Introducing CHAP

A program to clarify dynamic memory usage in un-instrumented cores.

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vmware

Background

- Was created by me in 2010 as a tool called ah64
- Was motivated by need to debug growth issues on un-instrumented cores
- Started supporting leak detection in early 2011
- Has been heavily used in our development and test life cycle for several years
- Became available as CHAP as open source under GPL-2.0 license on April 19, 2017
- http://github.com/vmware/chap

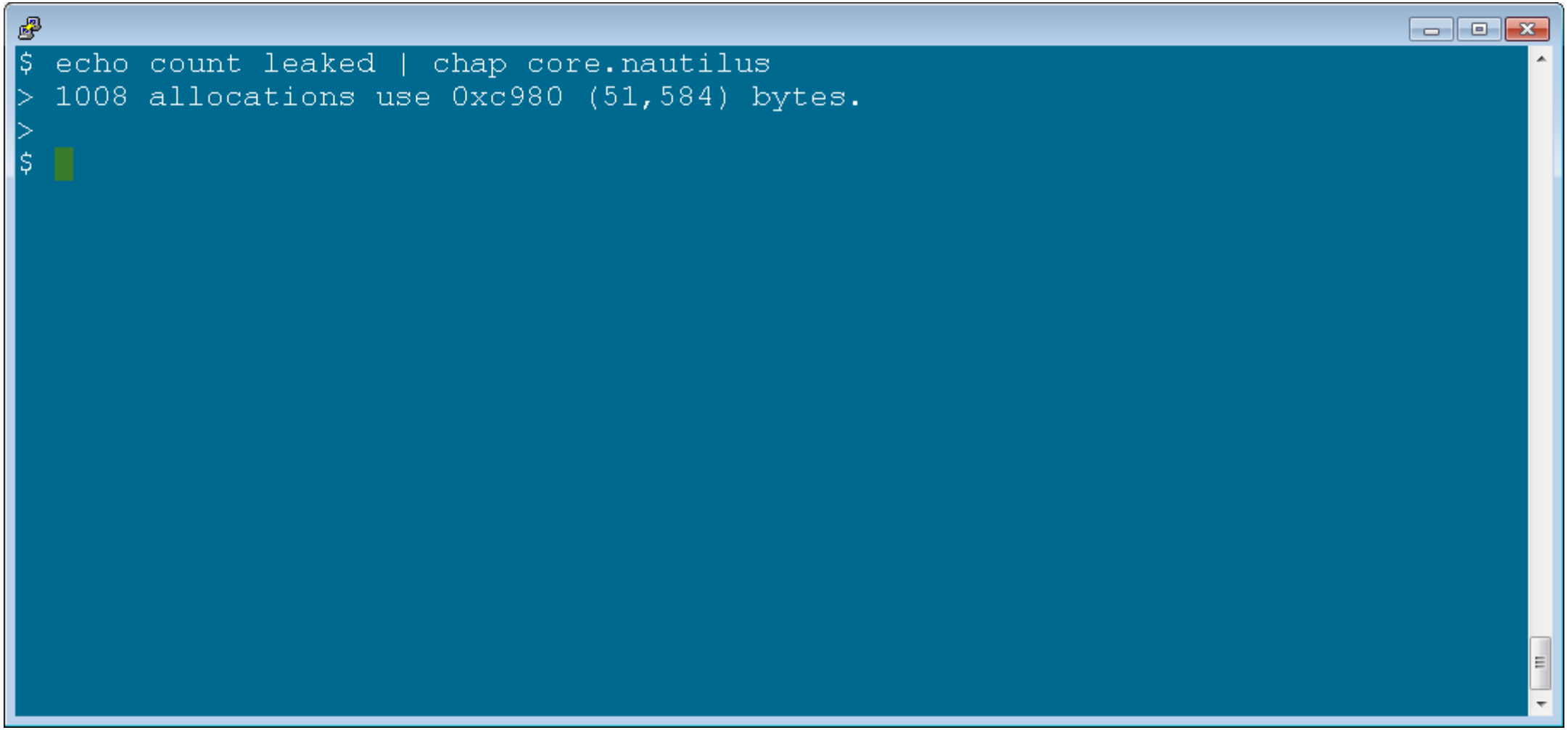
CHAP – Core Heap Analysis Program

- CHAP stands for Core Heap Analysis Program
- Reads a process image as input
  - Currently supports 32 or 64 bit ELF cores as process image
  - Does not require any advance instrumentation
- Provides information about dynamically allocated memory
  - Currently recognizes memory allocated by glibc

Some Use Cases

- Allows automated leak detection, even for performance tests at scale on release builds …
- Can be used interactively to do leak analysis
- Can be used interactively to do memory growth analysis
- Can automatically detect some forms of heap corruption
- Supplements debuggers such as gdb by providing status of various memory addresses

The Simplest Use Case



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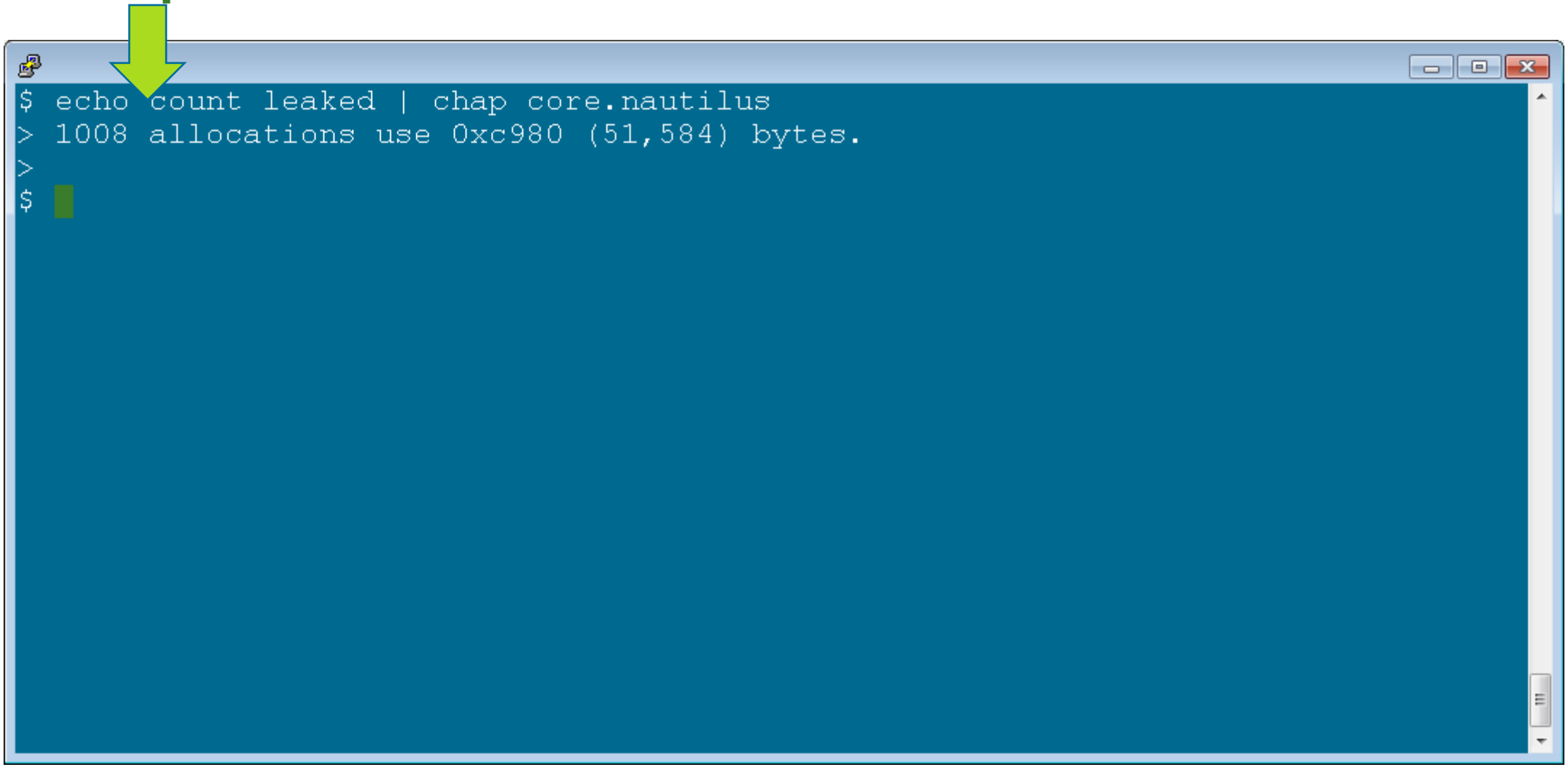

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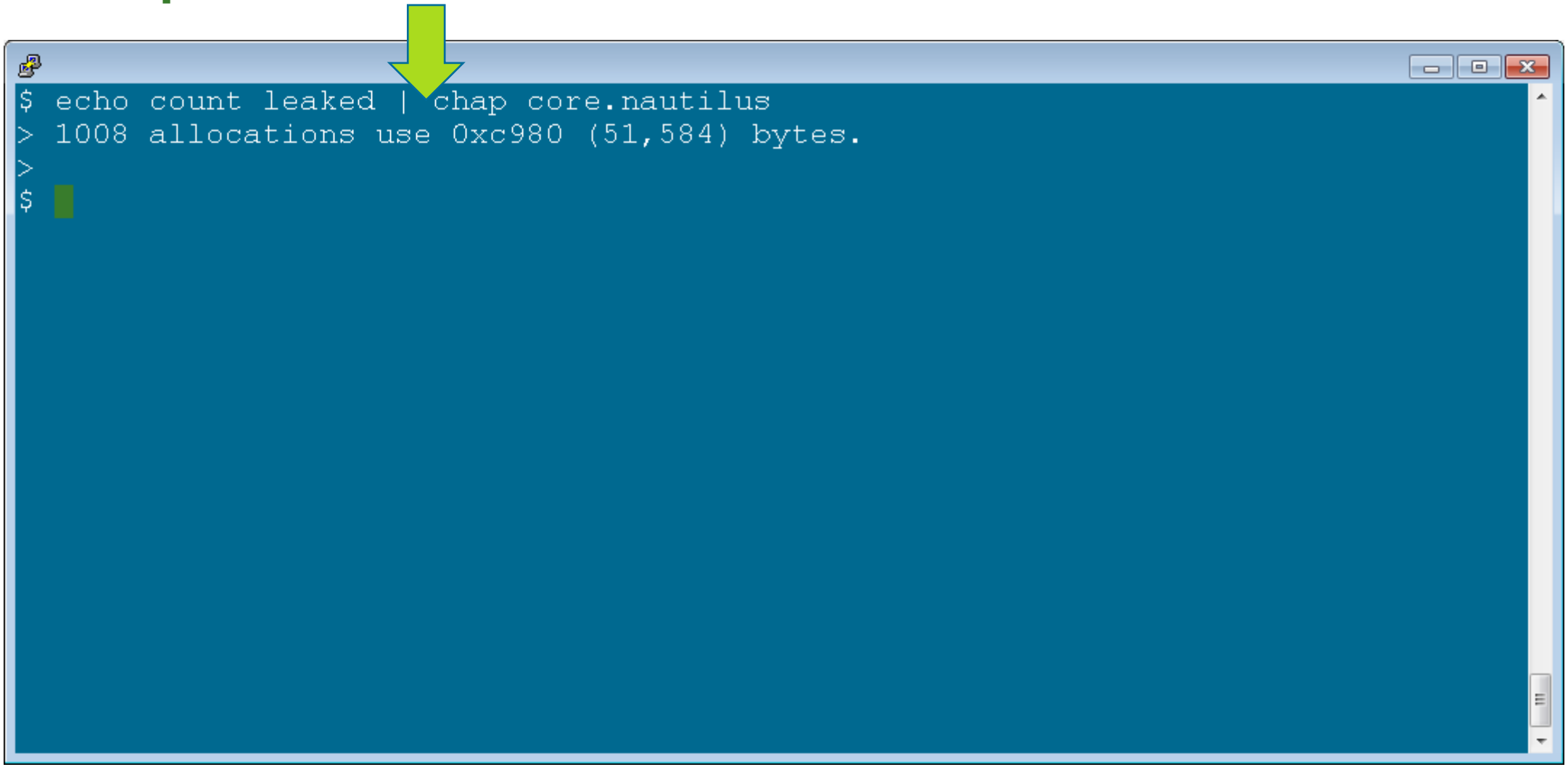

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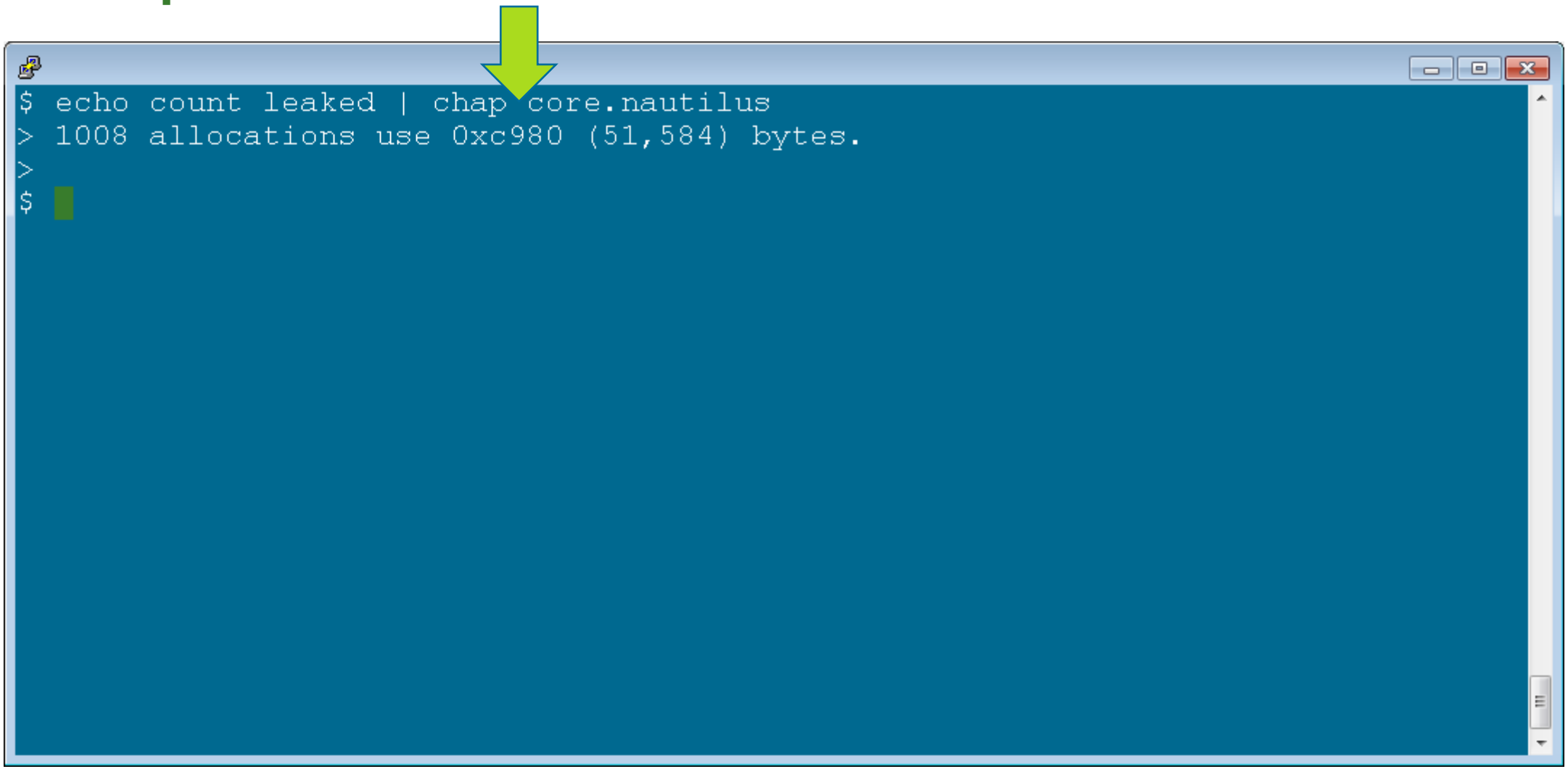

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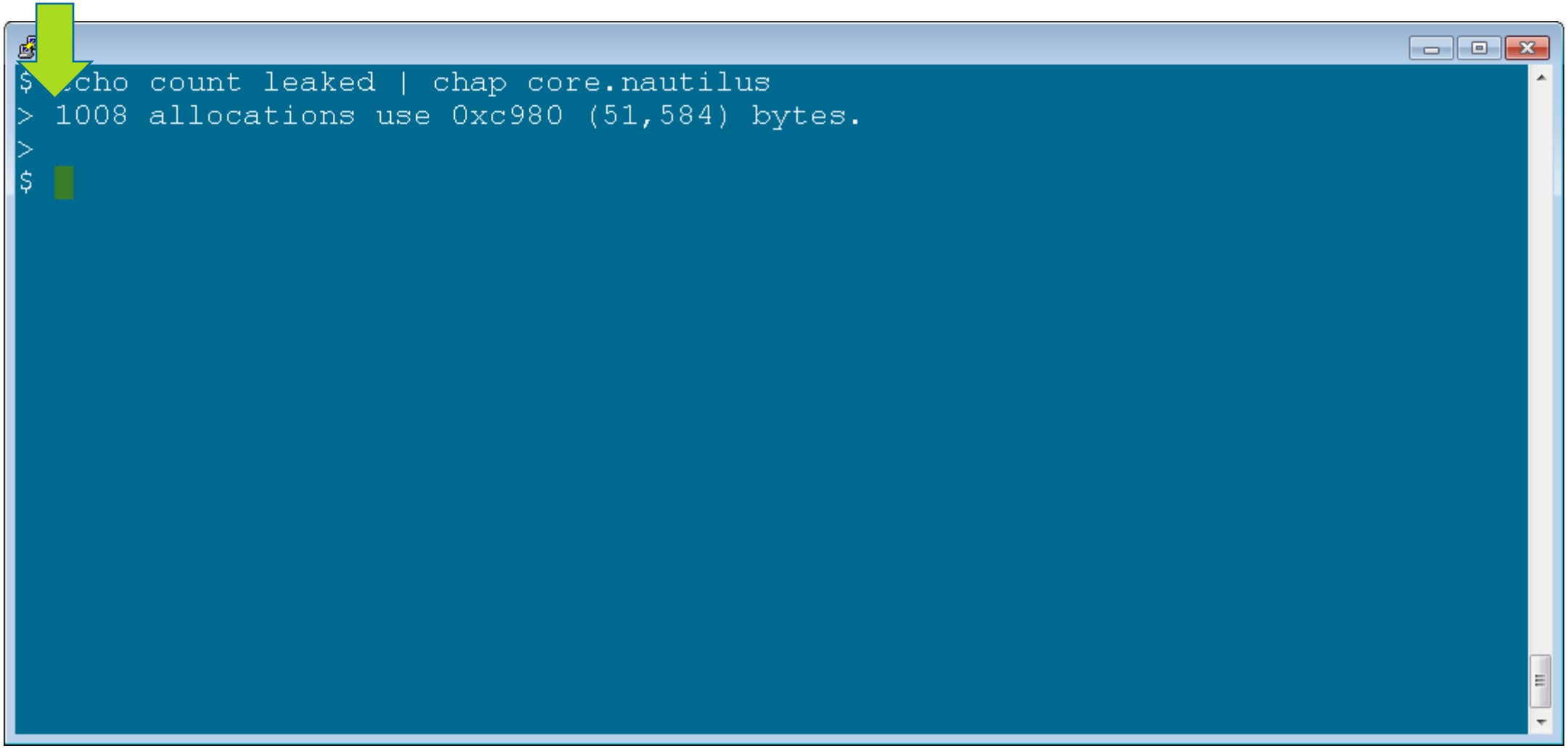

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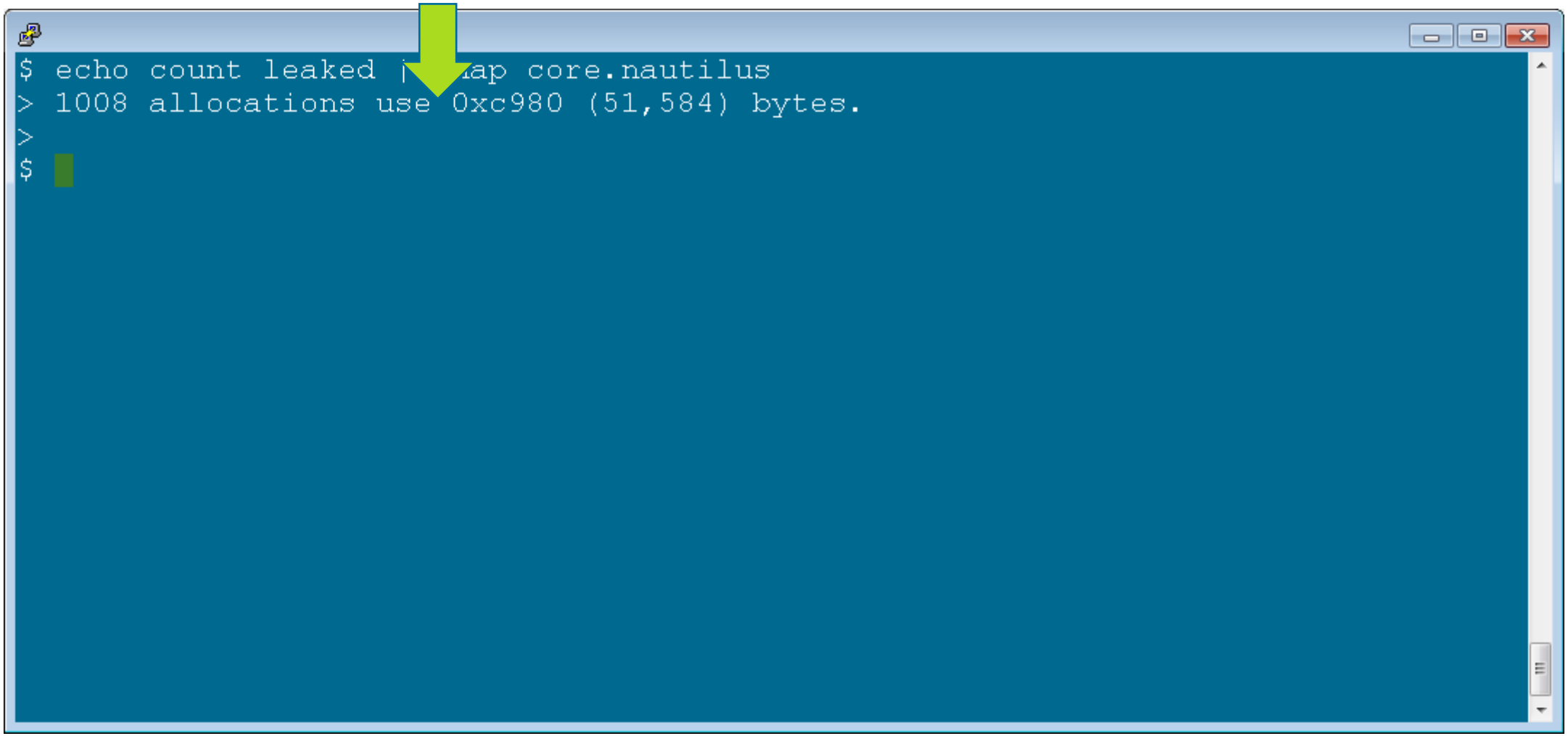

Why Create Yet Another Memory Analysis Tool?

Some Characteristics of Instrumentation Approaches

- Increase process size
- Have some performance penalty
- Distort timing
- Some alter allocation algorithms

Environments that Normally Run Without Instrumentation

- Customer production environments
- Performance tests
- Sizing tests
- Tests at scale
- Uptime tests

CHAP Finds Allocations

Terminology: Allocations and Overhead

- A dynamic memory allocation function (e.g., malloc) provides a pointer to a sufficiently large **allocation**
- The **allocation** is considered **used** until it is returned to the allocator, when it becomes **free**
- Any writable memory used by the allocator beyond what is needed to hold every **used allocation** is considered **overhead.**
- Any writable memory other than **overhead** and **used allocations** is considered to be **outside of dynamic memory**

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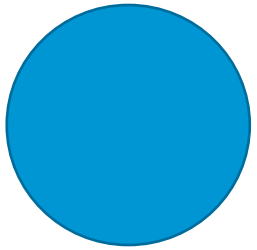
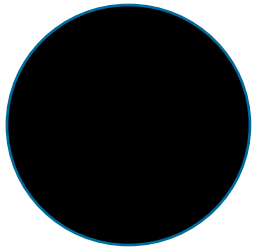
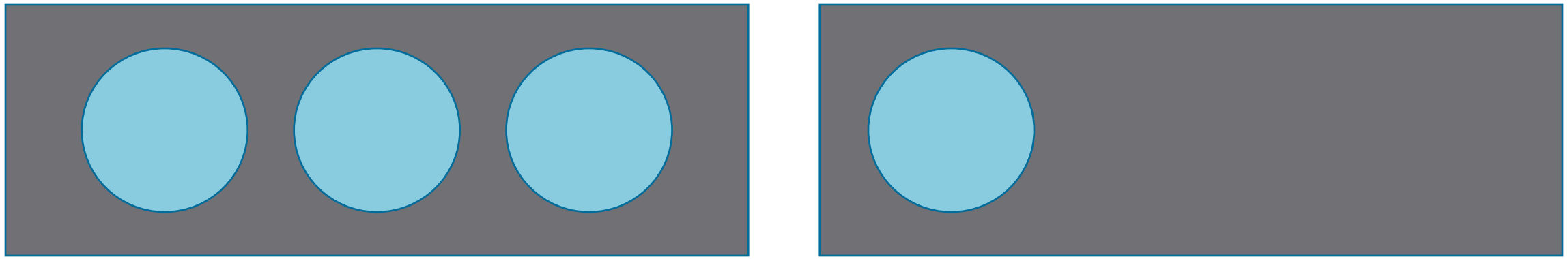
- Allocations will be represented in this presentation by circles





Some assumptions about allocators

- Satisfy requests for small **allocations** by partitioning larger ranges of memory
- Provide **allocations** that are “suitably aligned for any kind of variable”



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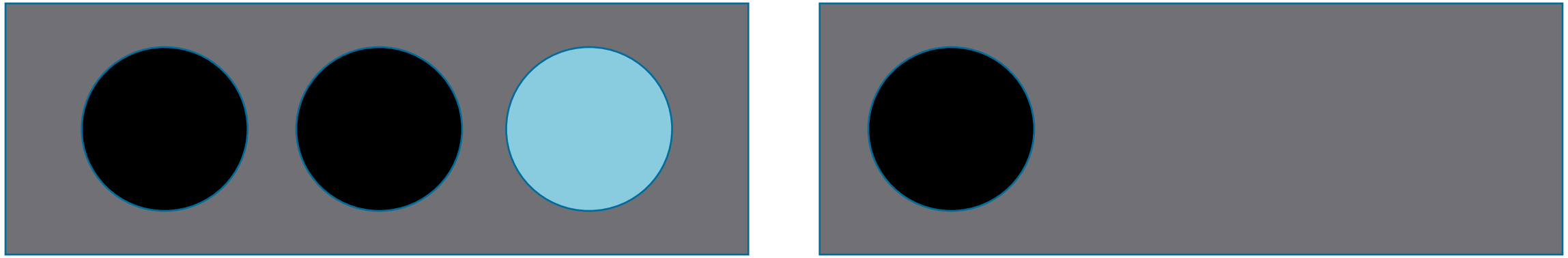

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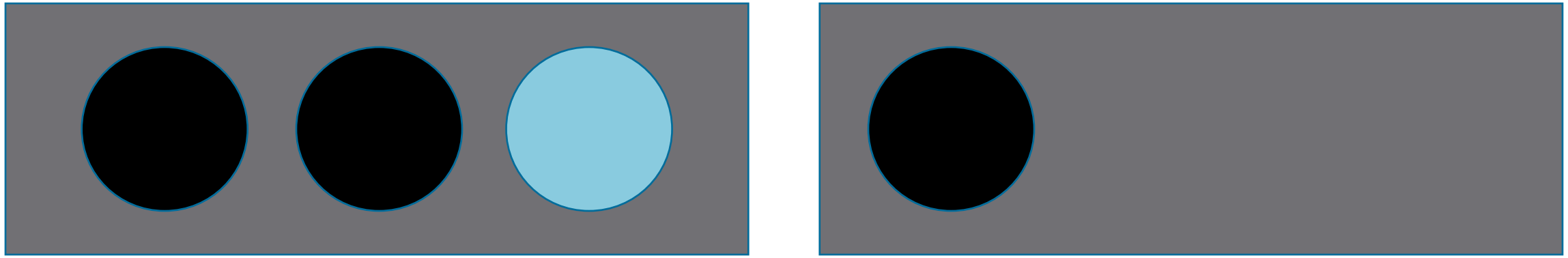

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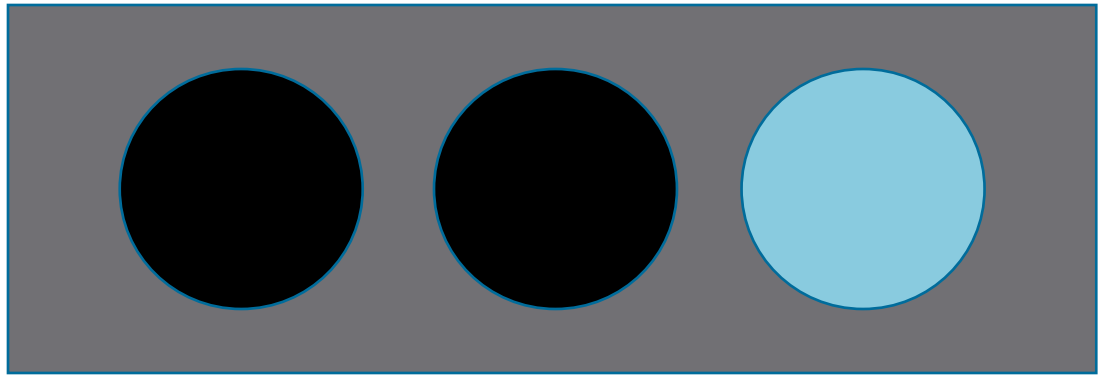

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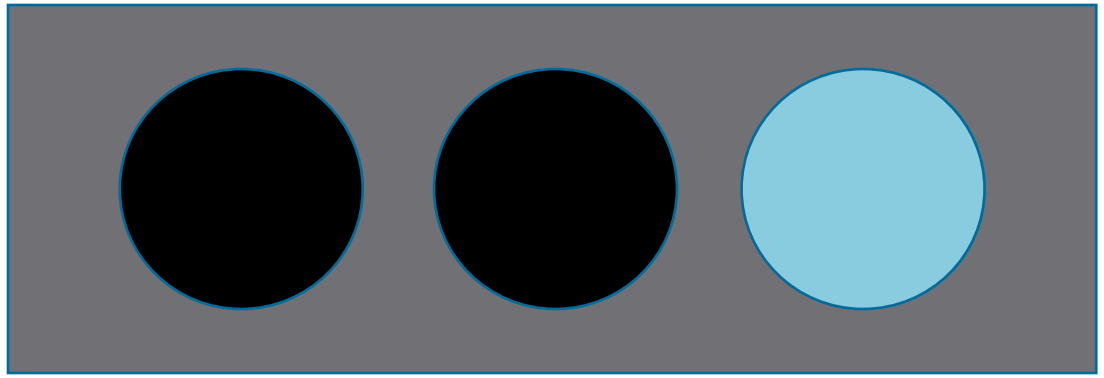

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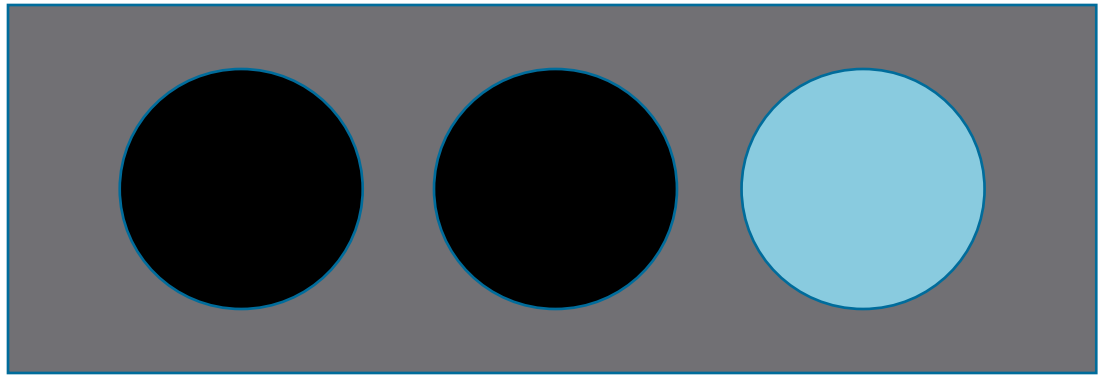
- Often keep one or more **free allocation**, which can be used to satisfy some subsequent allocation request



