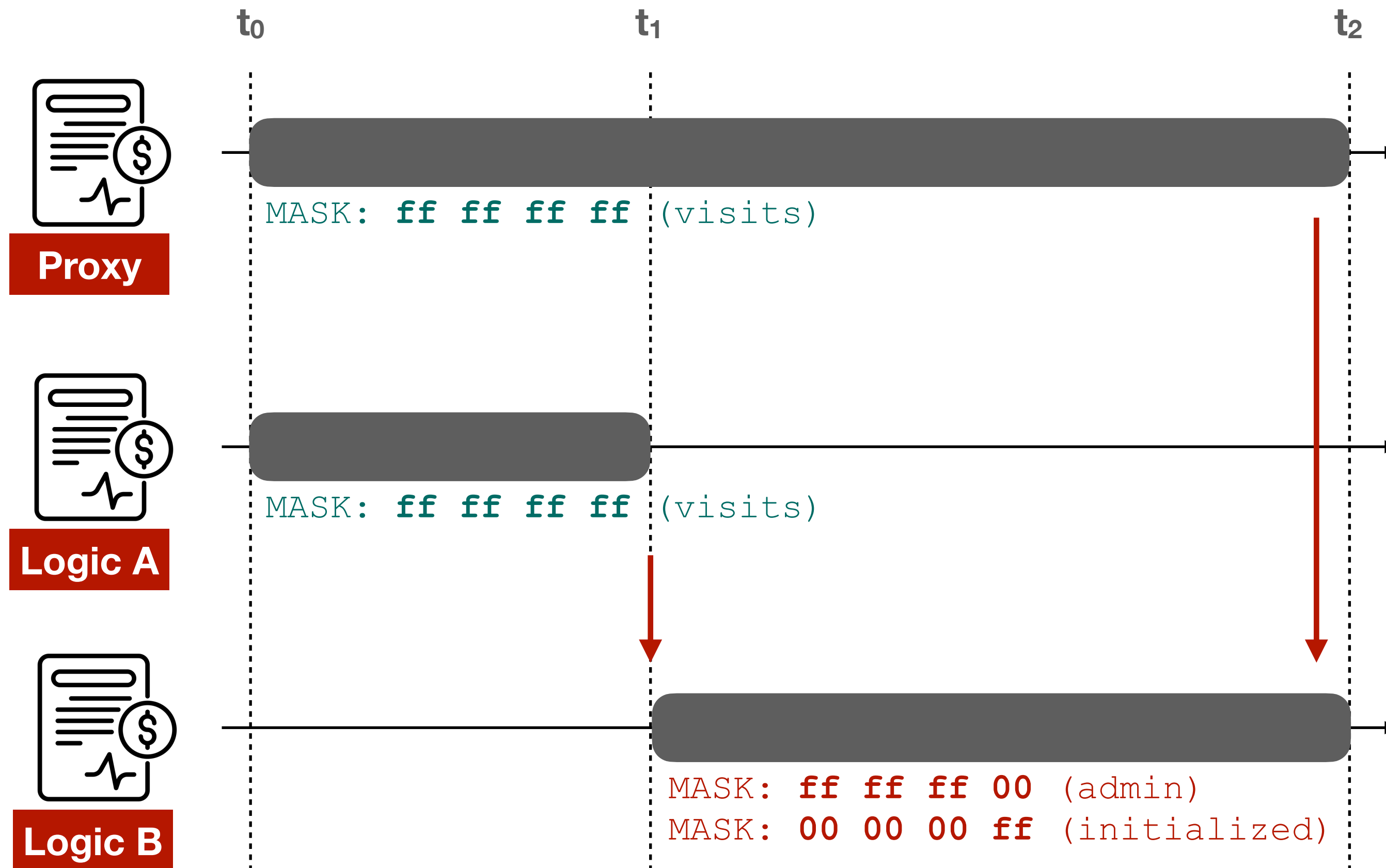
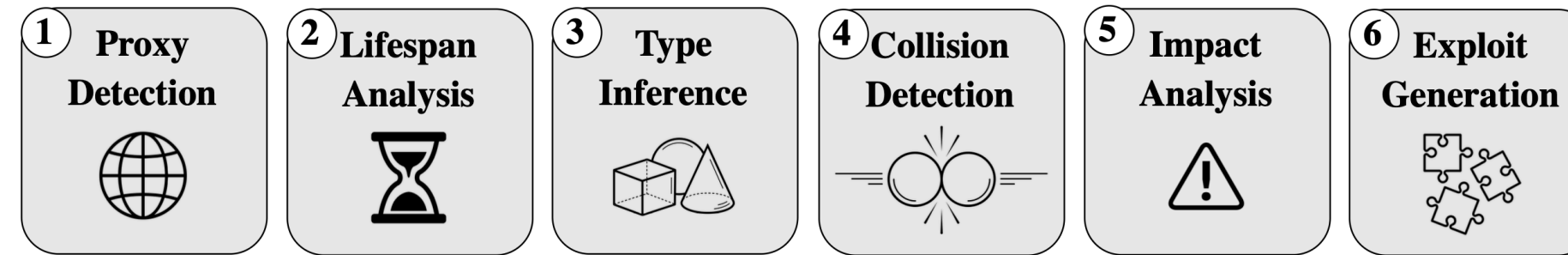
- × (t₁) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{LogicA}