A Program To Illustrate Allocations

```
#include <string>

void f() {
   std::string s("S");
}
int main(int argc, char **argv) {
   std::string l("ABCDLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL");
   f();
   *((int *)(0)) = 92; // crash
   return 0;
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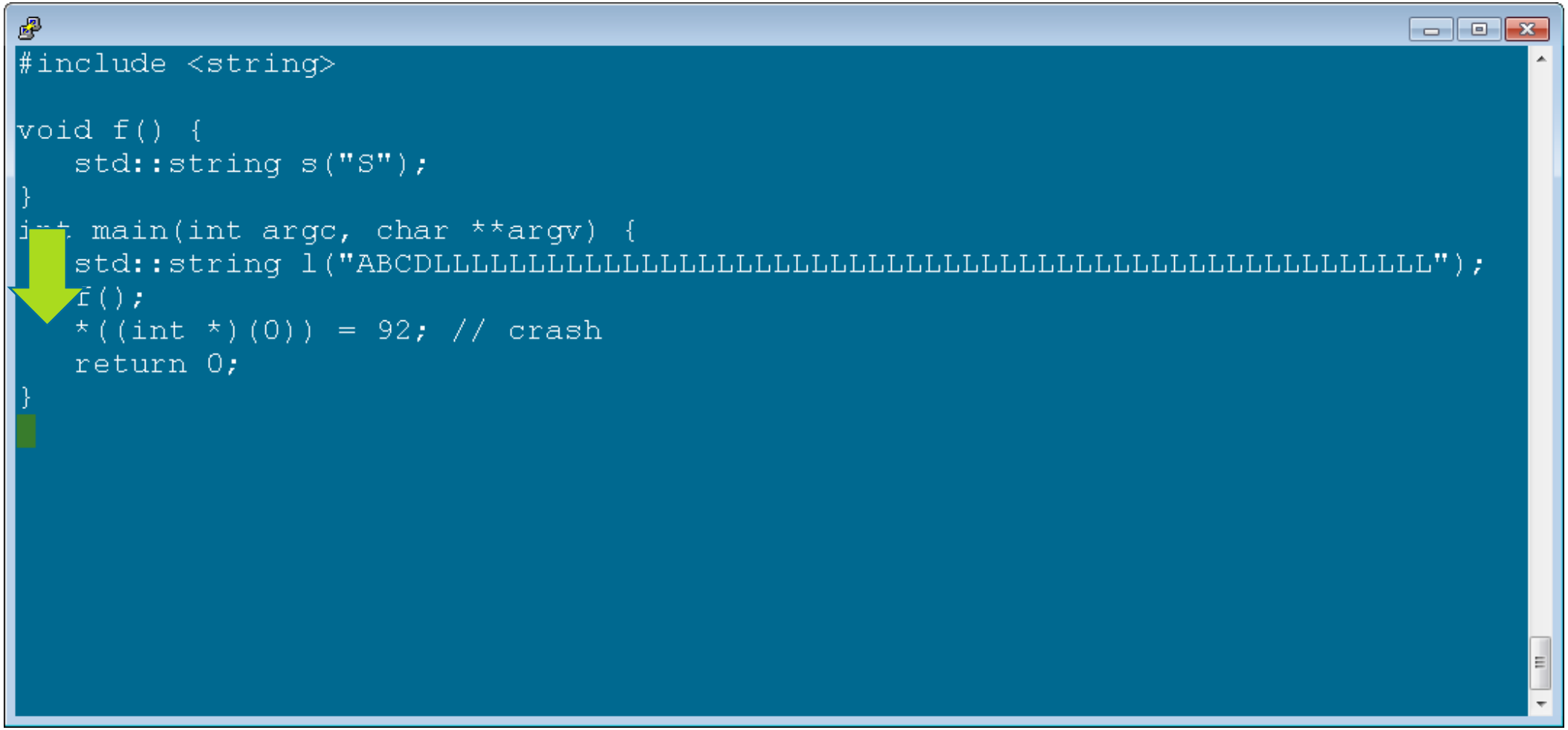

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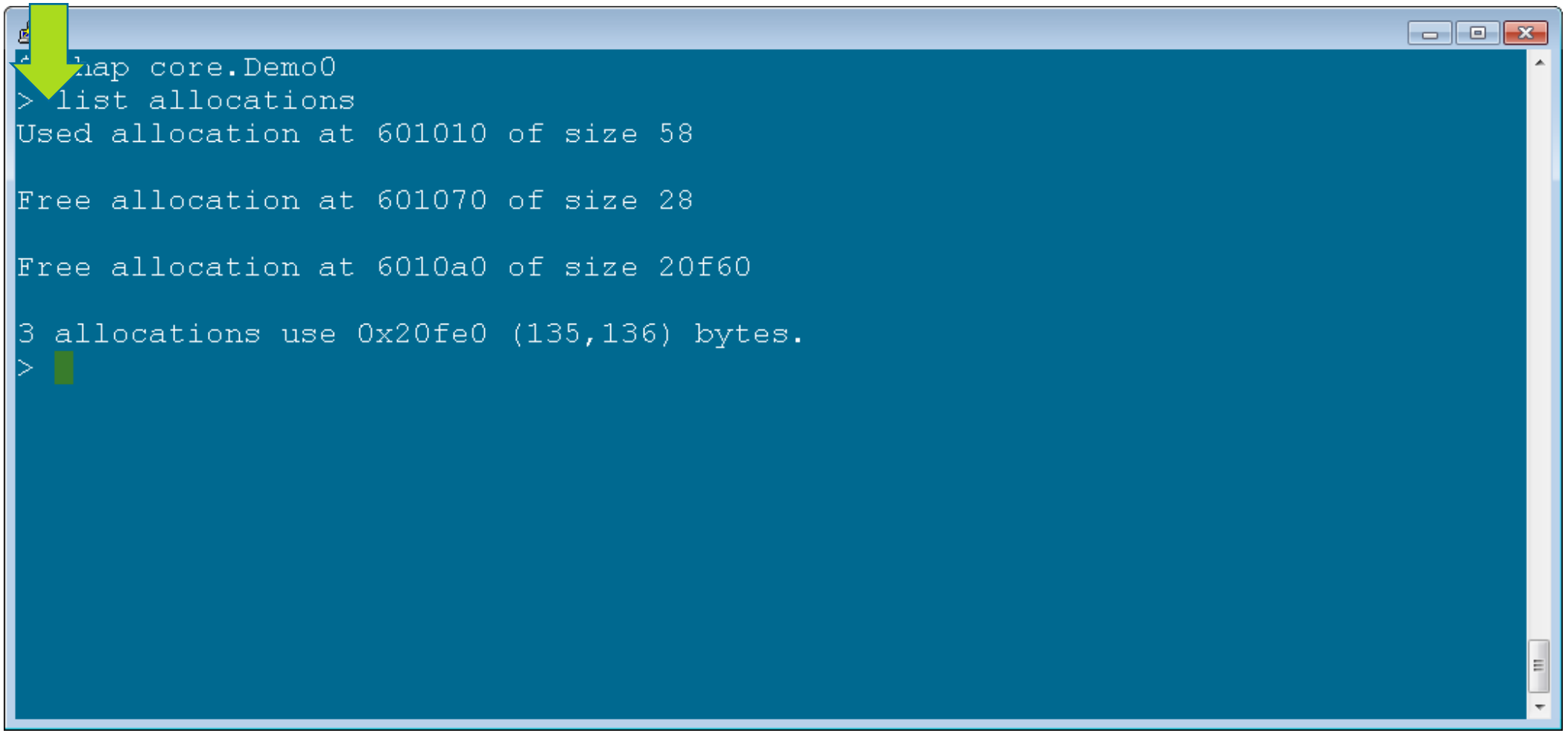
Listing Allocations



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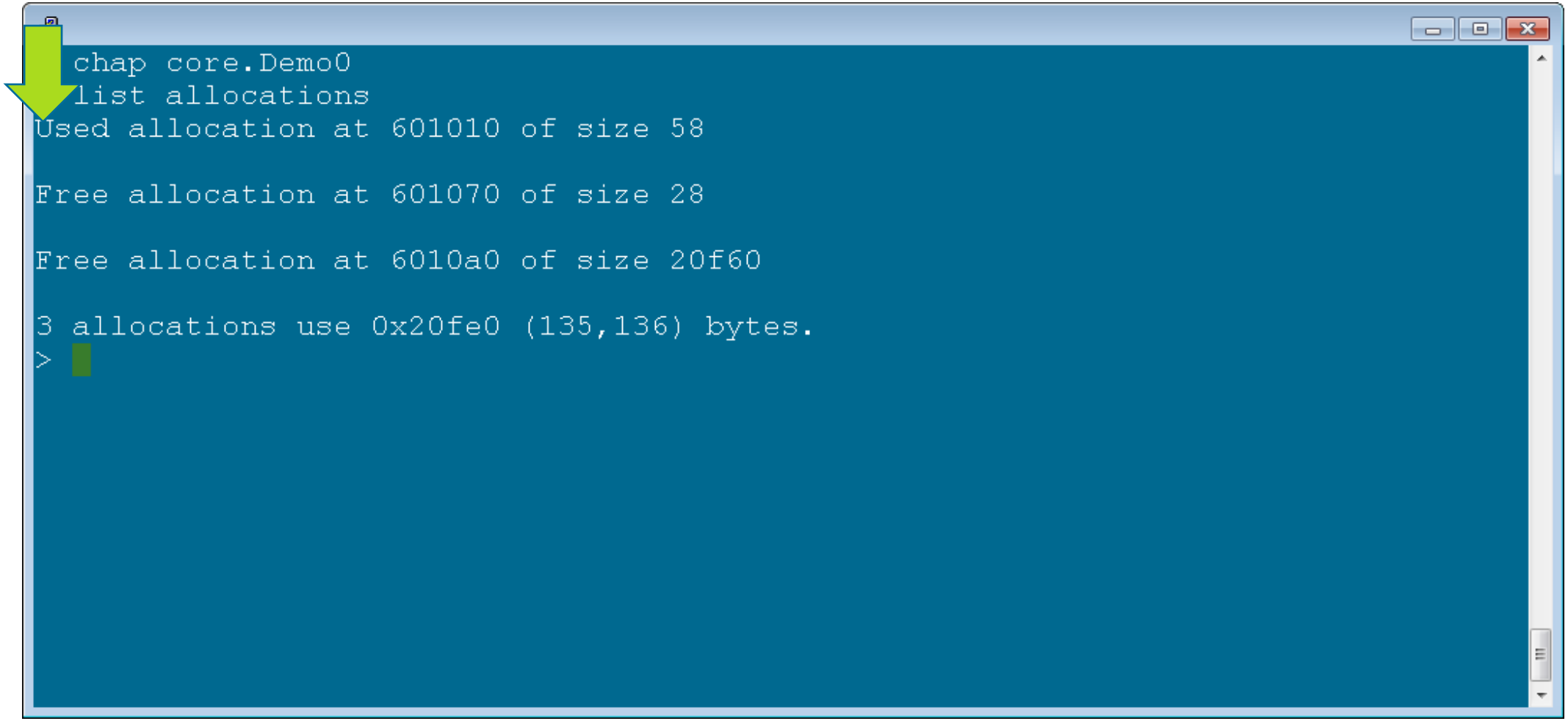

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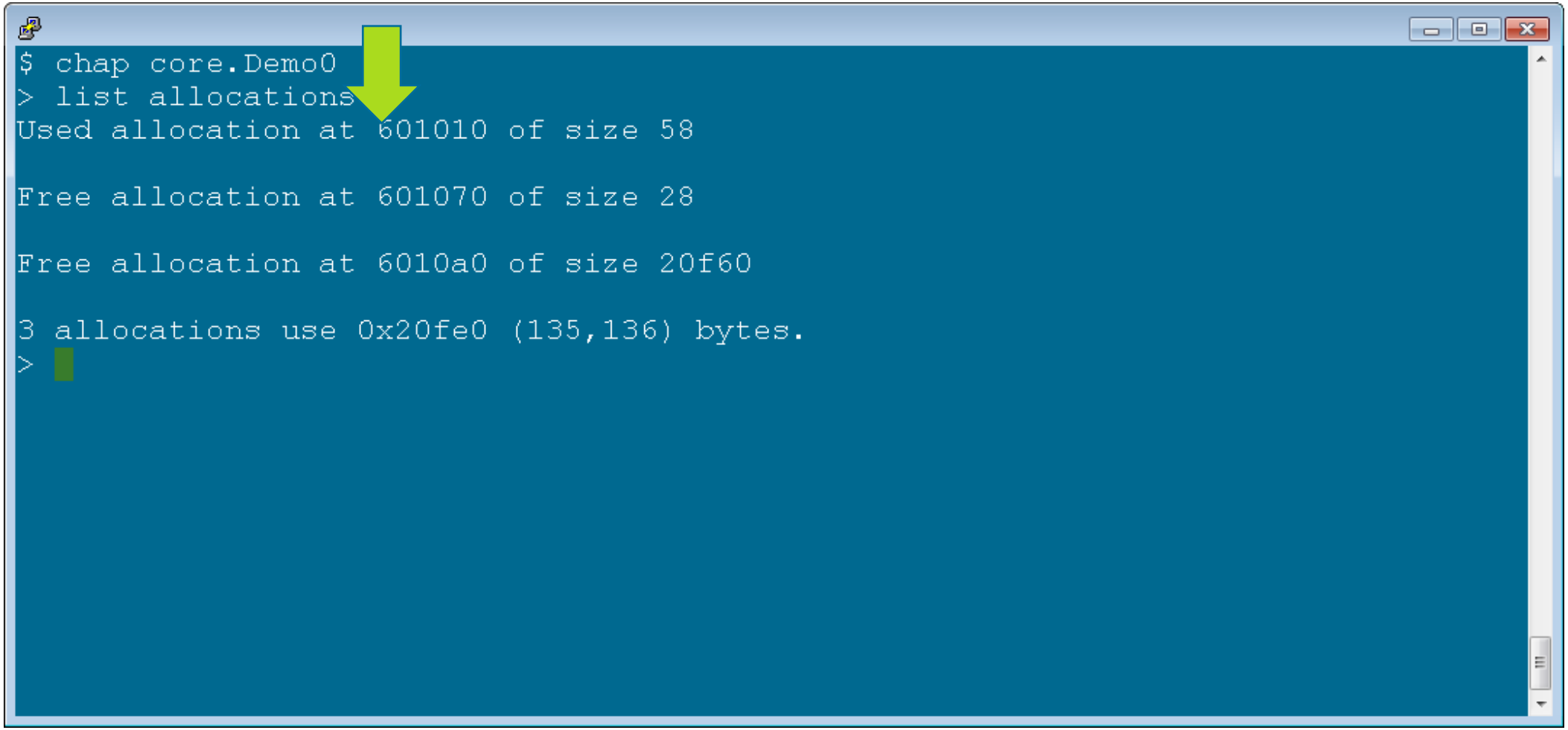

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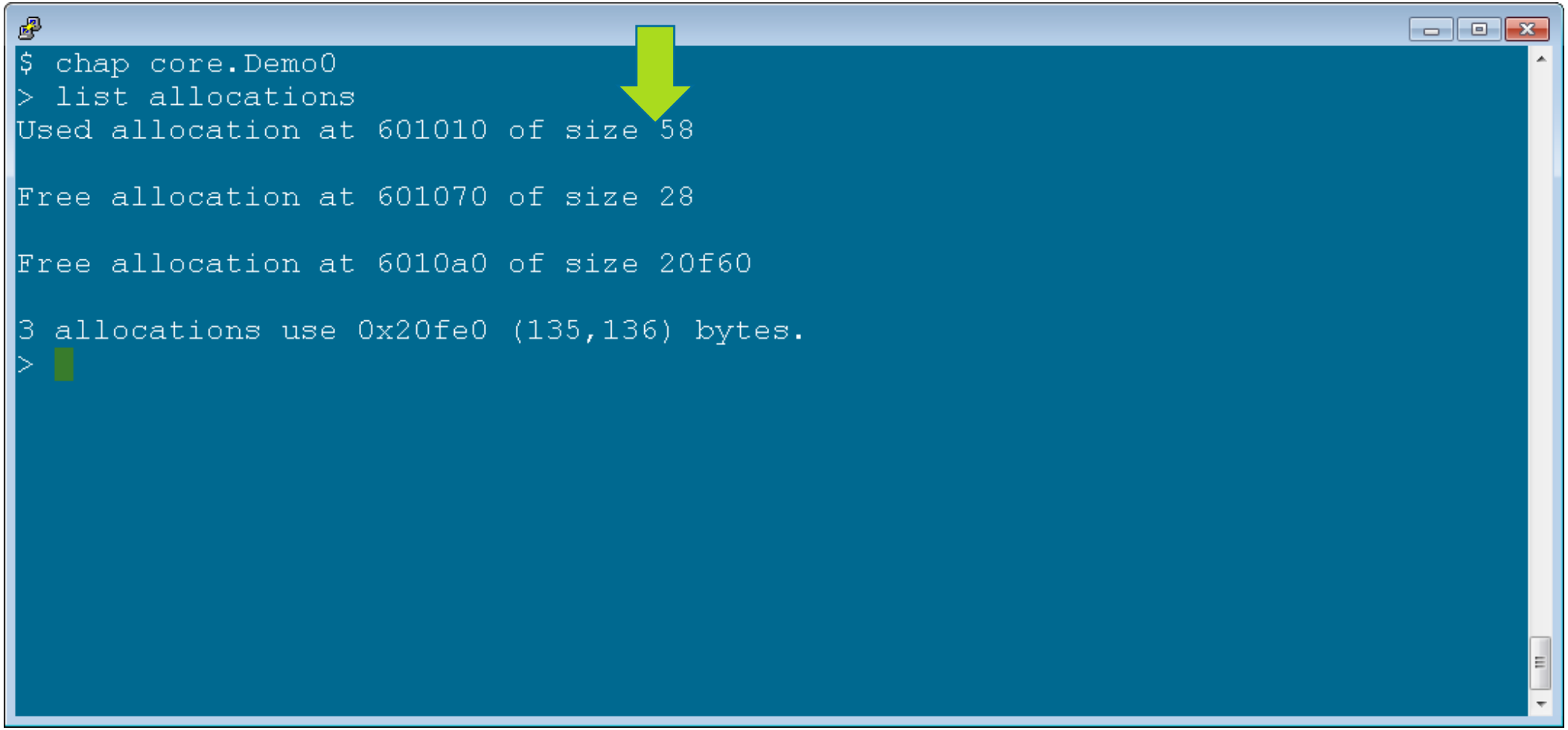

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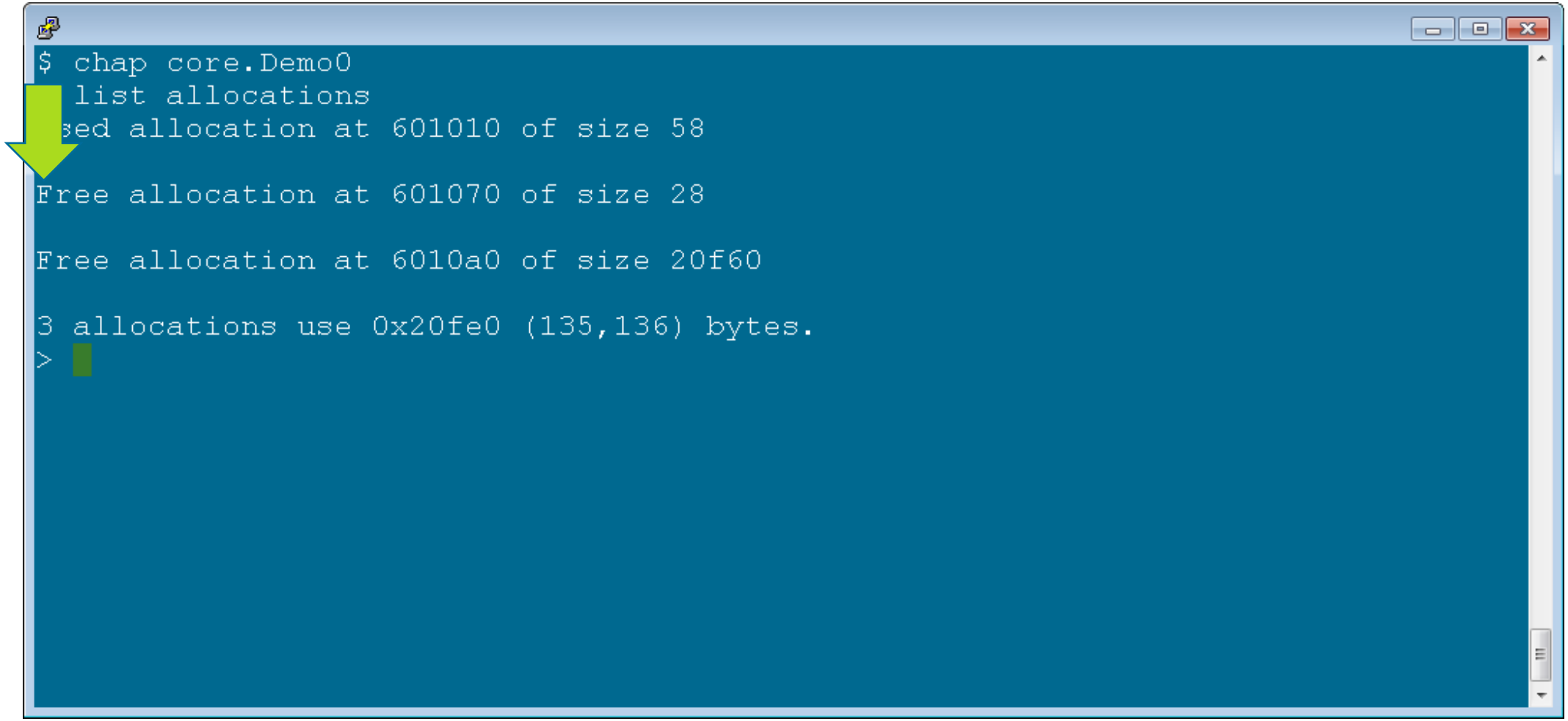

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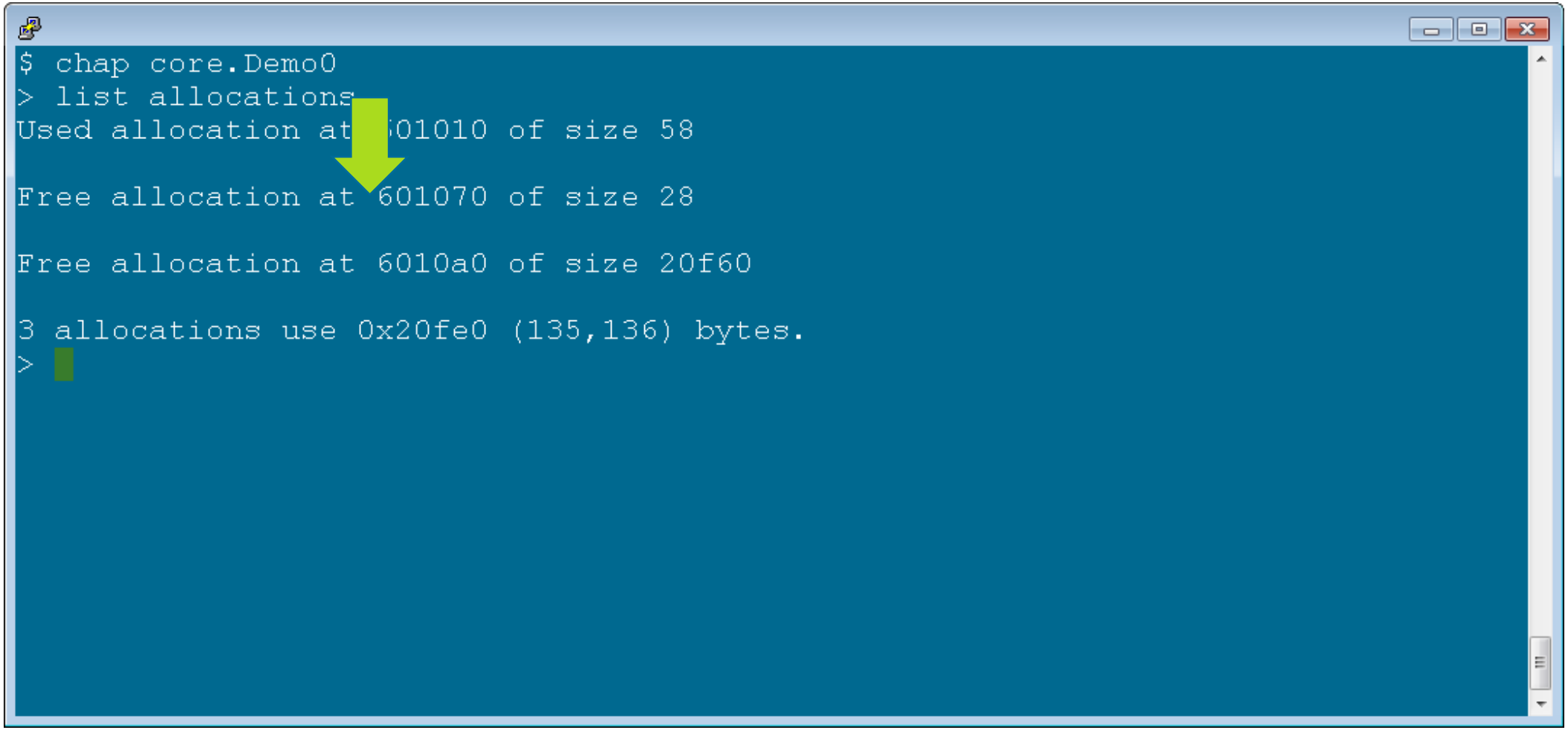

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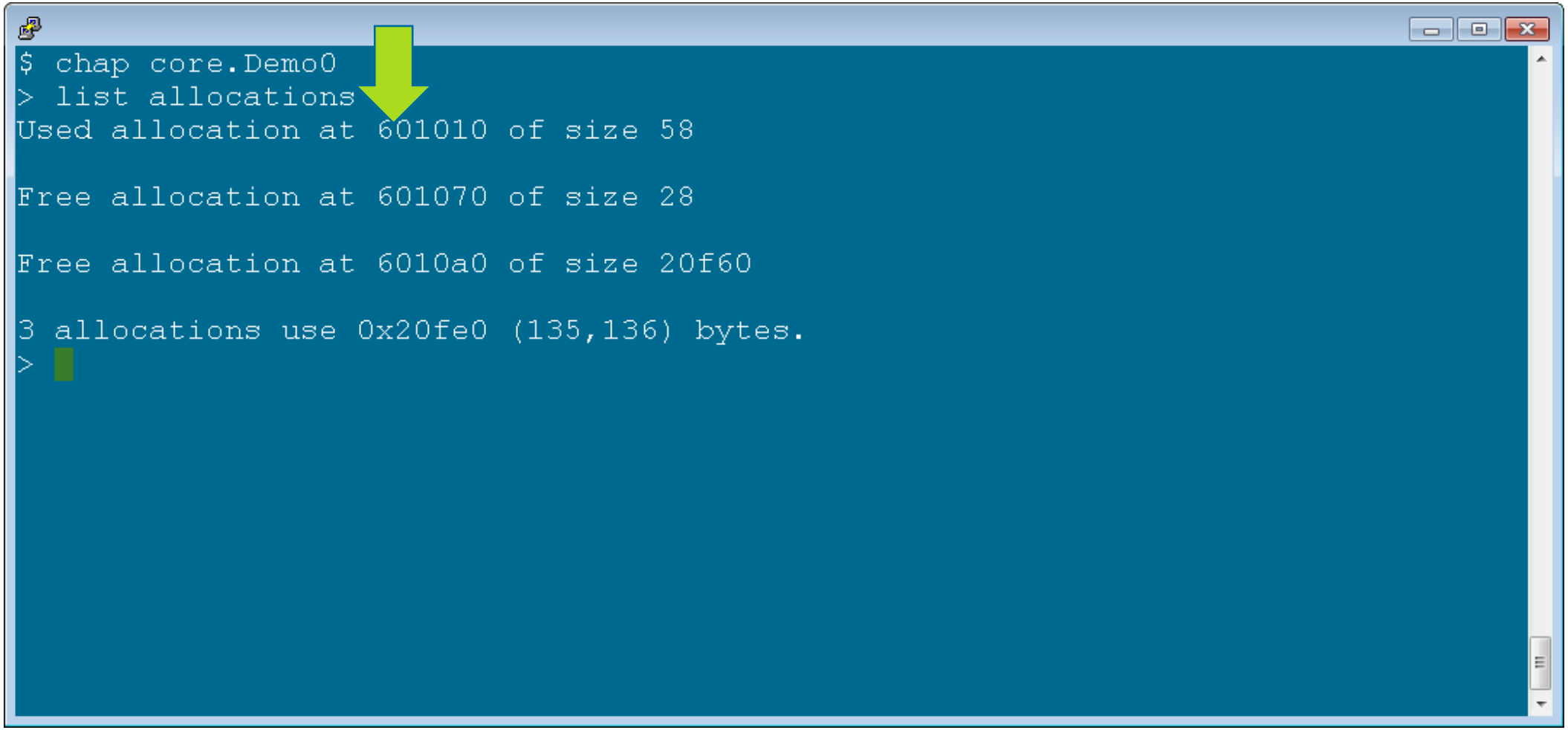

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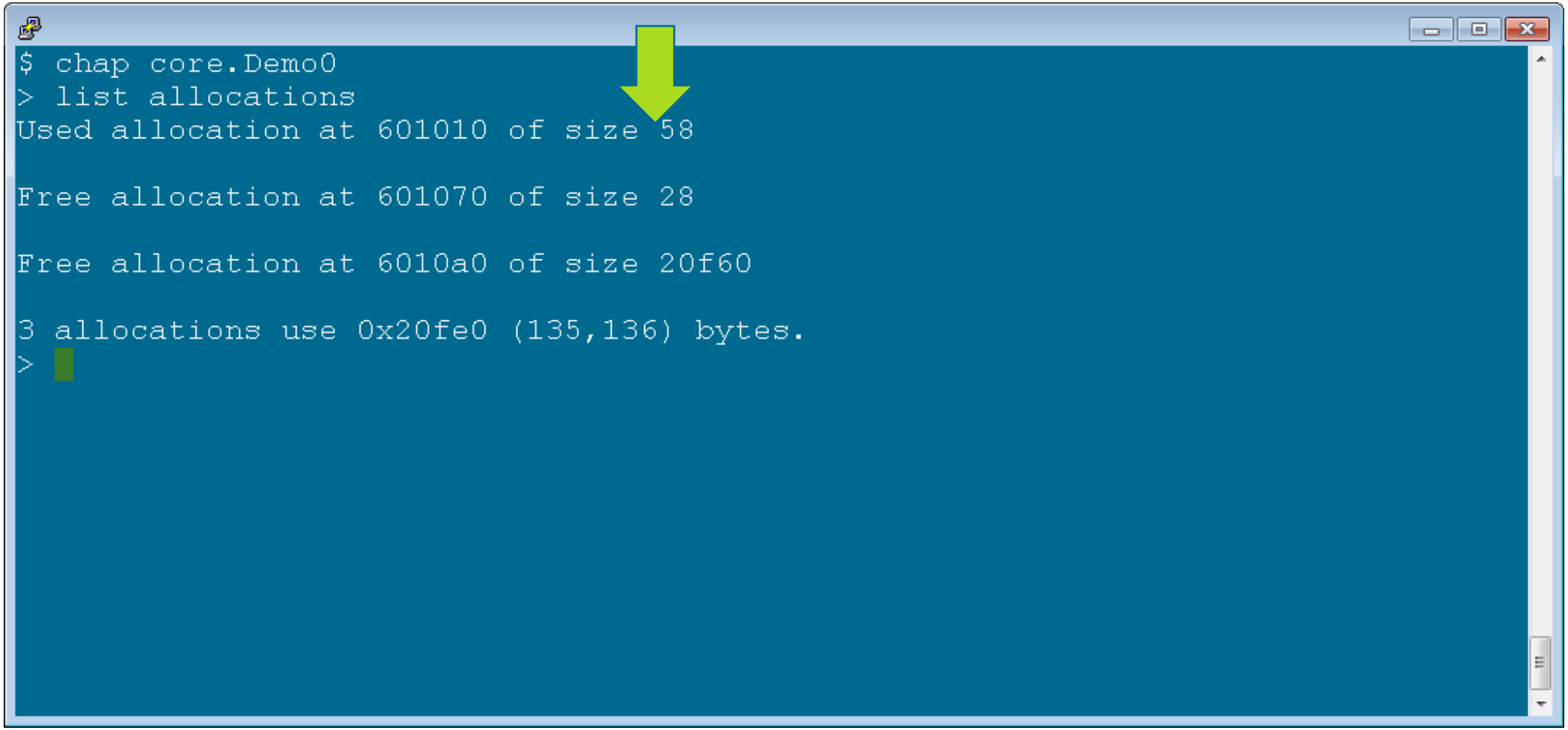

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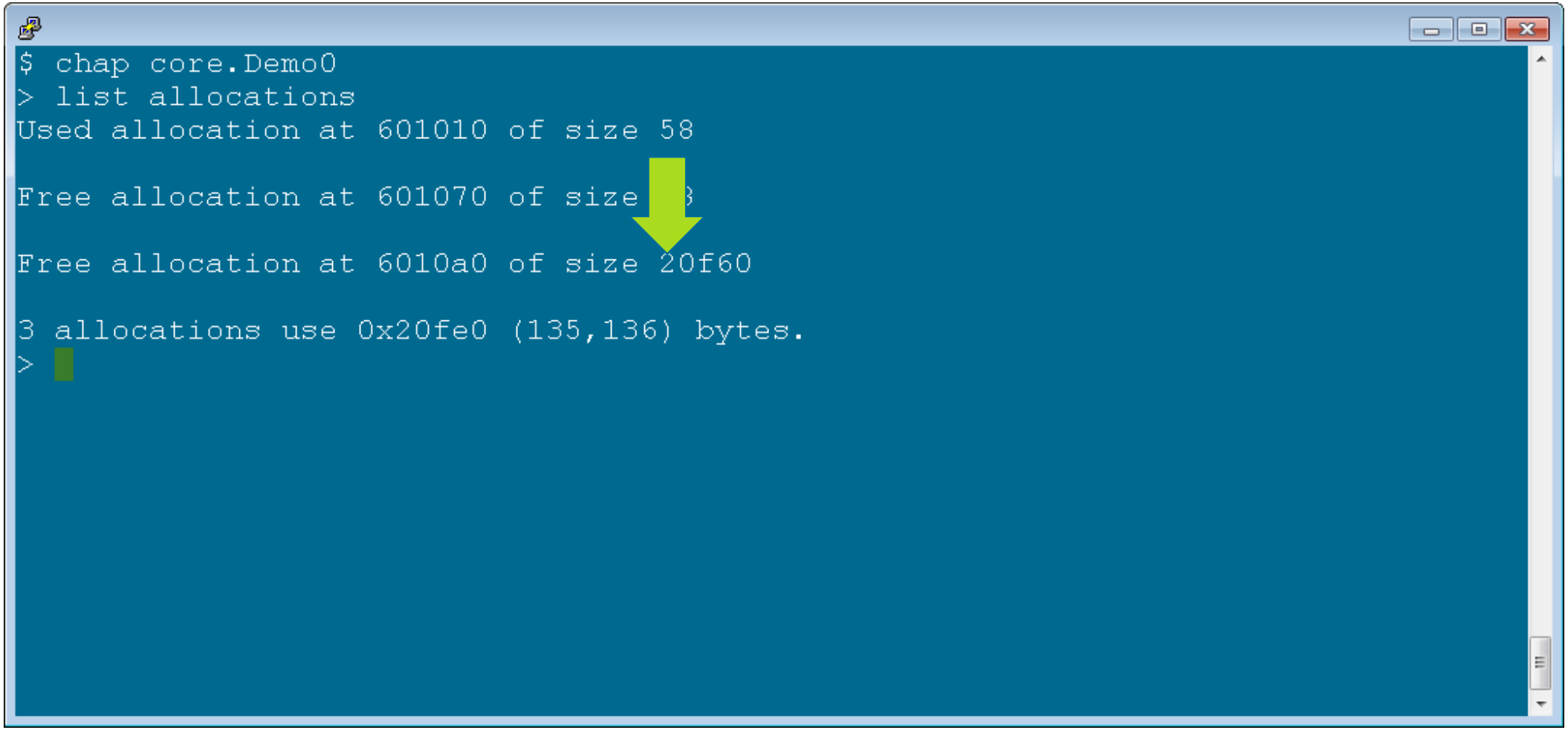

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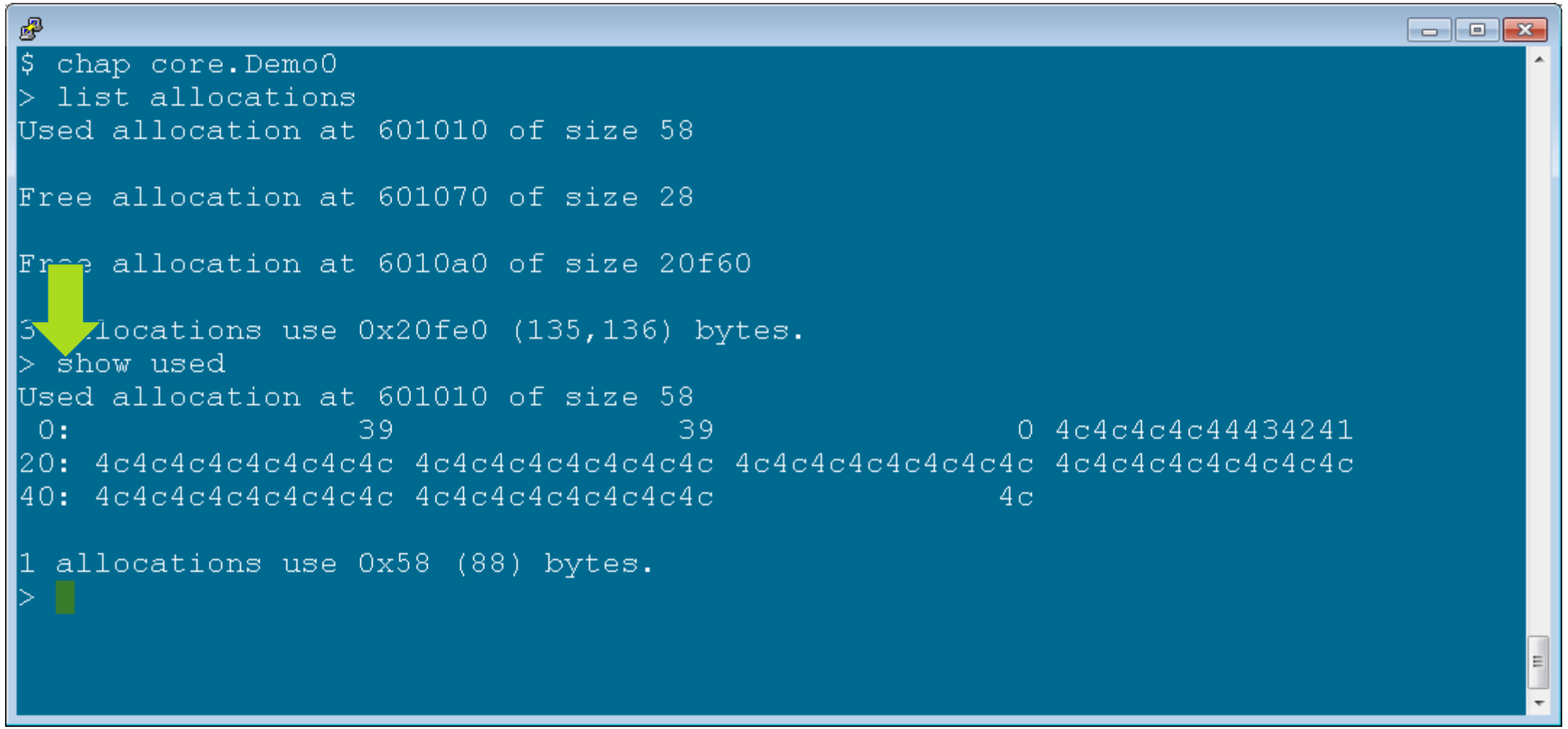

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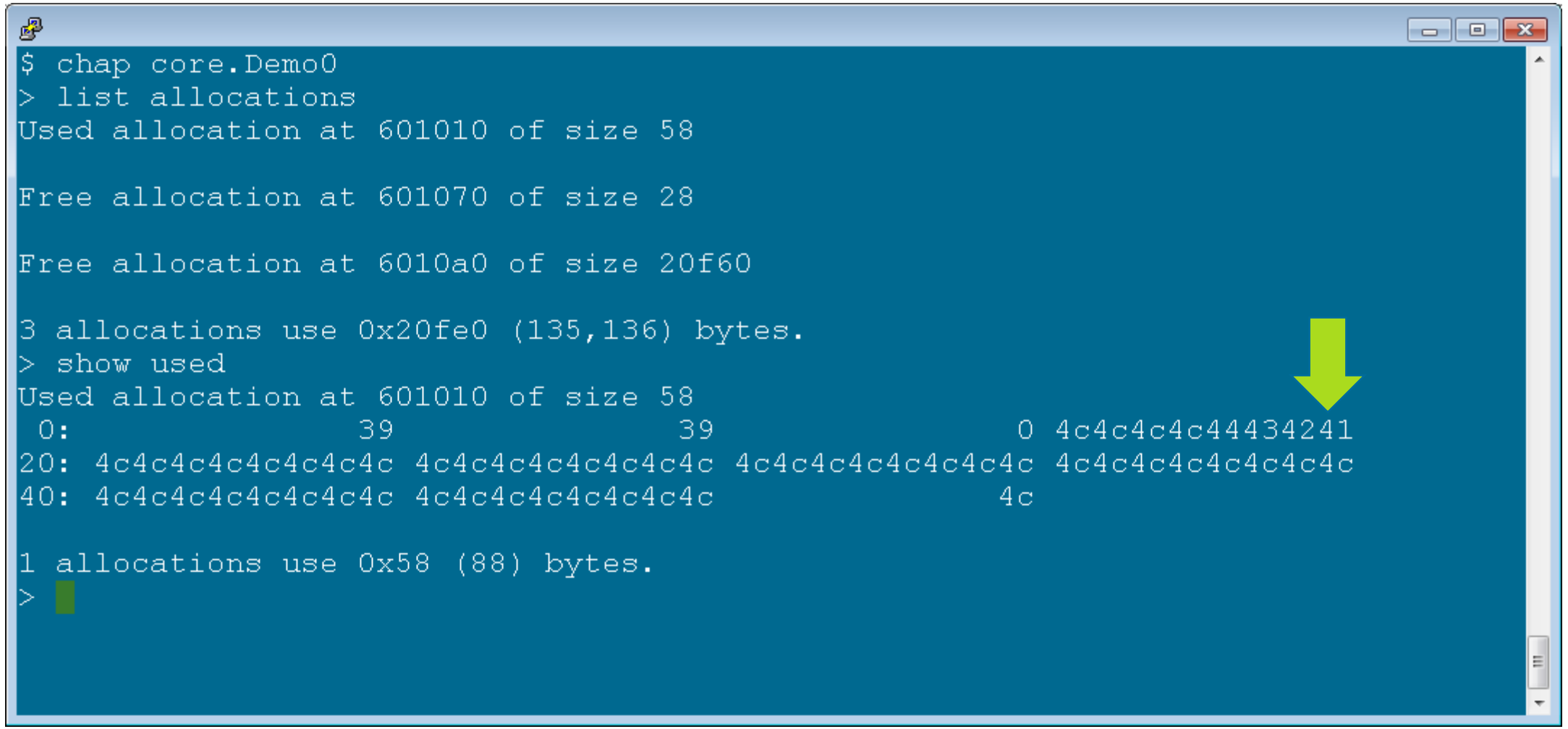

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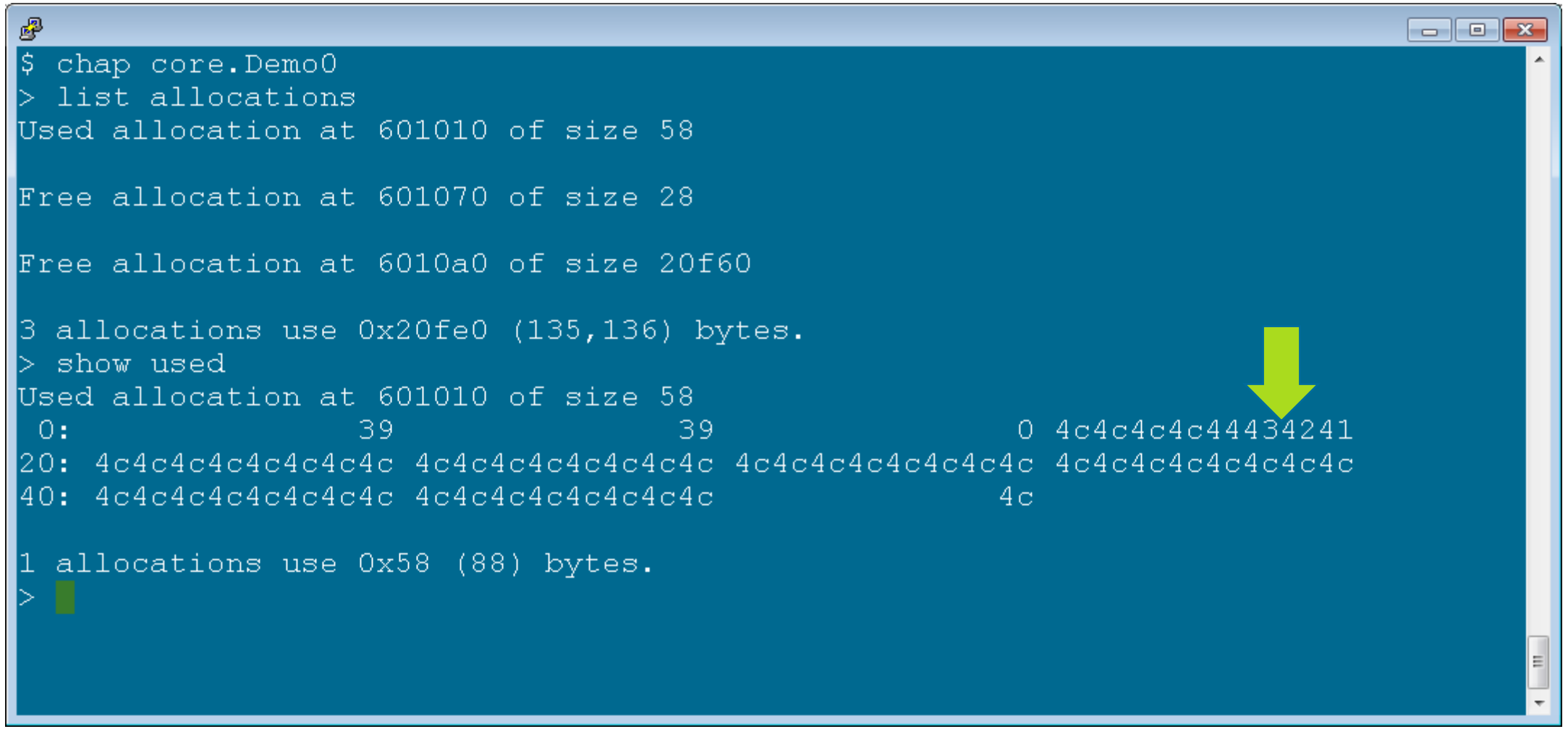

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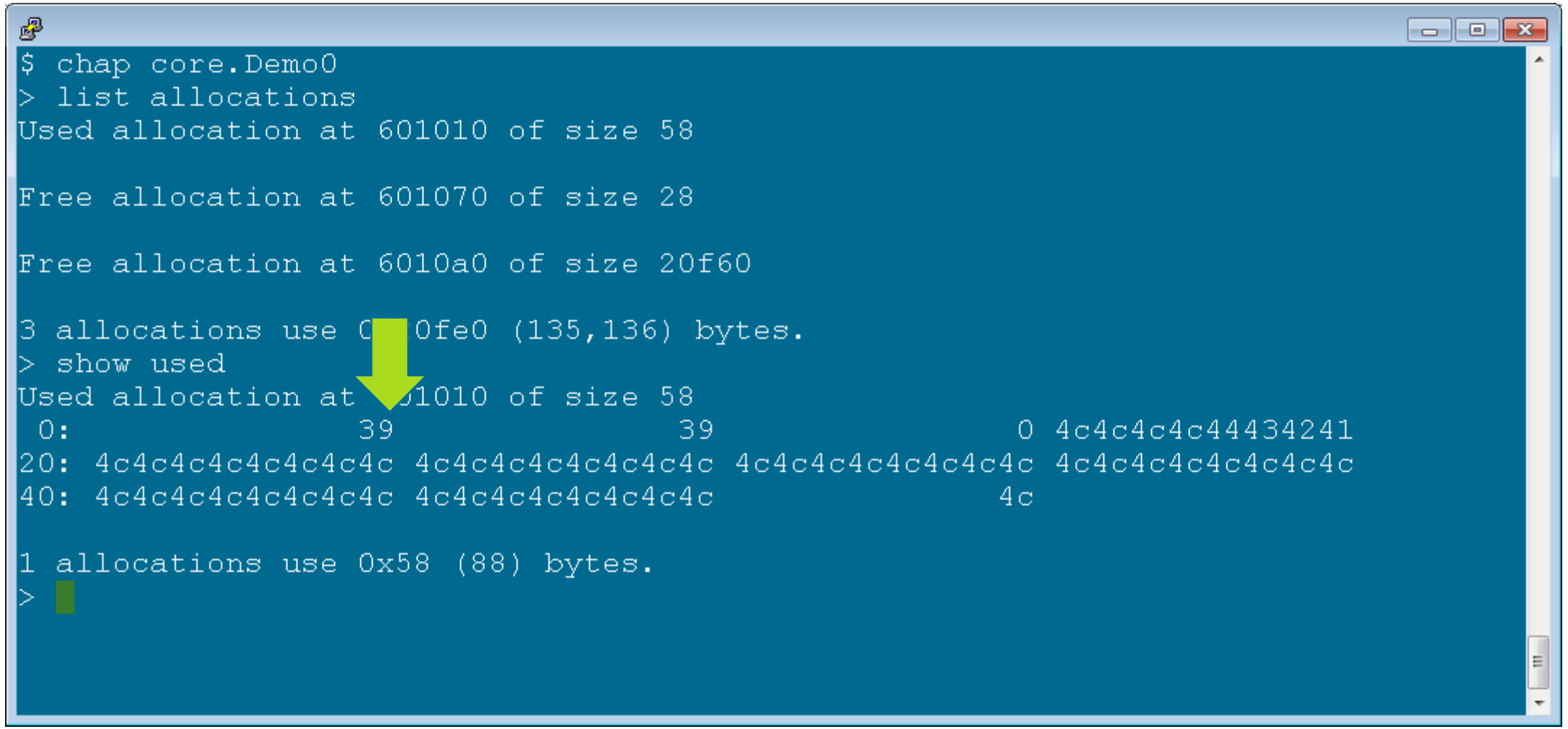

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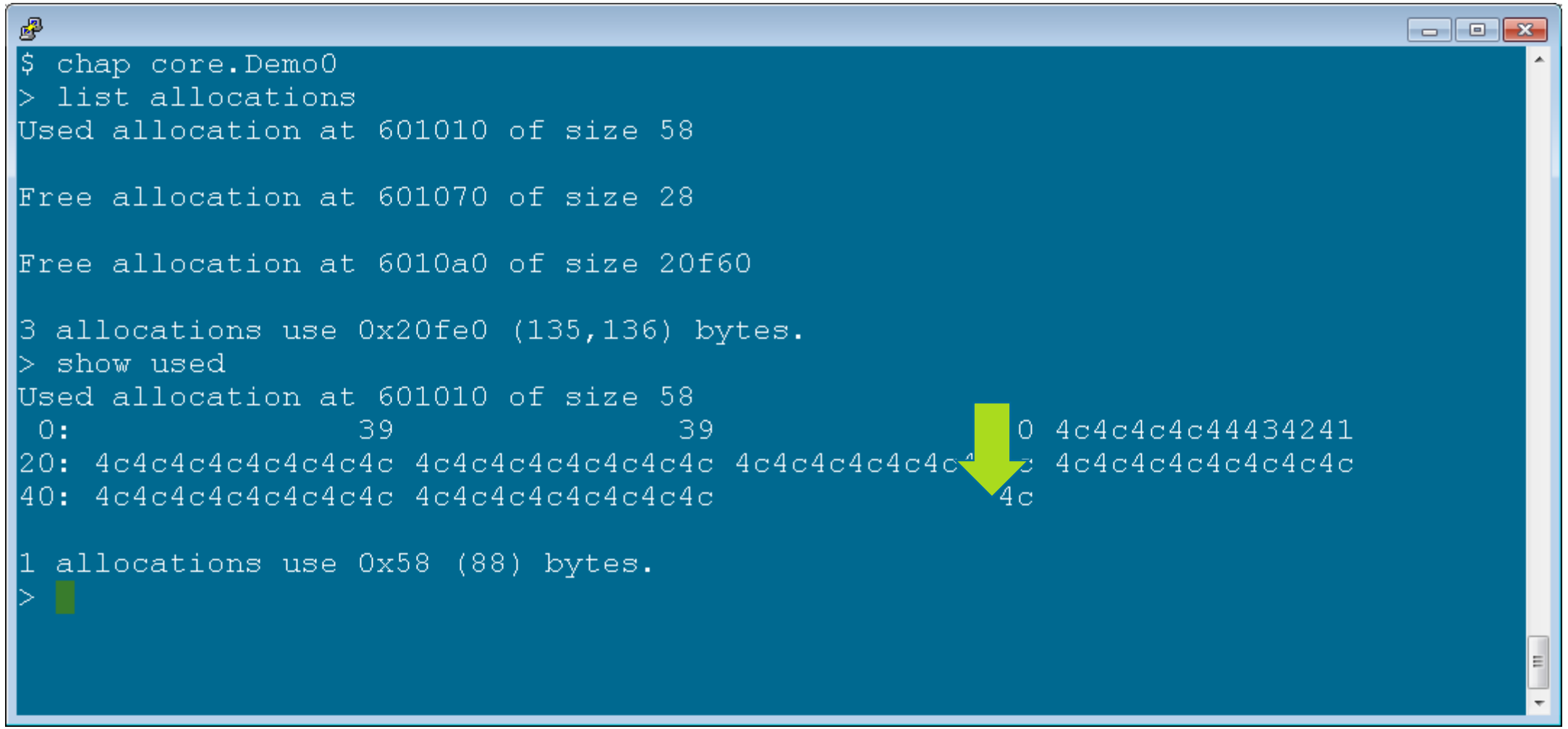
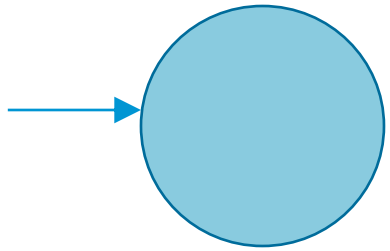


Chap Finds References to Allocations

Terminology: Reference

- A **reference** to an **allocation** is a value somewhere (possibly in a register or in memory) paired with some interpretation of that value as providing a live pointer to some part of the **allocation**
- A **real reference** to an **allocation** is a **reference** tor which the interpretation is correct
- A **false reference** to an **allocation** is a **reference** tor which the interpretation is incorrect
- A **missed reference** to an **allocation** is a **reference** that is not detected



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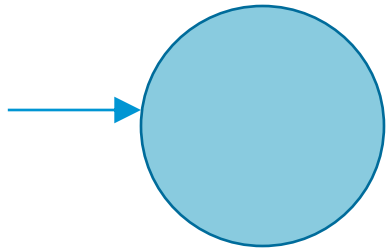
Examples of References

- A register associated with some thread contains a live pointer p to some part of an allocation
- A pointer-sized range of memory contains a live pointer p to some part of an allocation
- A register or memory contains f(p), e.g. myEncryptionFunction(p)
- Somewhere entirely outside the process holds p or f(p)



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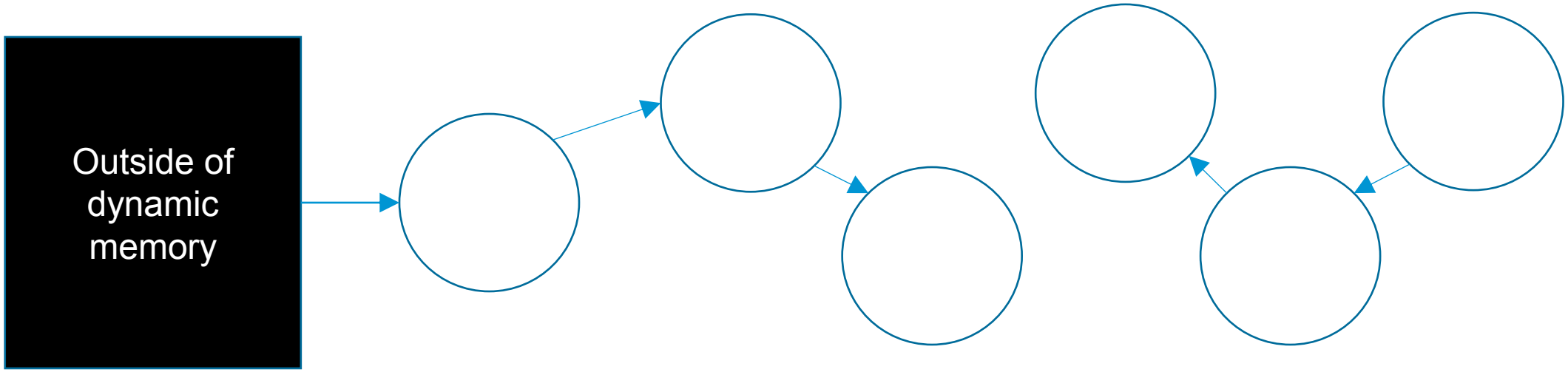
References and Allocations Form a Directed Graph



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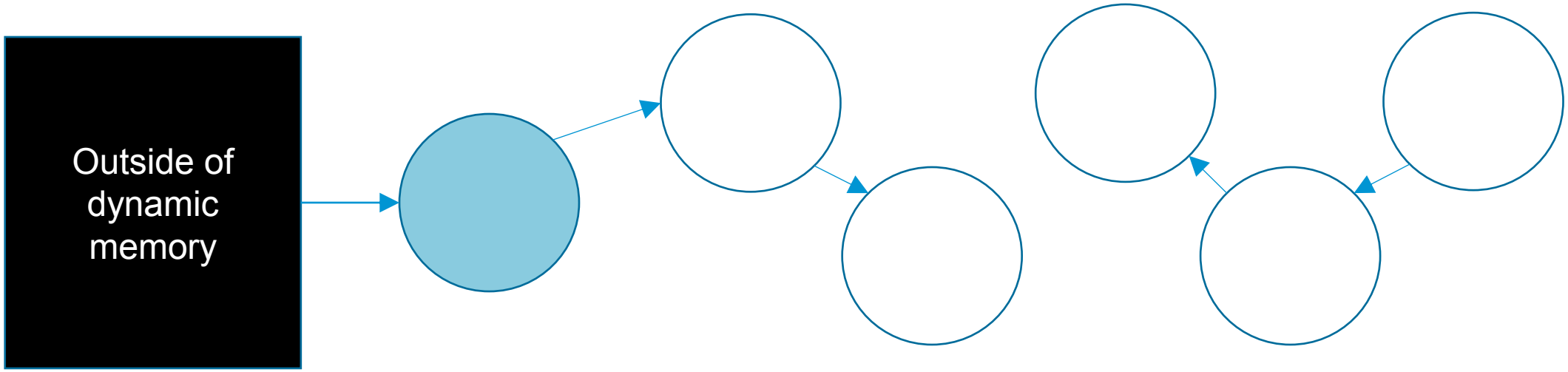
- A **used allocation** is considered an **anchor point** if it is directly referenced from **outside of dynamic memory**



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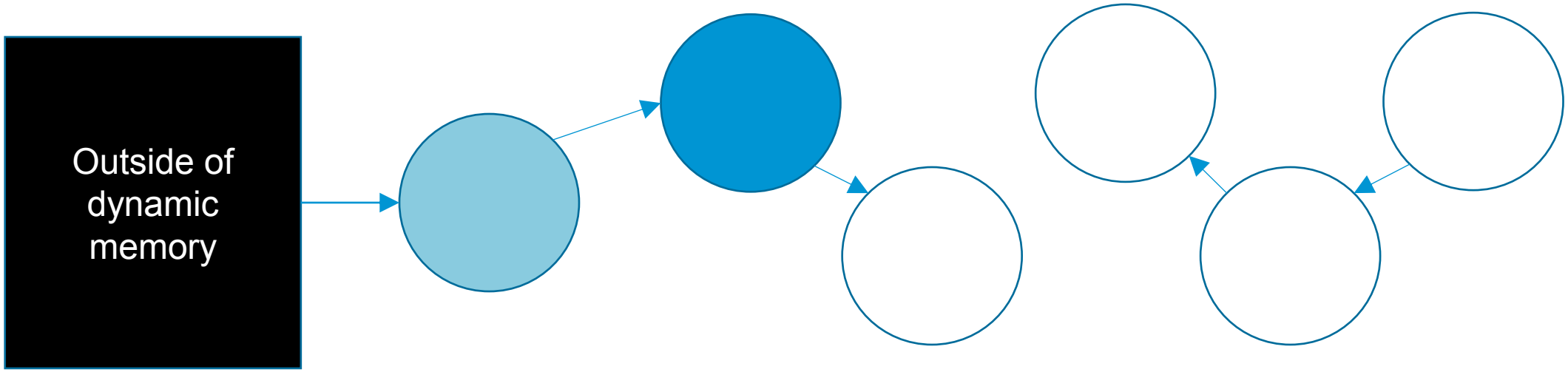

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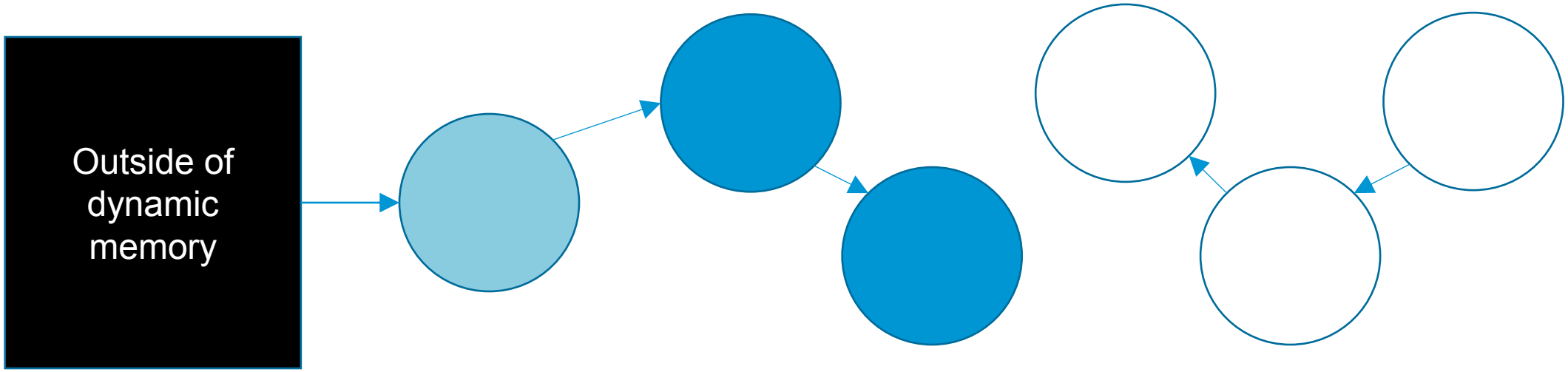

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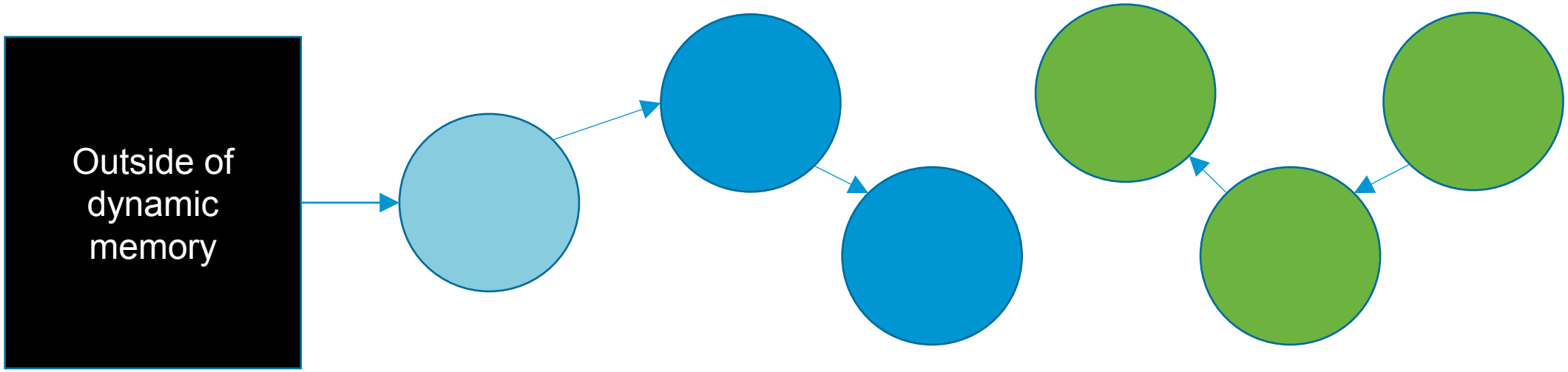

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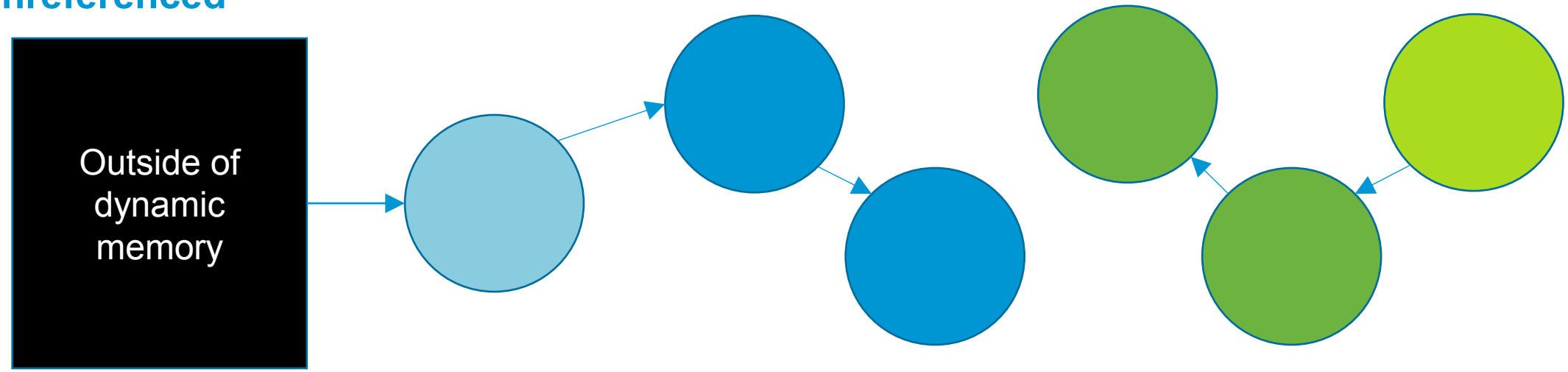
- A **leaked allocation** that is not referenced by another allocation is considered to be **unreferenced**



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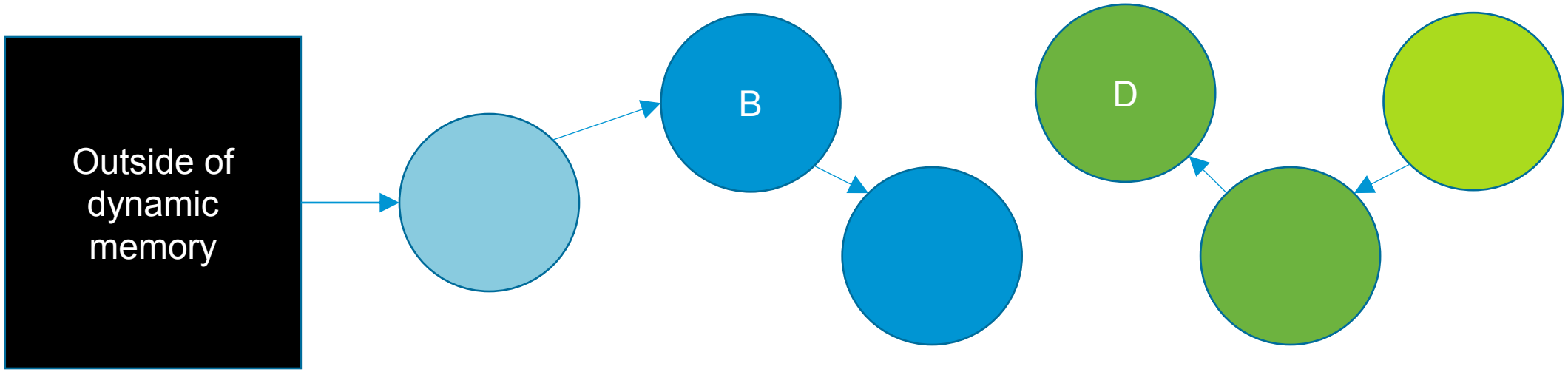

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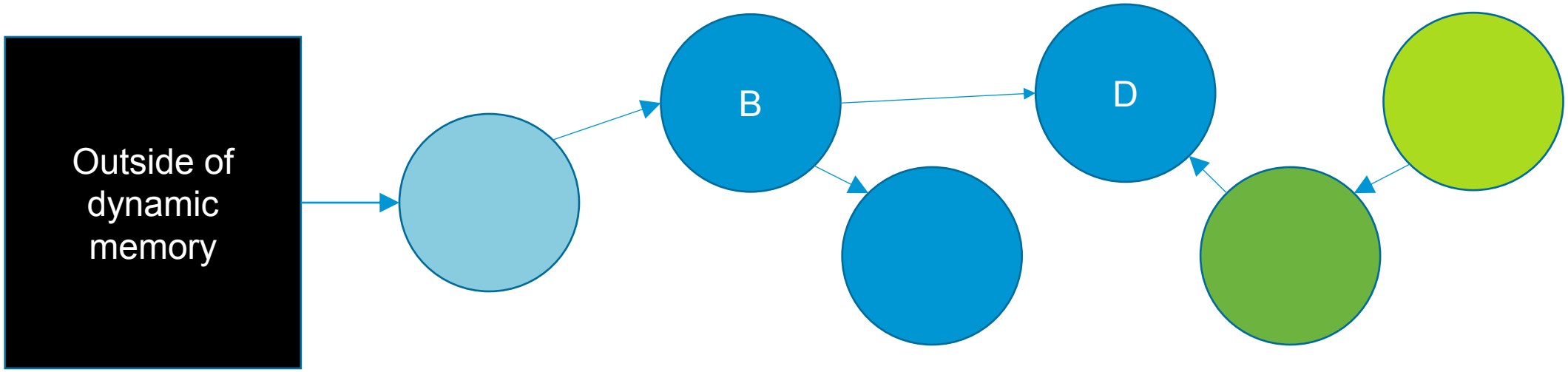
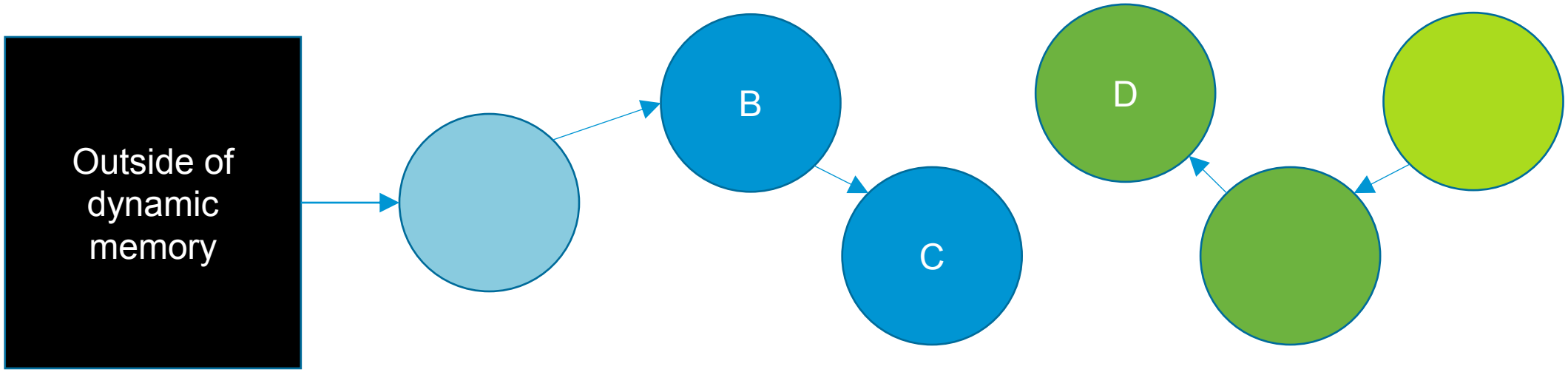


What Happens if the Reference from B to C is Missed?



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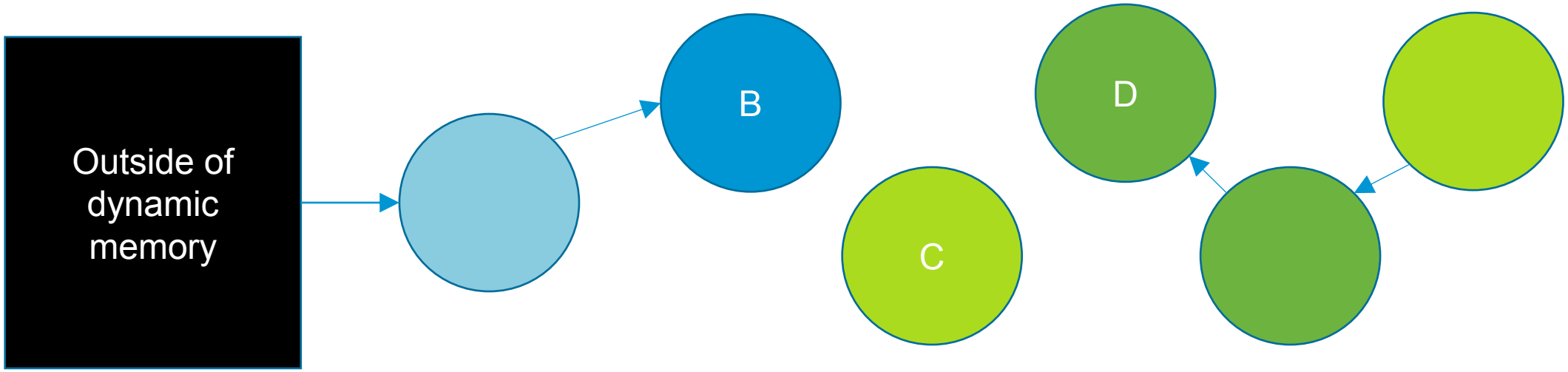
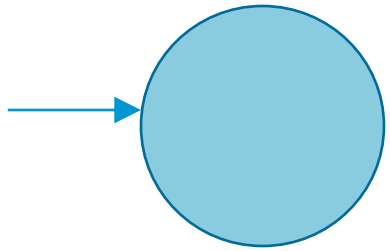


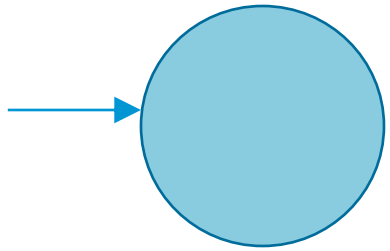
What CHAP Considers to be References

- A register associated with some thread contains a (not necessarily live) pointer p to some part of an allocation
- A pointer-sized range of memory (but constrained to be on a pointer sized boundary) contains a (not necessarily) live pointer p to some part of an allocation
-



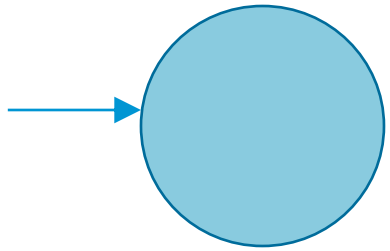
Some Reasons for False References Under CHAP

- Misinterpretation of liveness
  - Type not known
  - Failure to understand structure information for known type
  - Failure to understand liveness for known fields of a given class
  - Failure to understand liveness as a function of thread state
- Coincidence
  - Adjacent short integers
  - C-string



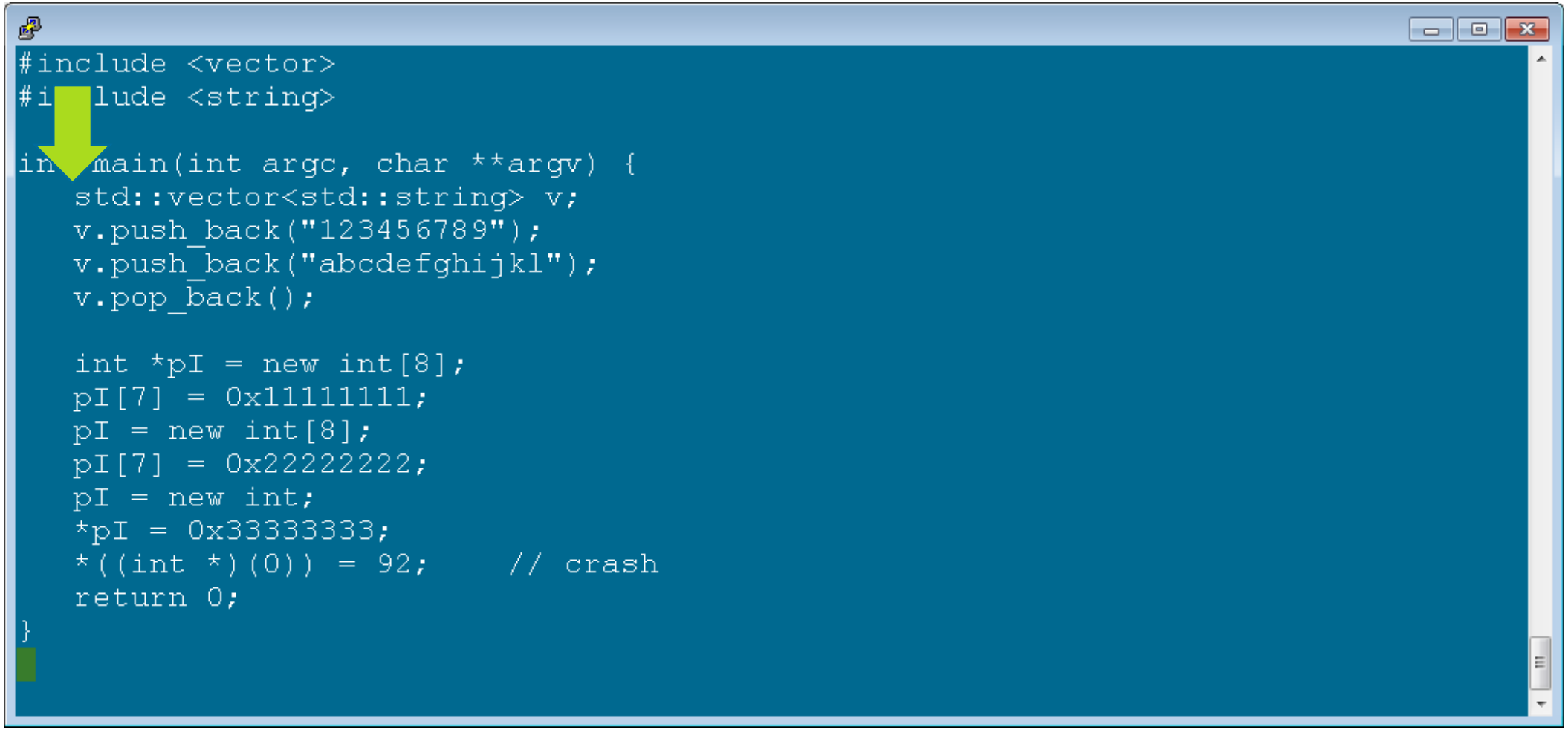
Some Reasons for Missed References Under CHAP

- Reference is from outside process
  - Fixable in future by allowing some way to recognize such allocations
- Reference is in the form f(p)
  - Fixable in future by modifying CHAP to be aware of f
- Reference is not aligned on a pointer-sized boundary
  - Fixable by relaxing alignment constraint, possibly configurably



-

A Sample Program to Illustrate References

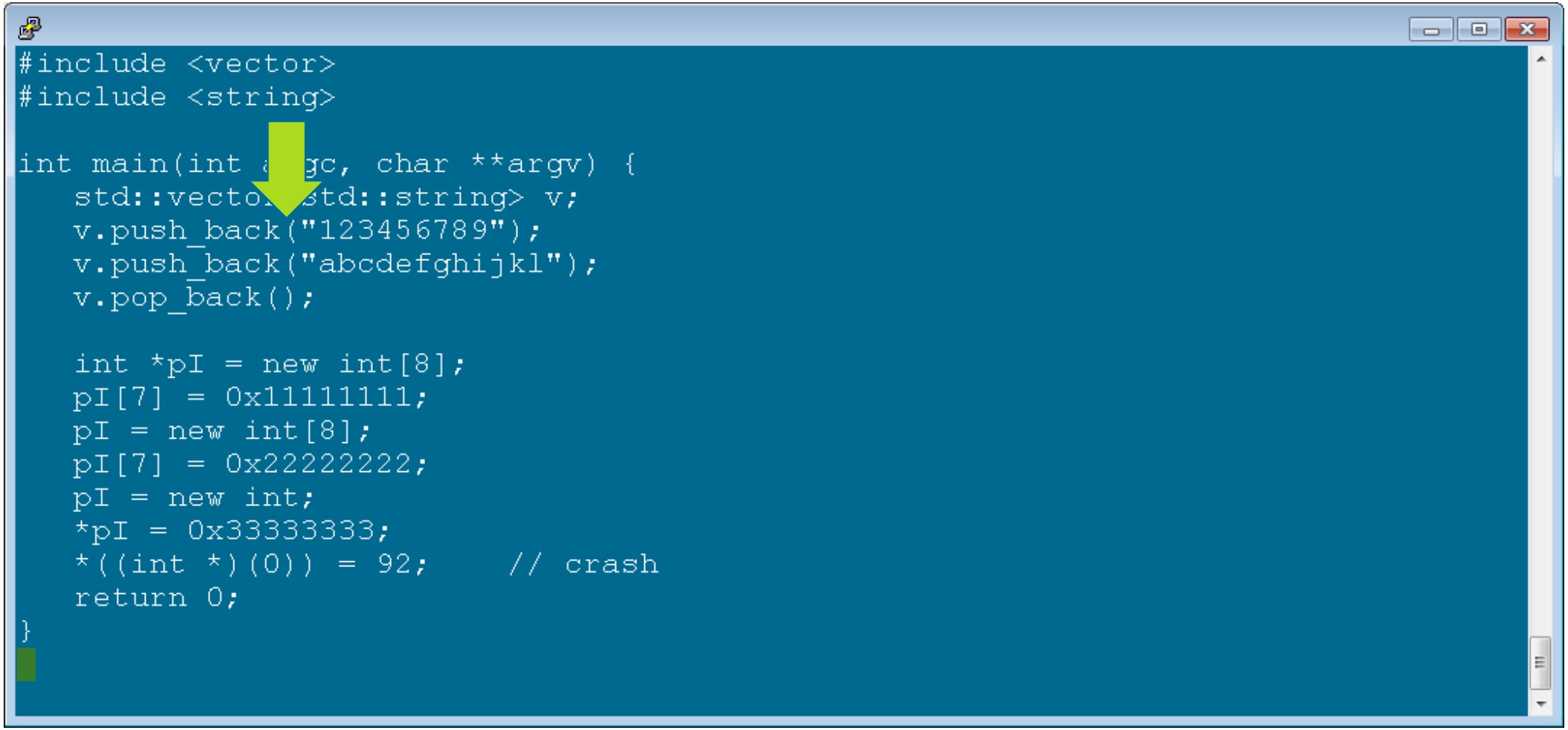