- (t₂) Write_{Proxy} → Read_{LogicB}

- × (t₂) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{Proxy}

NO IMPACT (uint visits)

CRUSH



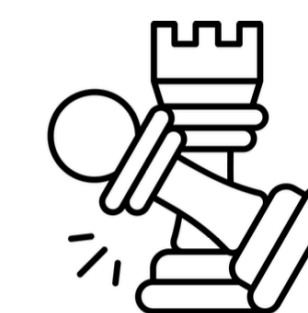
- Consider all possible attack scenarios for slot 0x0

- (t₁) Write_{LogicA} → Read_{LogicB}

- × (t₁) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{LogicA}

- (t₂) Write_{Proxy} → Read_{LogicB}

- × (t₂) Write_{LogicB} → Read_{Proxy}

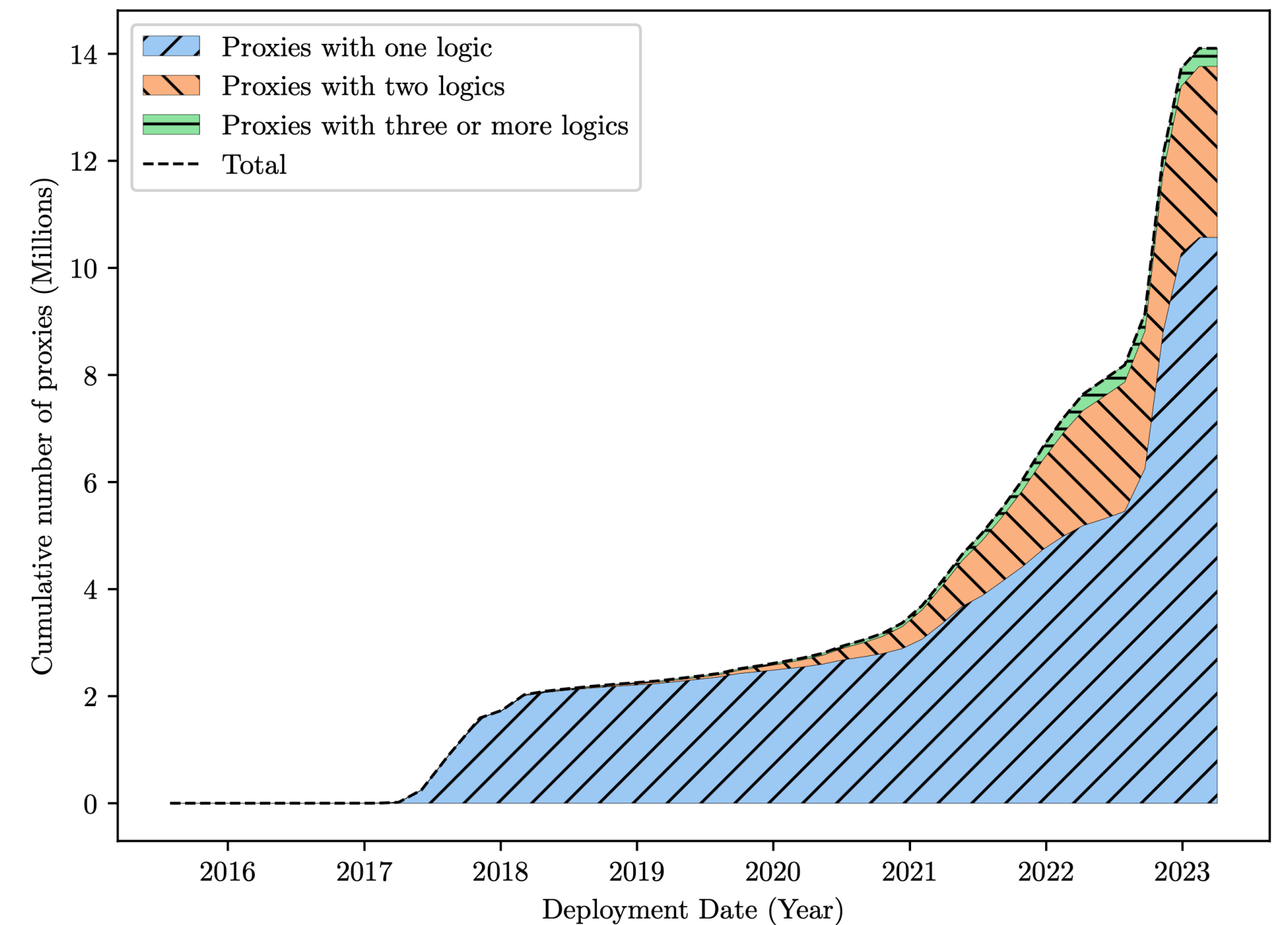


Evaluation

- Found **14,891** (out of 14,237,696) contracts with storage collision
- Automatically synthesized an end-to-end exploit for **956** contracts