```
#include <vector>
#include <string>

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    std::vector<std::string> v;
    v.push_back("123456789");
    v.push_back("abcdefghijkl");
    v.pop_back();

    int *pI = new int[8];
    pI[7] = 0x11111111;
    pI = new int[8];
    pI[7] = 0x22222222;
    pI = new int;
    *pI = 0x33333333;
    *((int *)(0)) = 92;     // crash
    return 0;
}
```

A Sample Program to Illustrate References



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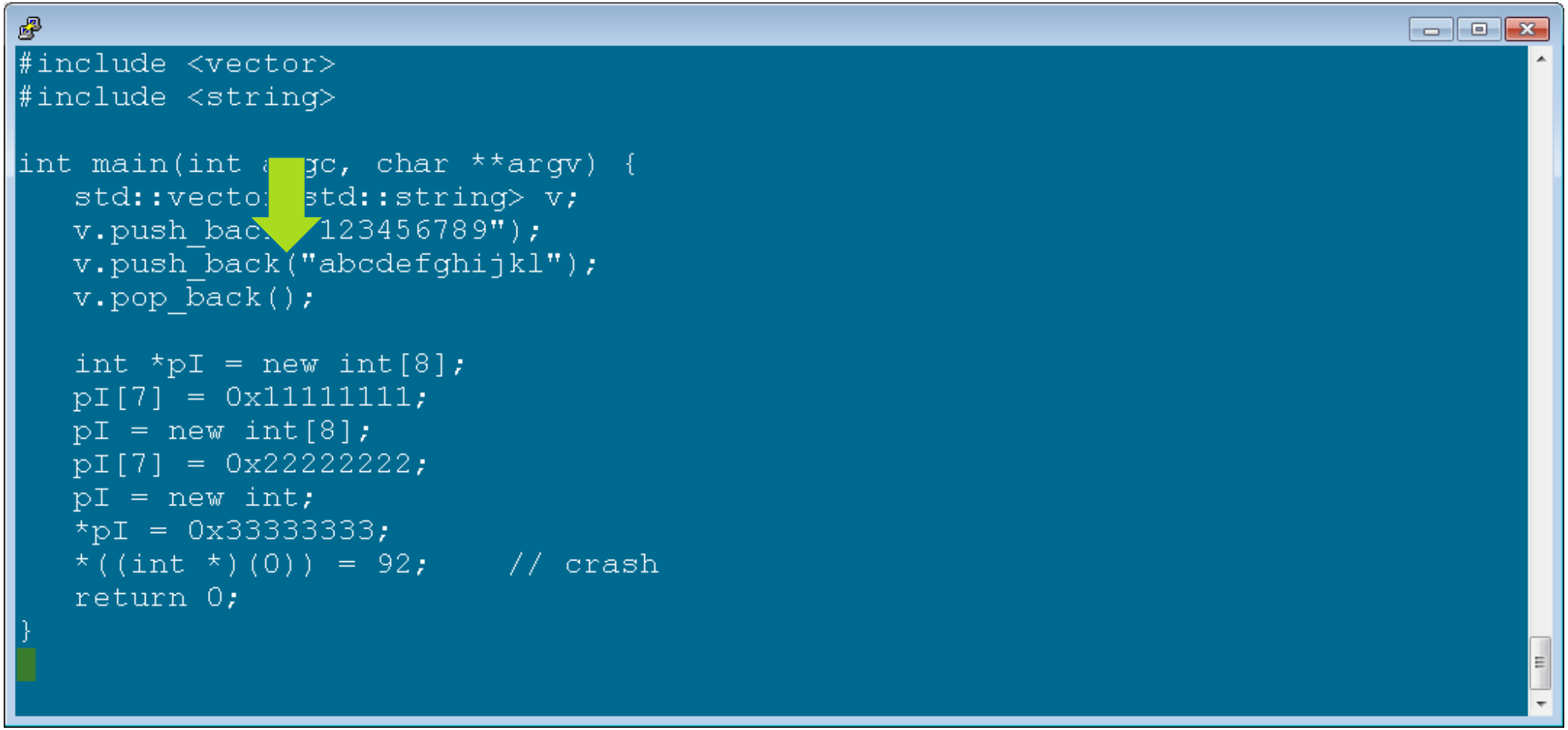

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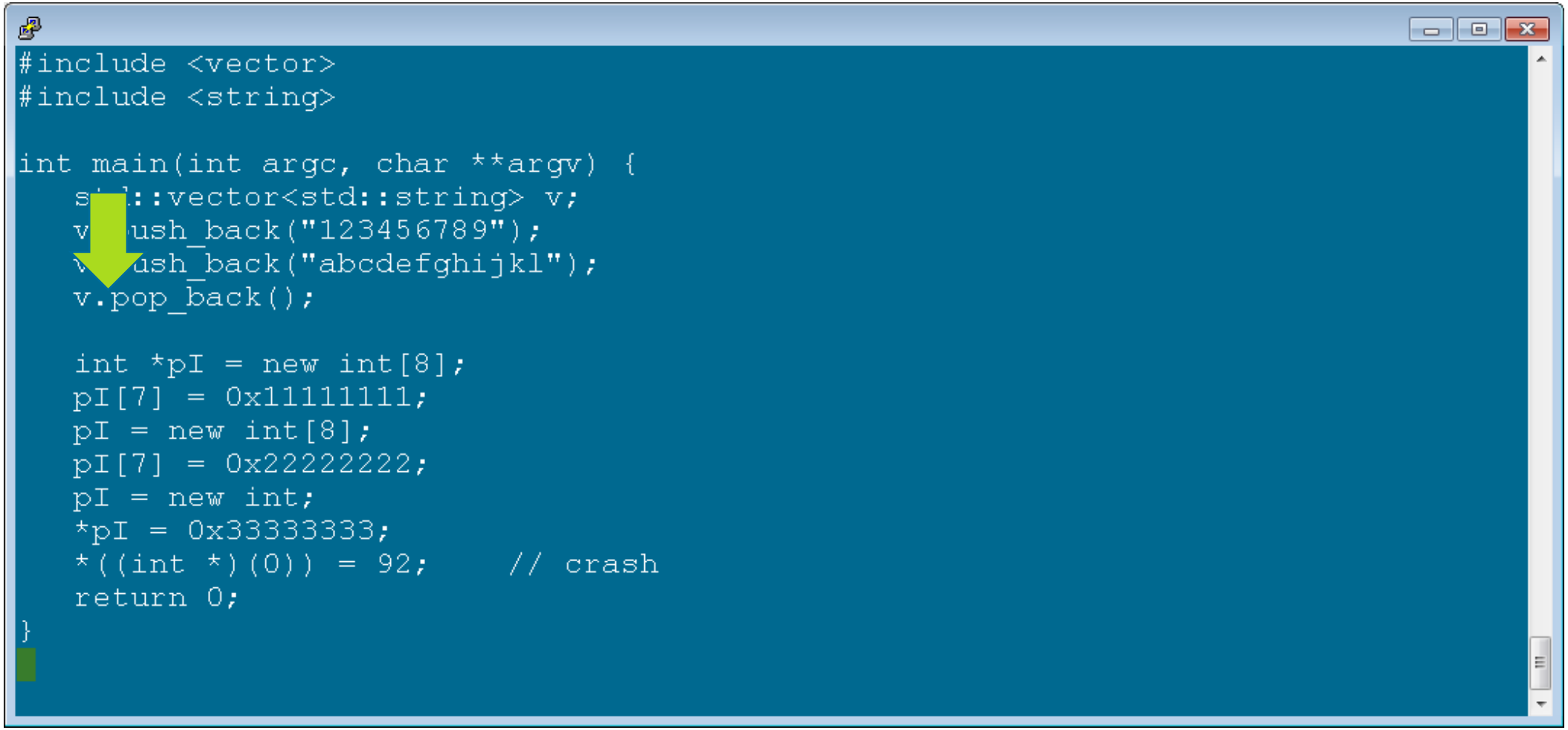

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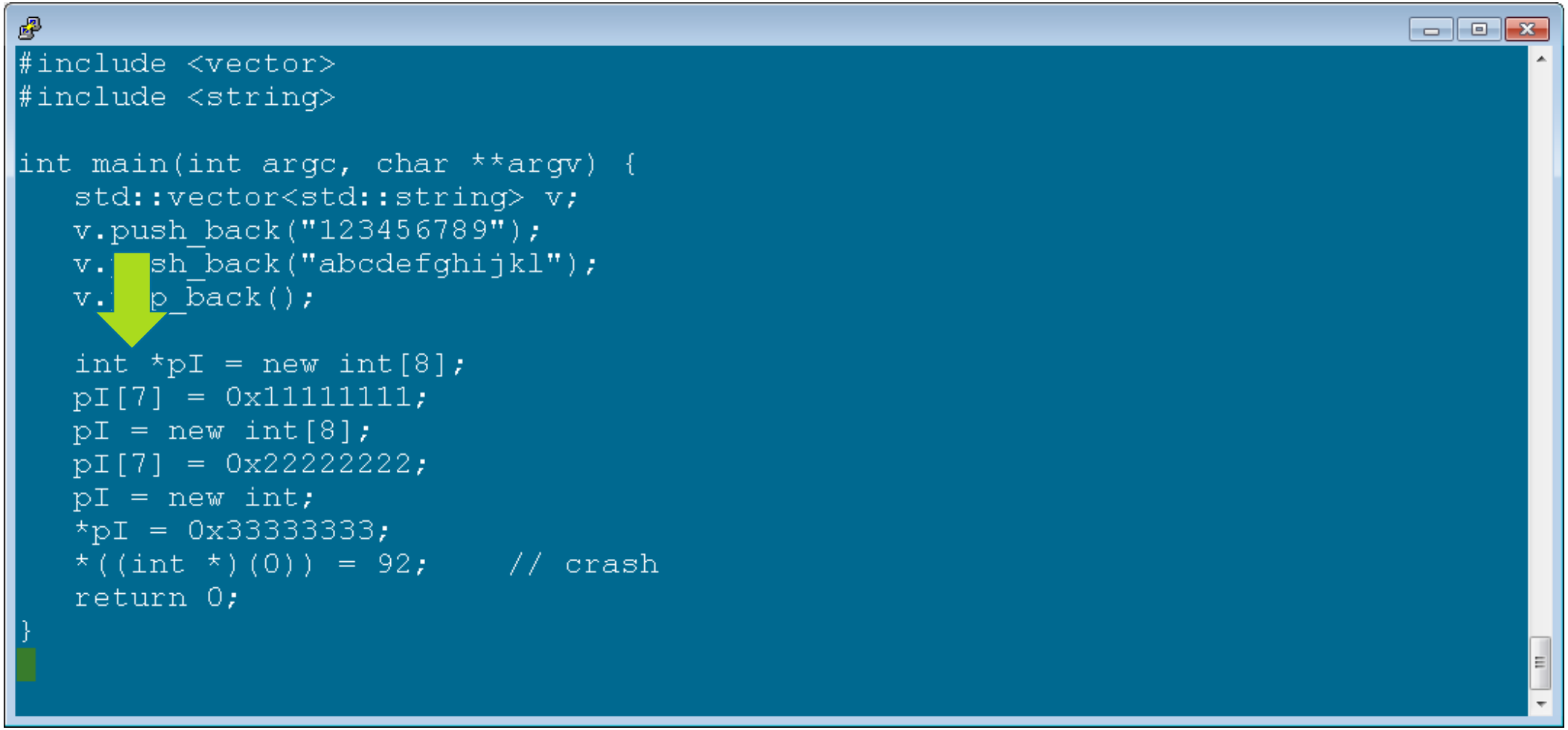

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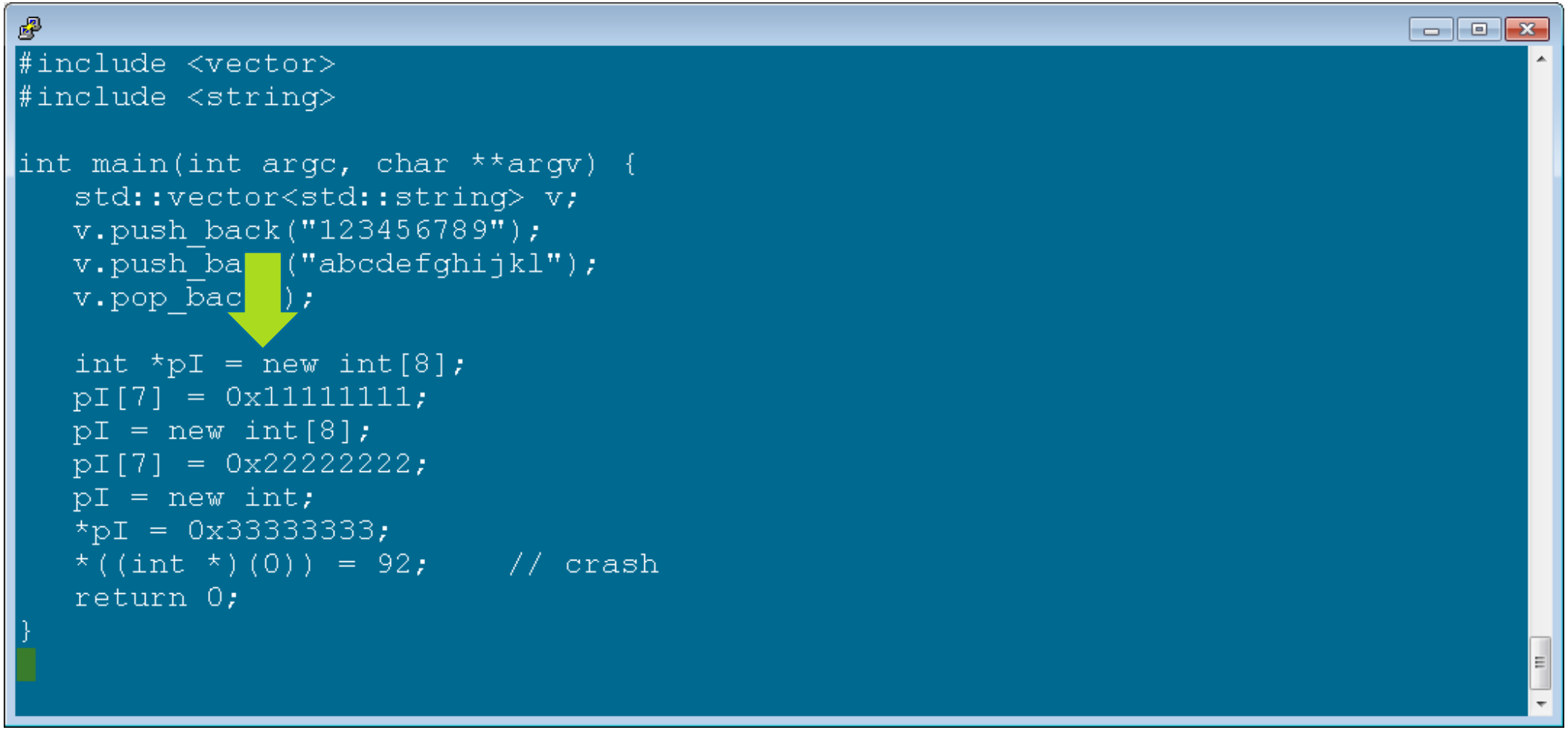

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#include <string>

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
   std::vector<std::string> v;
   v.push_back("123456789");
   v.push_ba  ("abcdefghijkl");
   v.pop_bac  );

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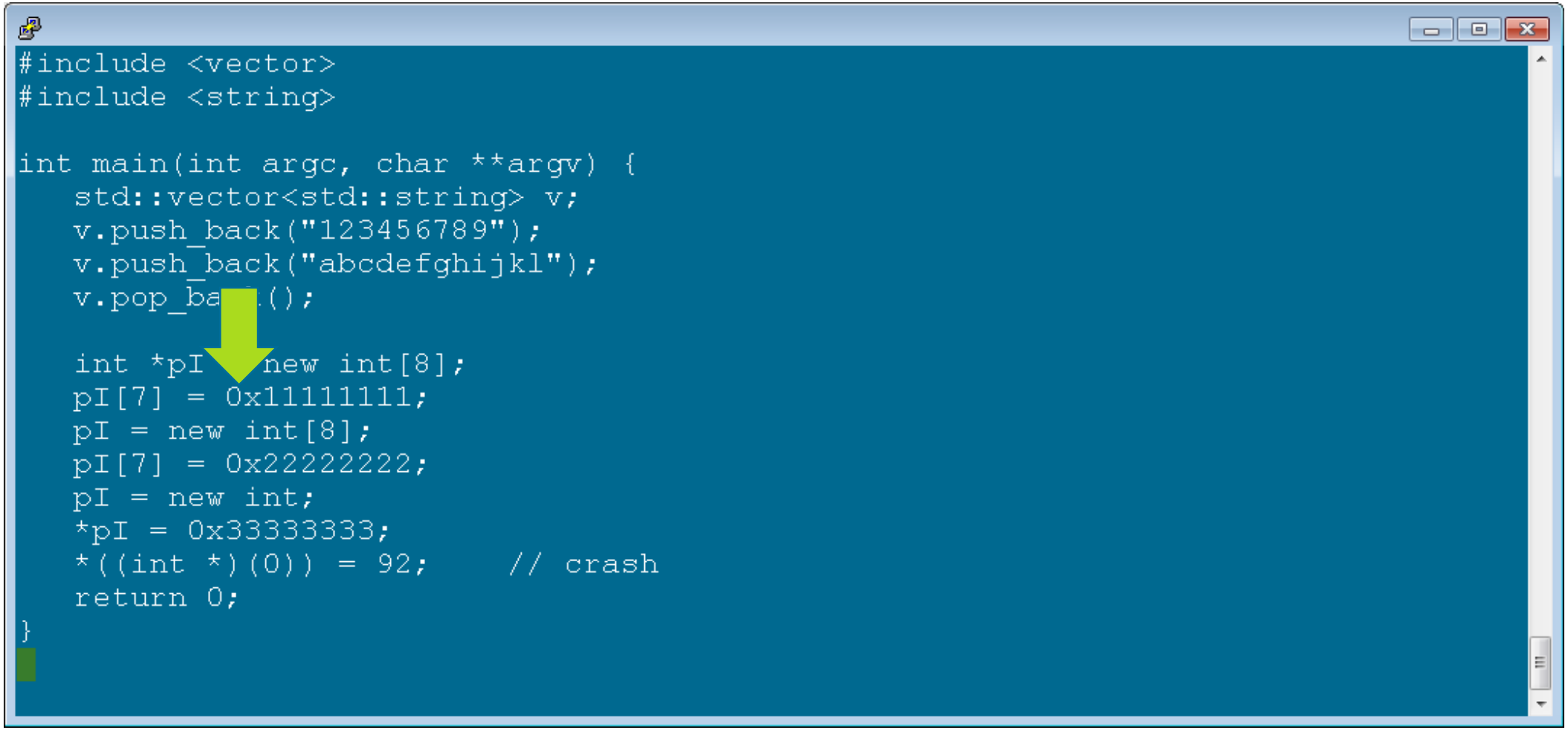

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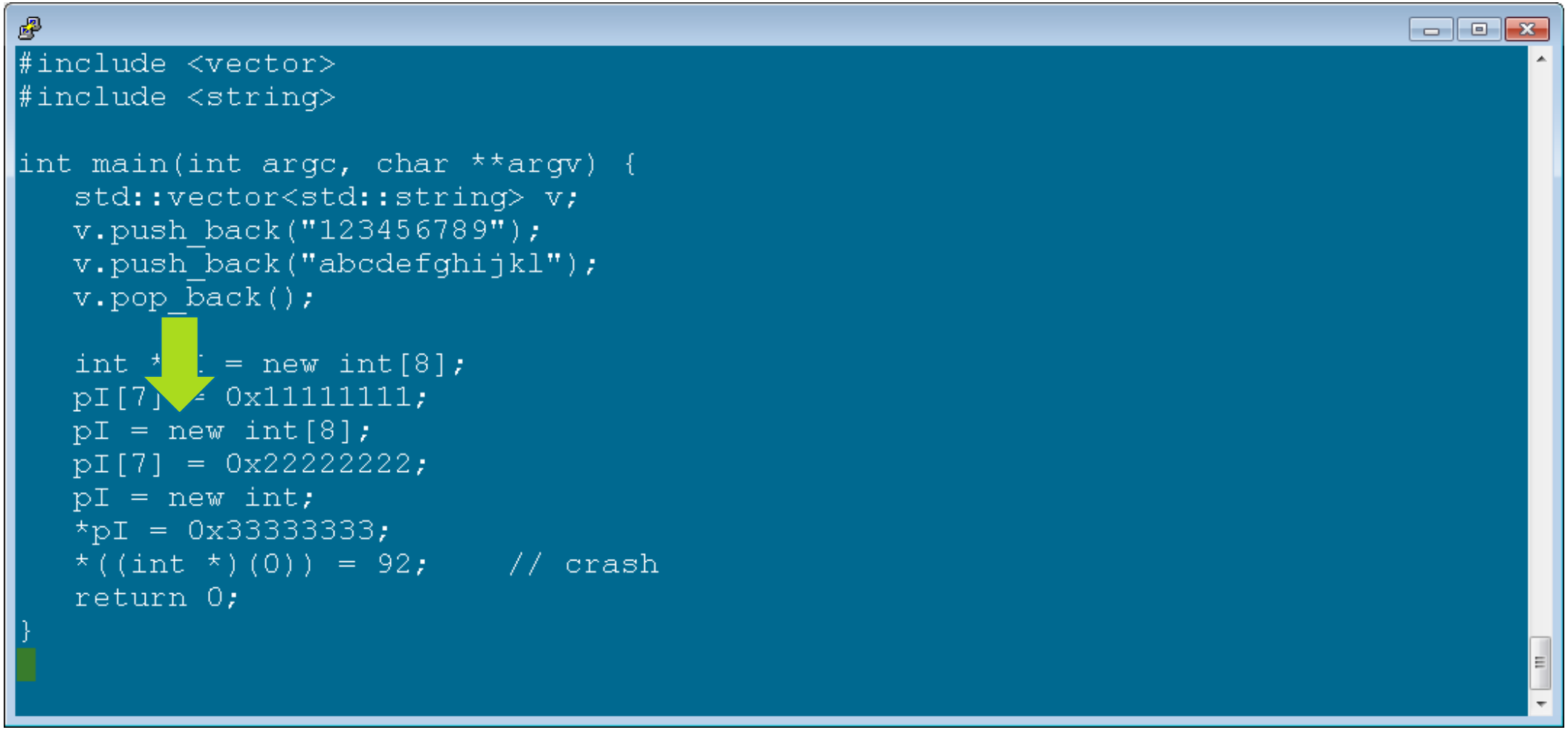

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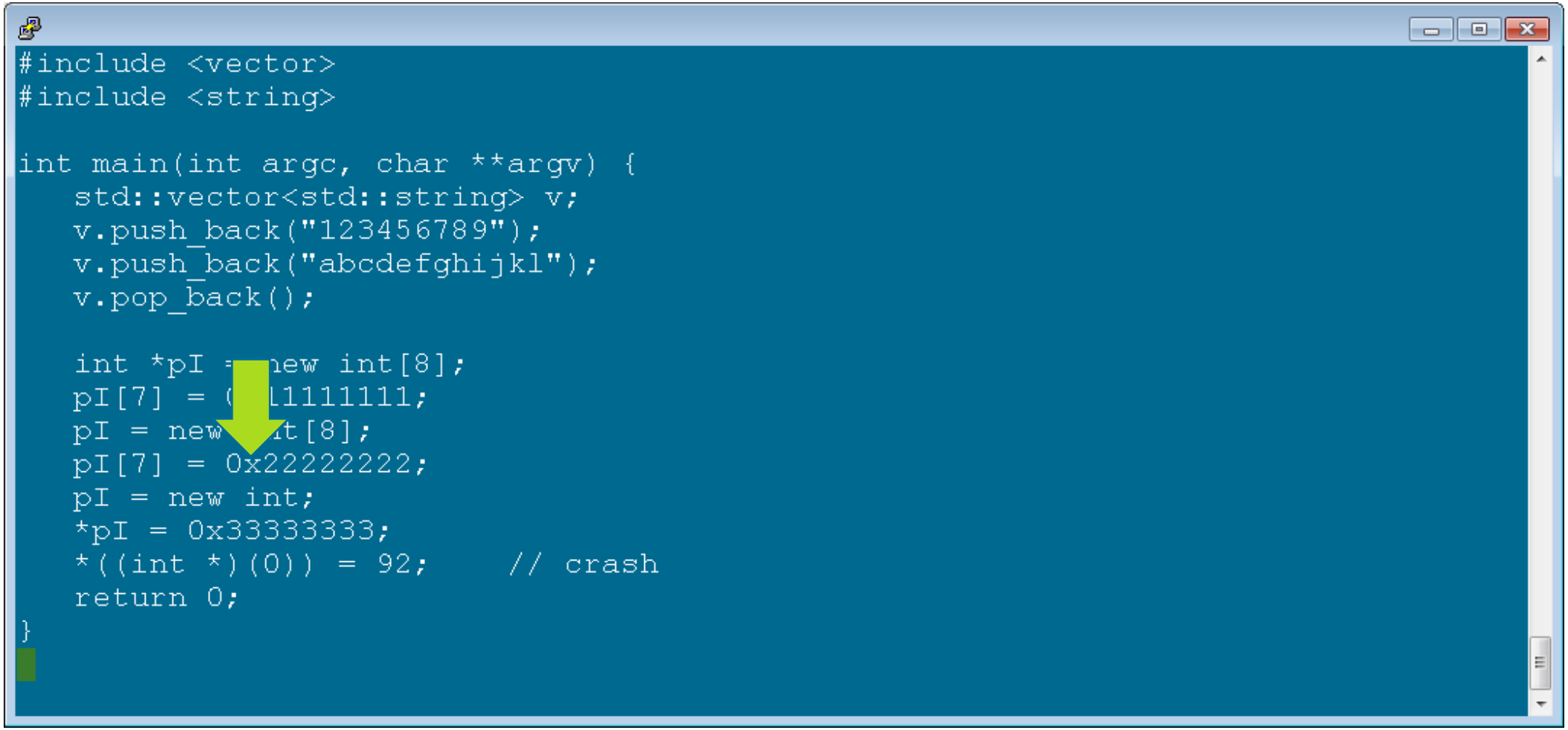
A Sample Program to Illustrate References



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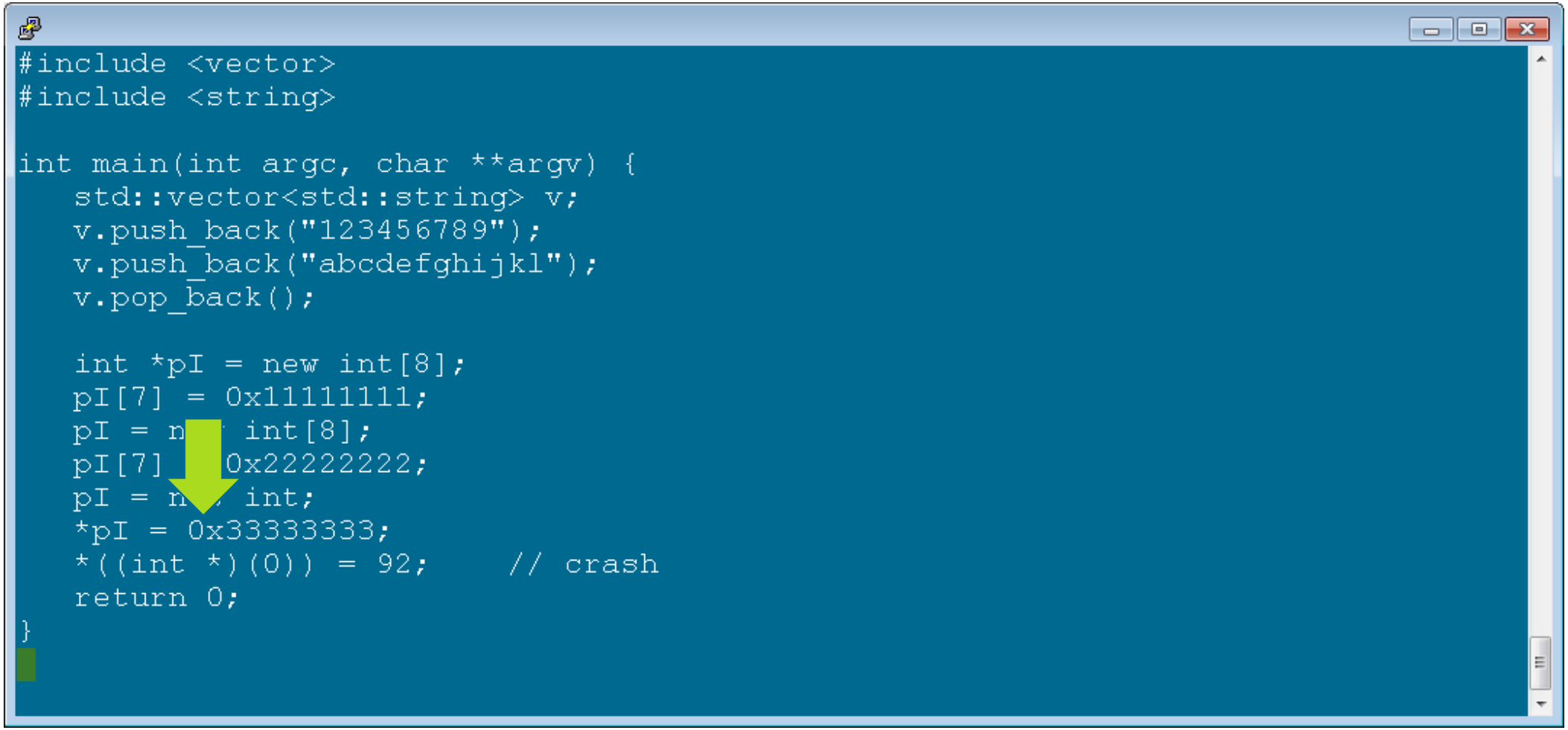
A Sample Program to Illustrate References



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int main(int argc, char **argv) {
   std::vector<std::string> v;
   v.push_back("123456789");
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   pI[7] = 0x11111111;
   pI = n  int[8];
   pI[7]  0x22222222;
   pI = n  int;
   *pI = 0x33333333;
   *((int *)(0)) = 92;     // crash
   return 0;
}
```
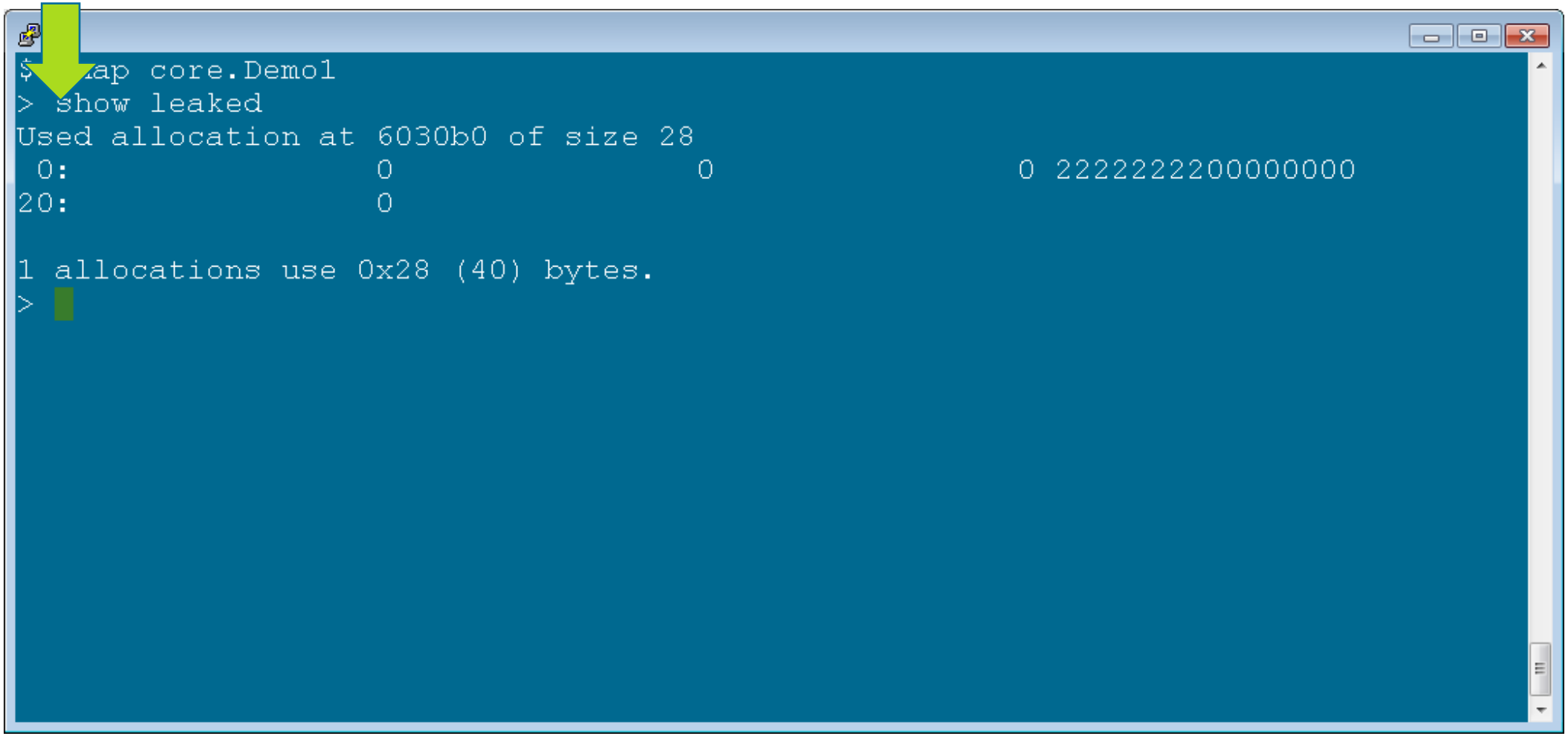
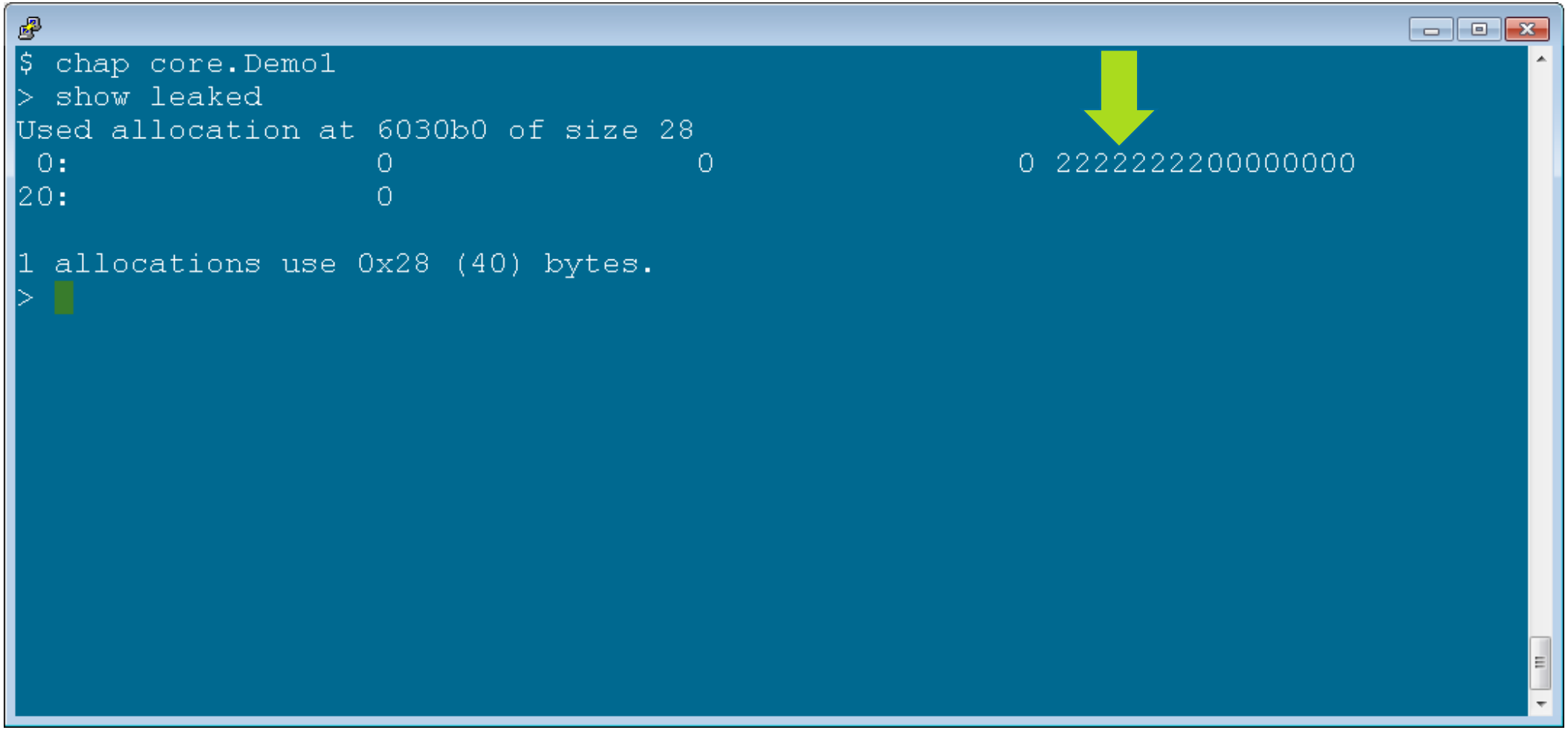
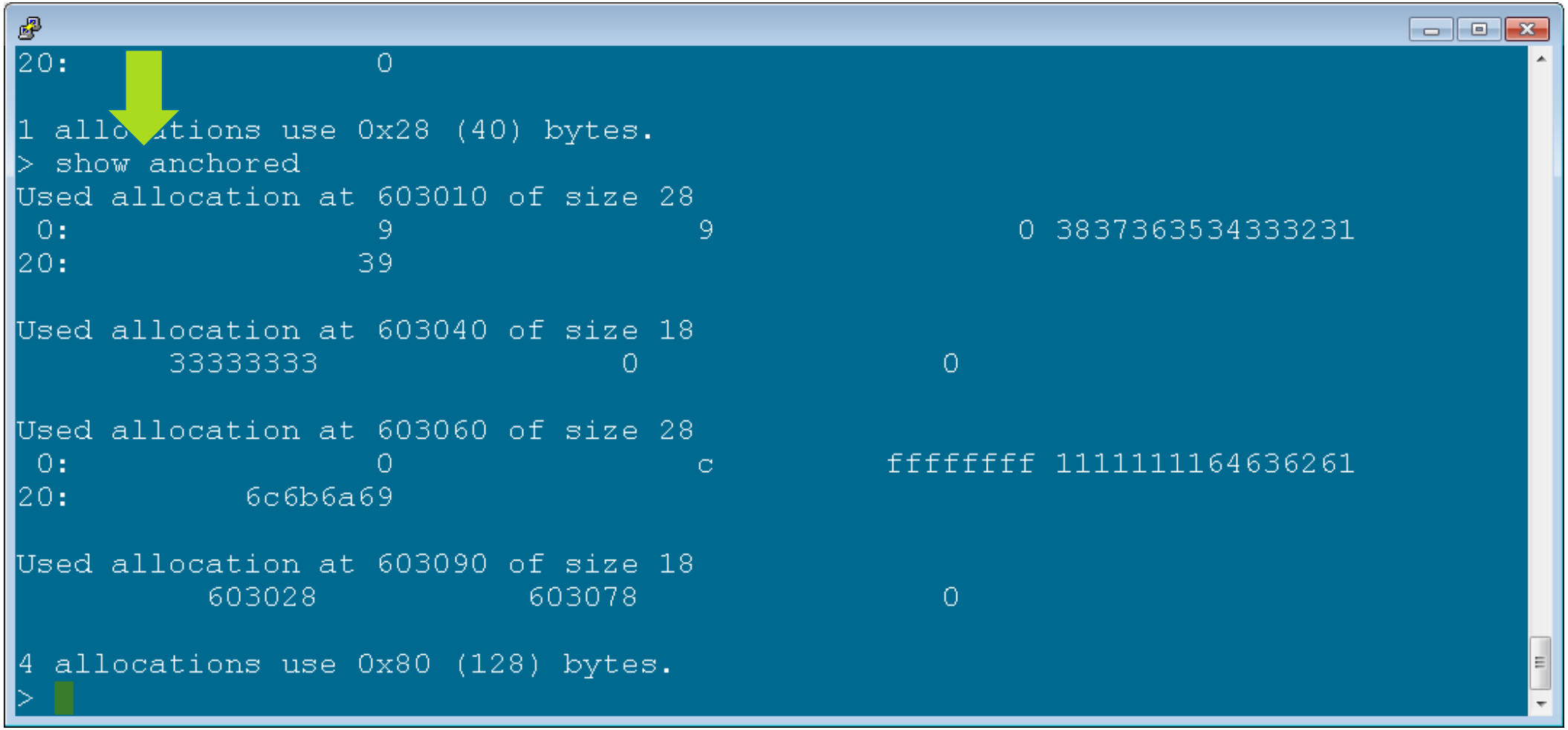

Showing (some of the) Leaked Allocations



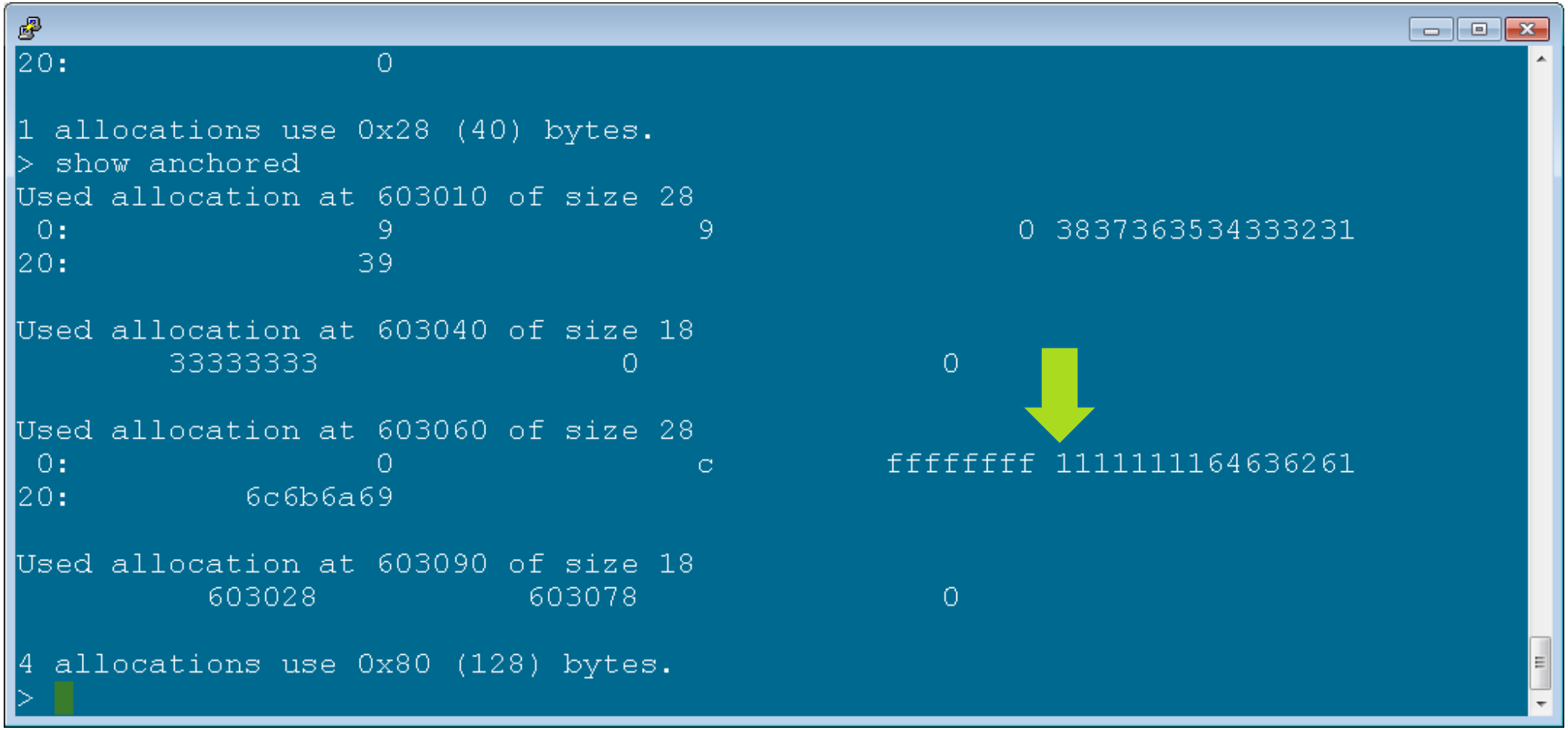
Showing (some of the) Leaked Allocations



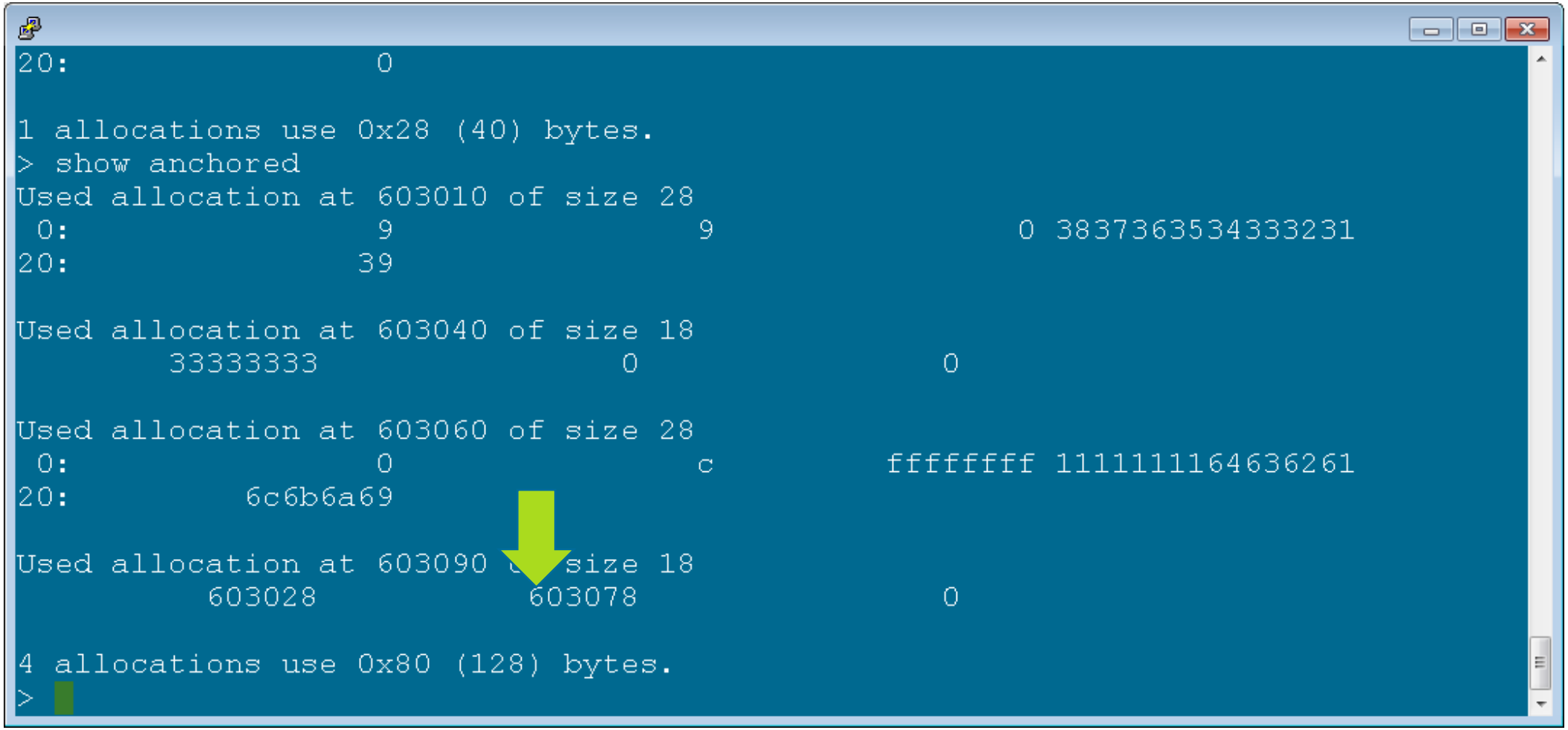
Showing (too many) Anchored Allocations



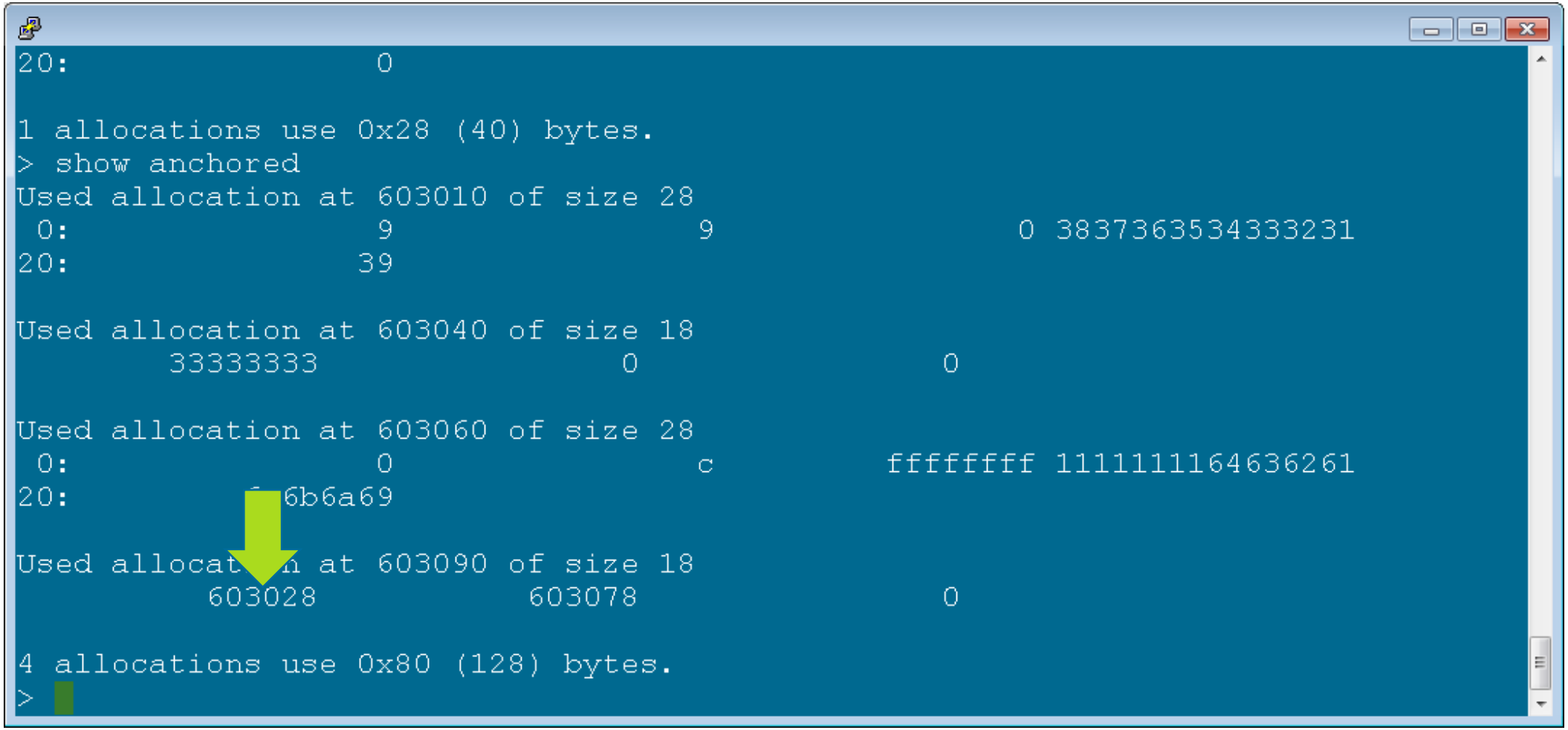
Showing (too many) Anchored Allocations



Showing (too many) Anchored Allocations

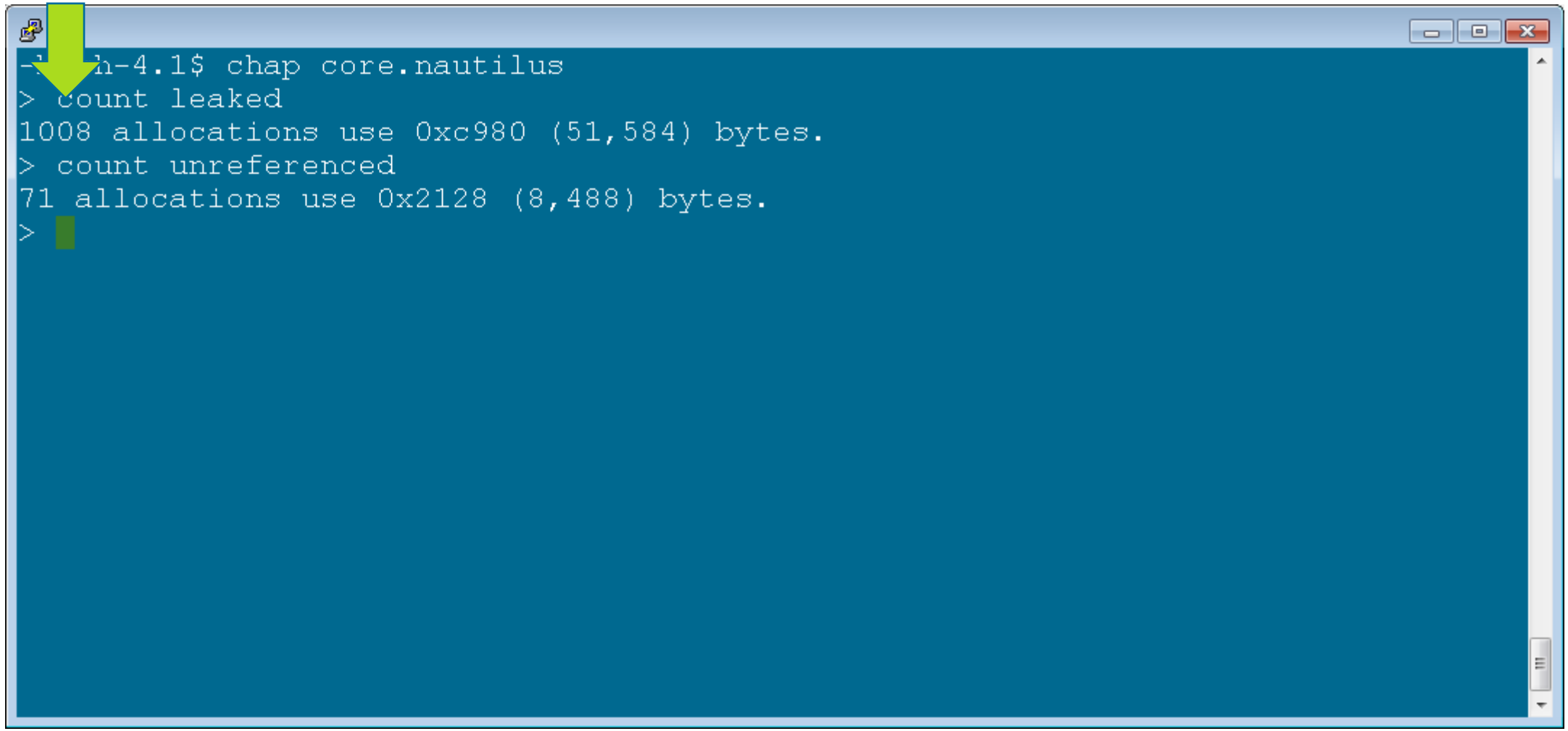


Showing (too many) Anchored Allocations

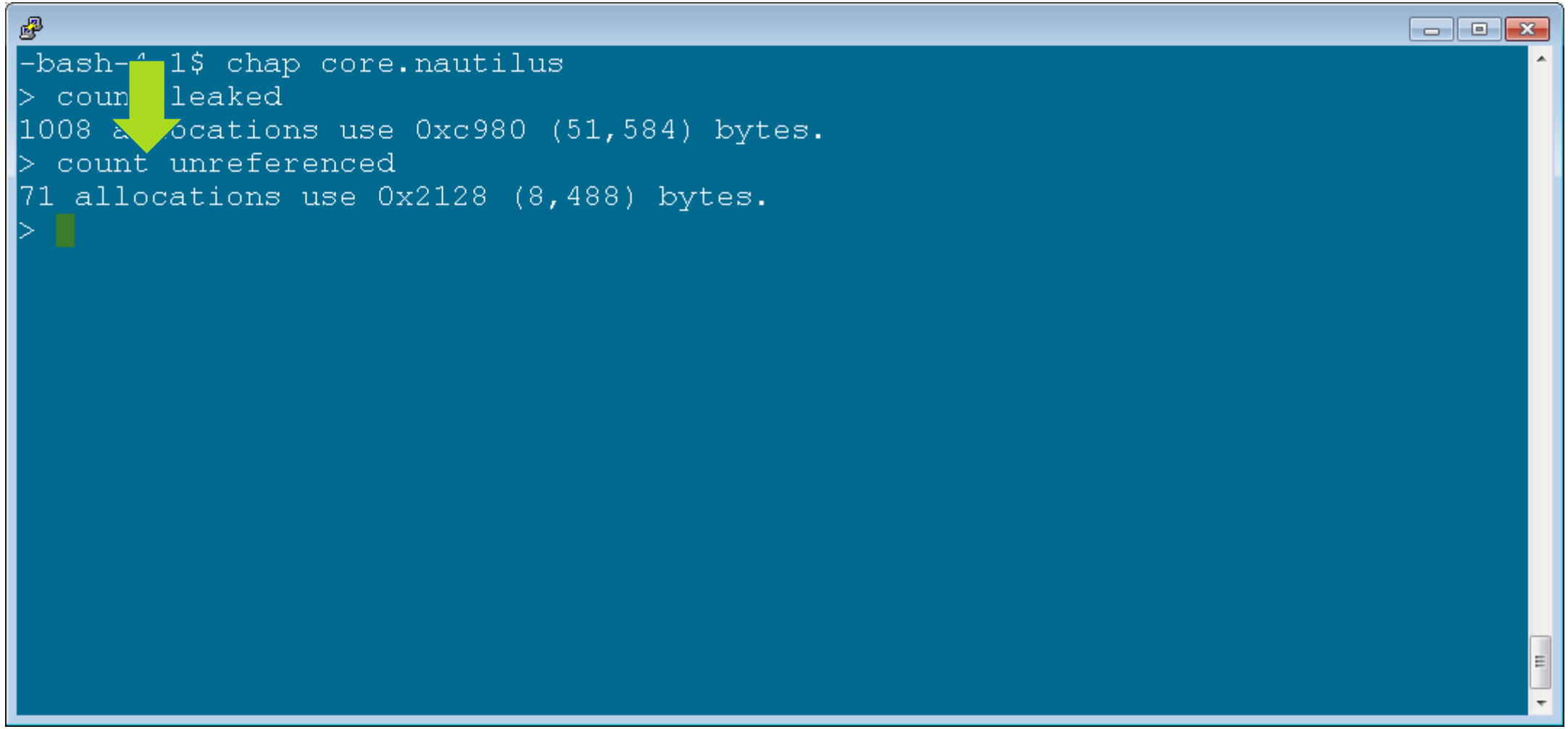


Using CHAP to Analyze Leaks

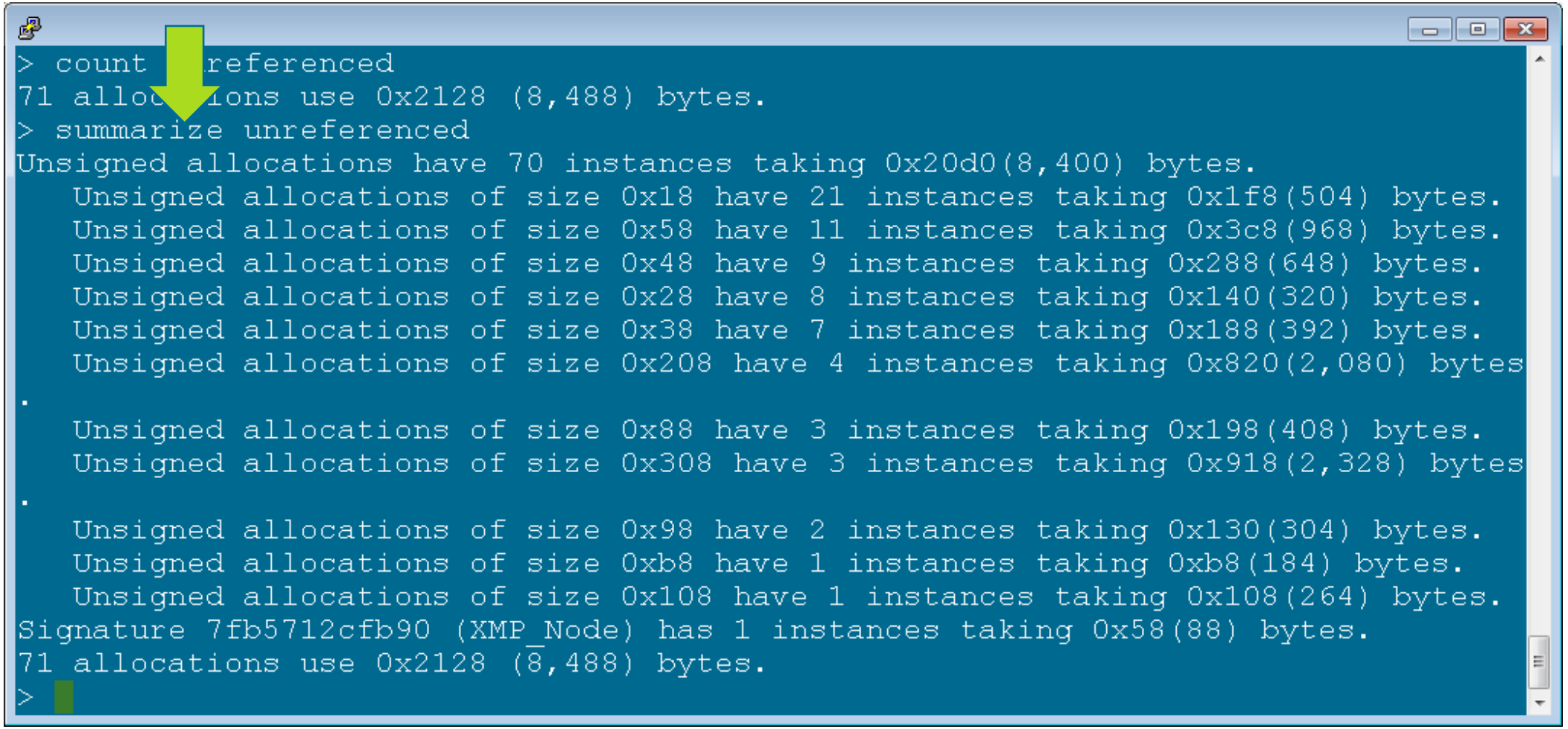
Checking for Leaks



Checking for Leaks



Summarizing Unreferenced Allocations



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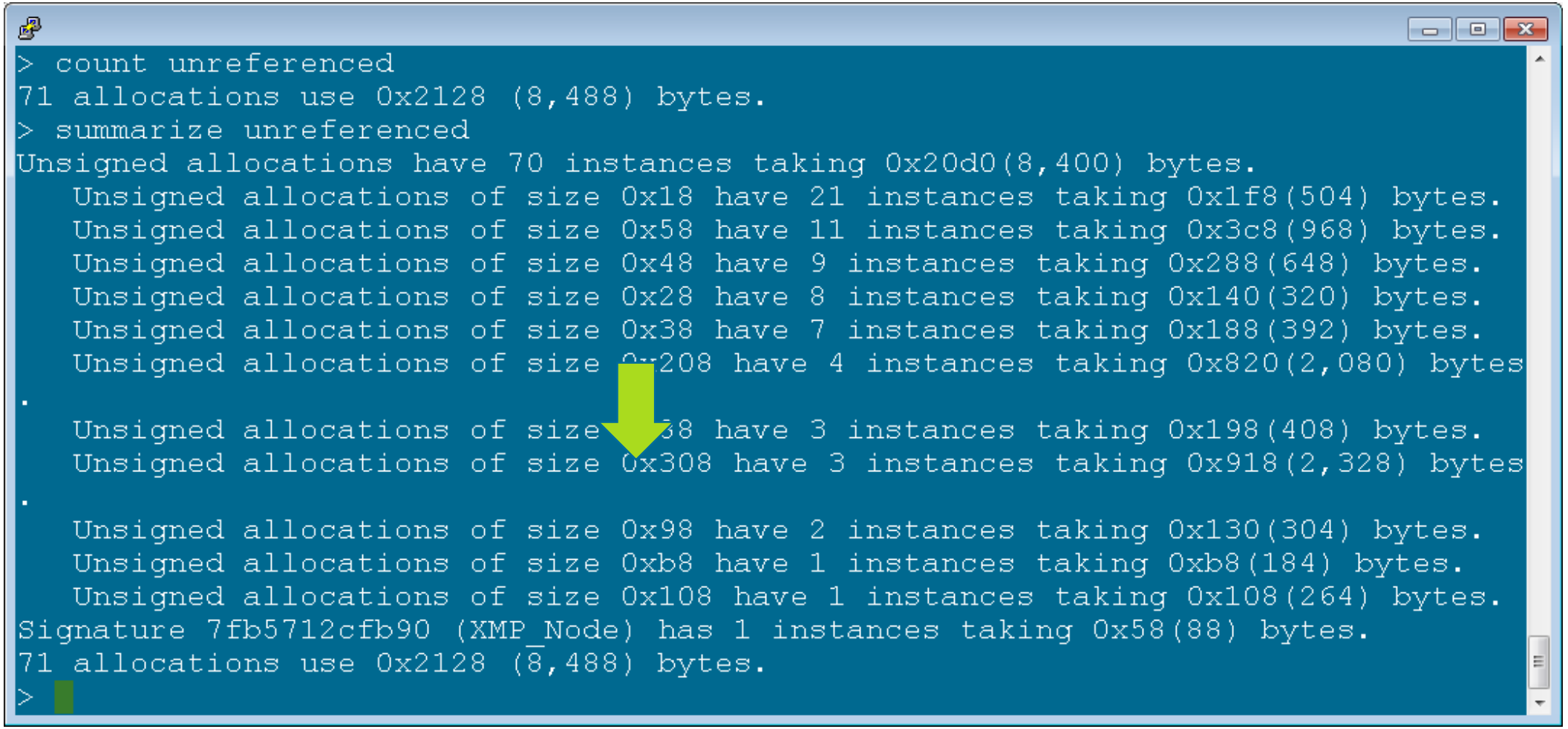
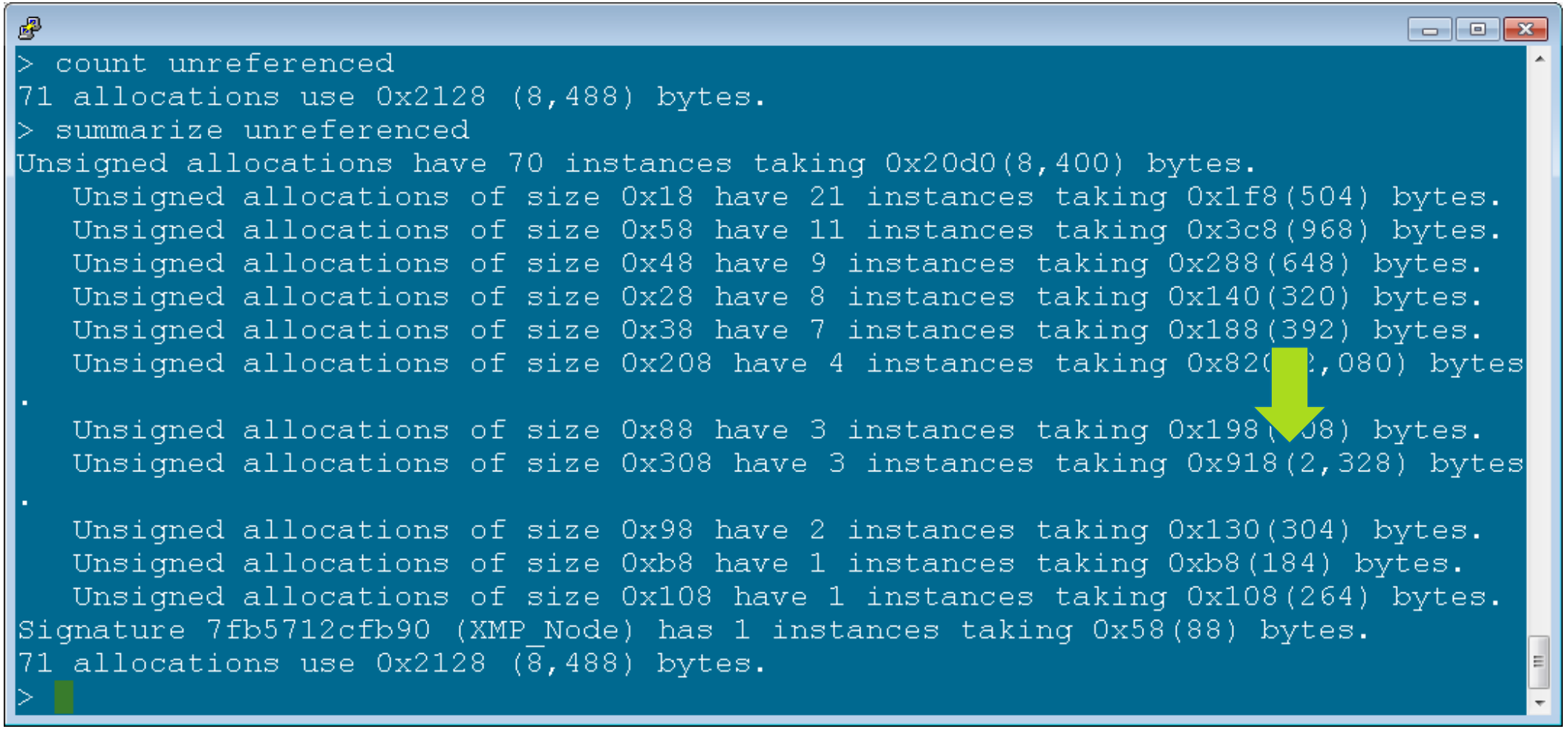
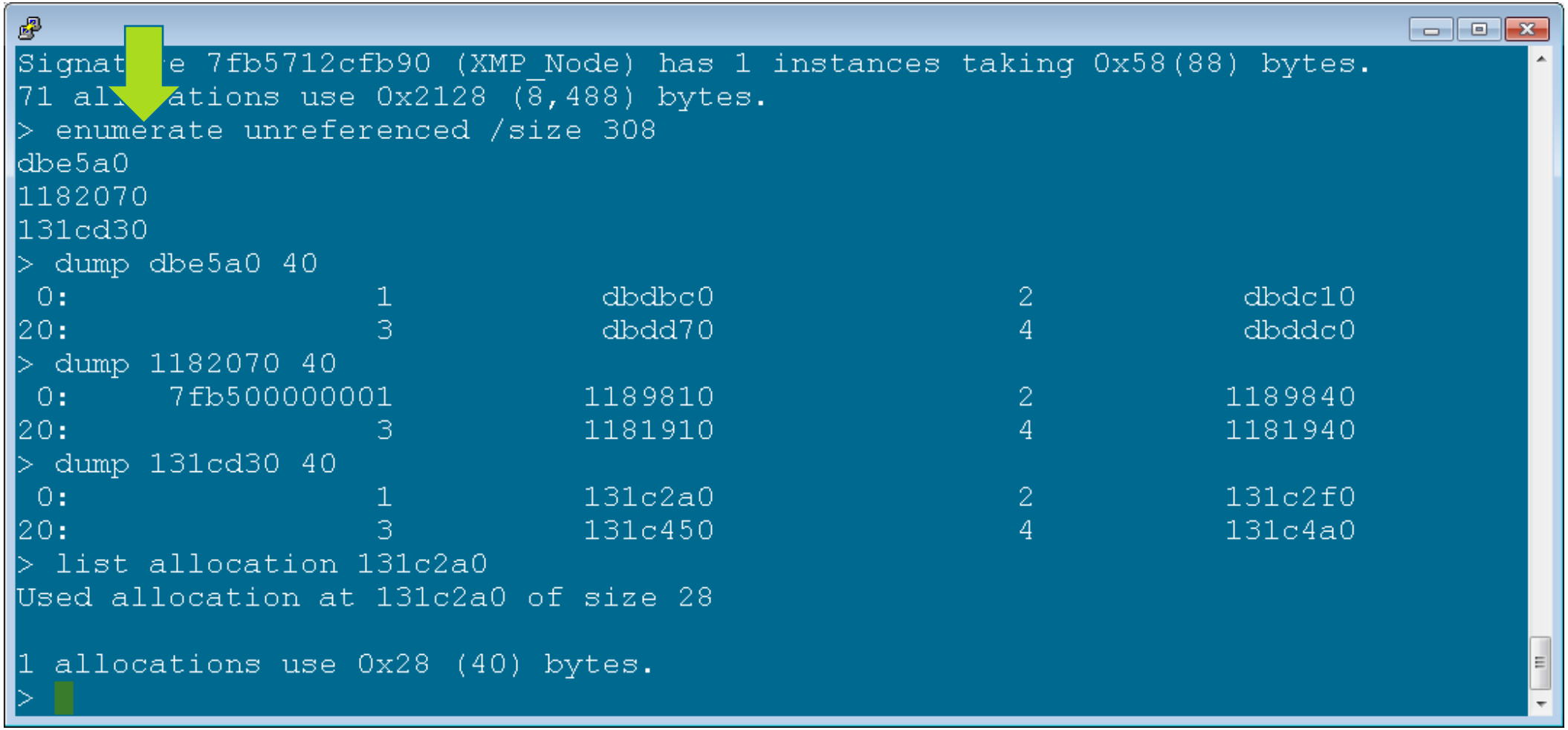


Summarizing Unreferenced Allocations



Looking at Similar Leaks



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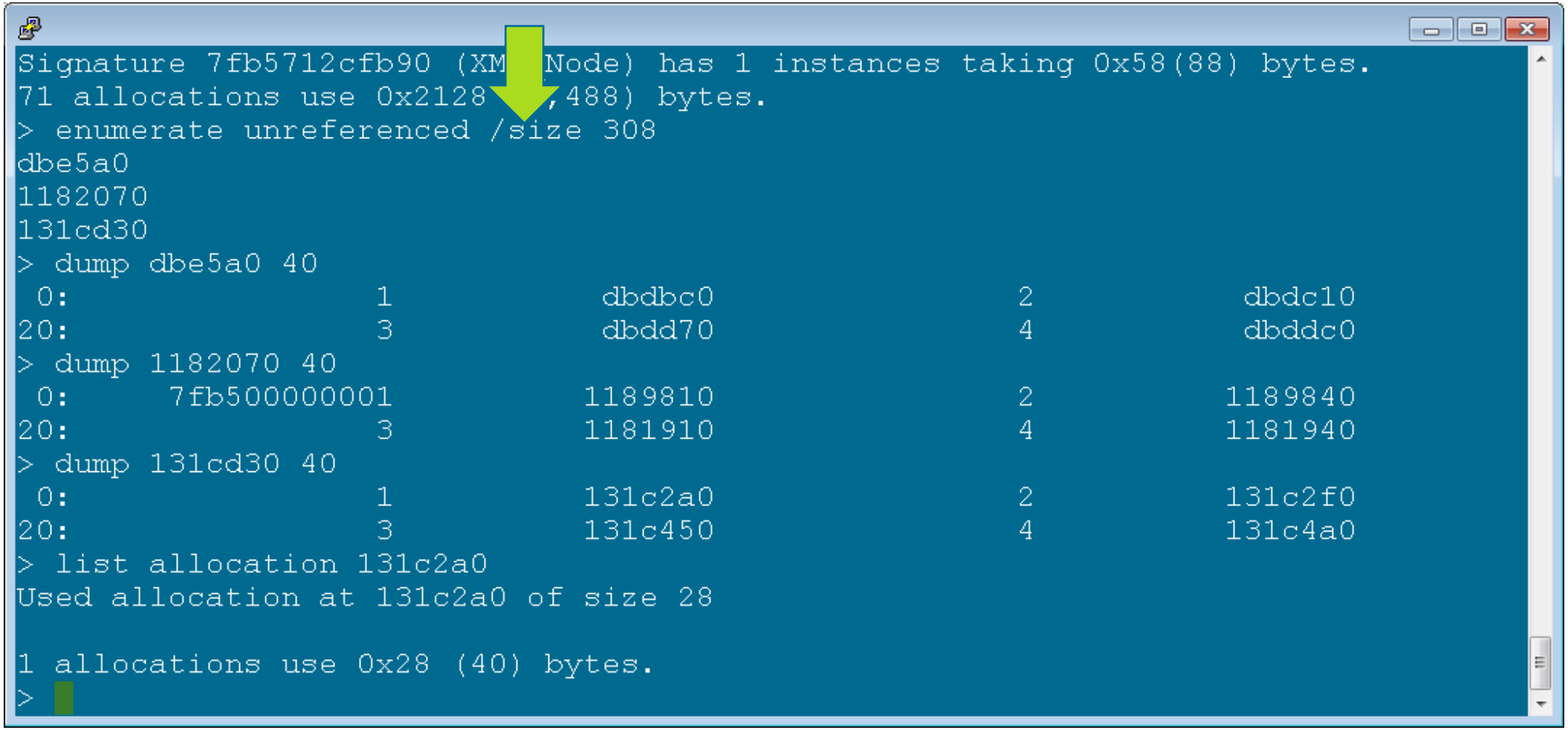

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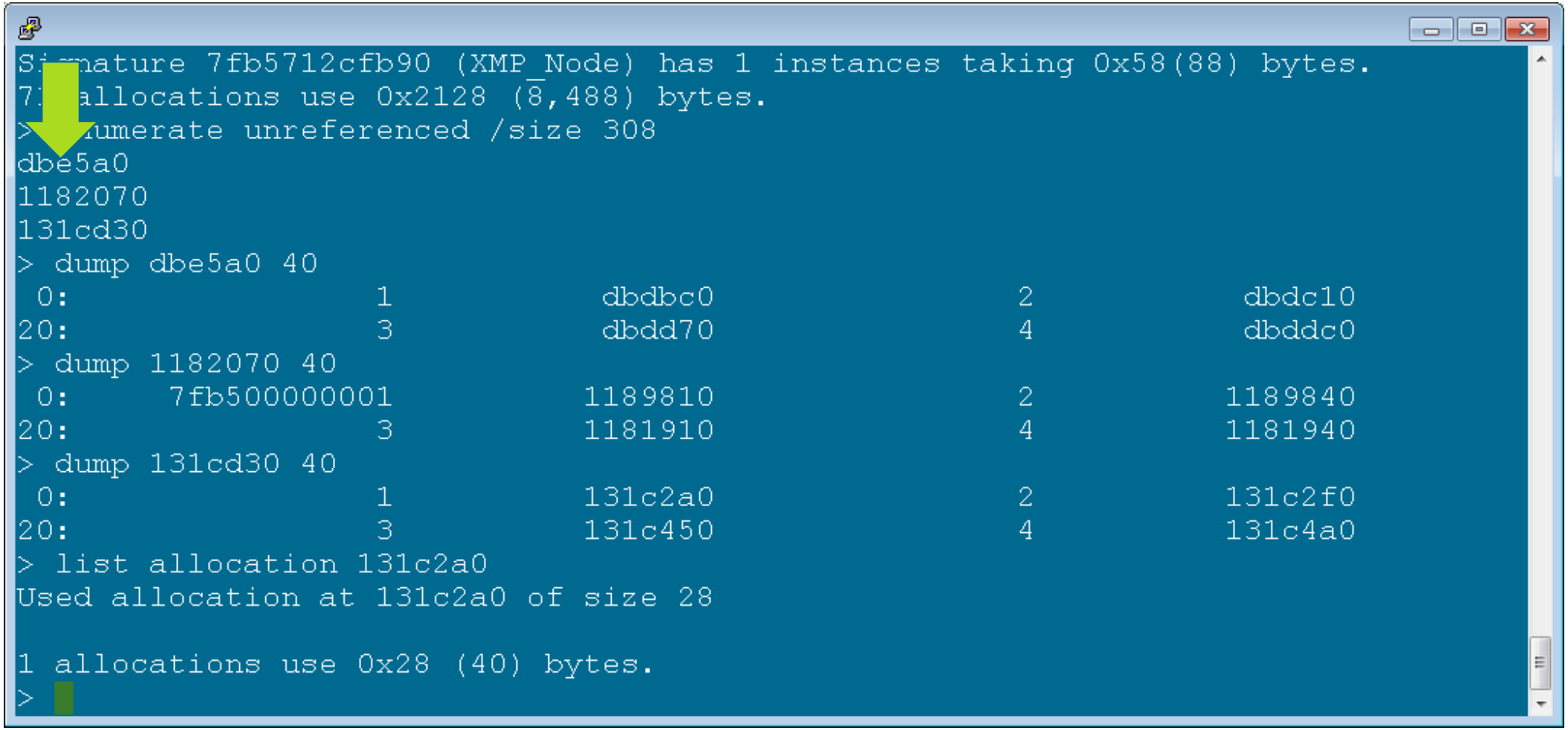

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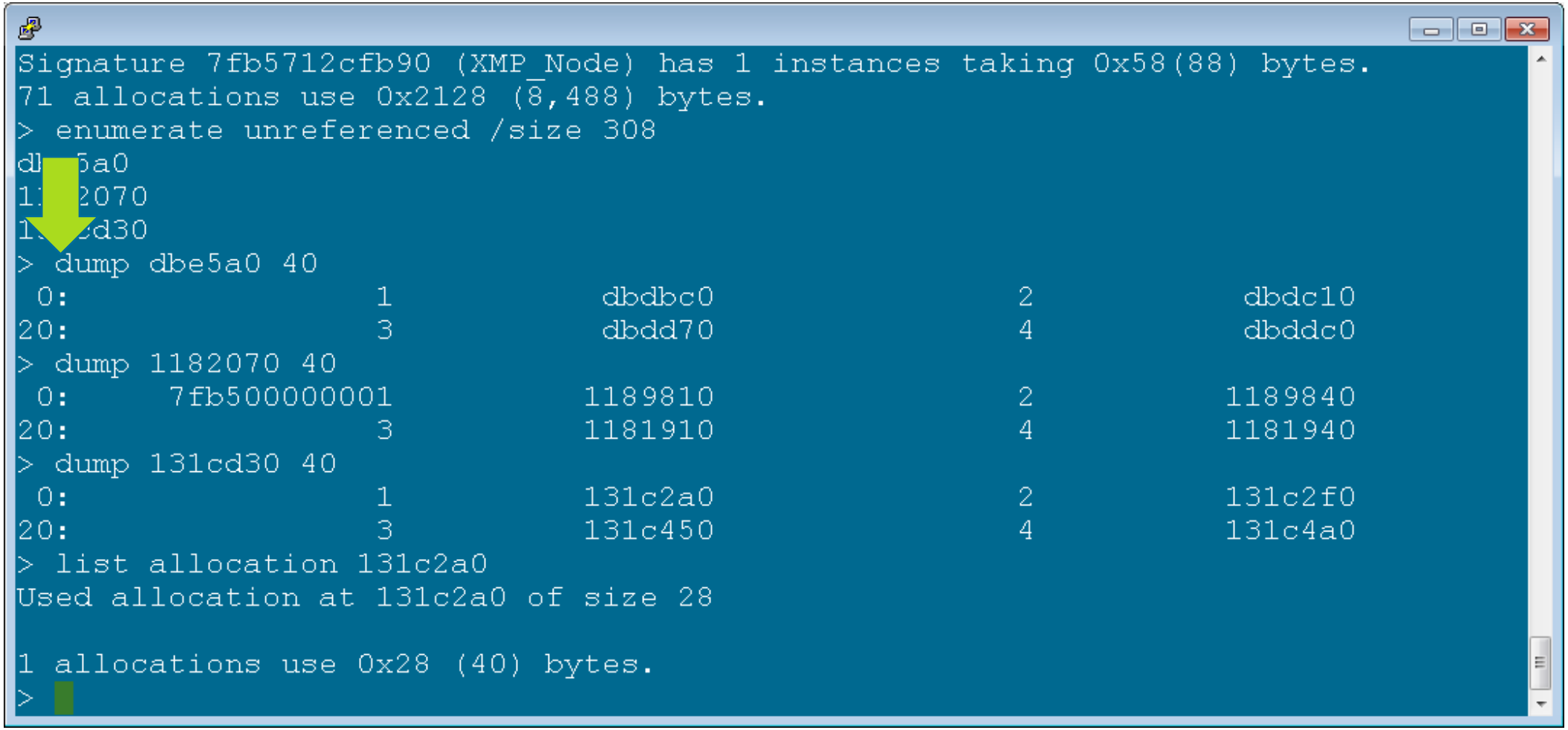

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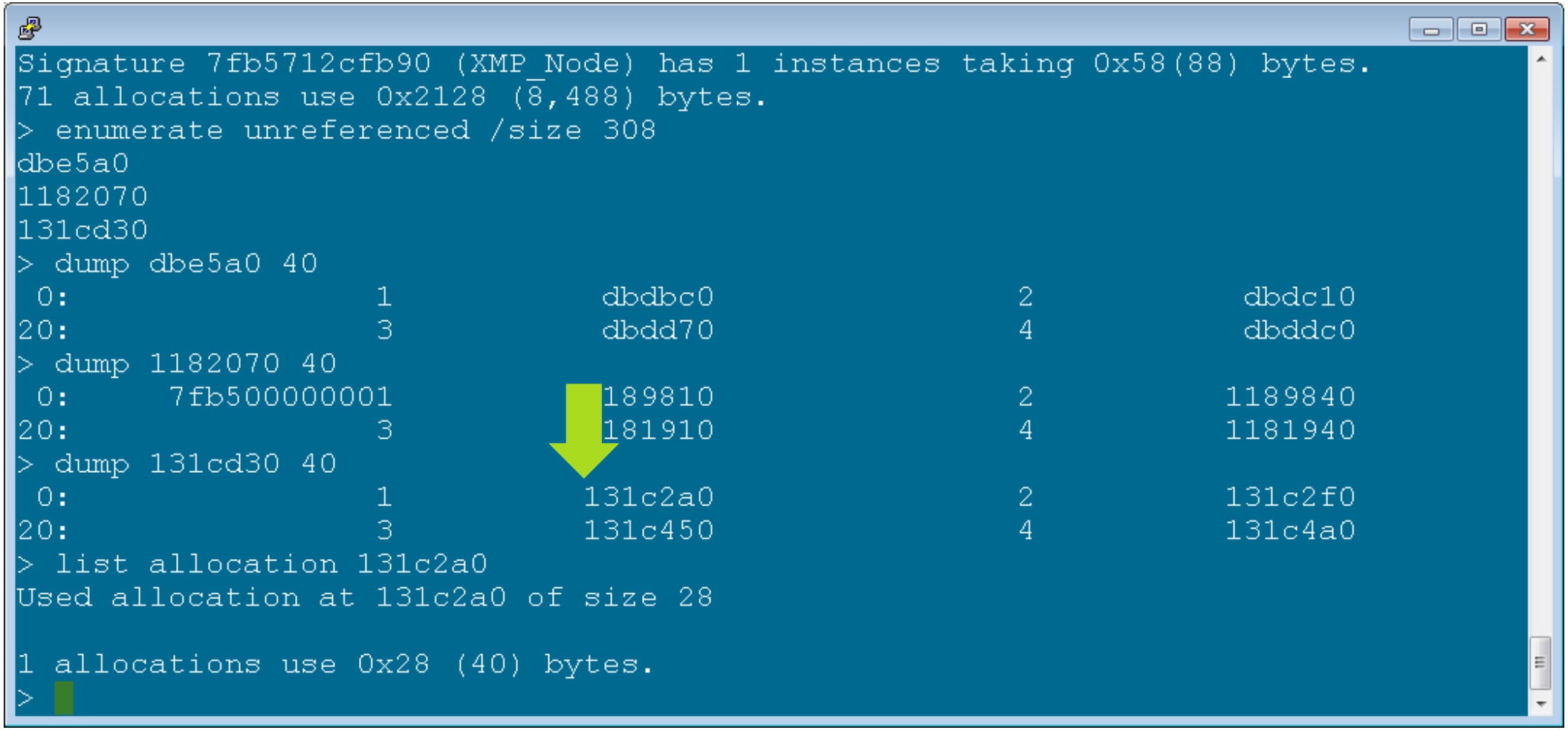