 - More than **\$12M** of potential financial damage (*\$6M previously unreported*)
 - At least **132** still exploitable at the time of writing (*\$242K*)

Conclusions

- Storage collisions happen when two smart contracts have **conflicting interpretations of the same storage variables**
- Vulnerabilities in contract interactions are under-studied and **happening in the wild**
- We estimate more than **\$12 millions** of possible financial damage



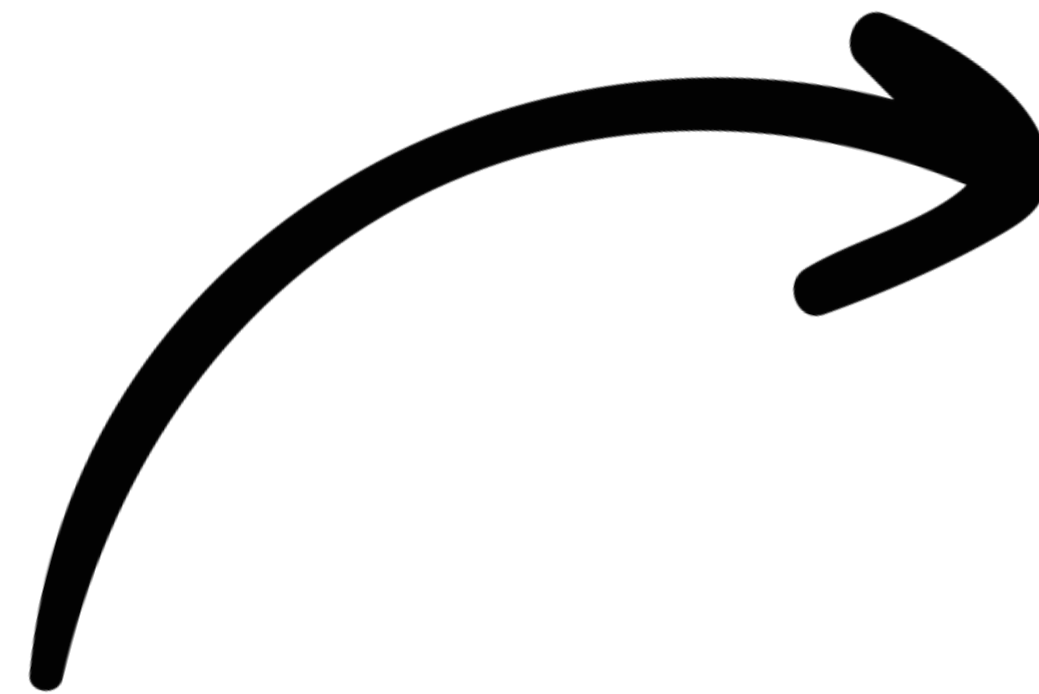
Thanks!

 github.com/ucsb-seclab/crush

 github.com/ucsb-seclab/greed



Check out our code



UC SANTA BARBARA