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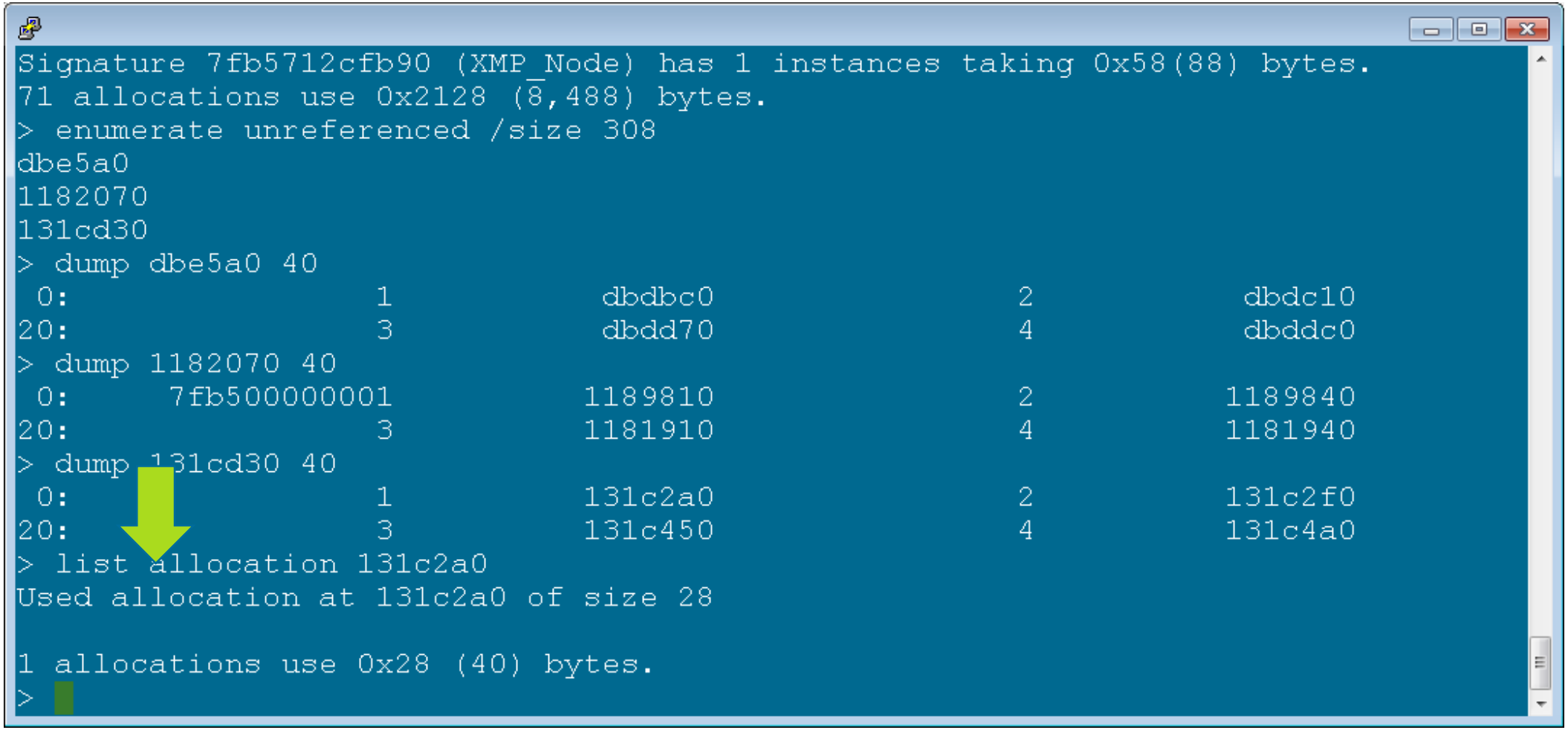
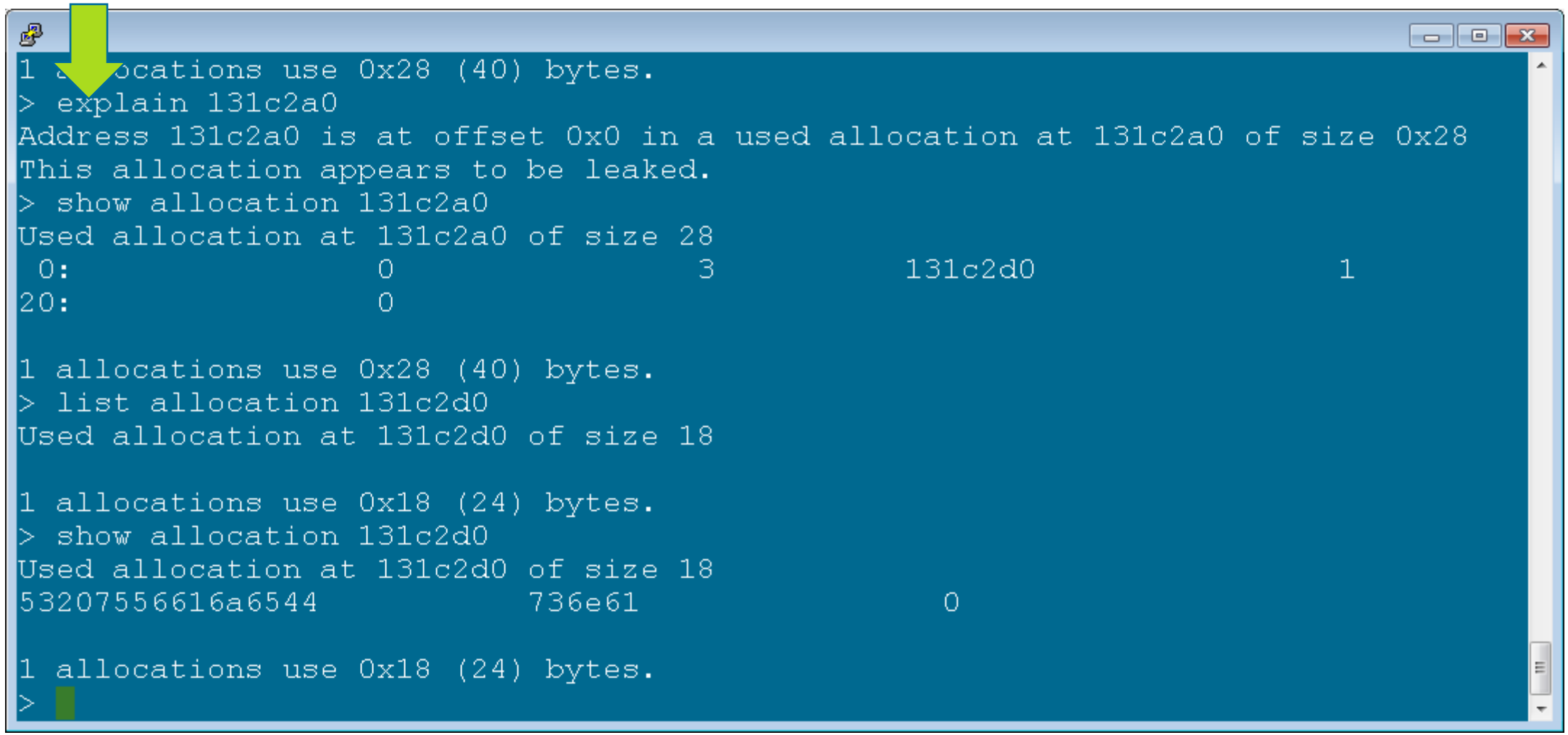


Following Outgoing Edges



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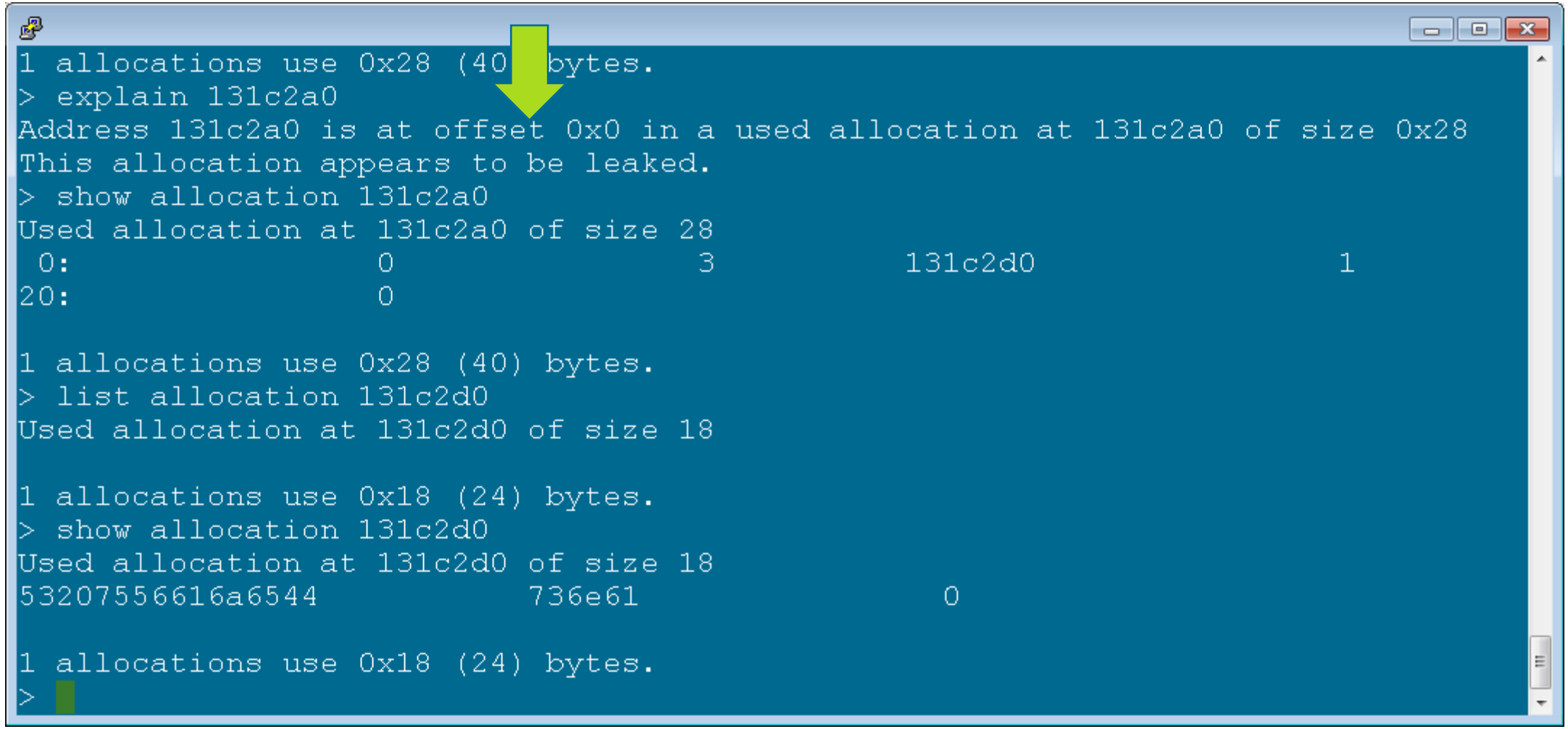

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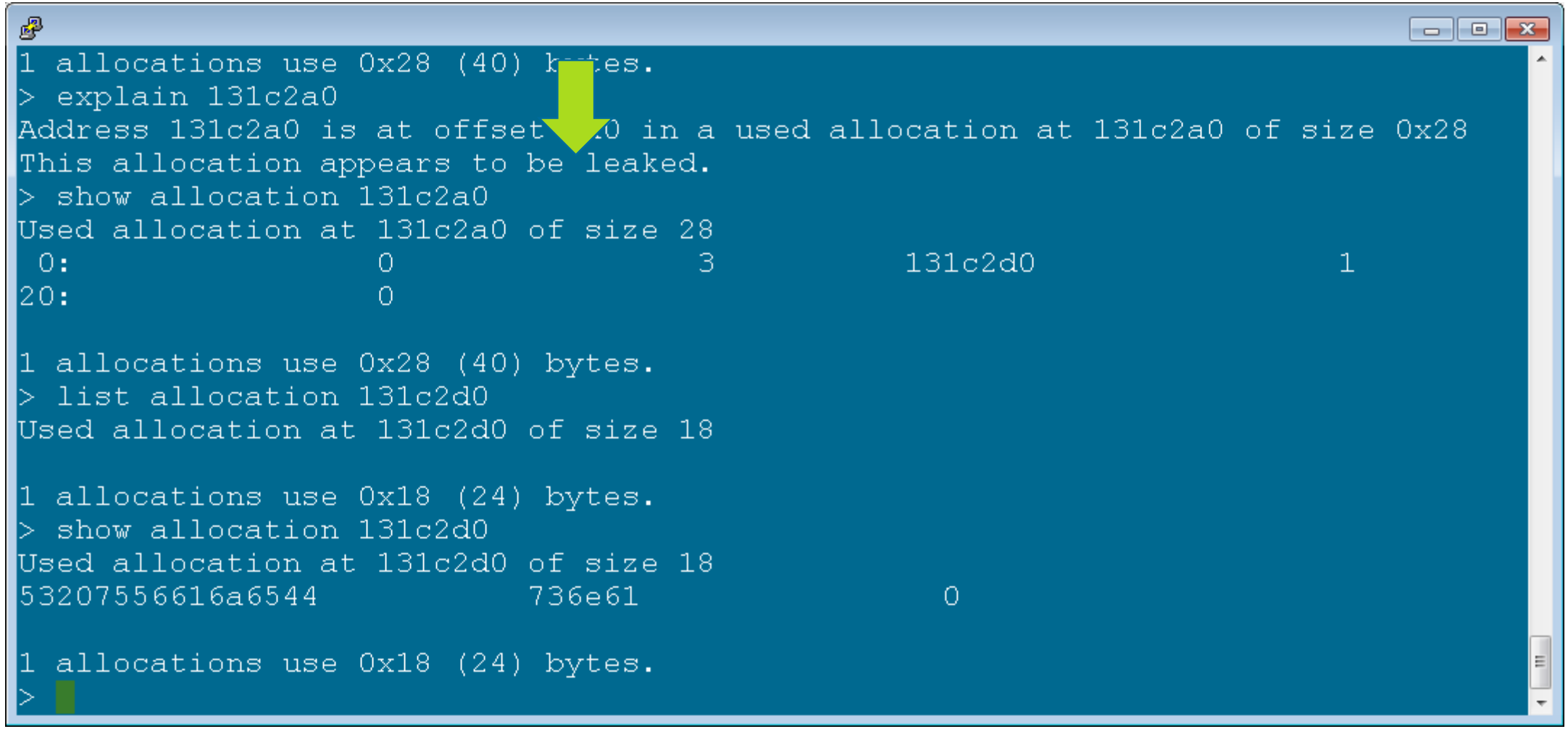
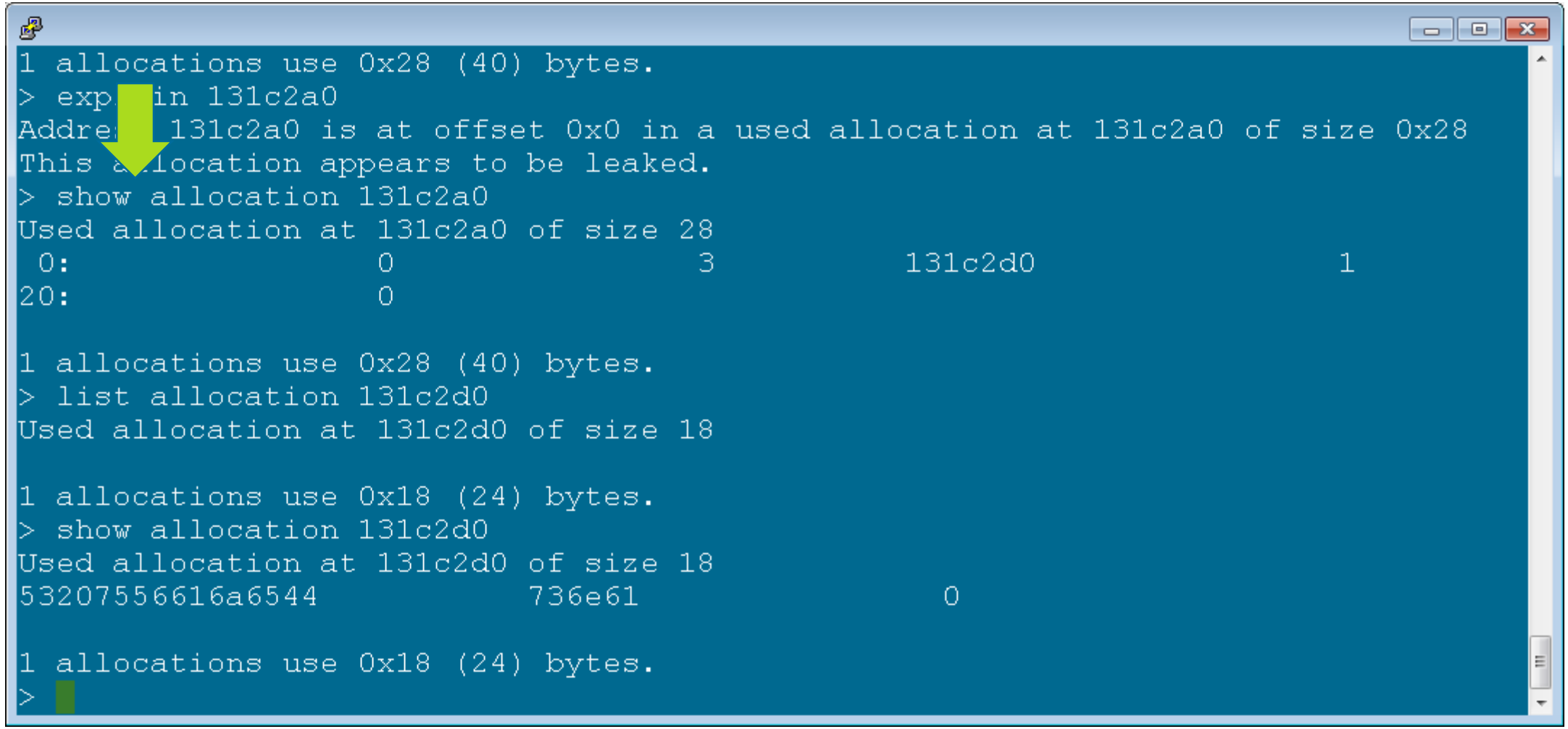


Following Outgoing Edges



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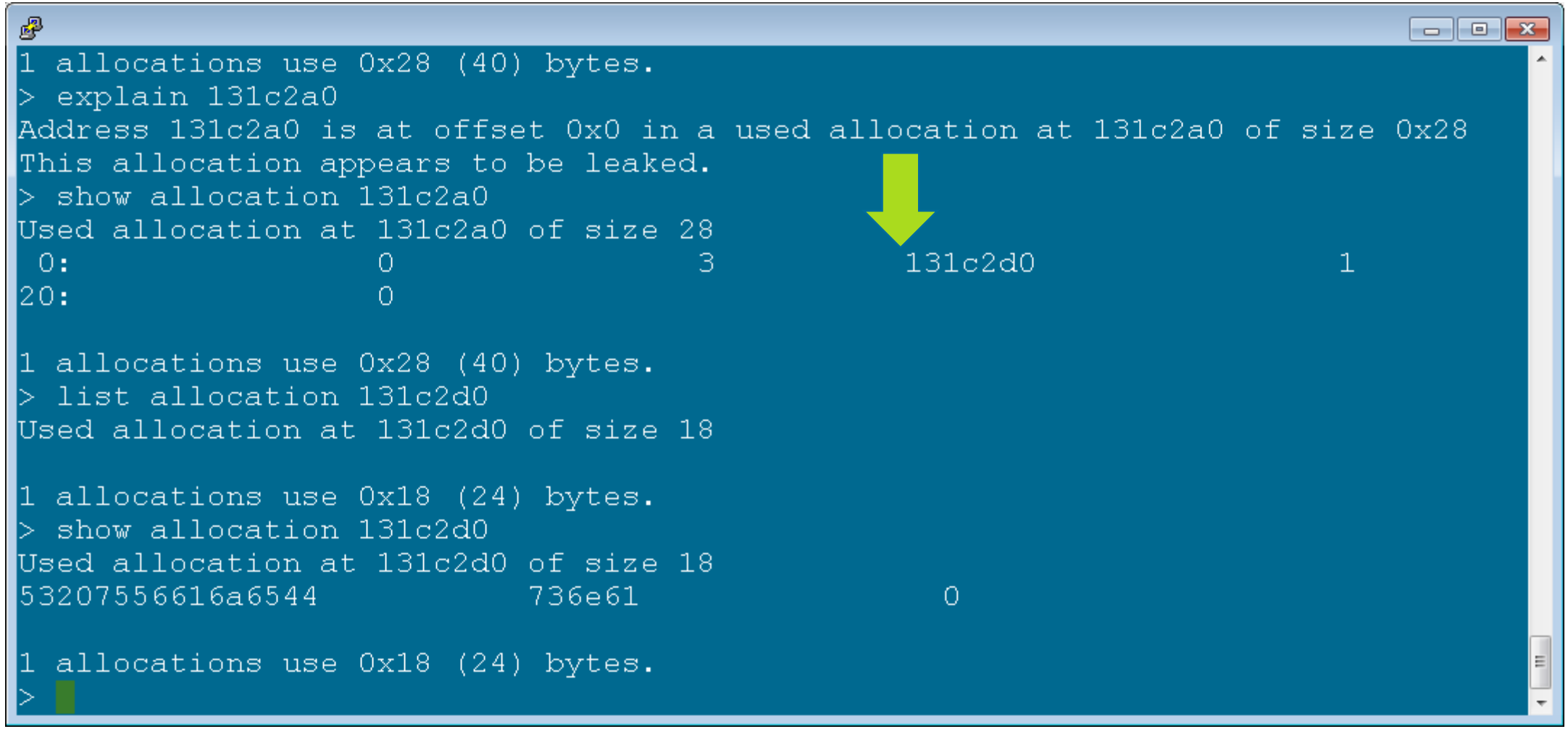
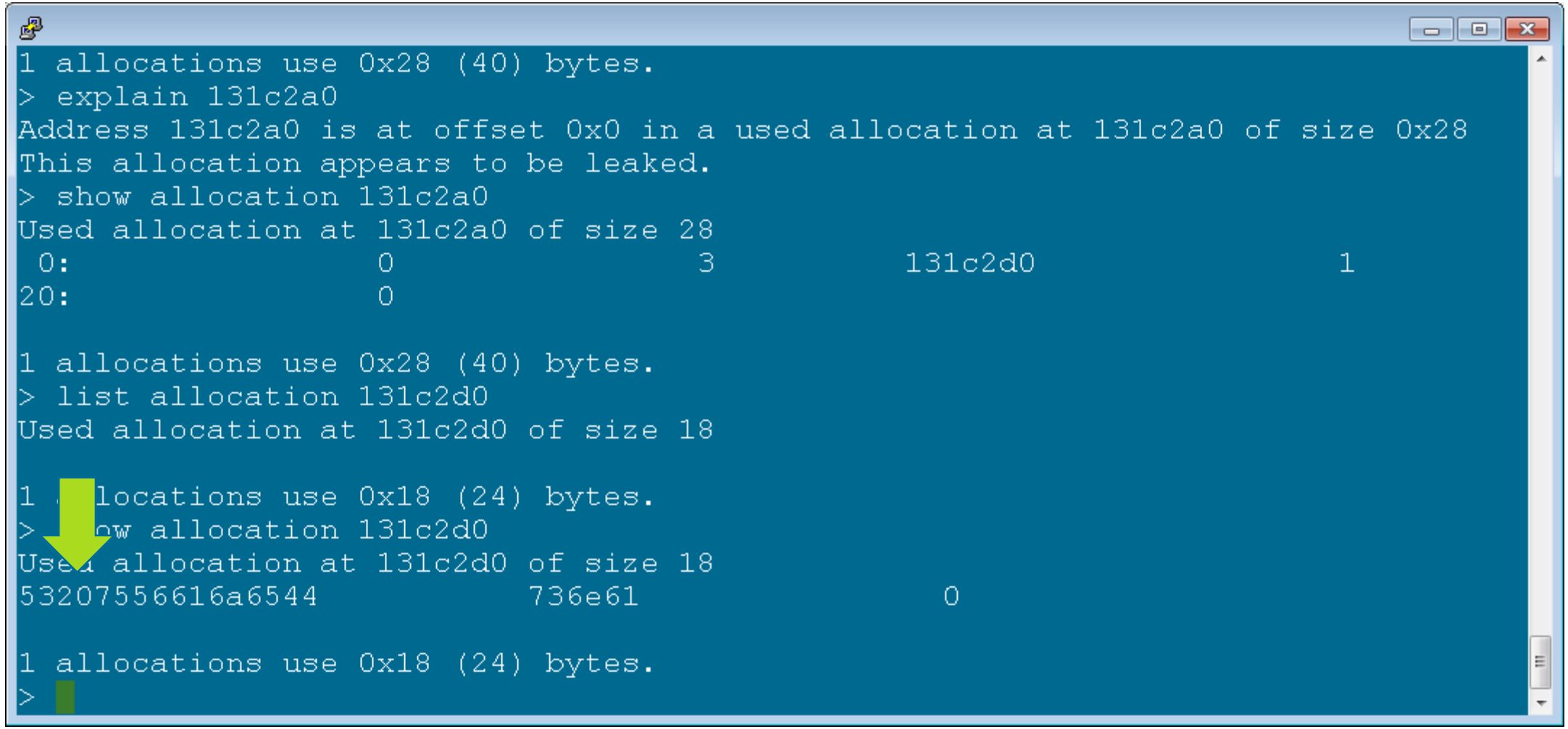
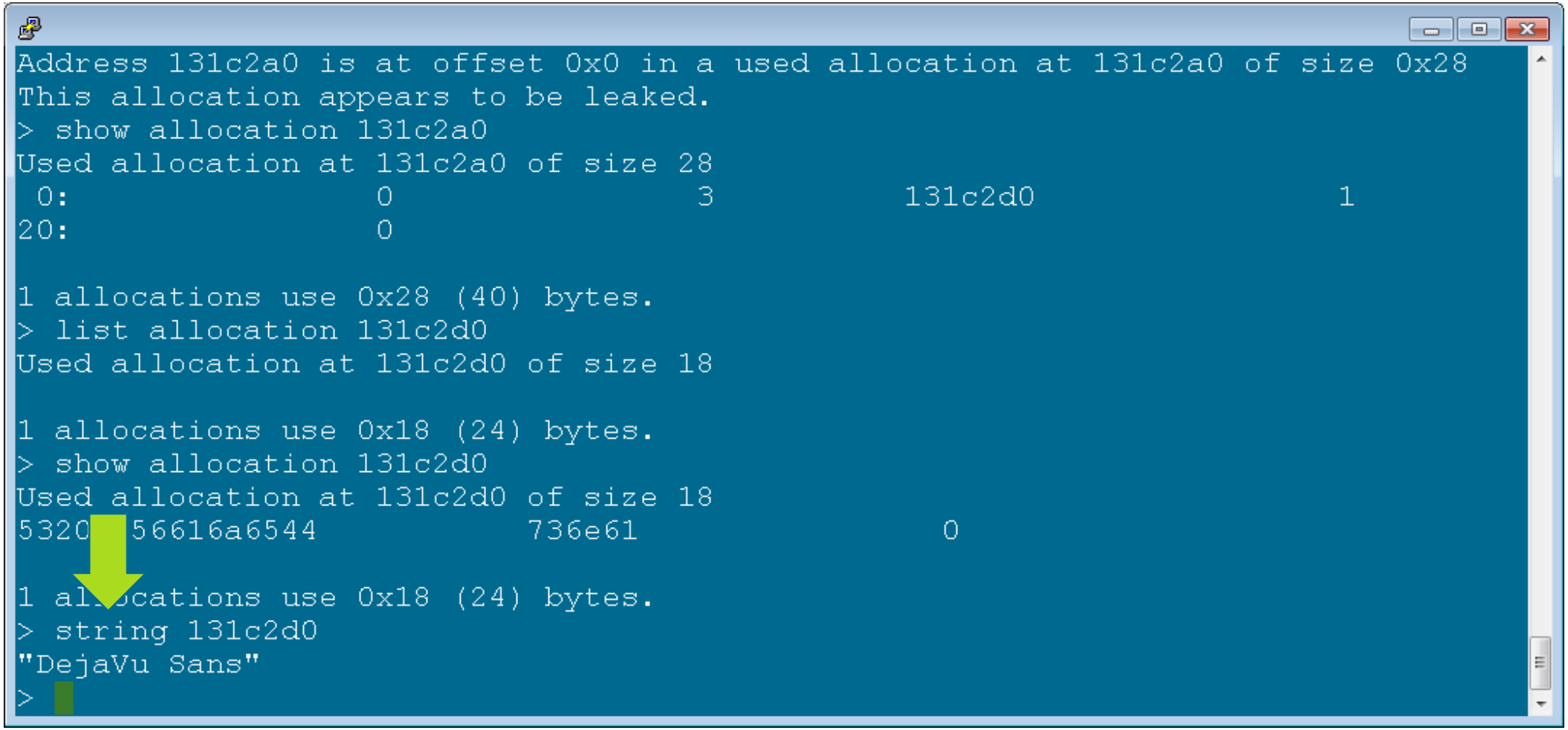


Following Outgoing Edges



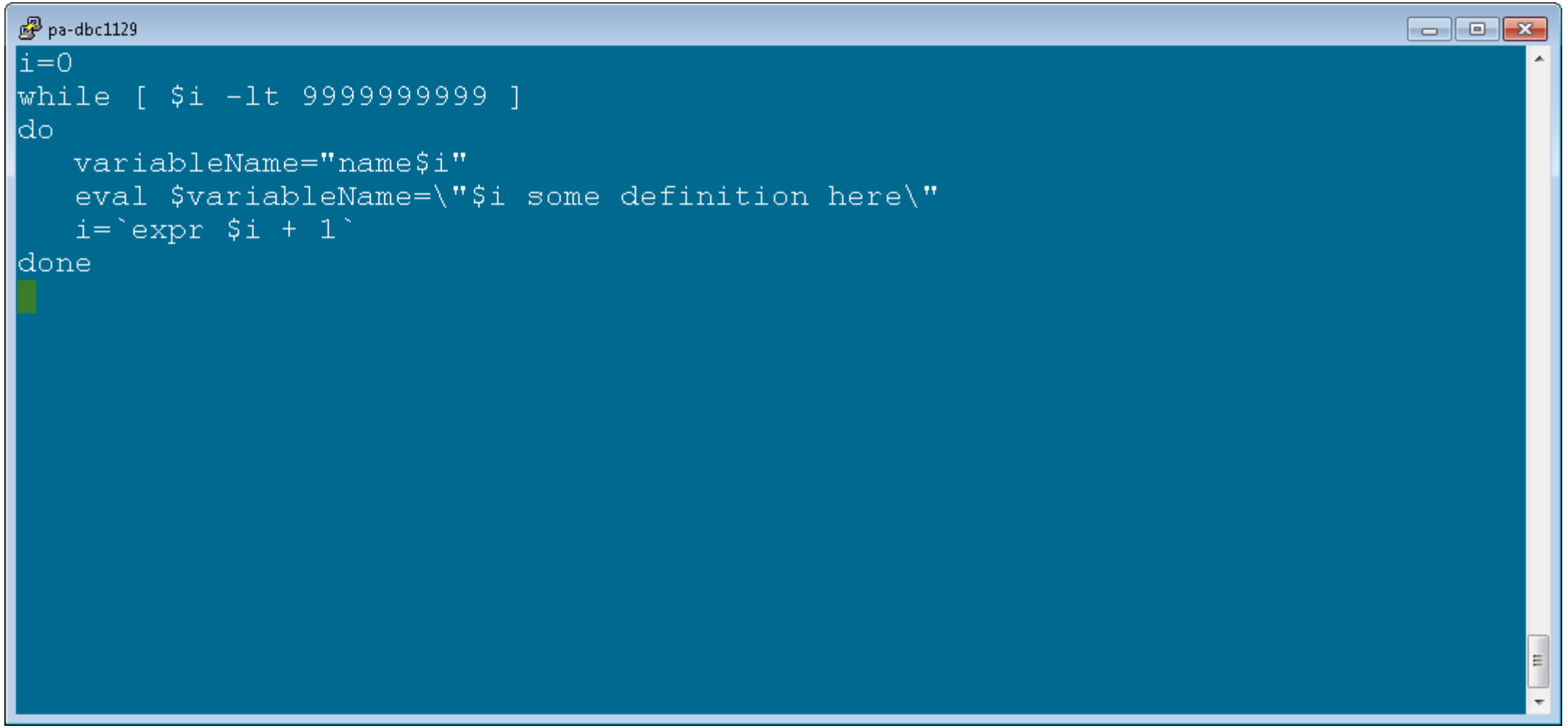
Detect and Analyze Memory Leaks – Looking at a String



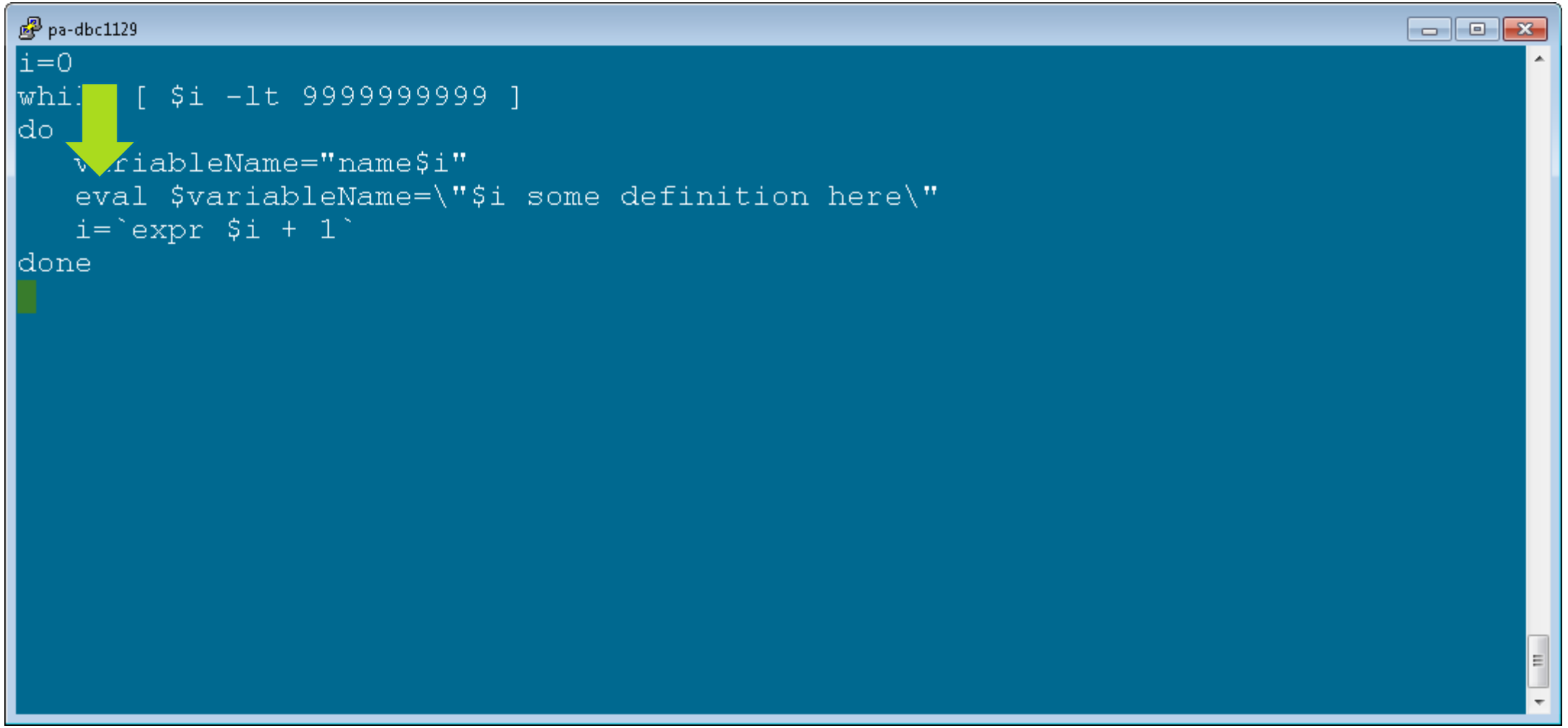
Using CHAP to Analyze Memory Growth

vmware®

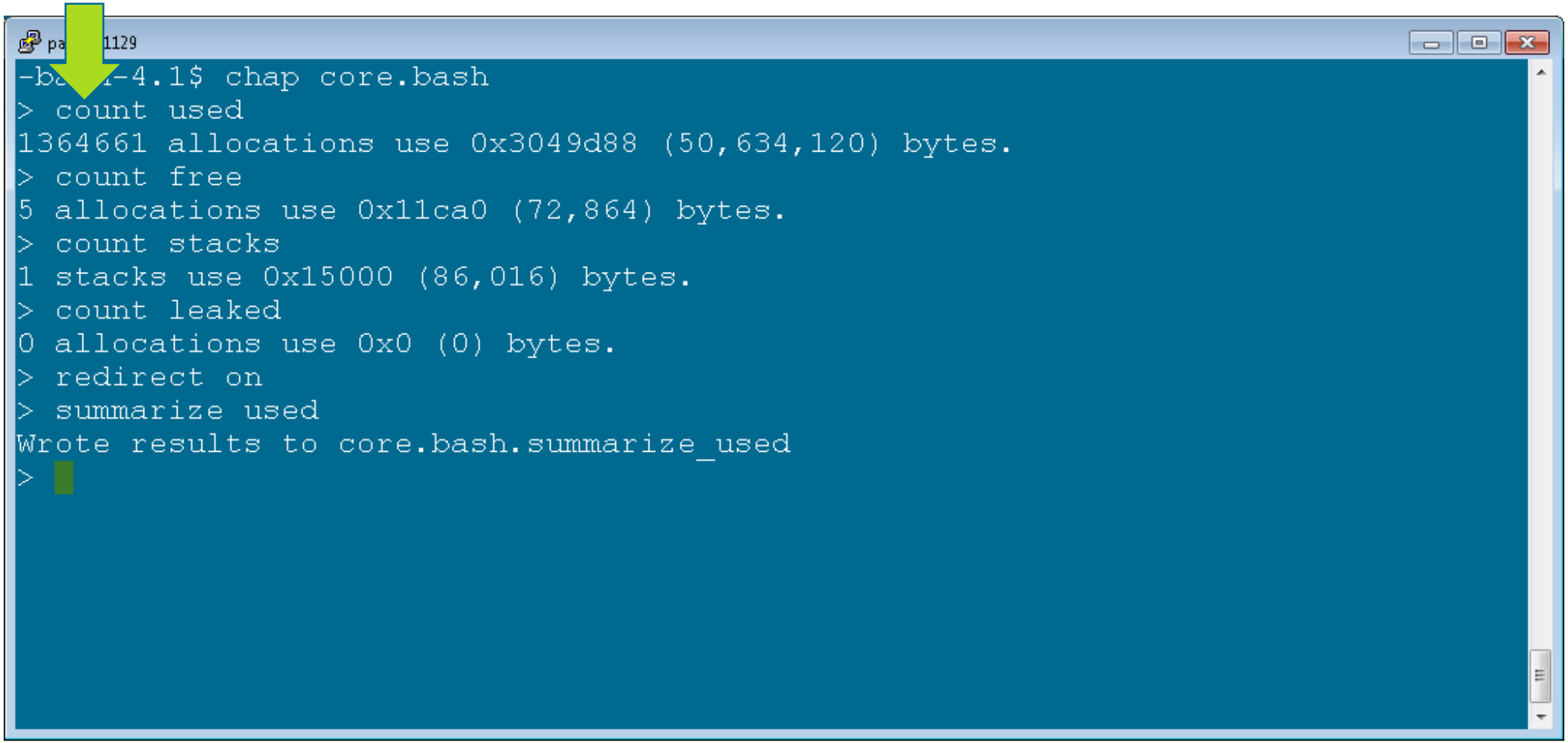
Analyzing Memory Growth



Analyzing Memory Growth



Getting an Overview



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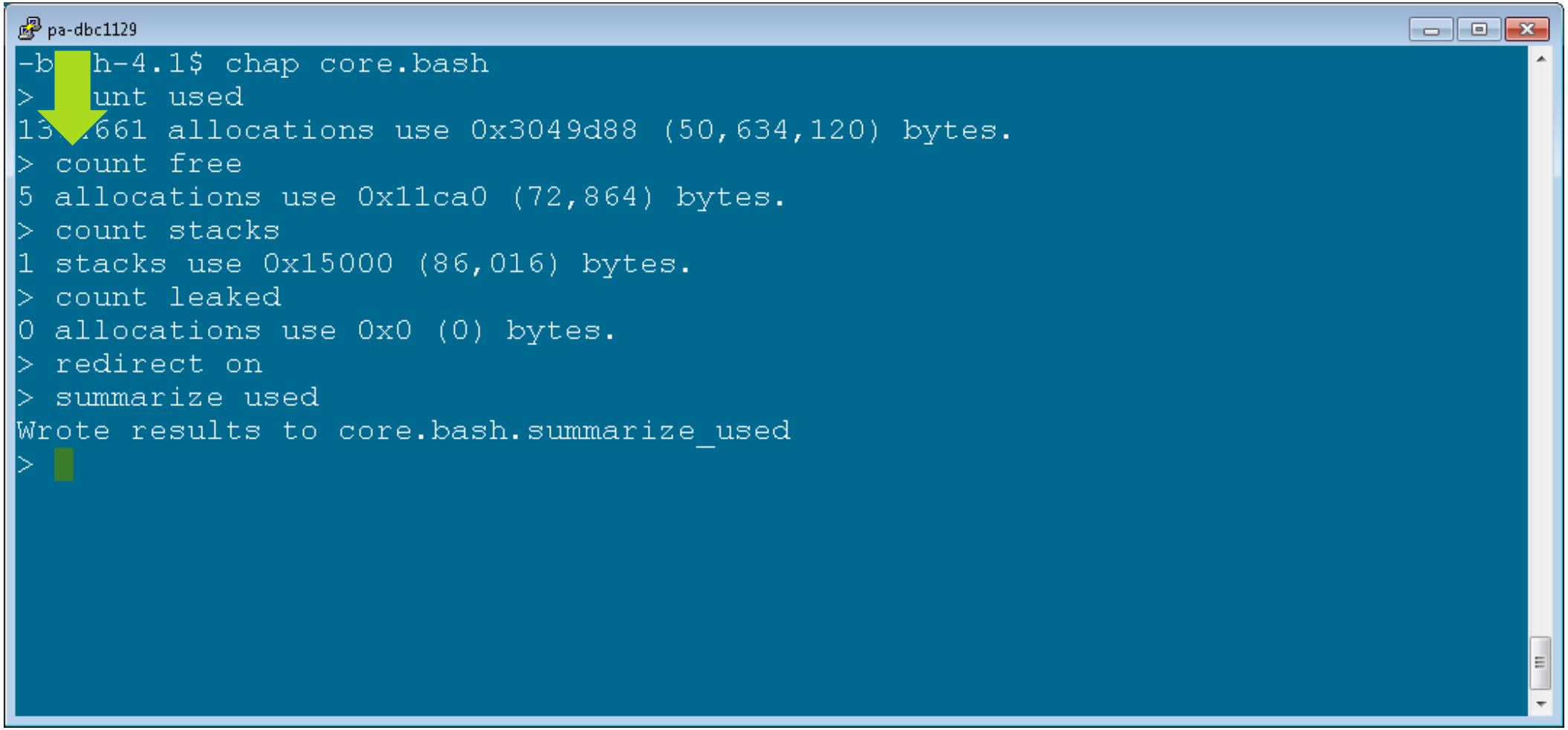

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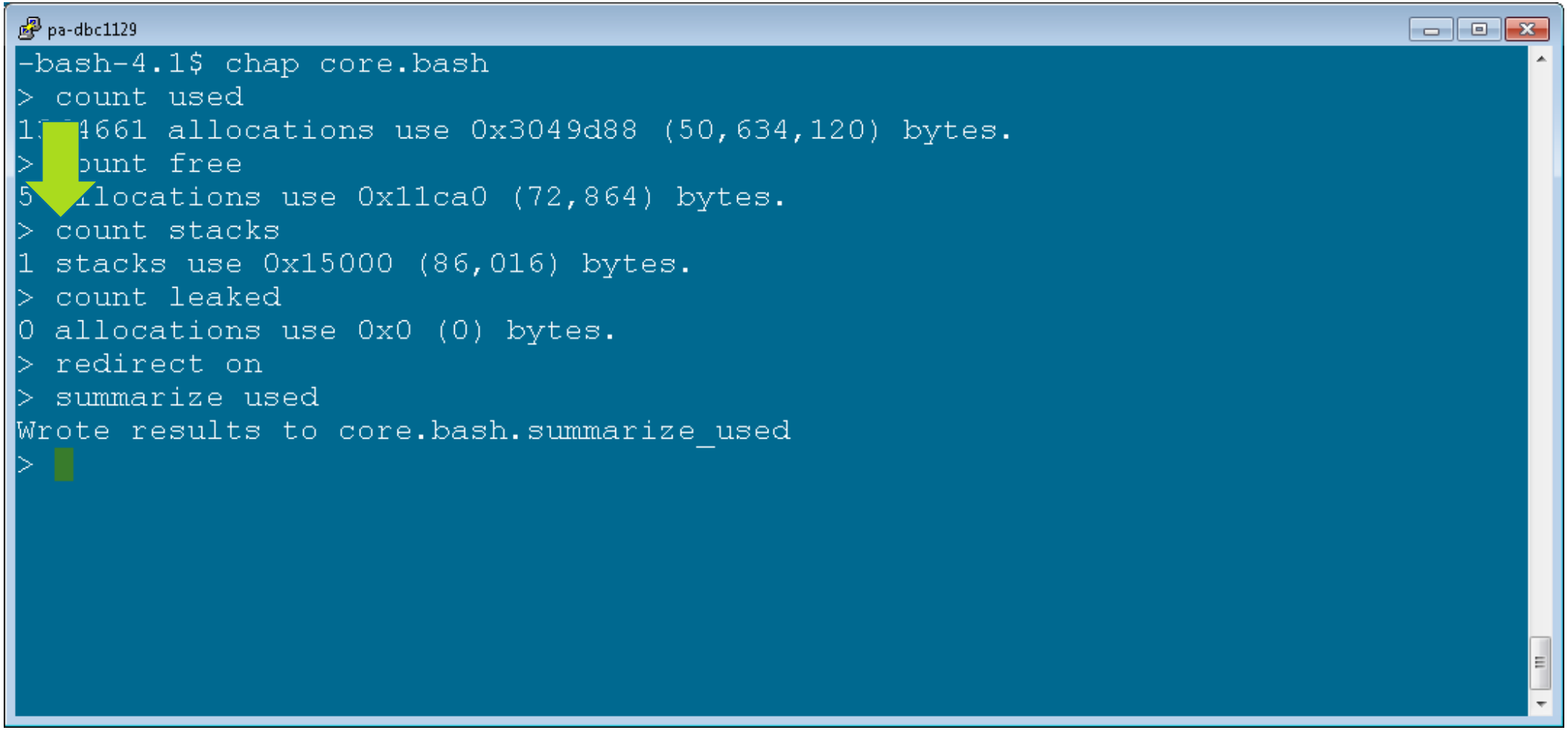
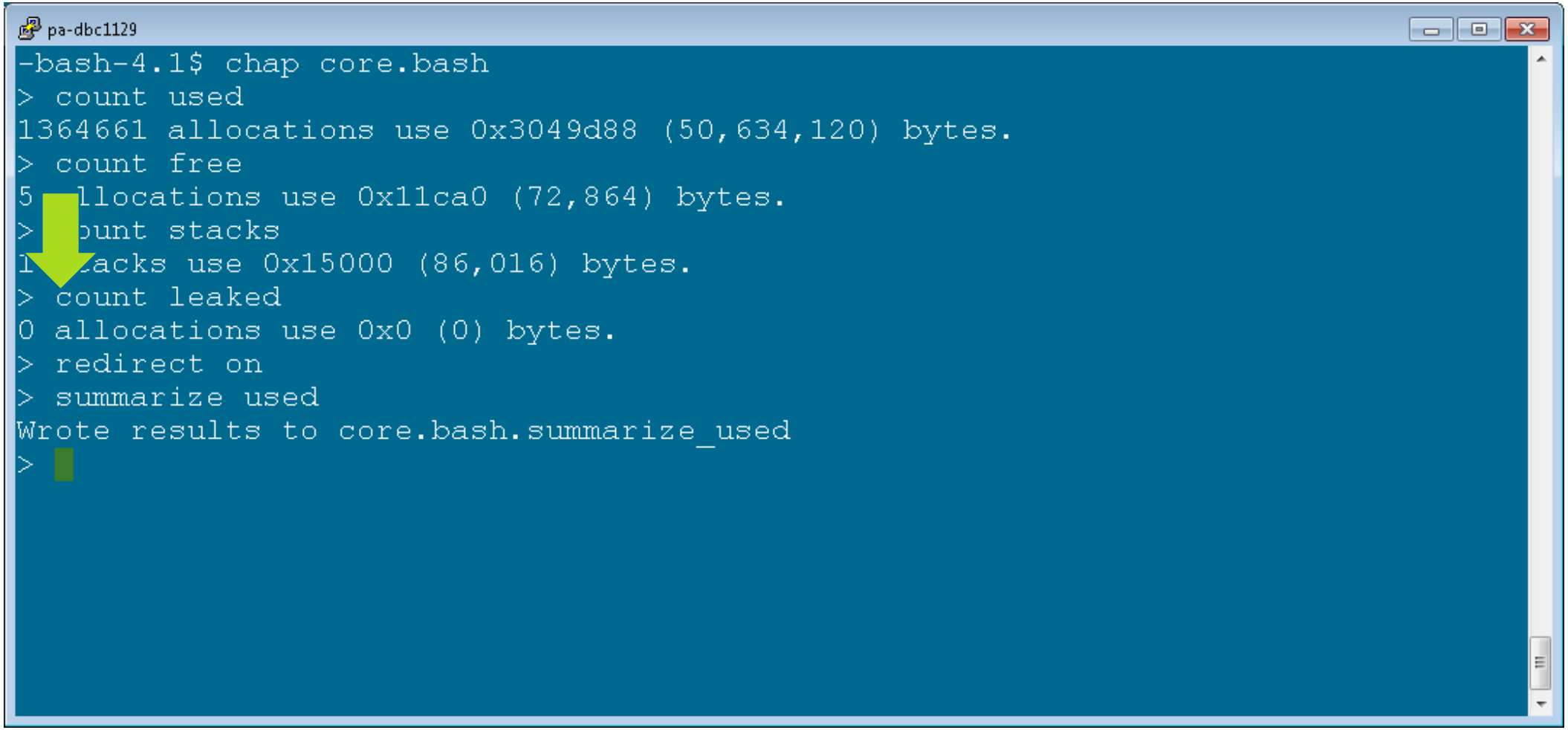


Getting an Overview



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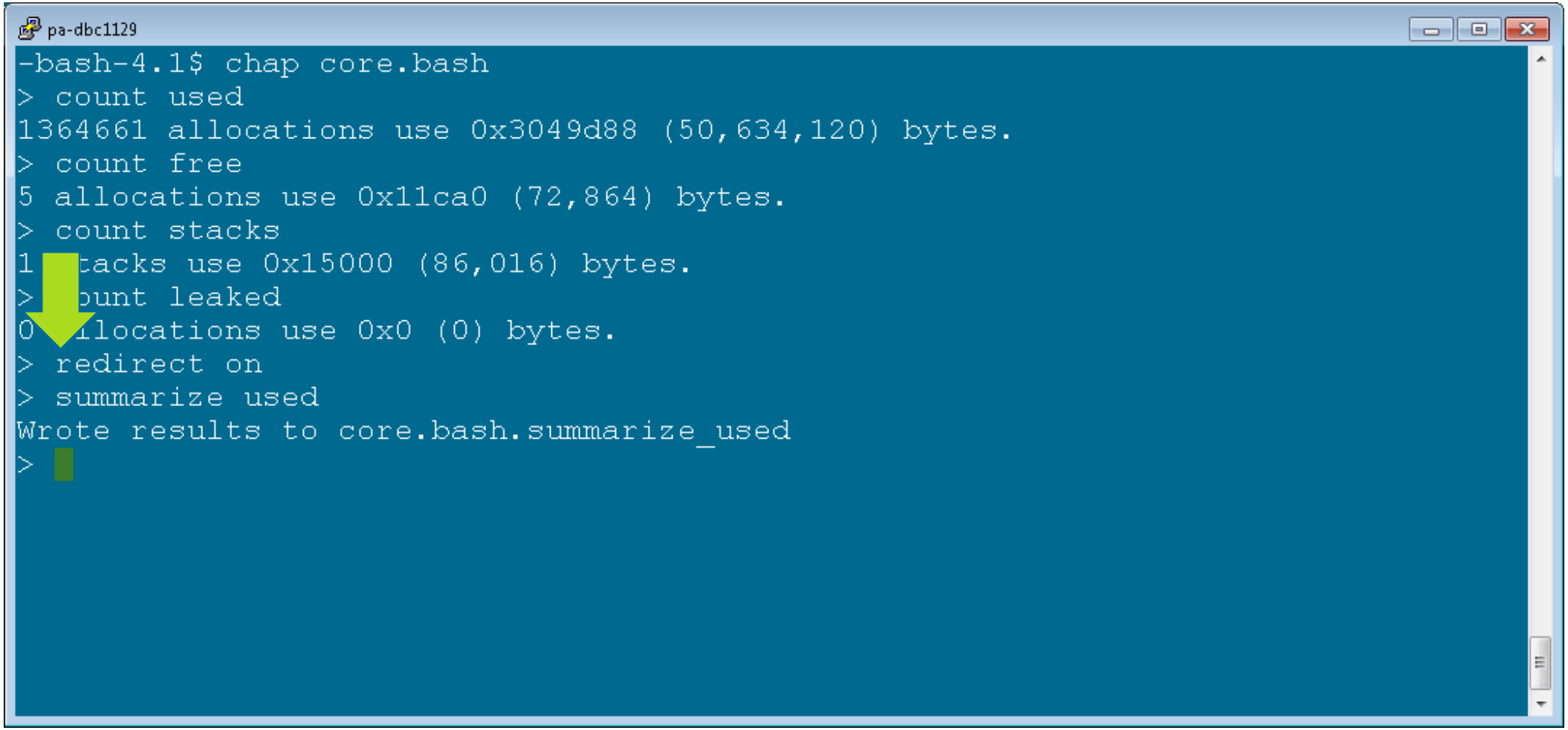

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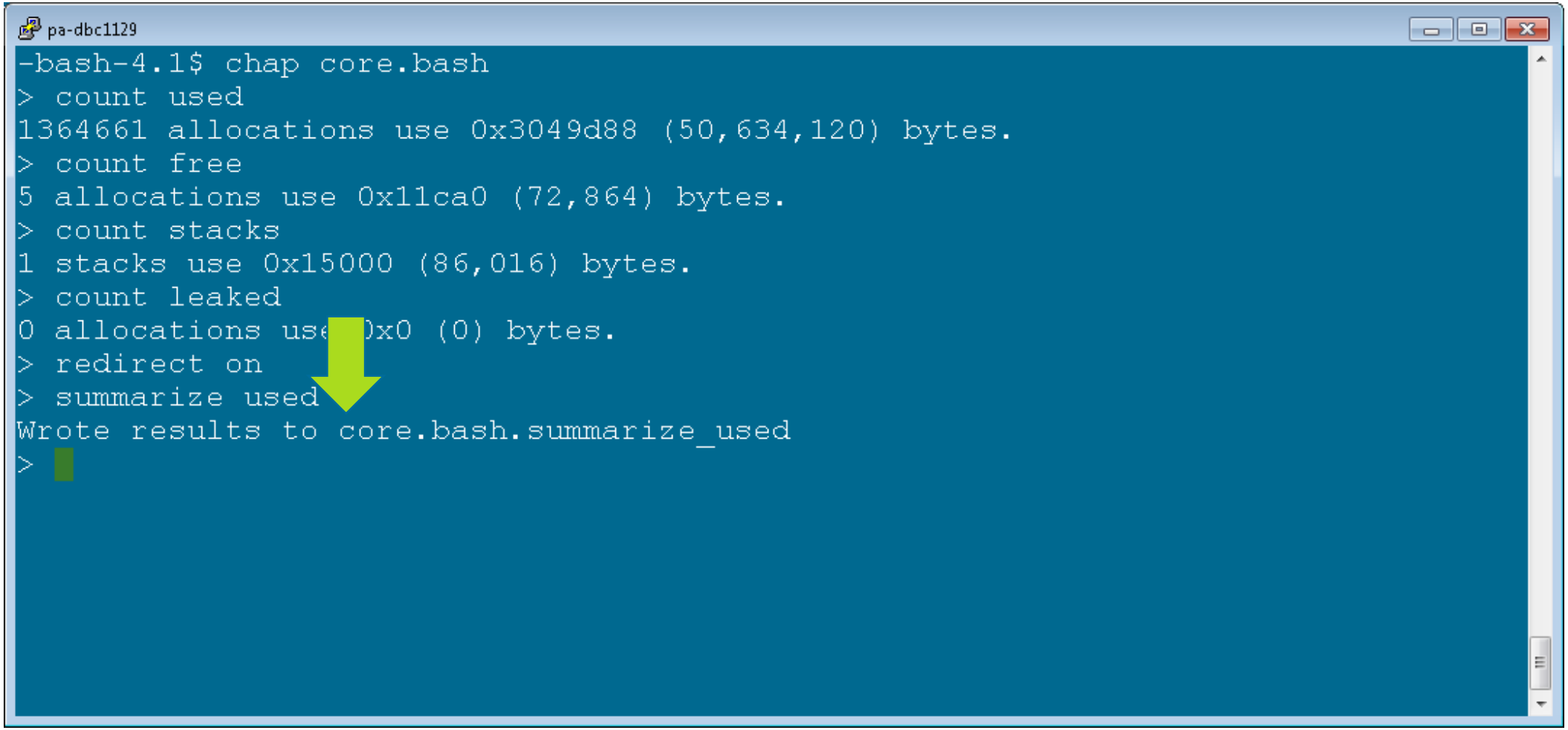
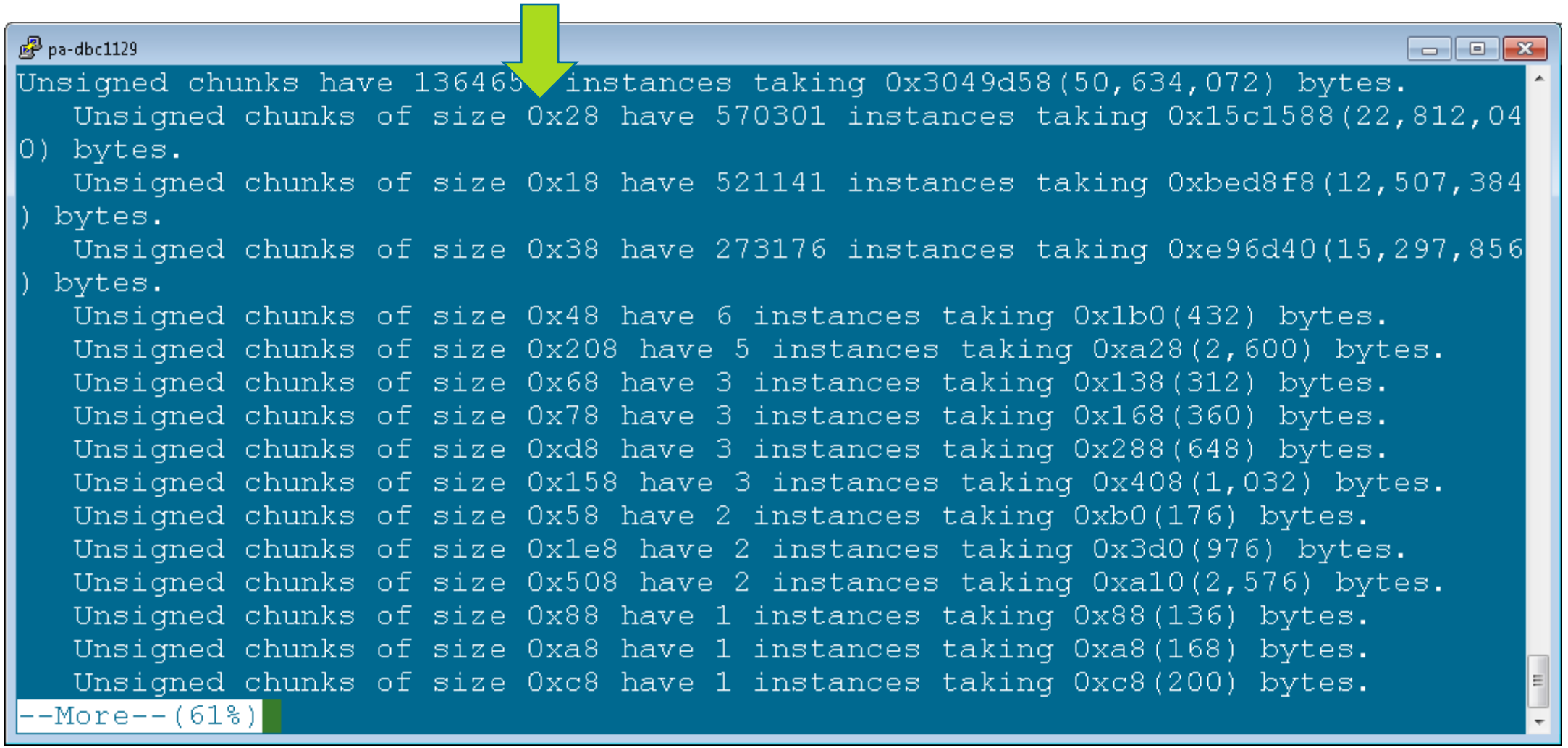
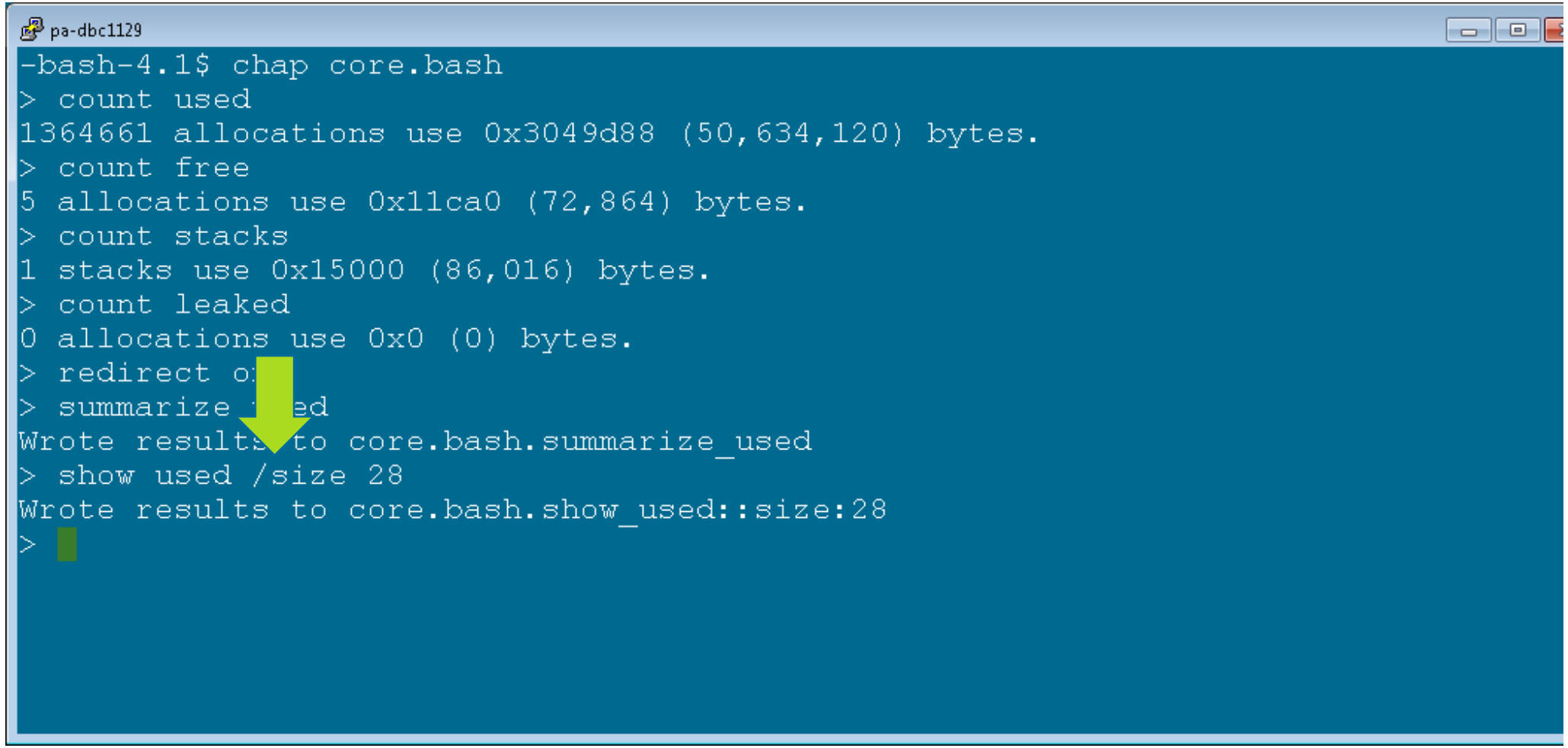


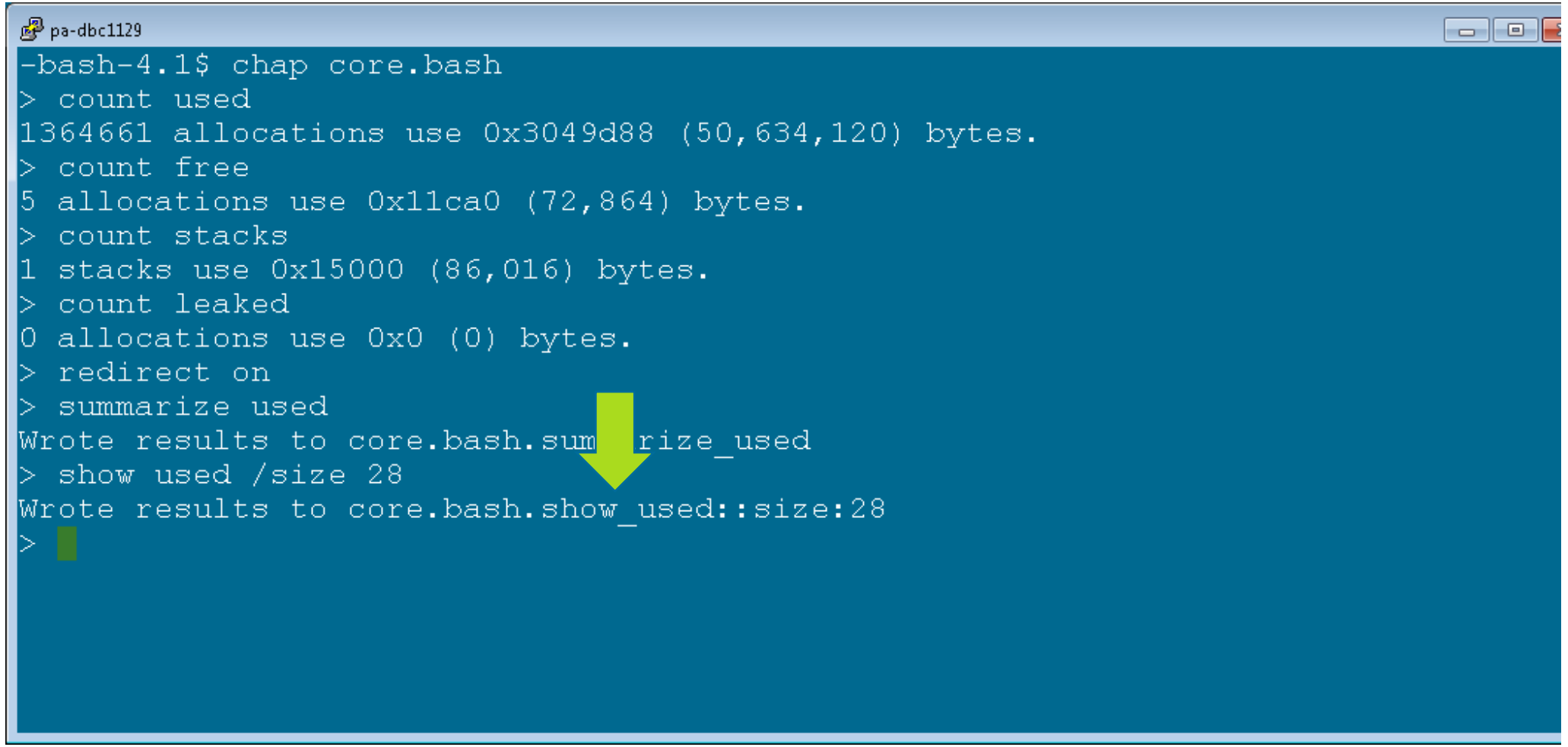
Results of “summarize used”



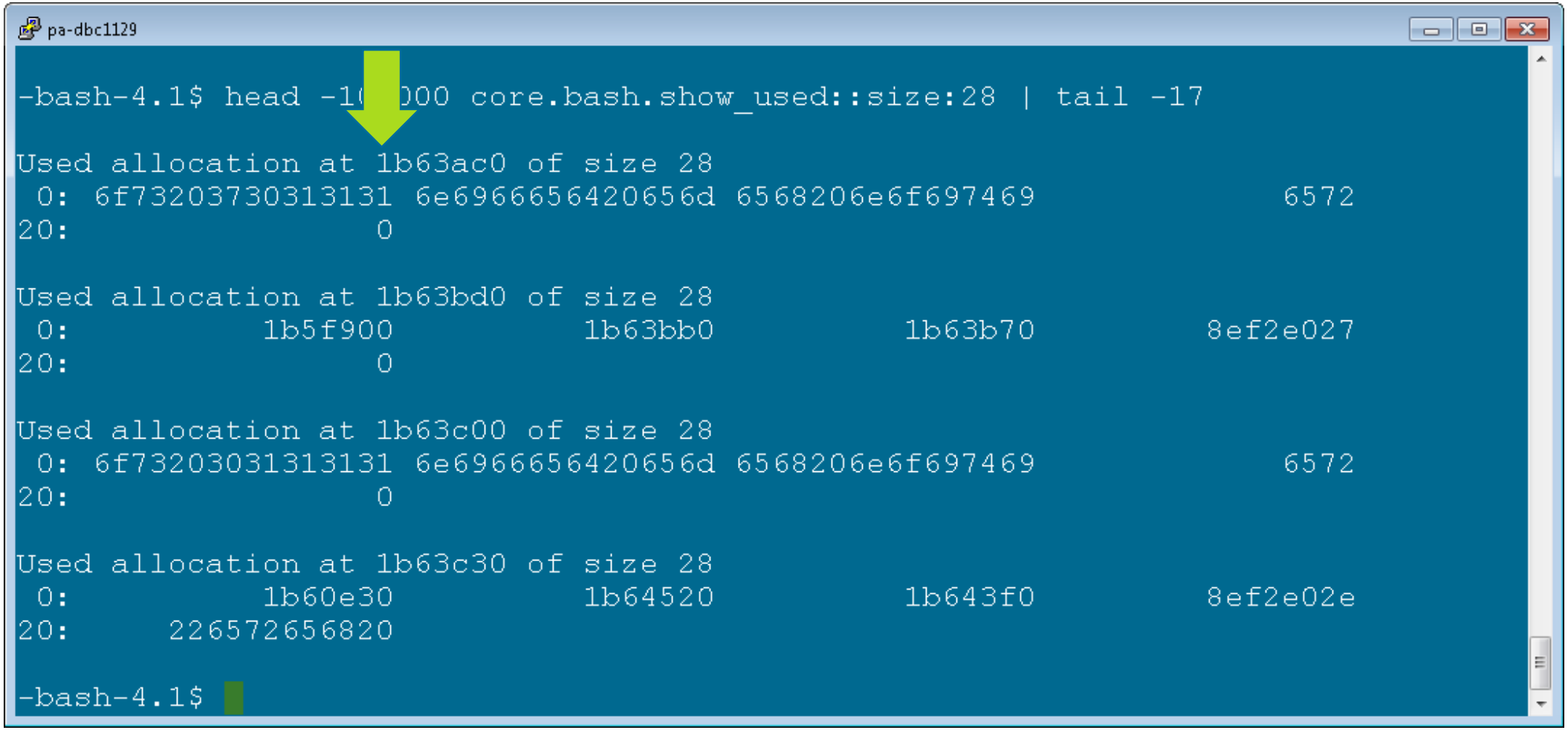
Showing Many Allocations to a File



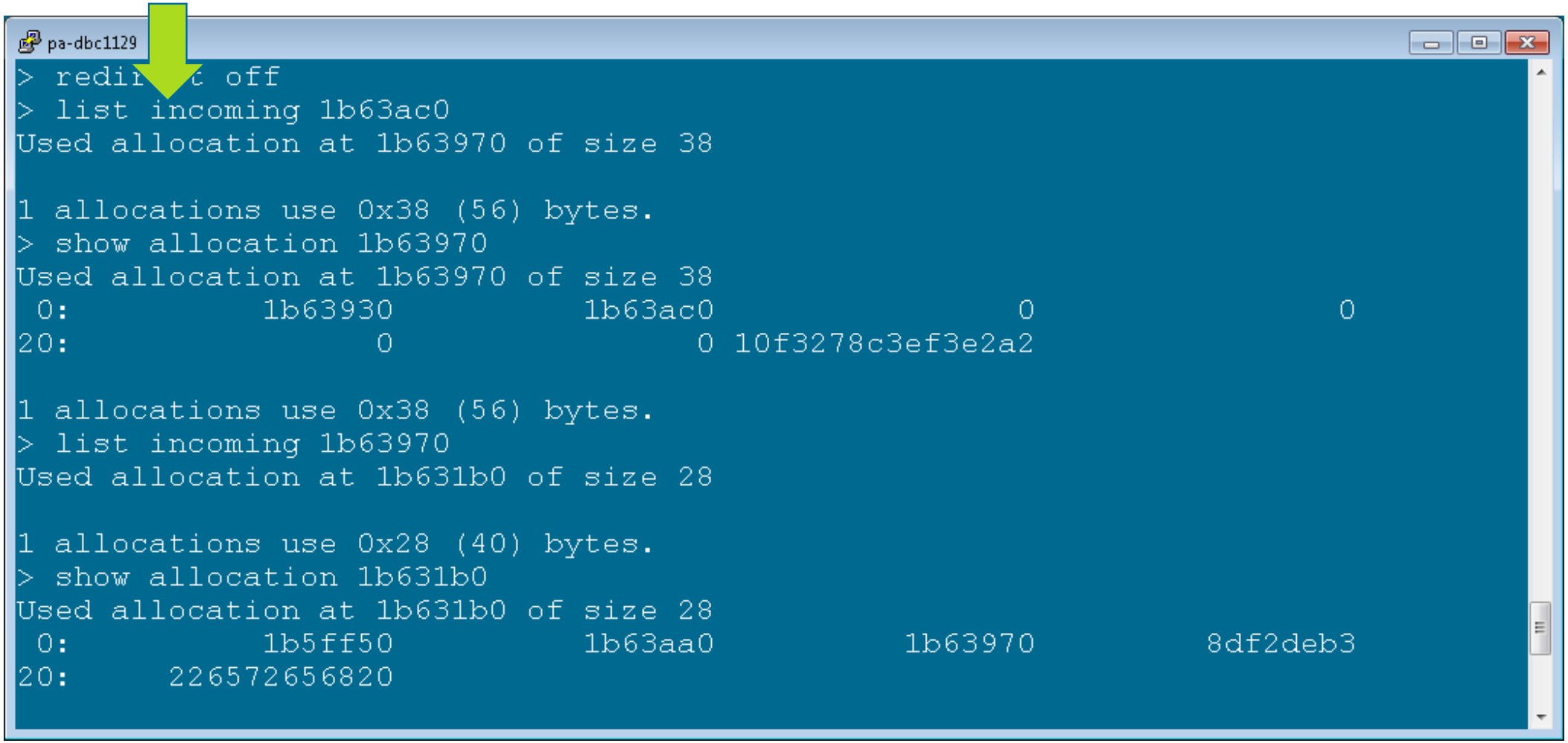
Showing Many Allocations to a File



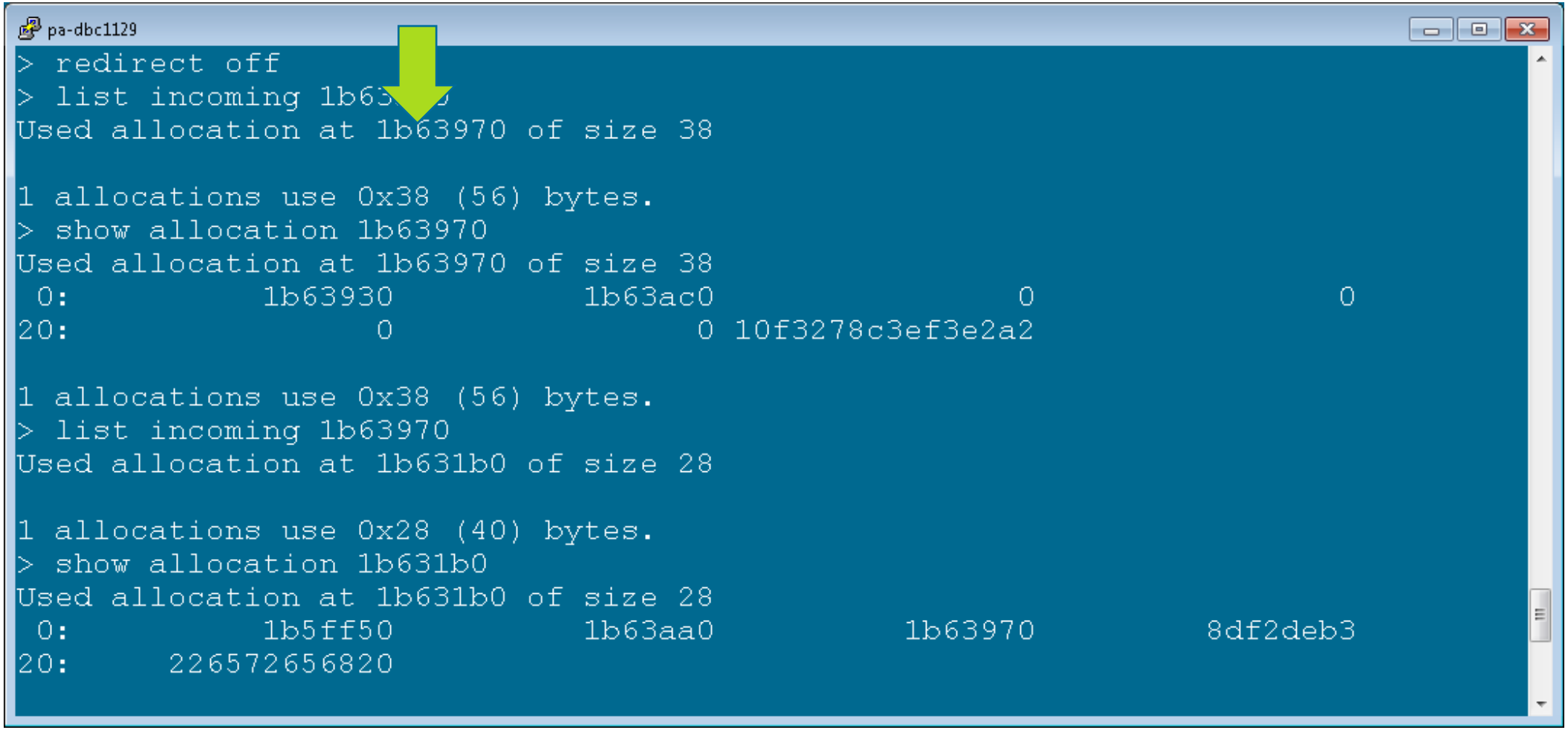
Looking at the Allocations



Following Incoming Edges



Following Incoming Edges



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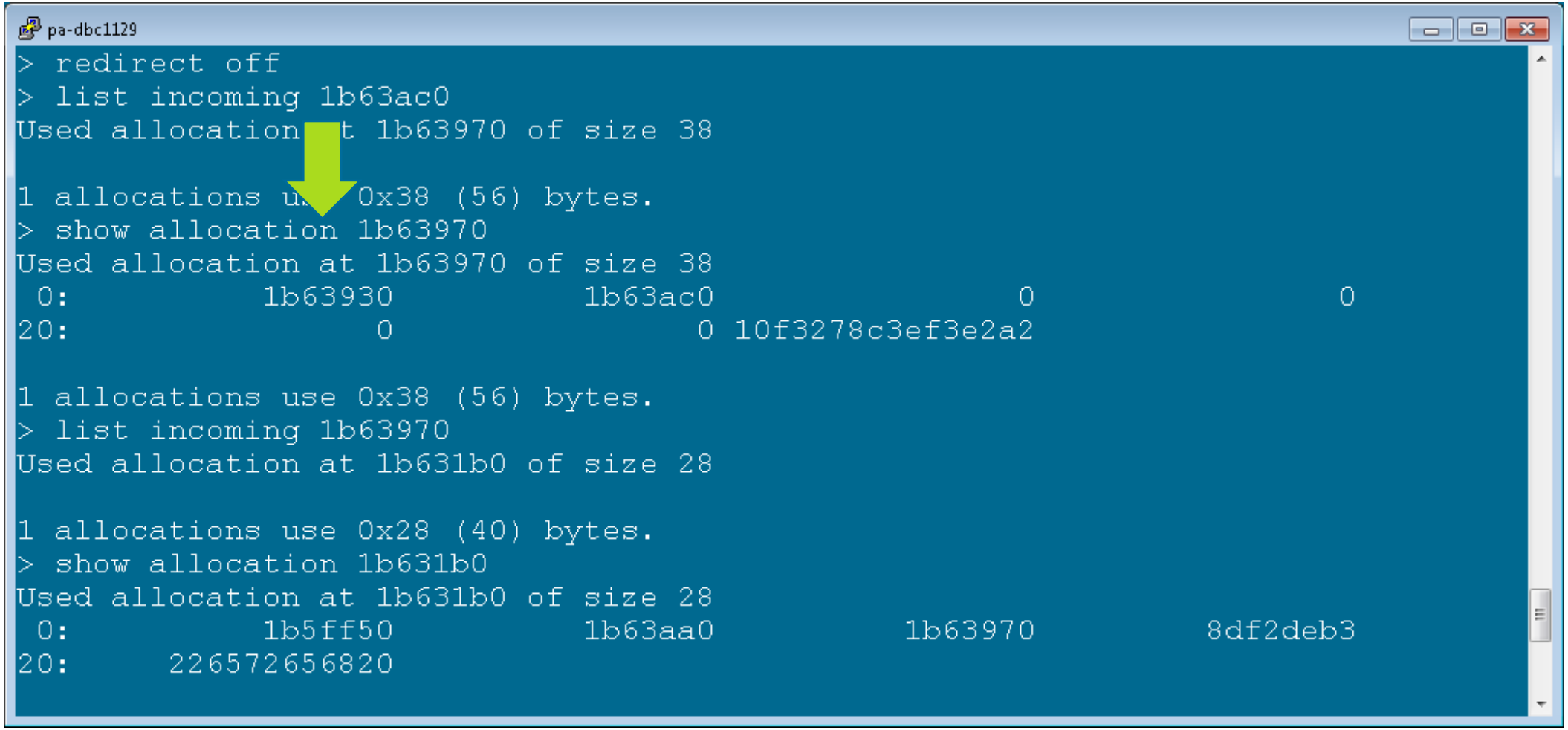

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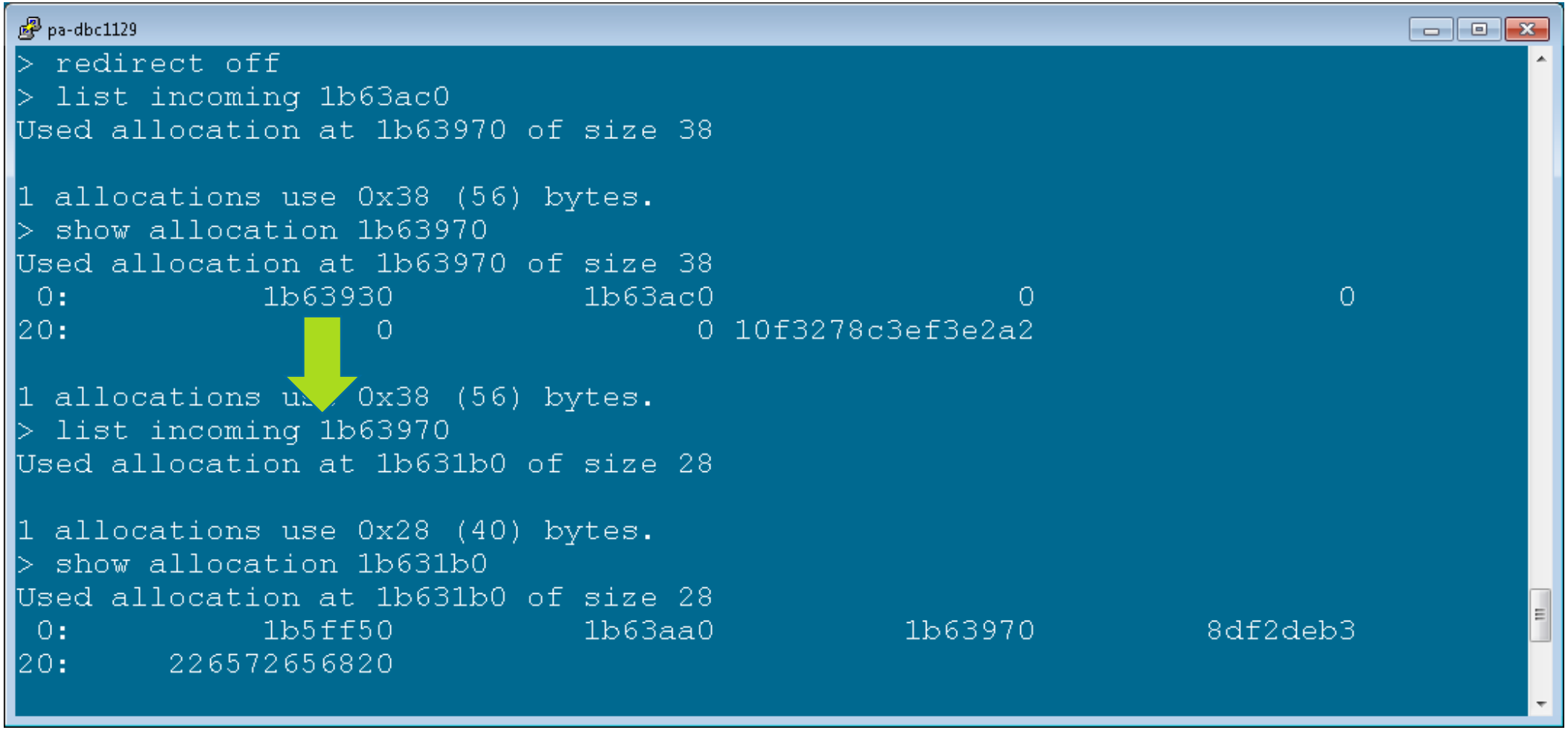

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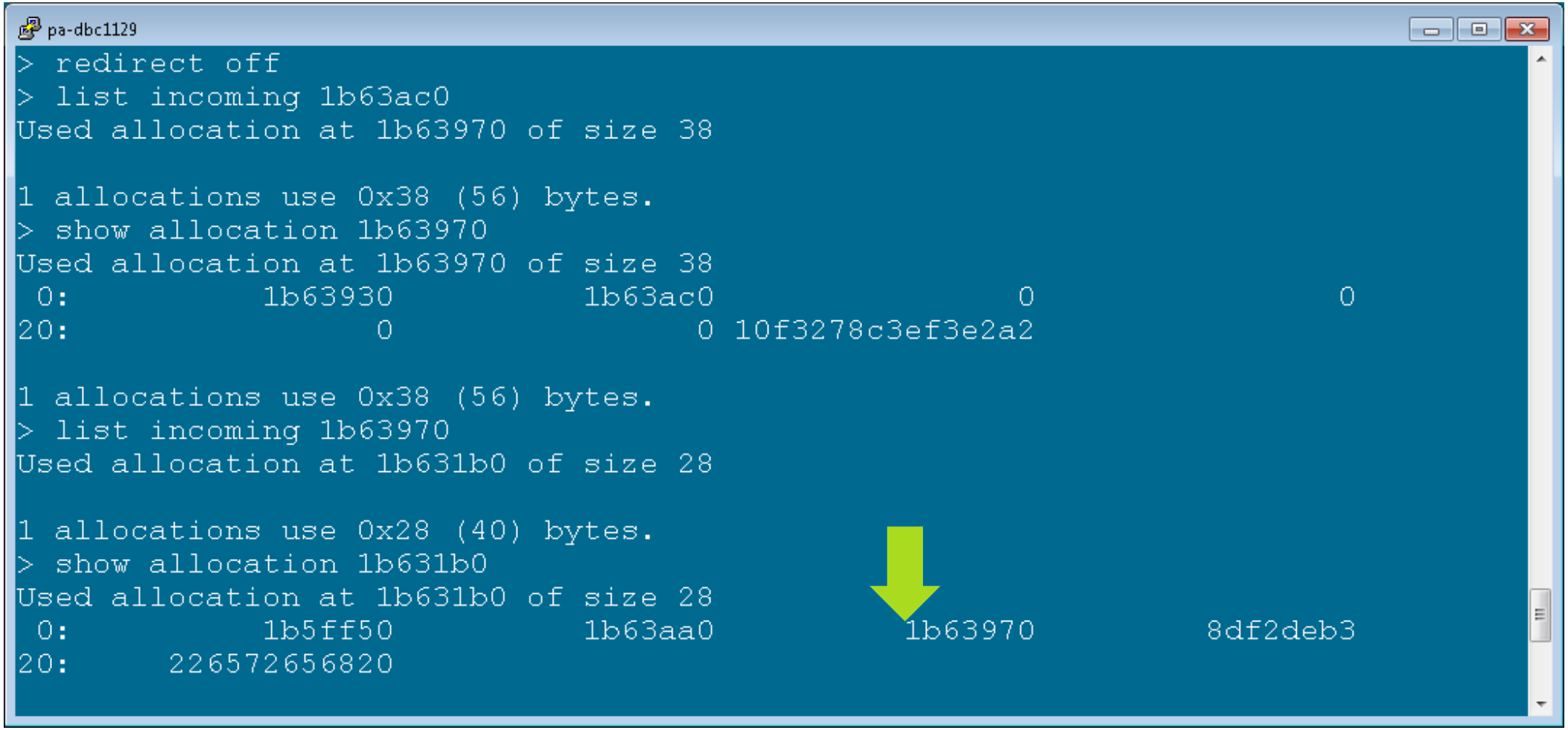
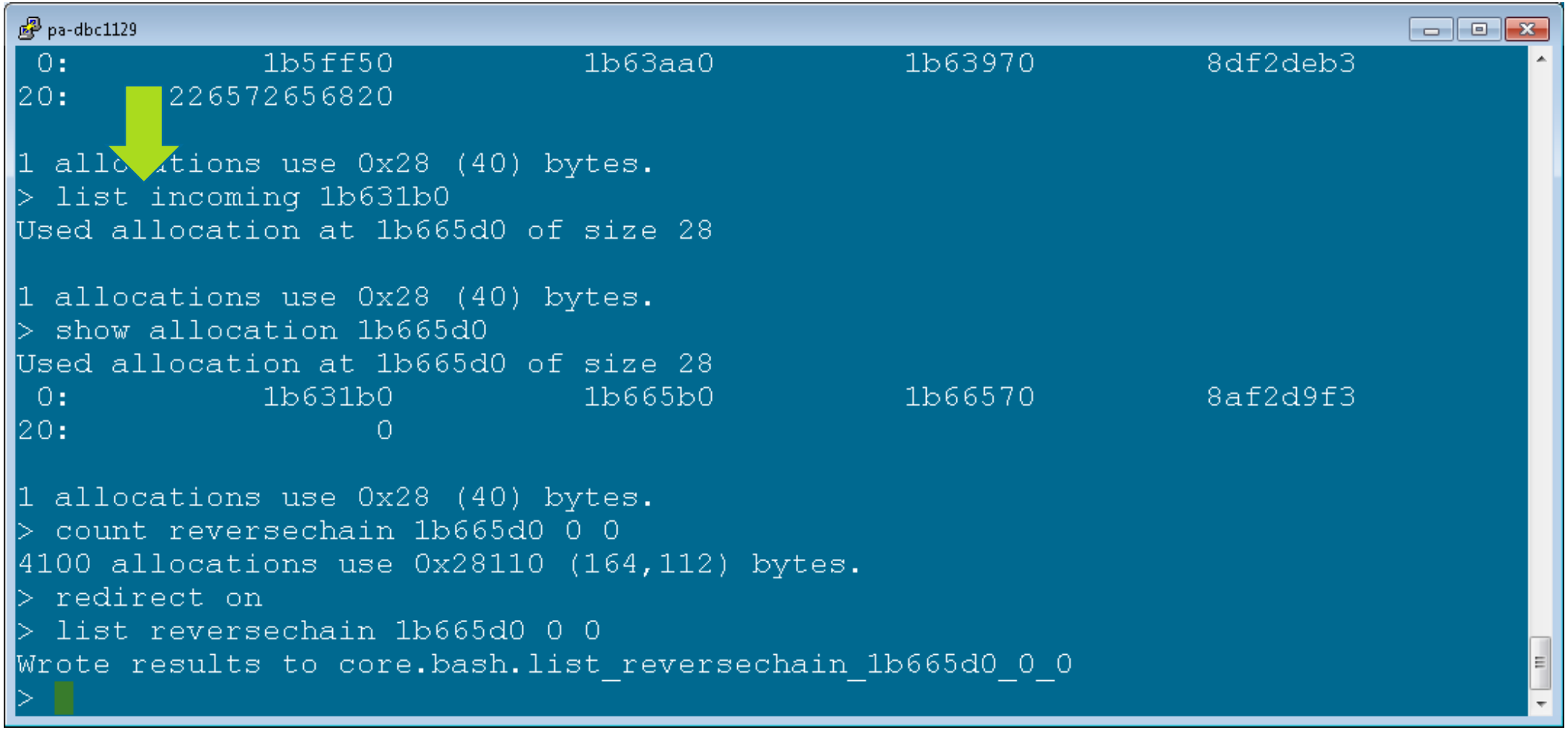
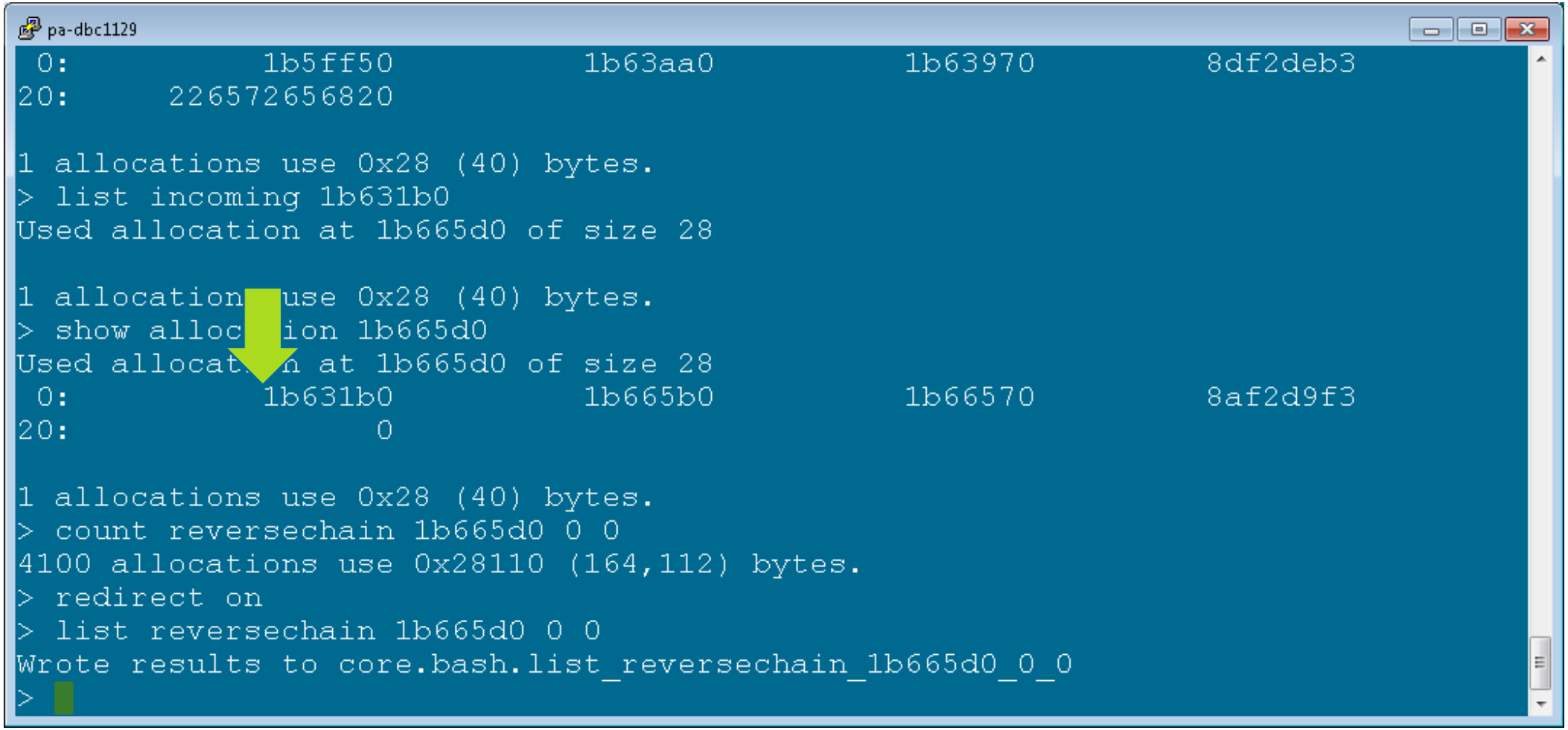


Speeding the Traversal



Speeding the Traversal



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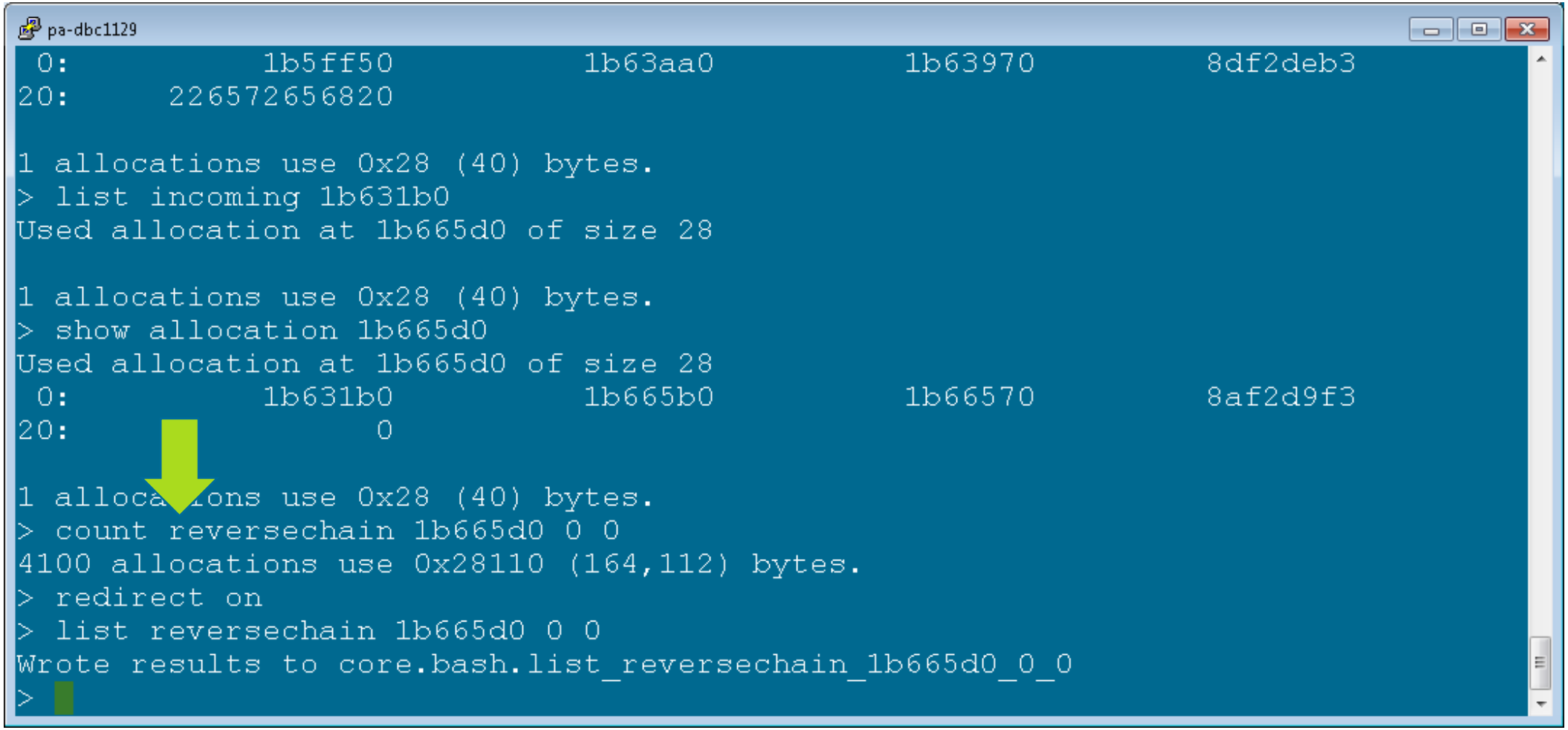
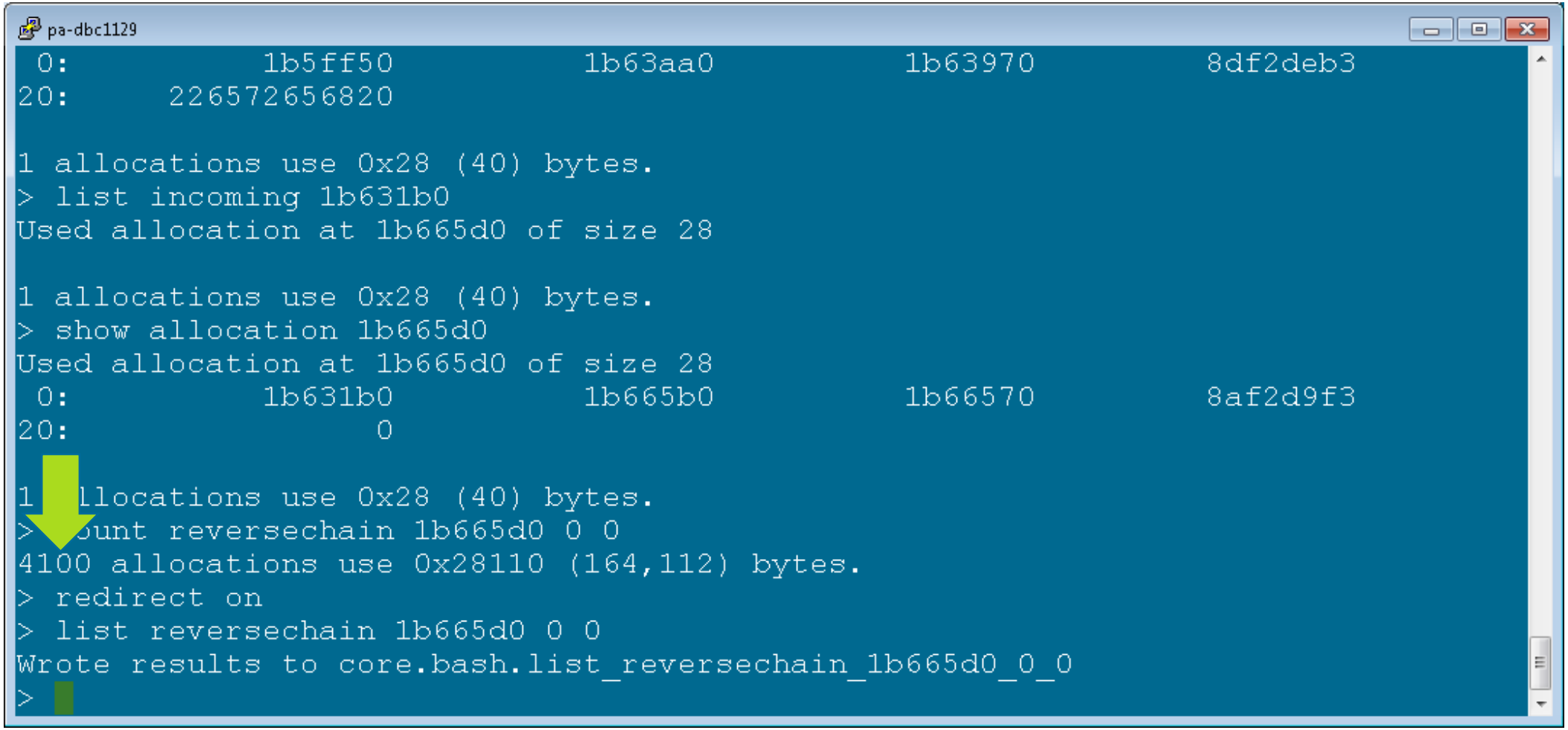
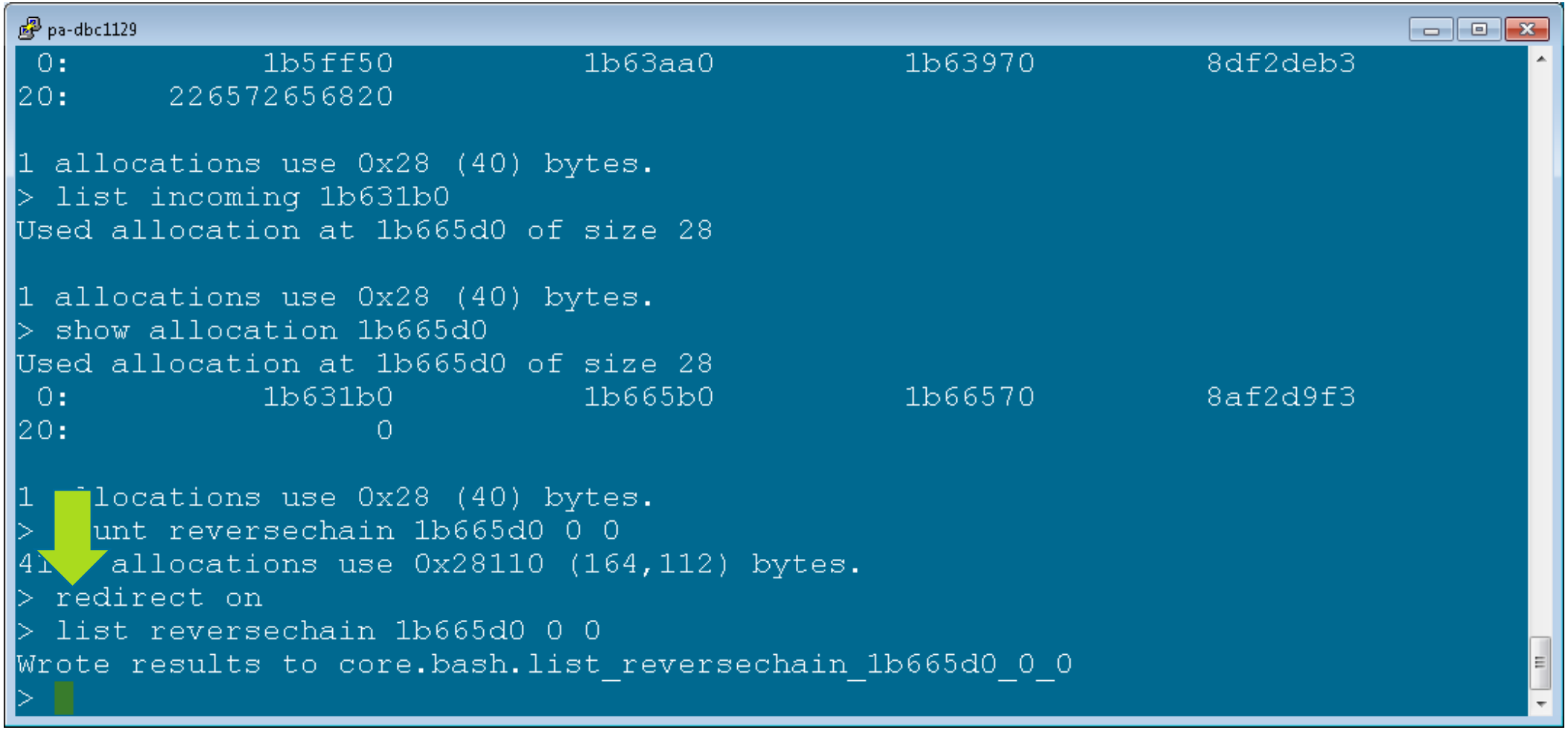


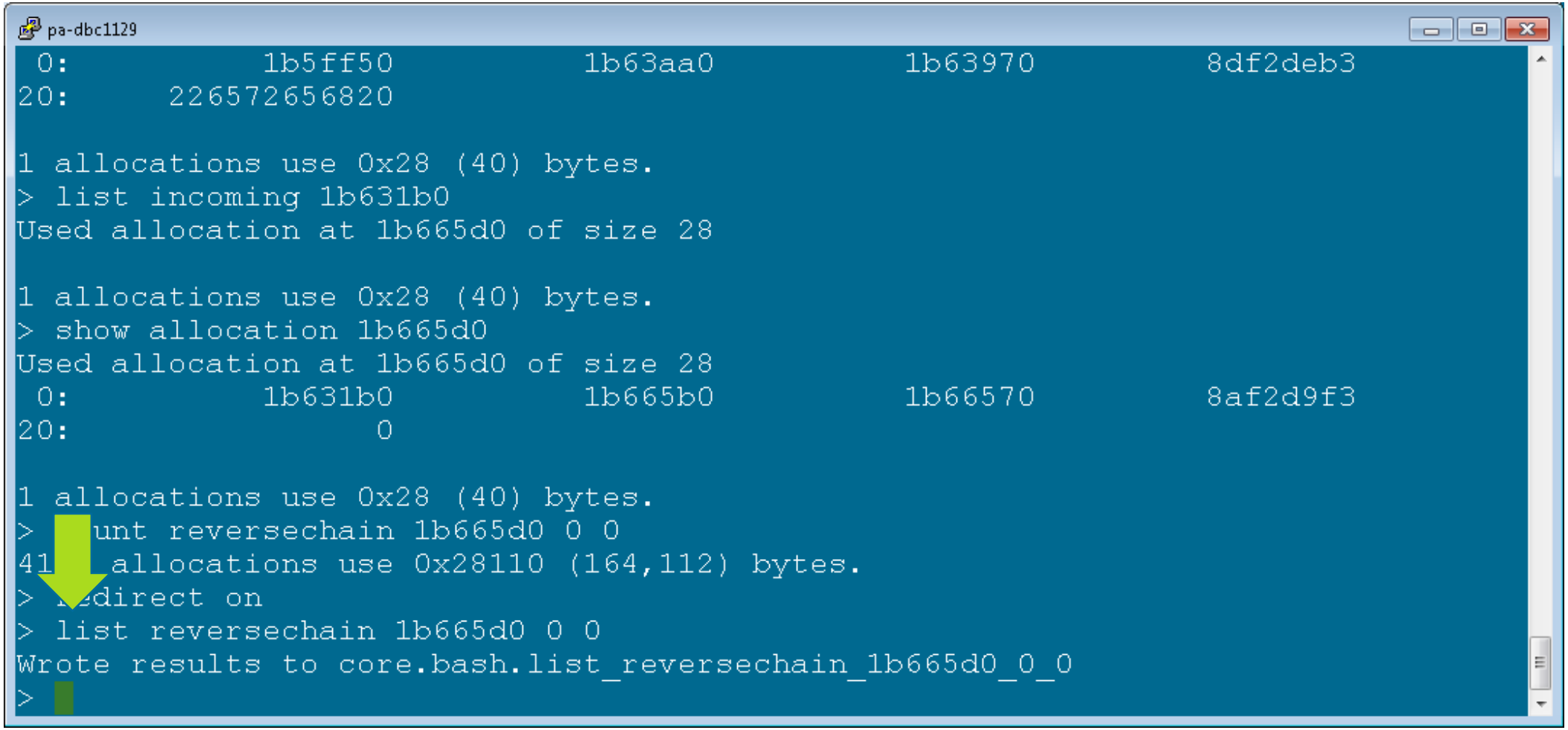
Speeding the Traversal



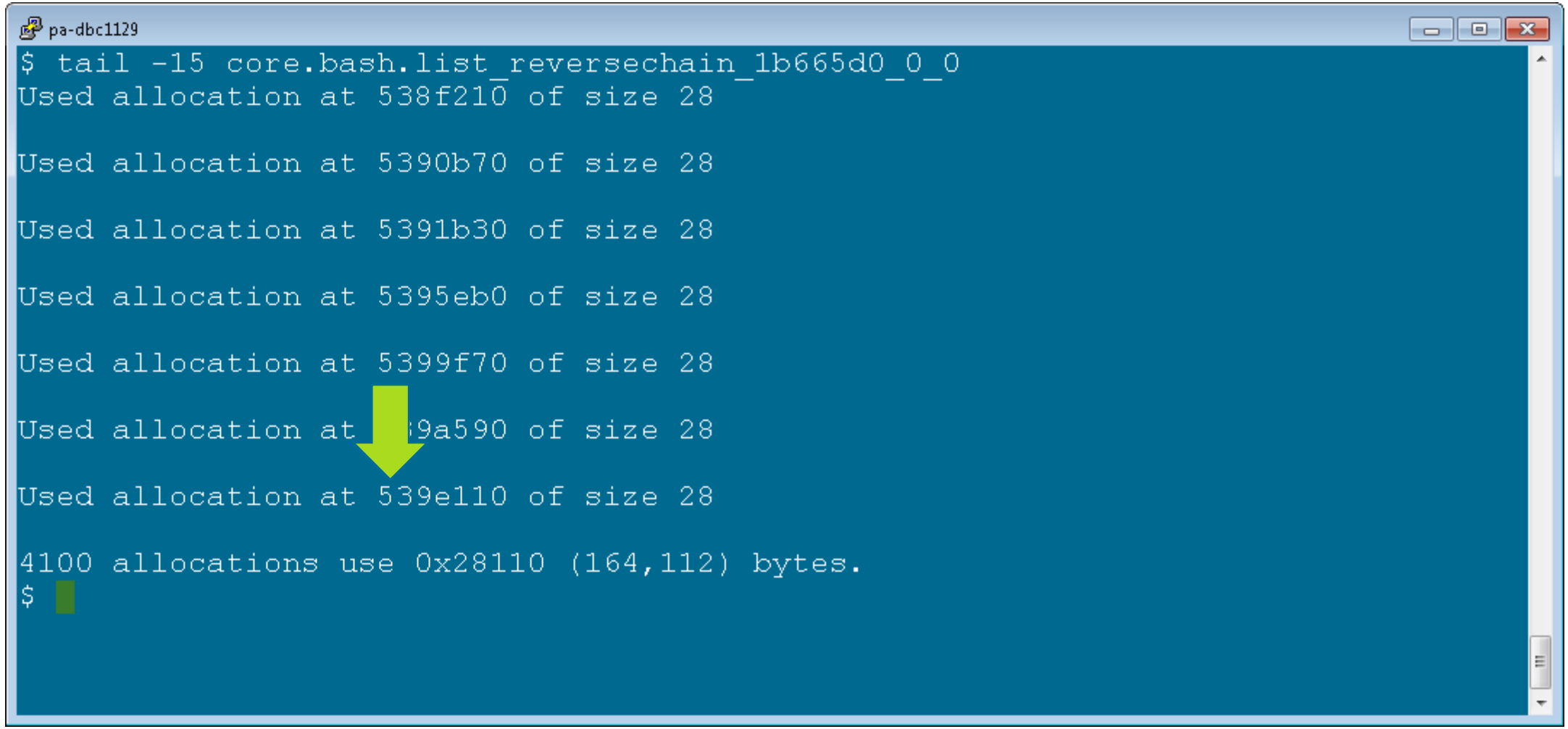
Speeding the Traversal



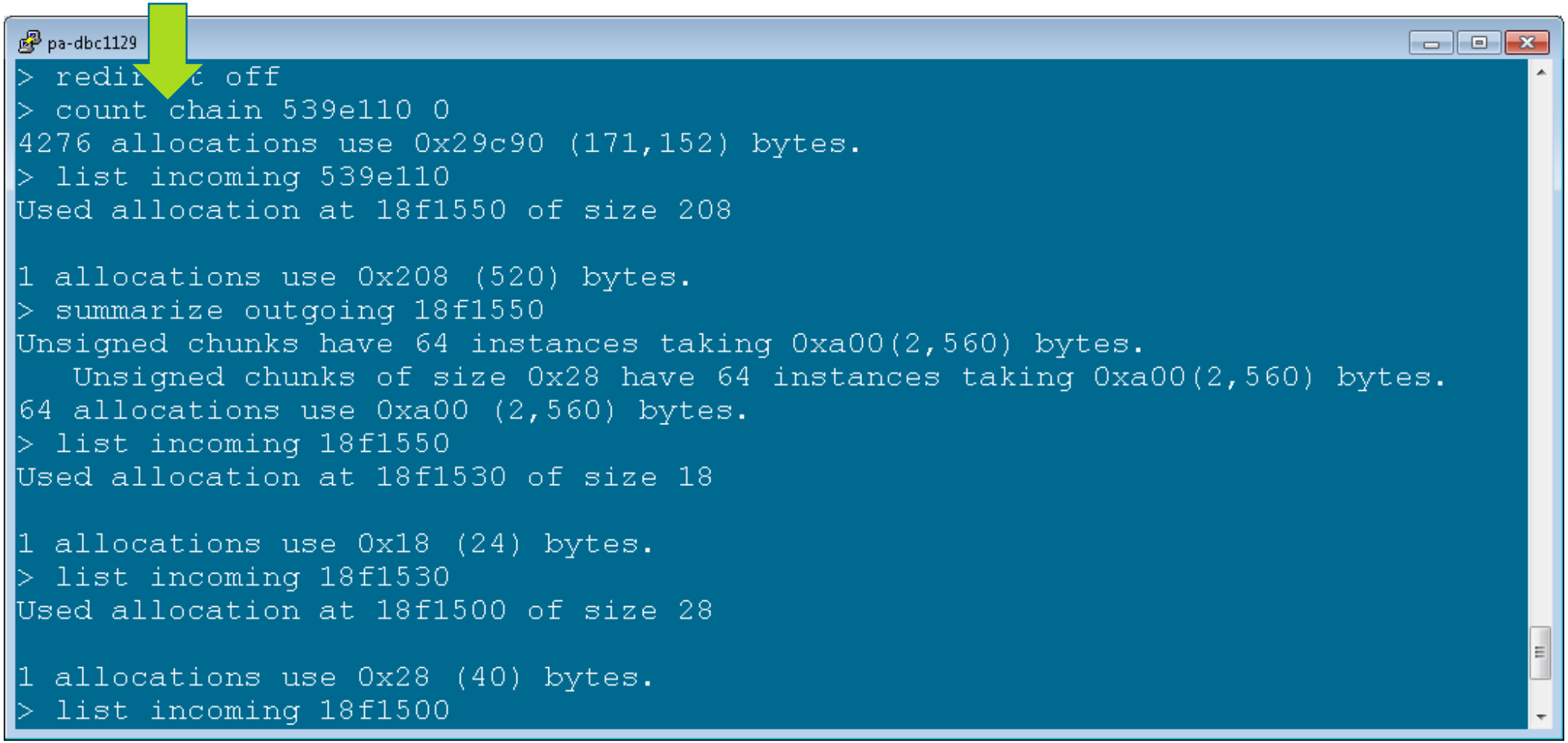
Speeding the Traversal



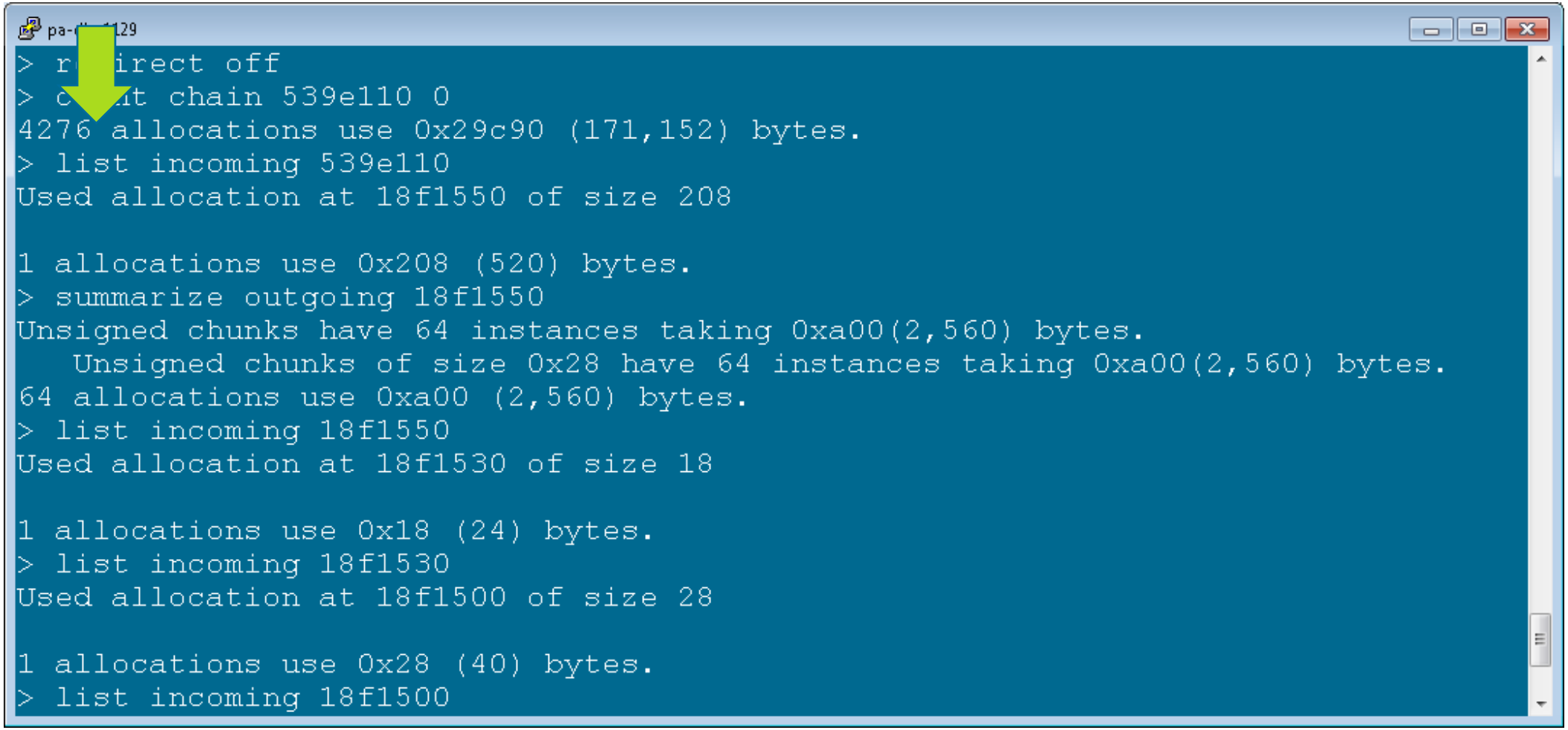
The Start of the Chain



Before the Start of the Chain



Before the Start of the Chain



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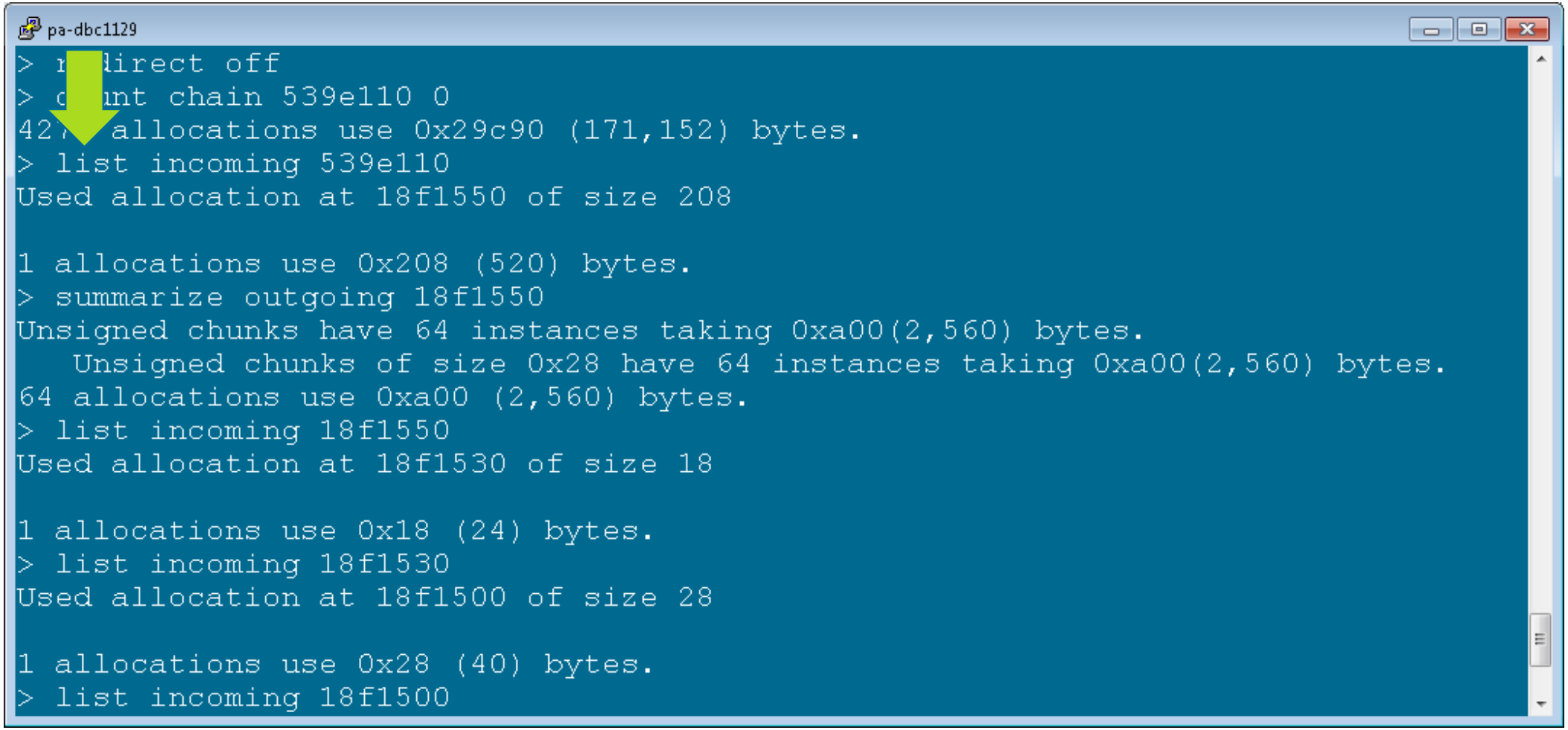

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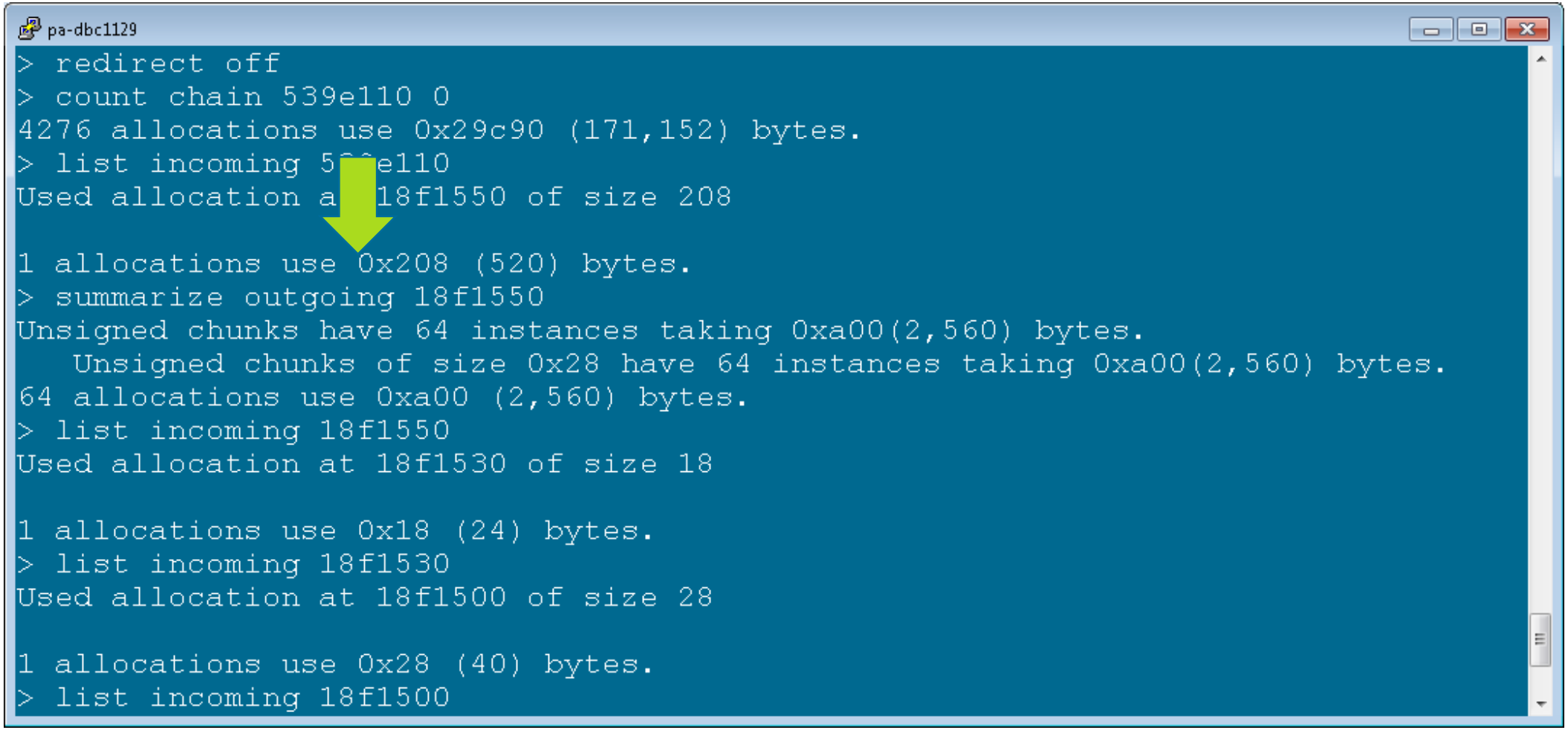

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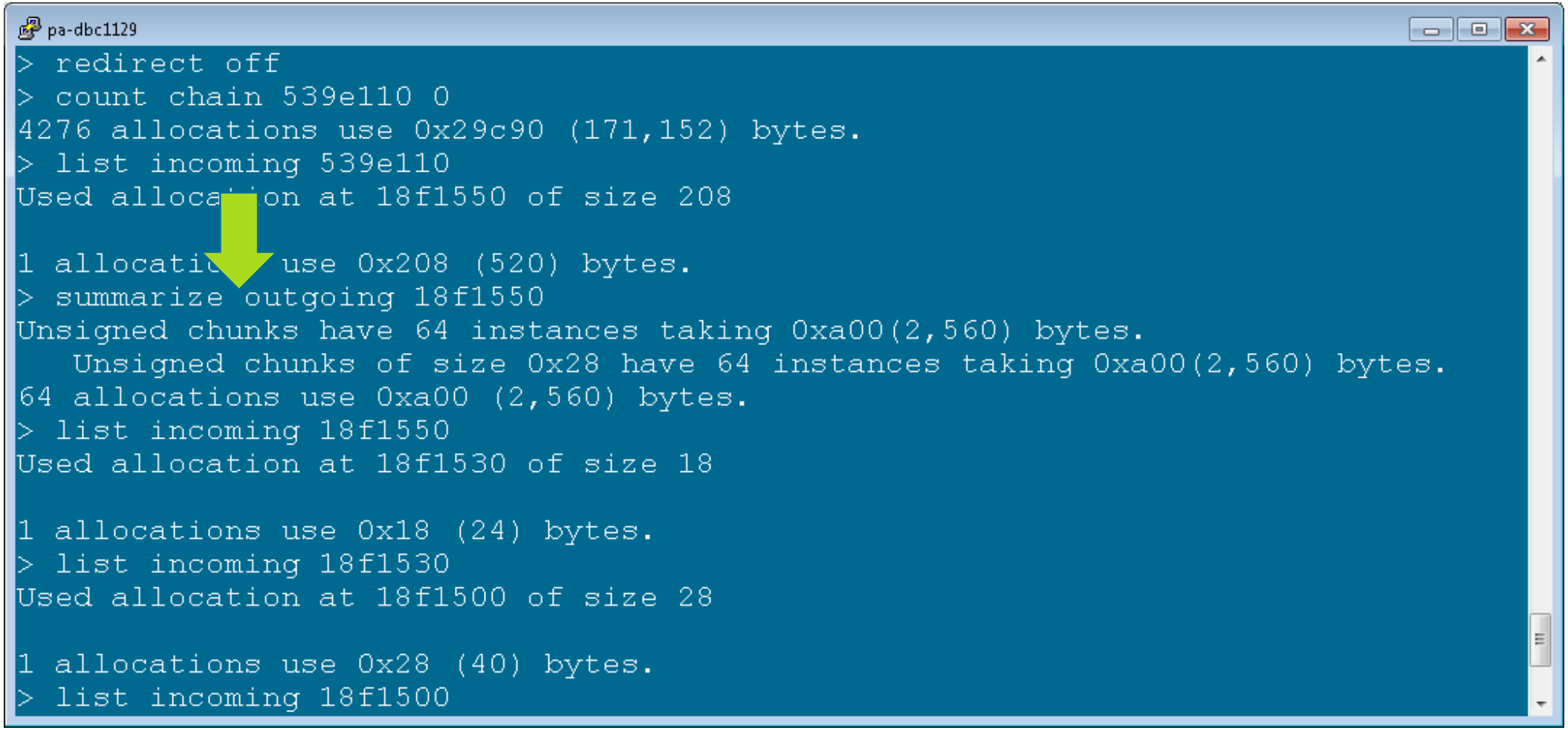
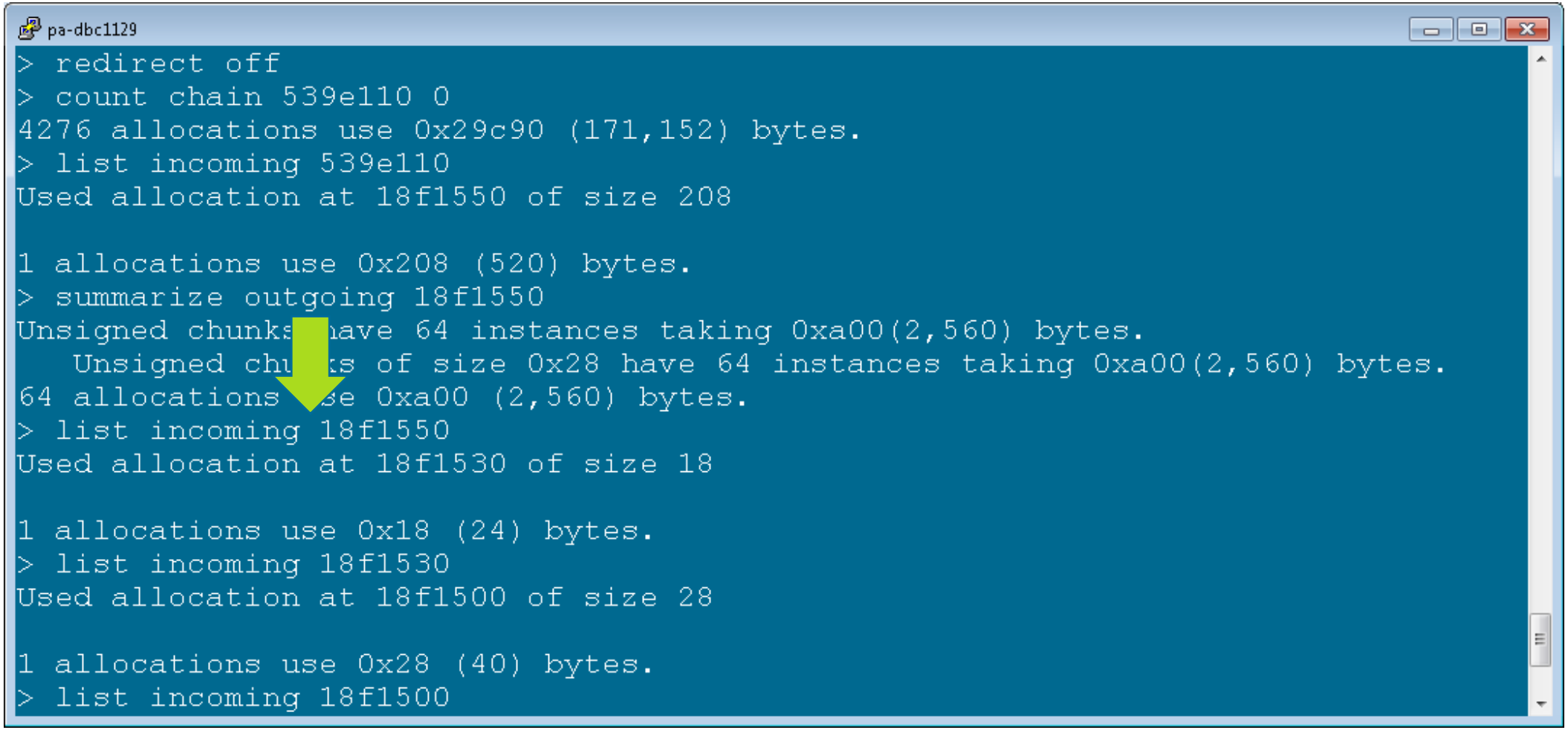
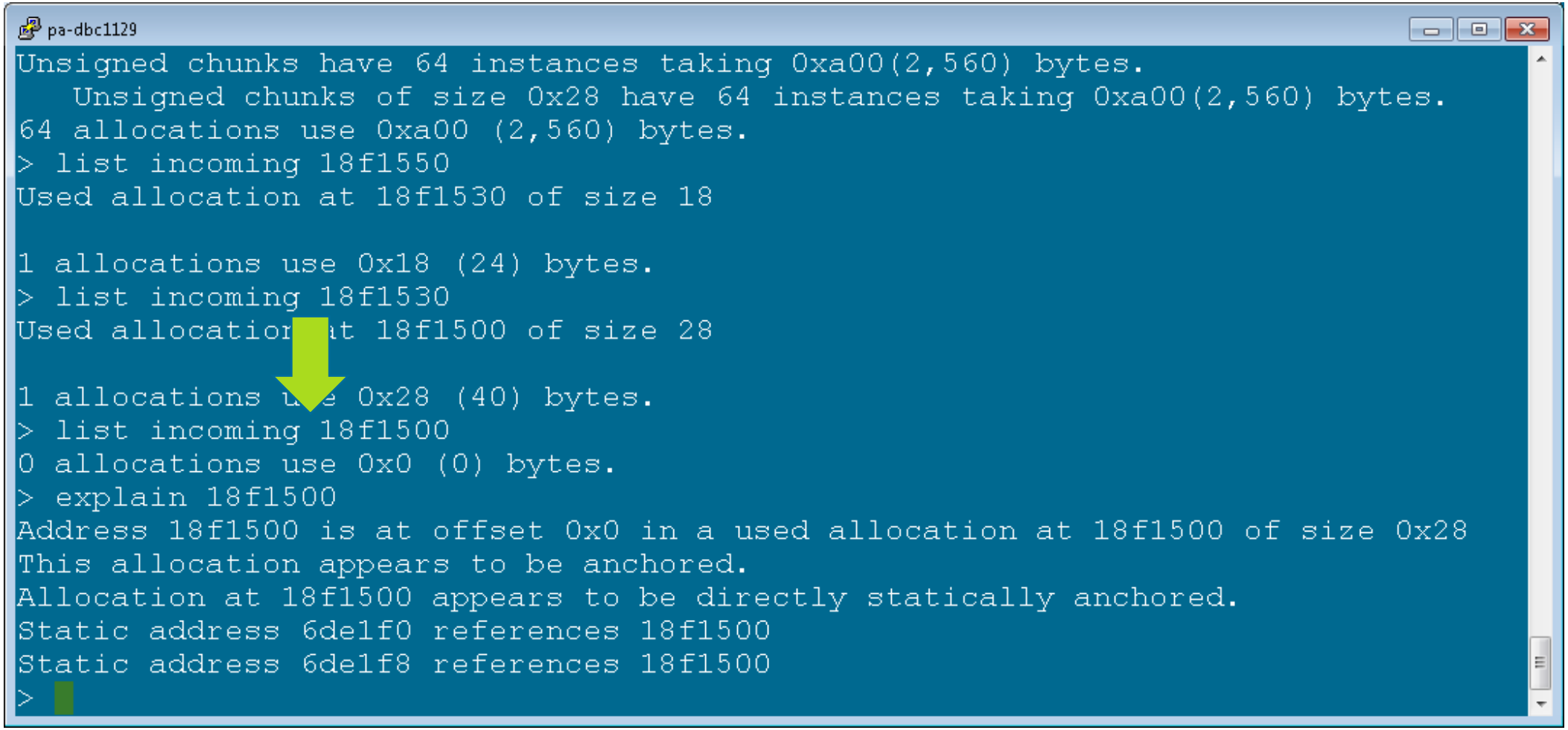


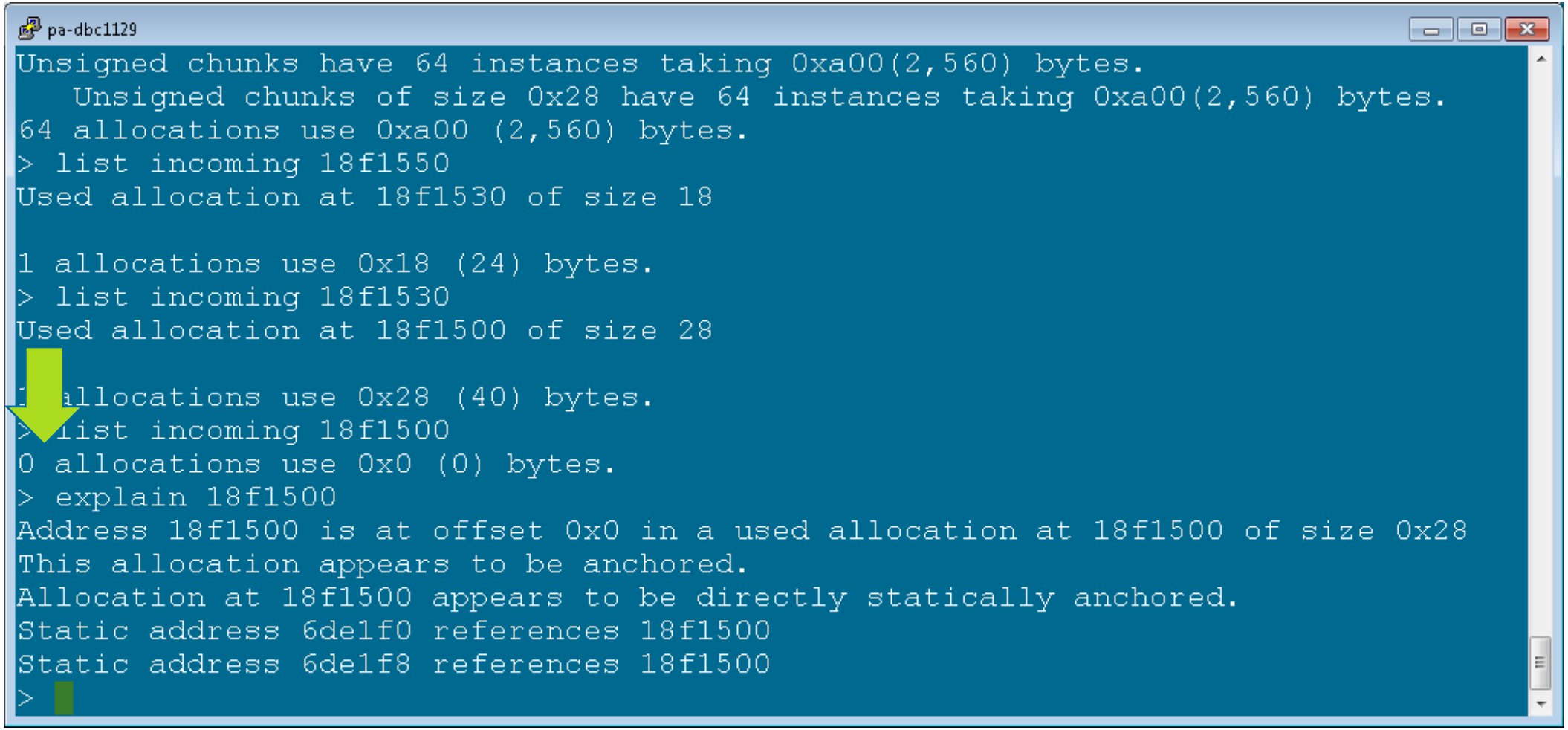
Before the Start of the Chain



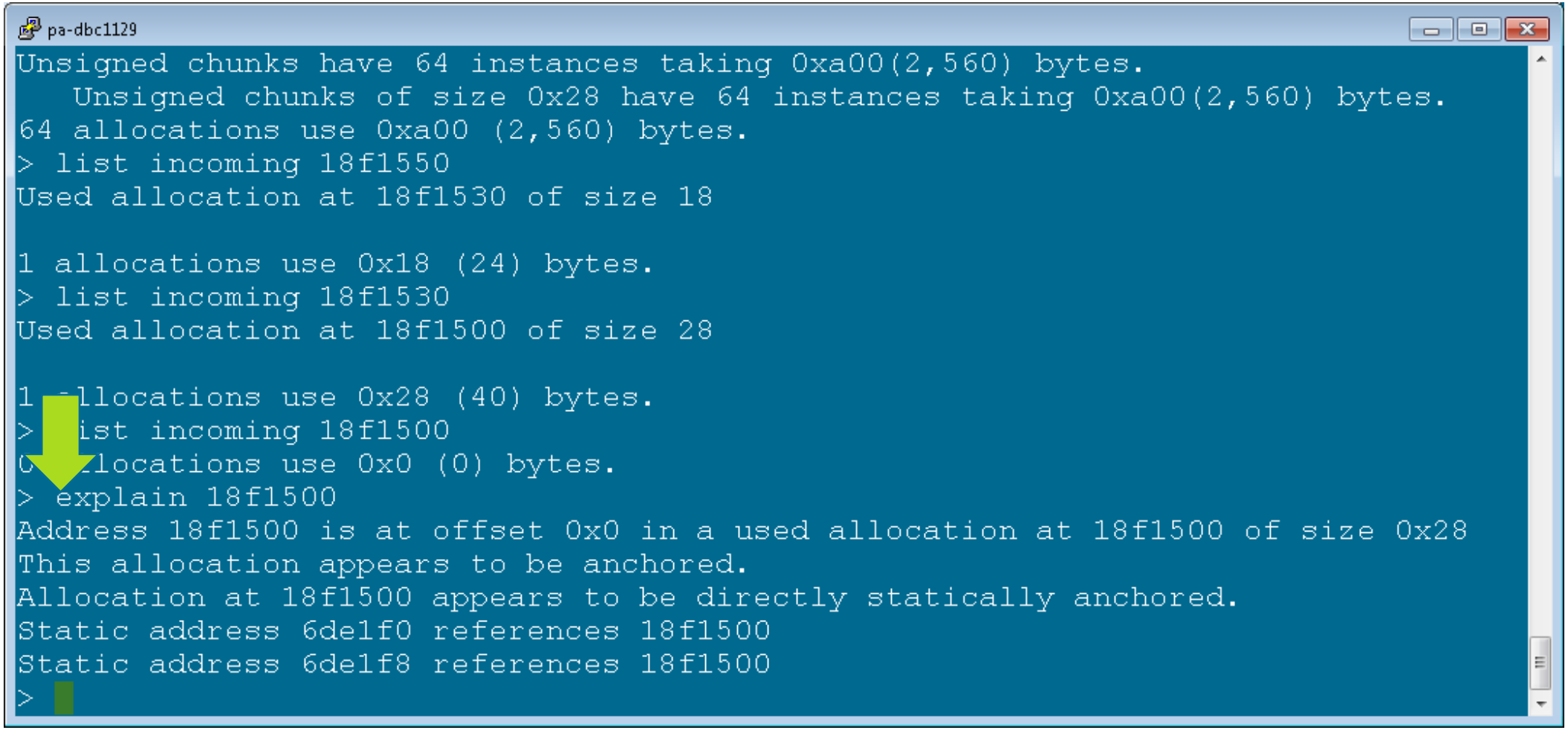
Finding the Anchor



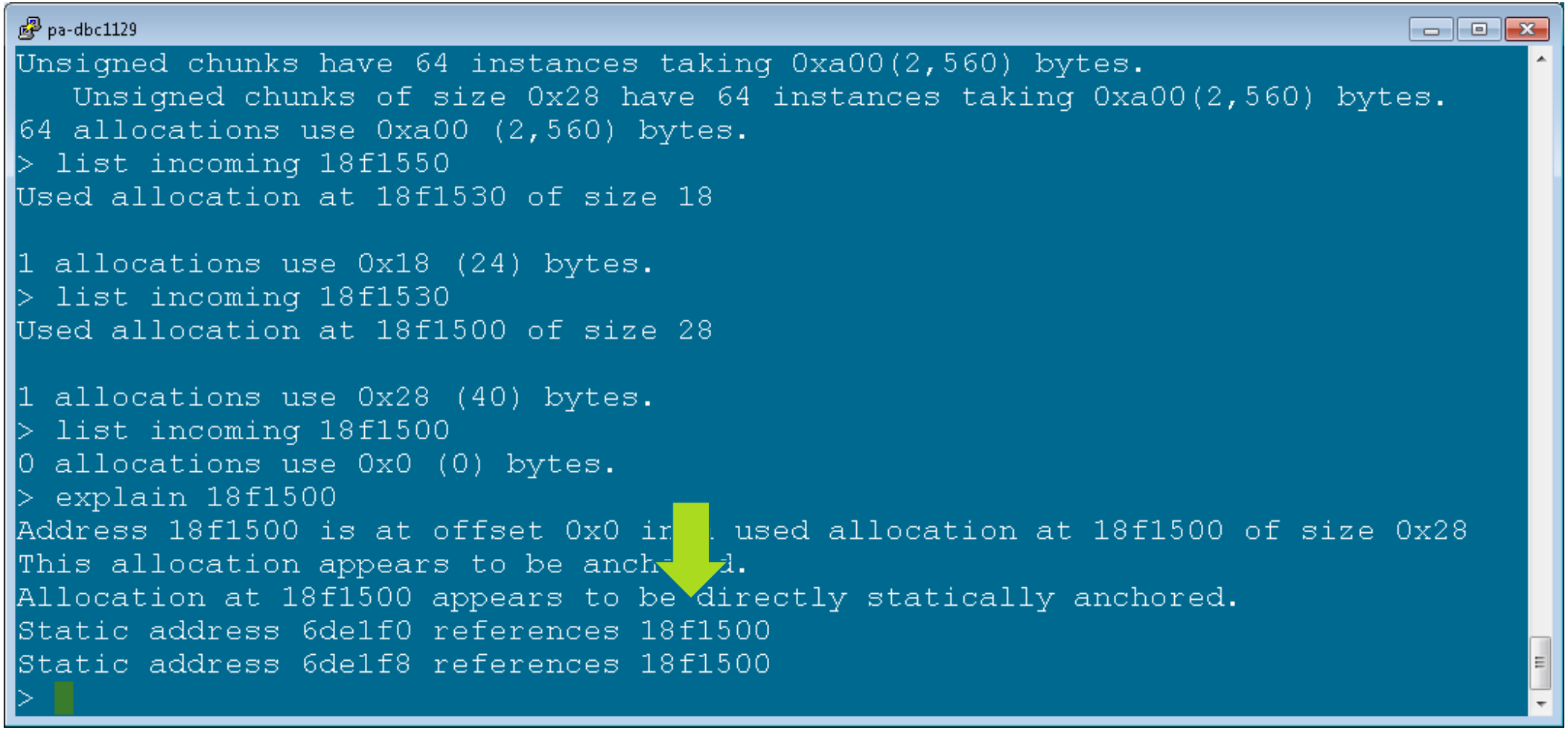
Finding the Anchor



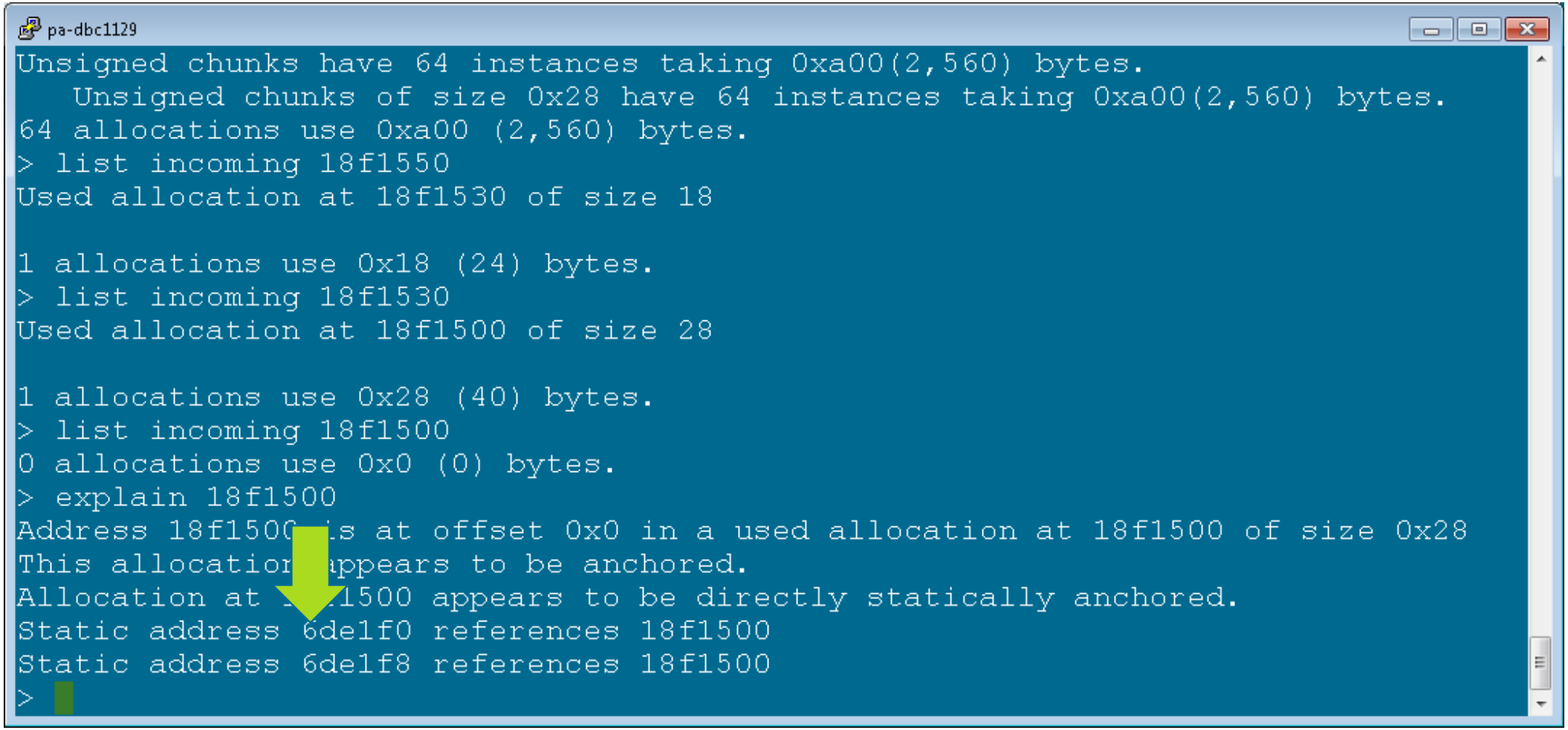
Finding the Anchor



Finding the Anchor

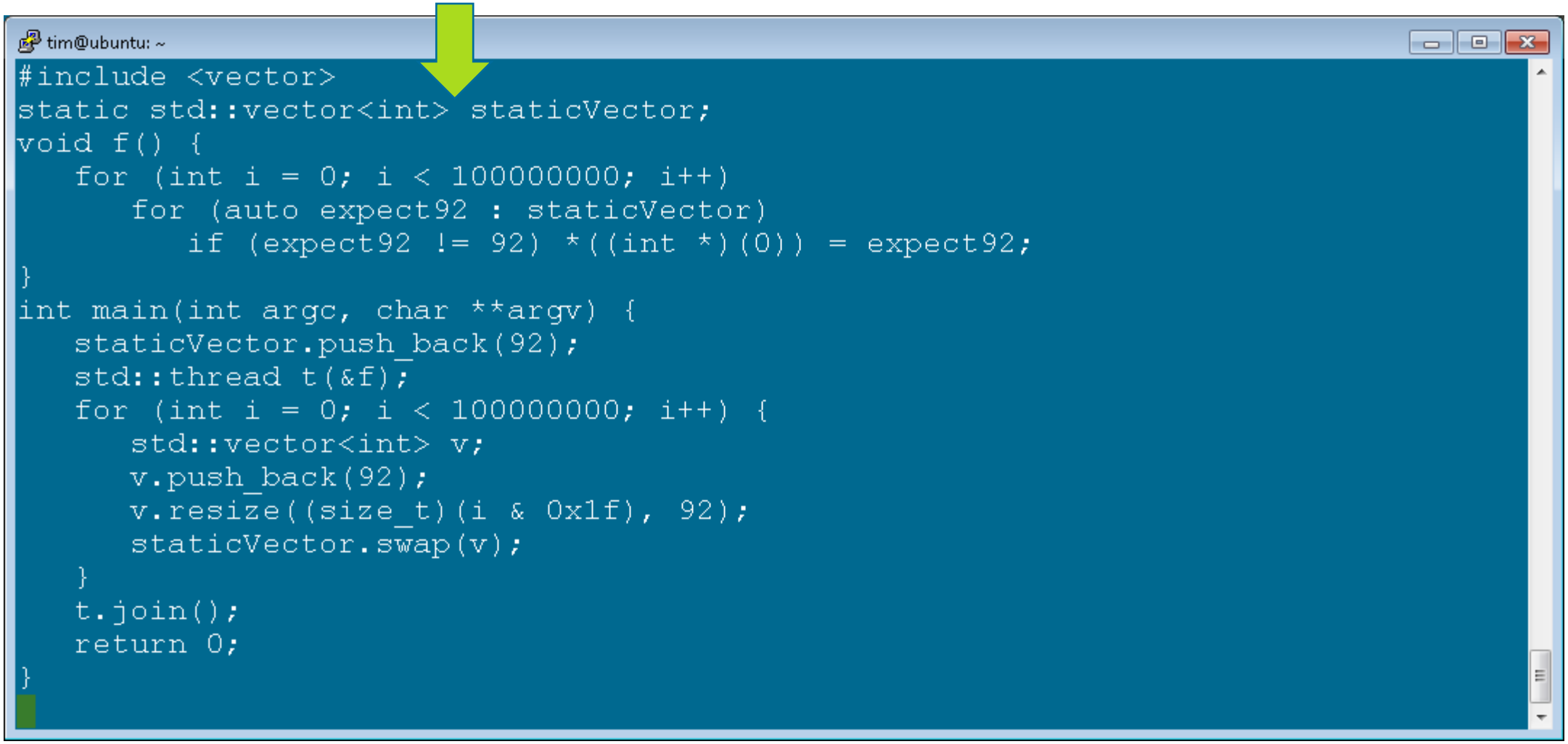


Finding the Anchor

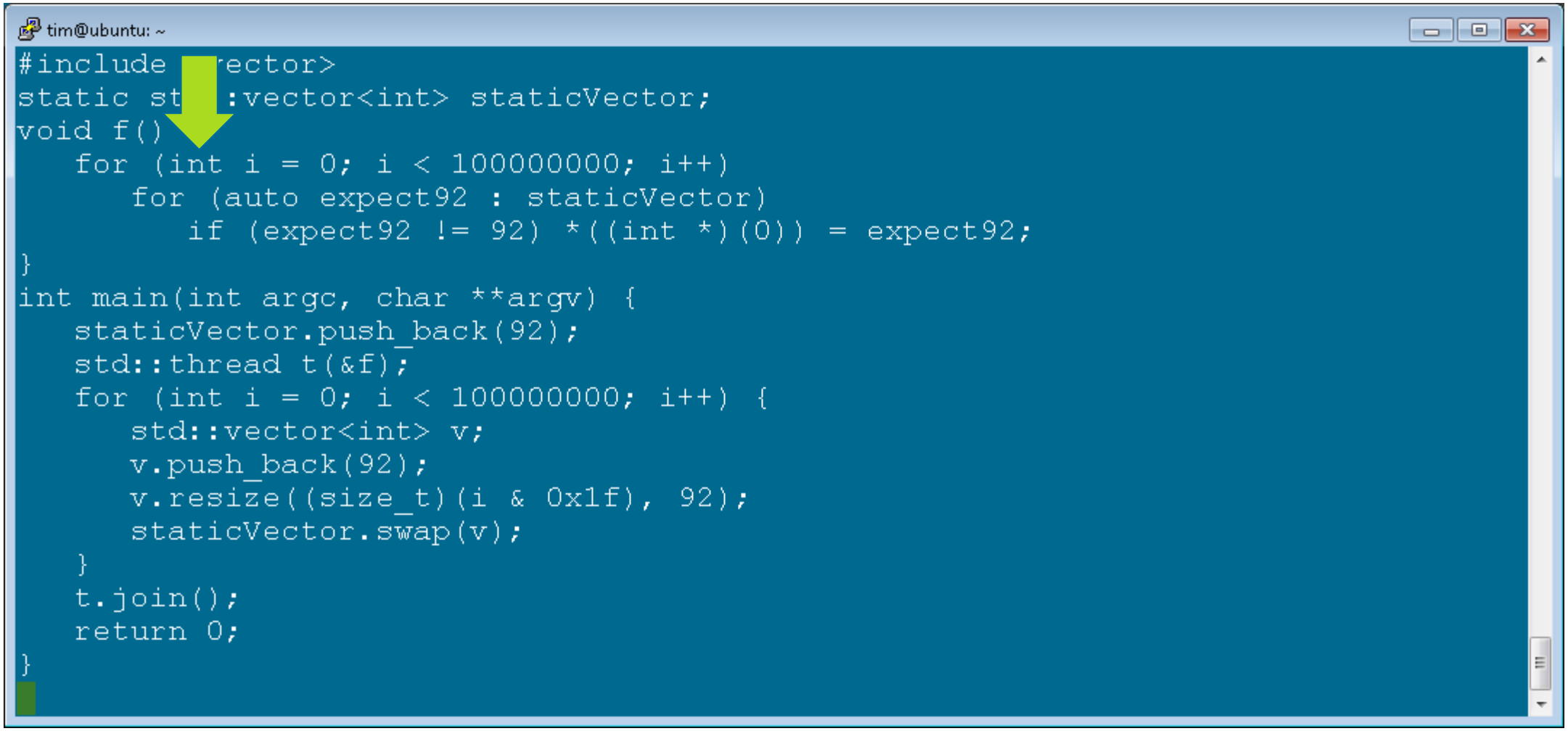


Using CHAP to Help With Crash Analysis

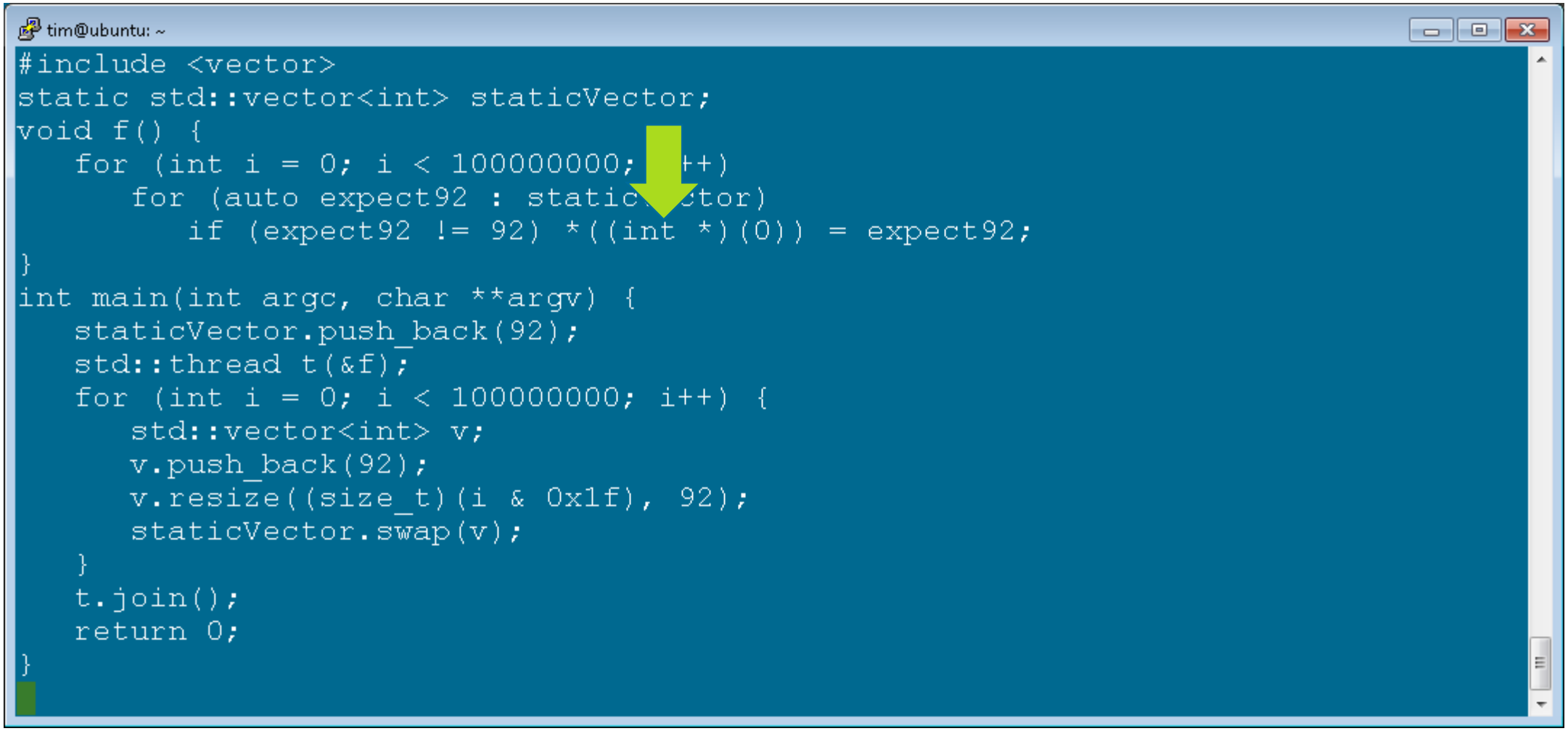
Analyze Corruption Issues – a Simulation



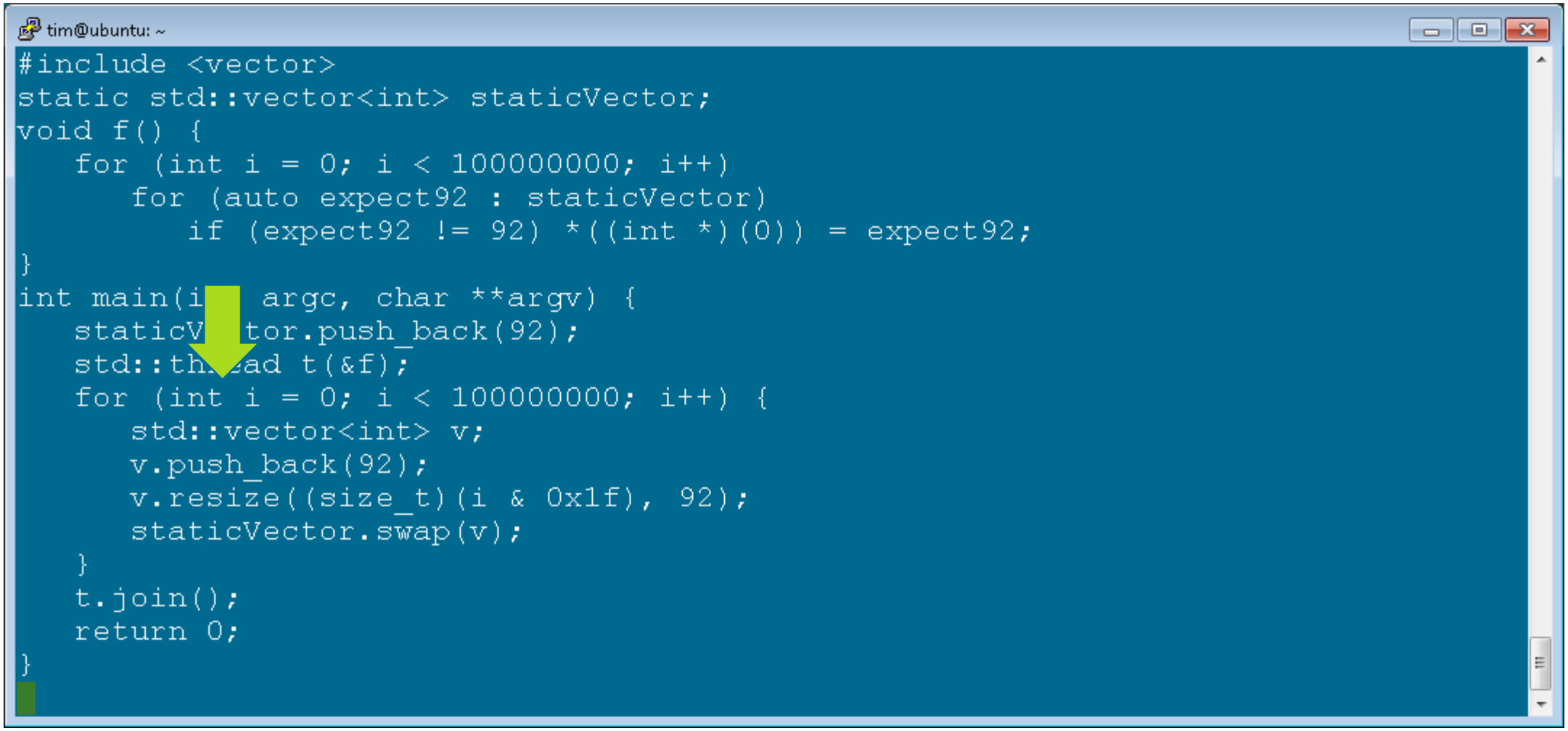
Analyze Corruption Issues – a Simulation



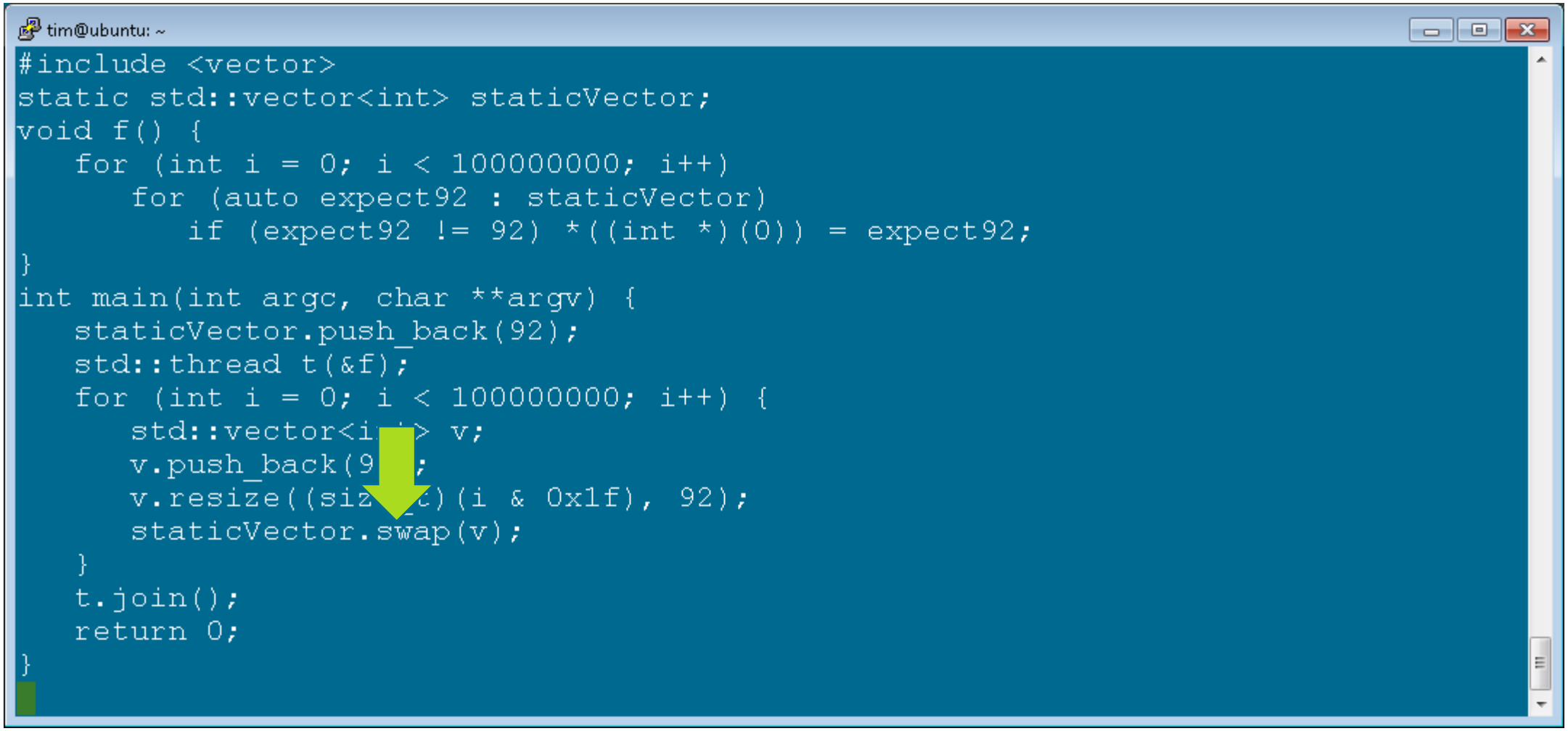
Analyze Corruption Issues – a Simulation



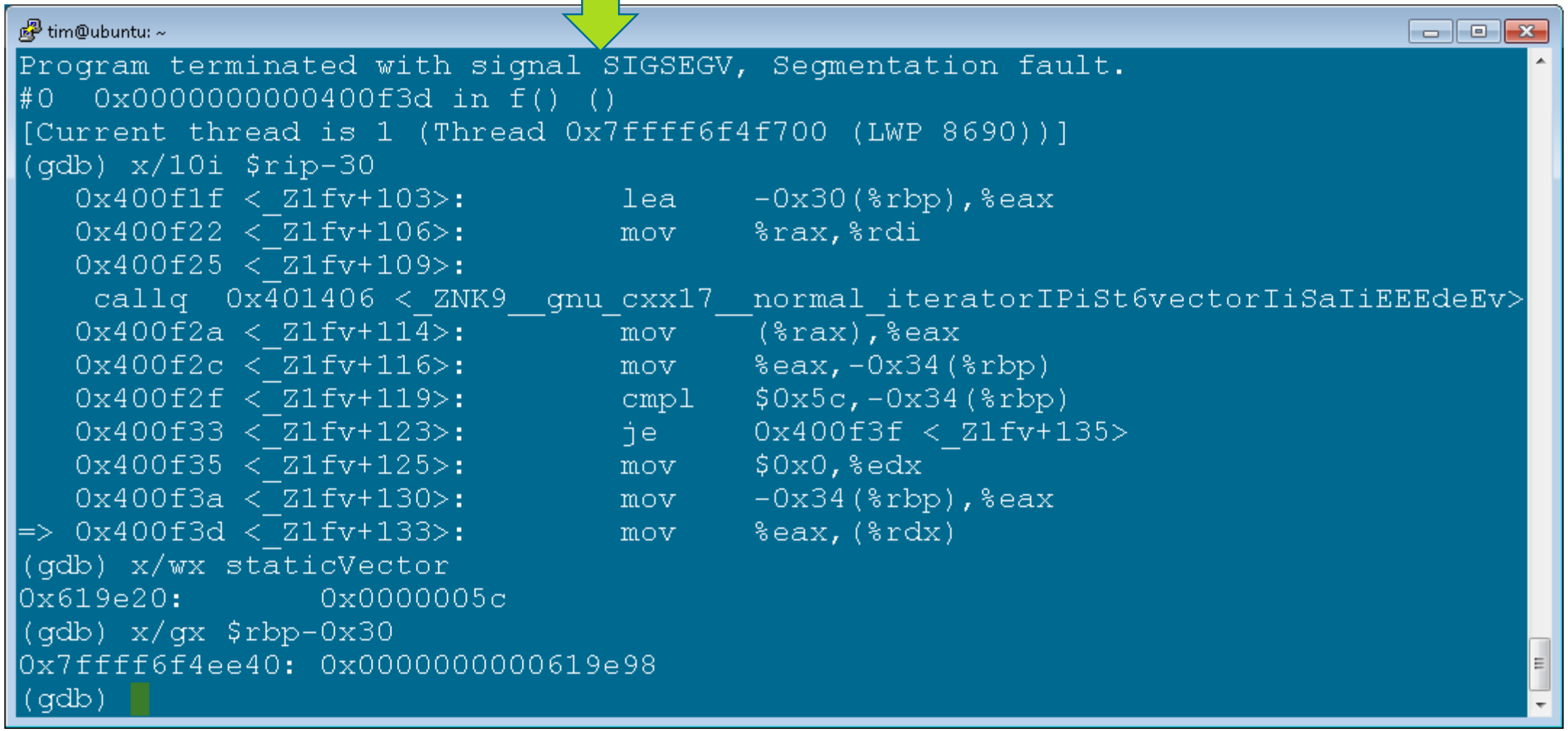
Analyze Corruption Issues – a Simulation



Analyze Corruption Issues – a Simulation



Analyze Corruption Issues – Looking at the Core With gdb



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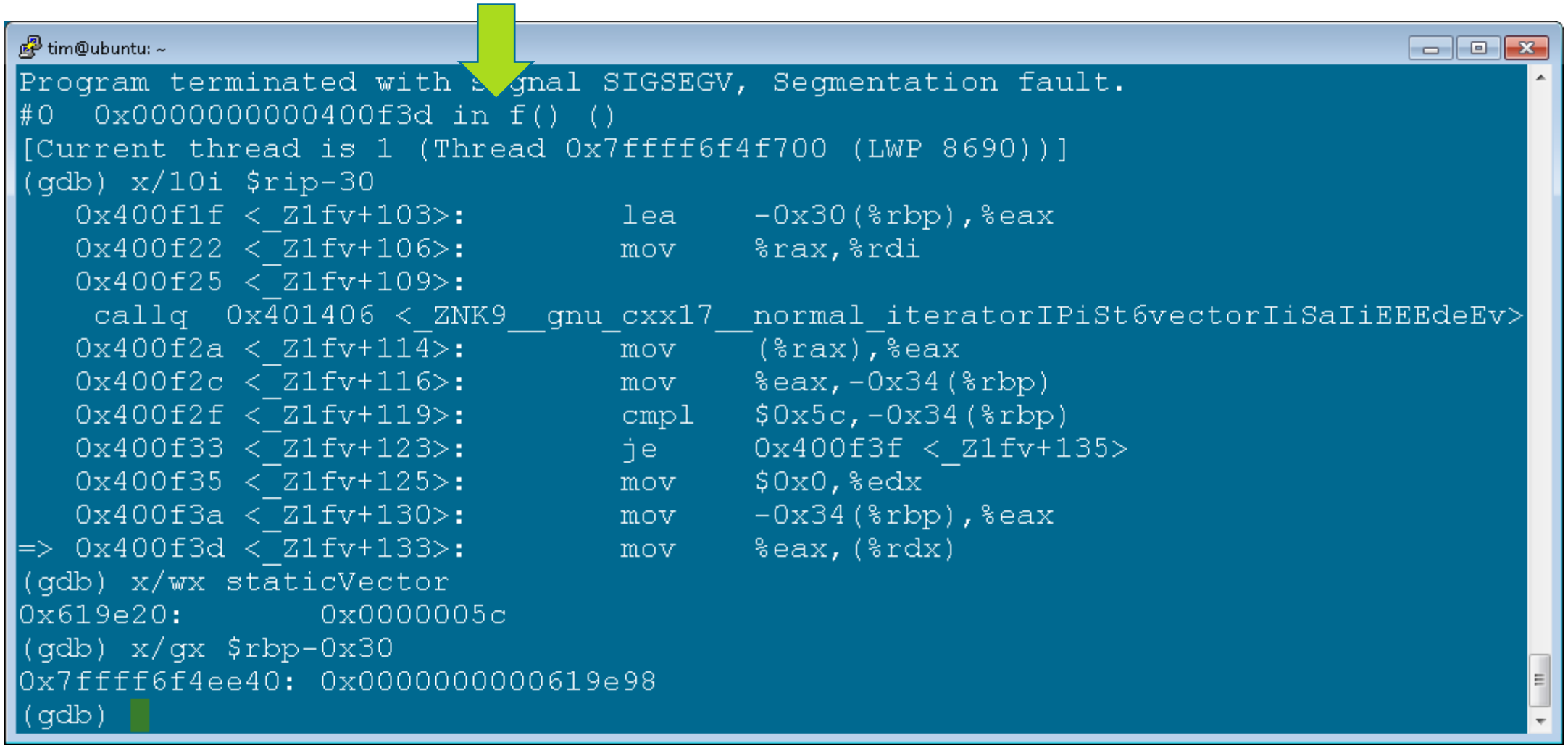

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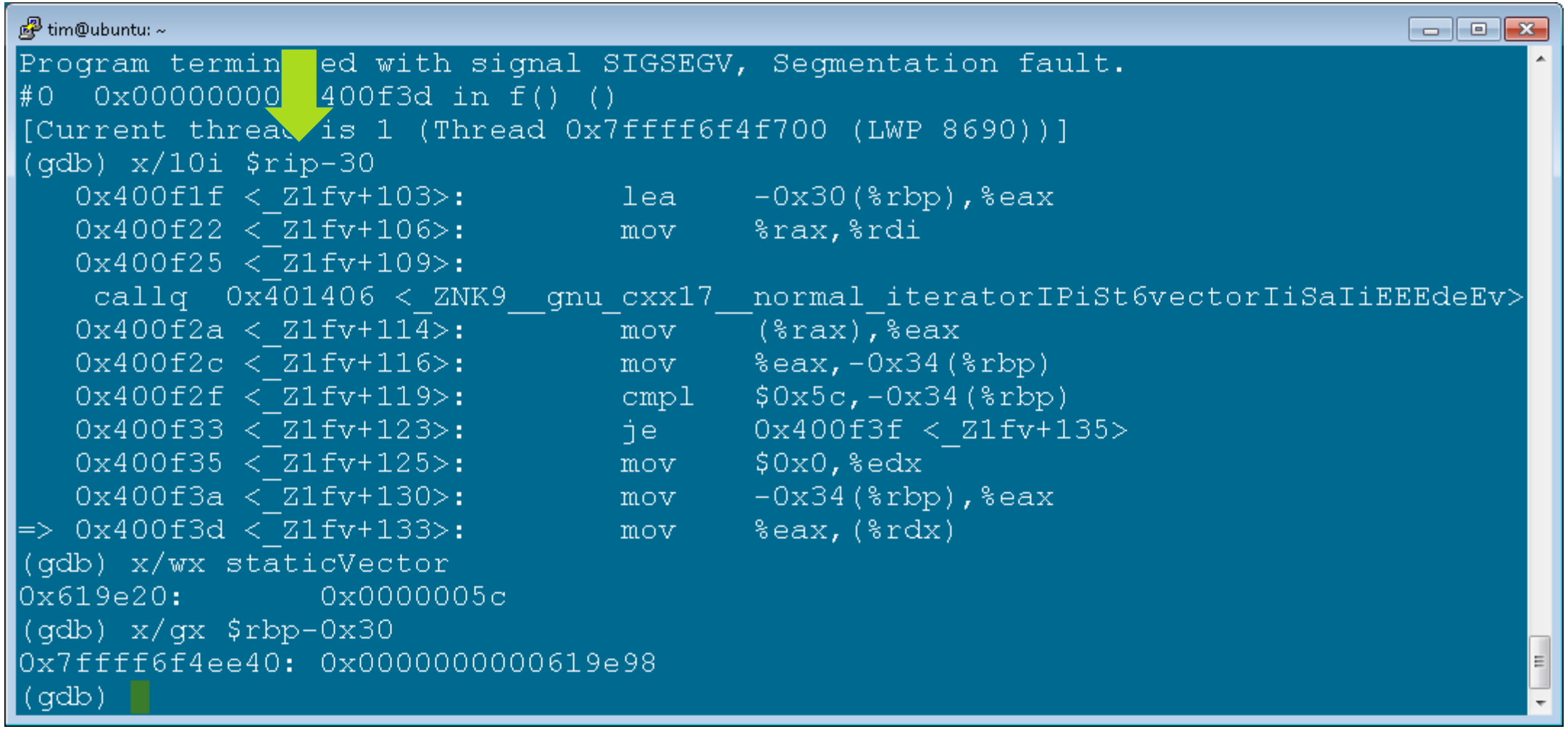

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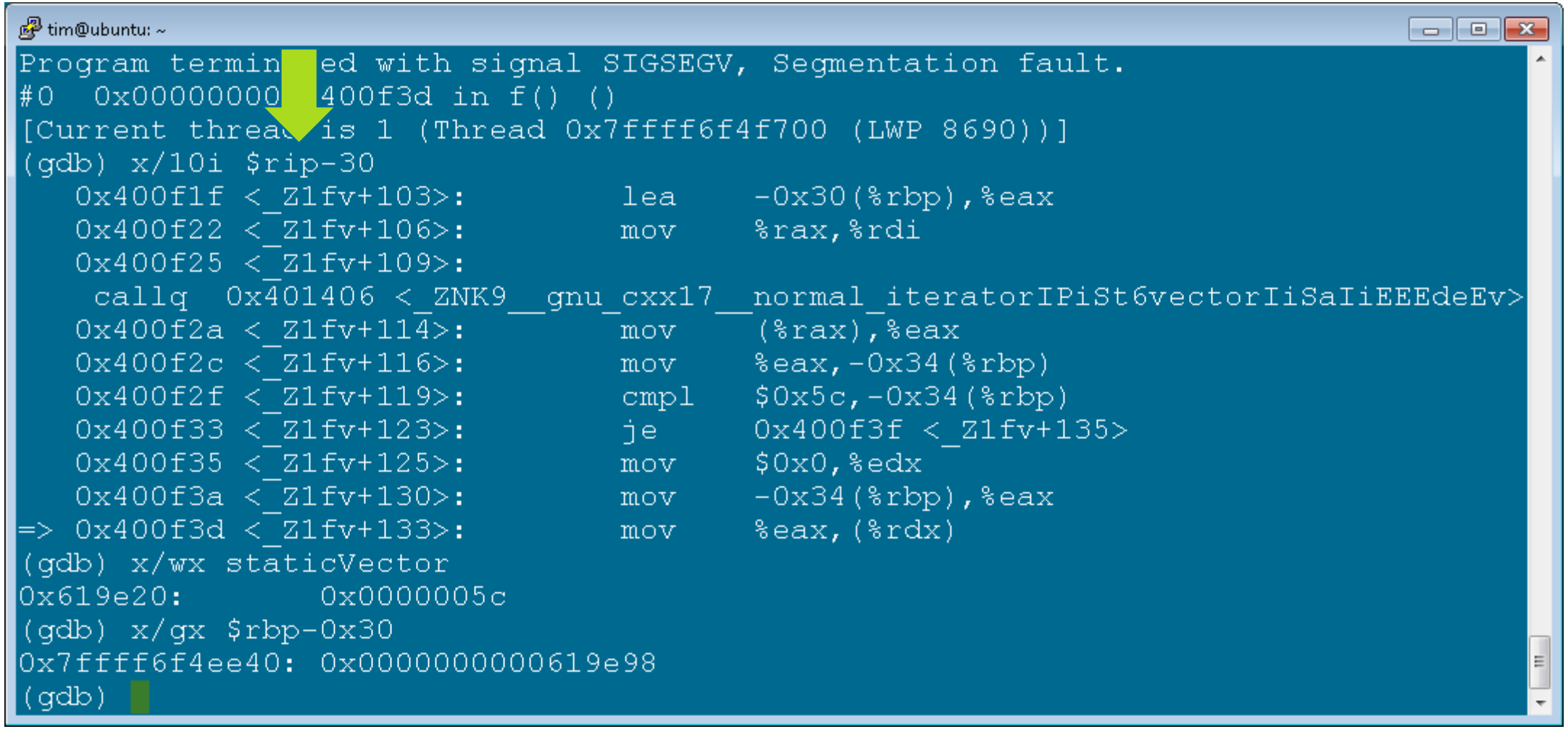

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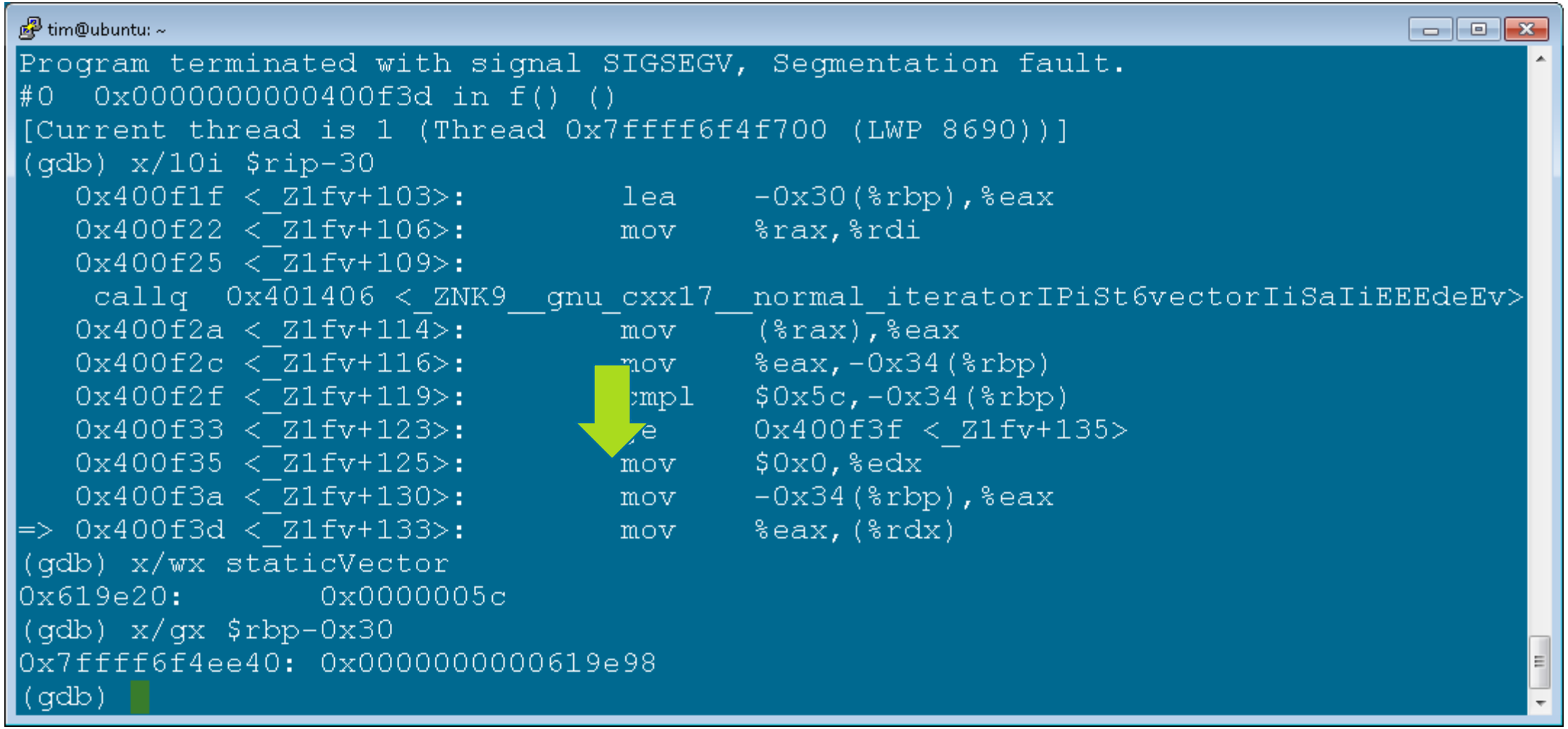

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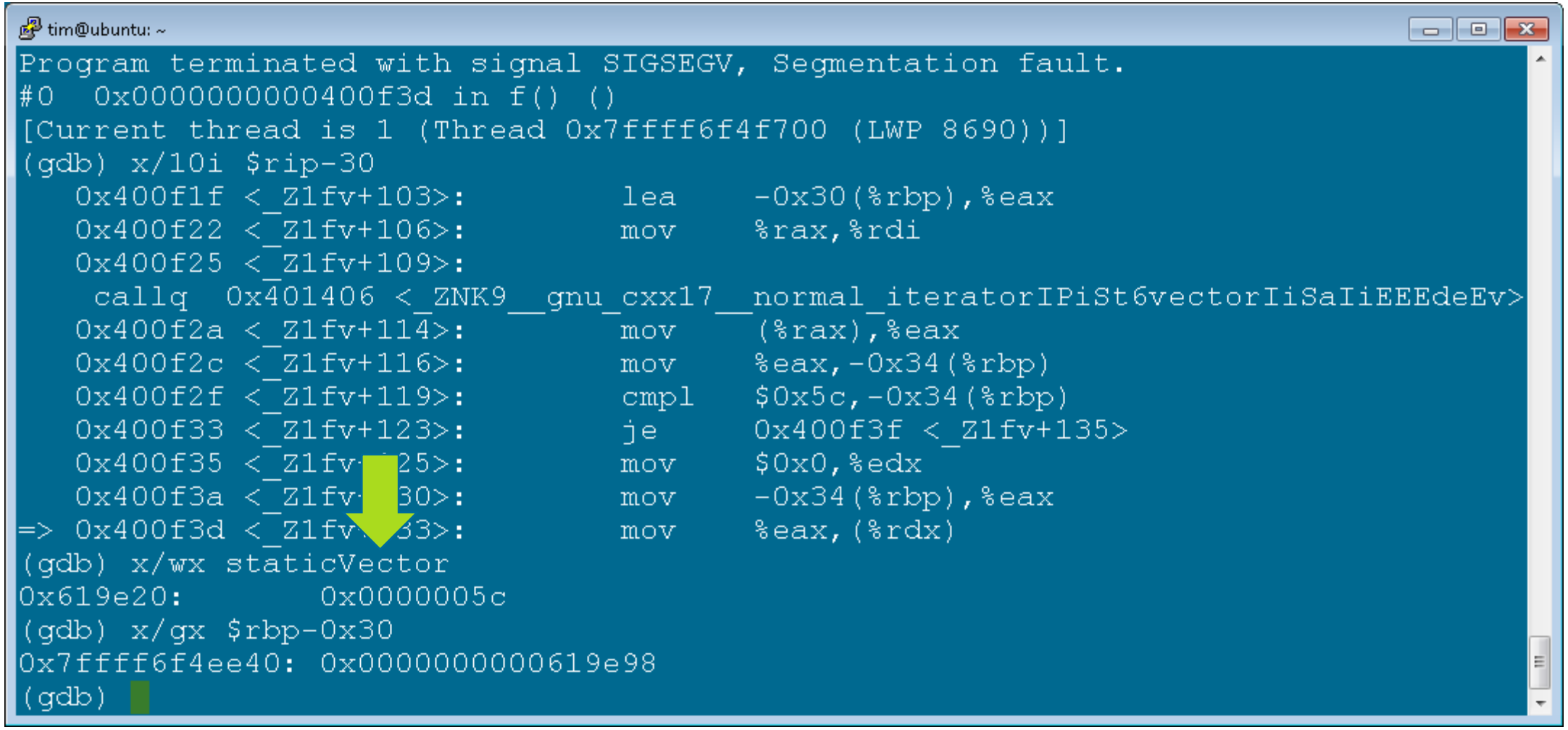

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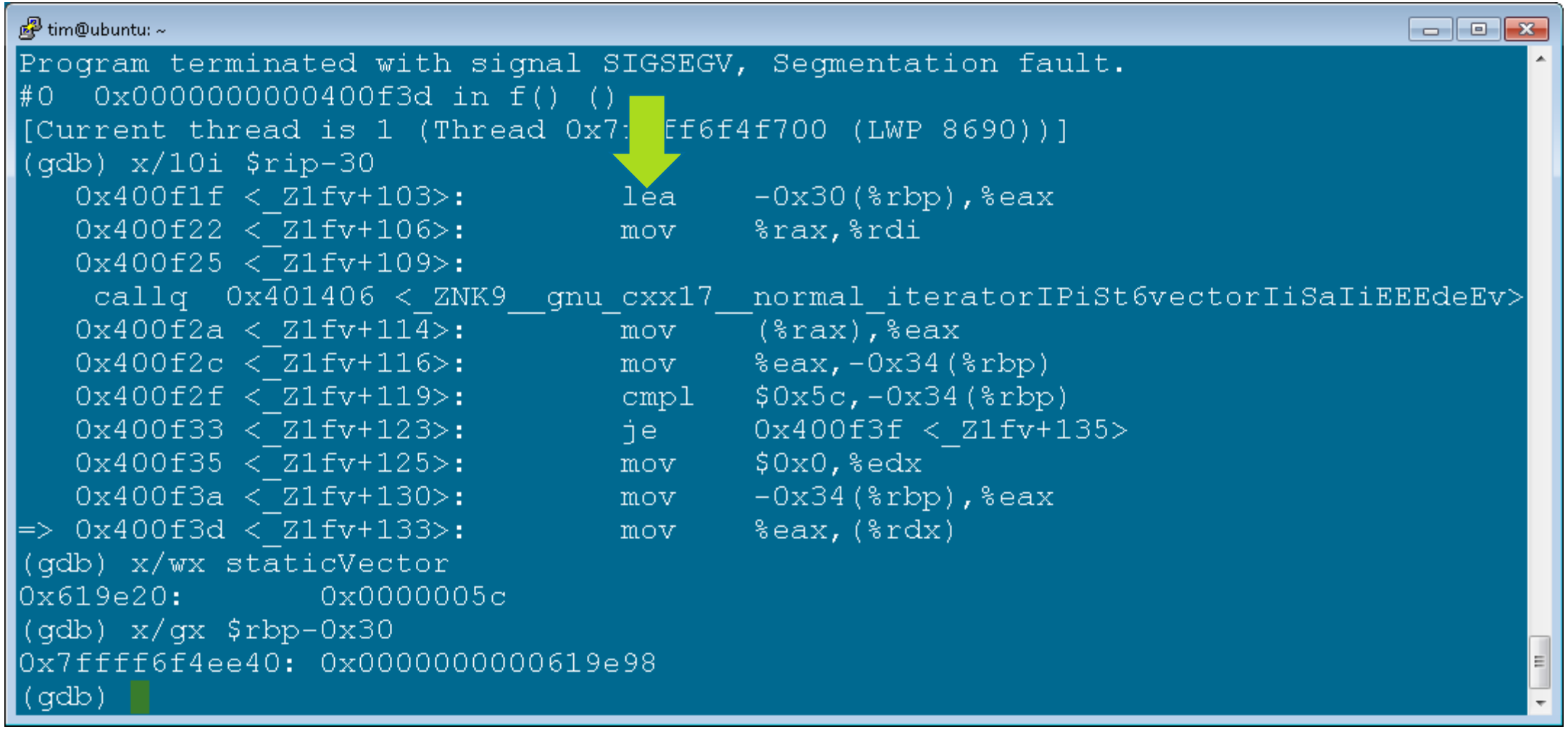
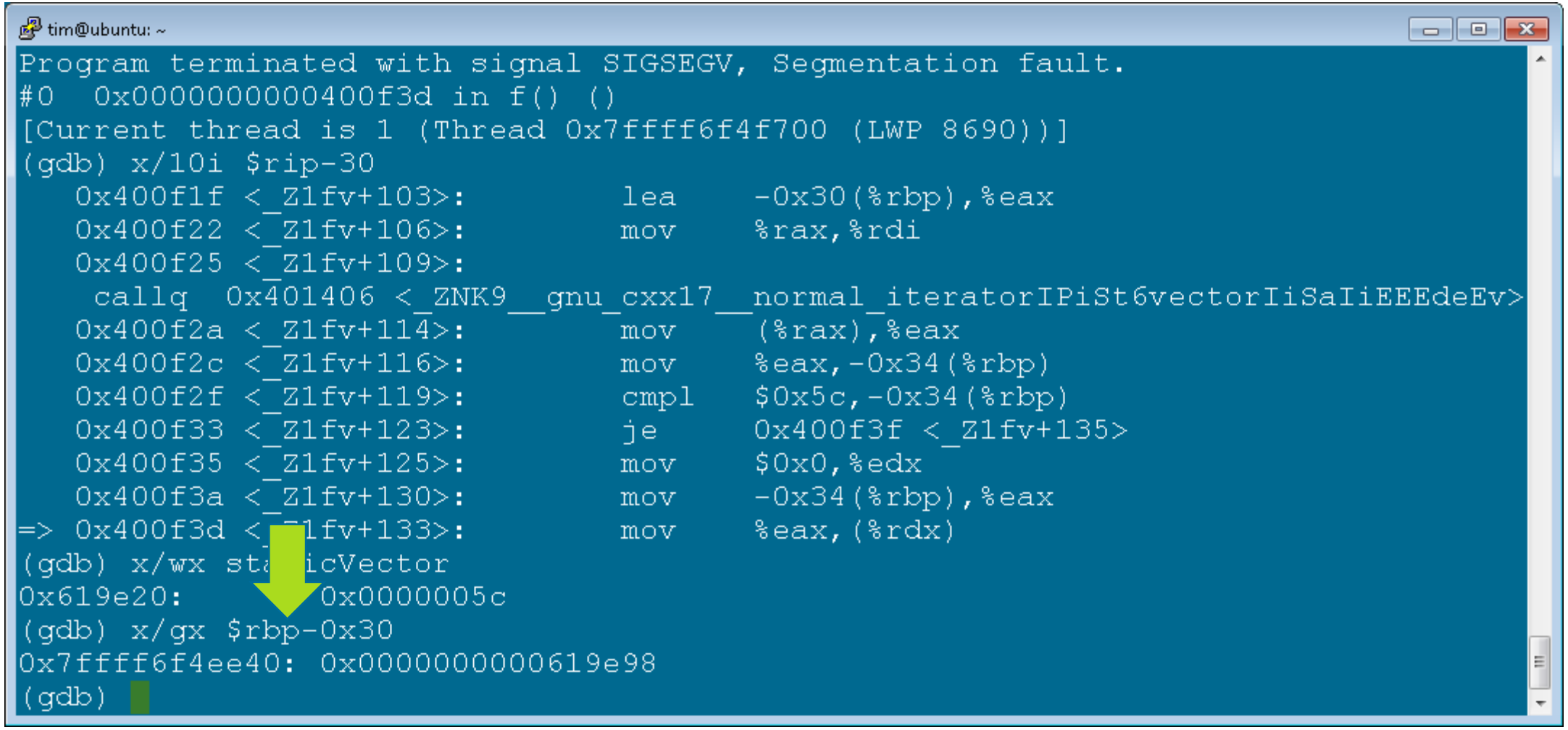
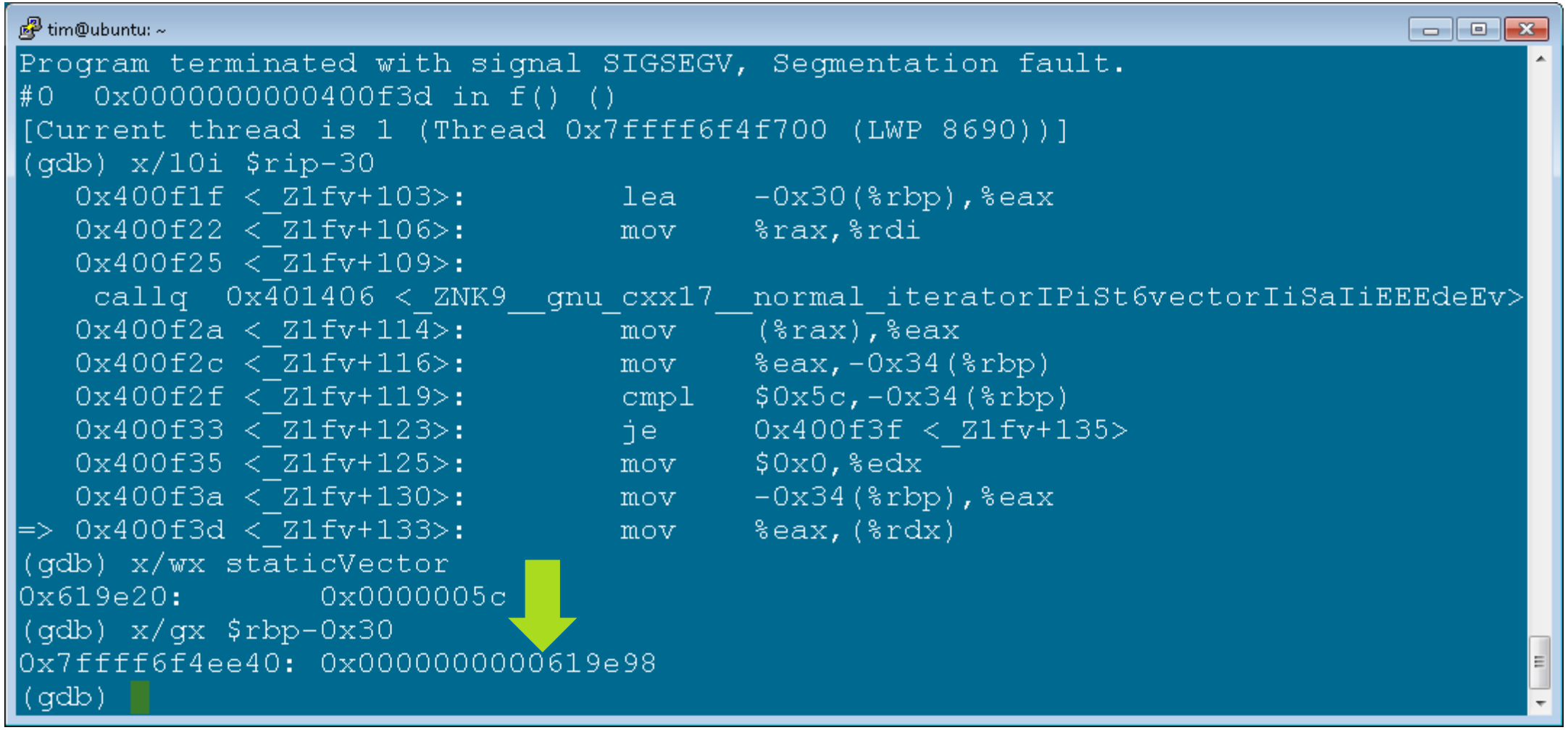


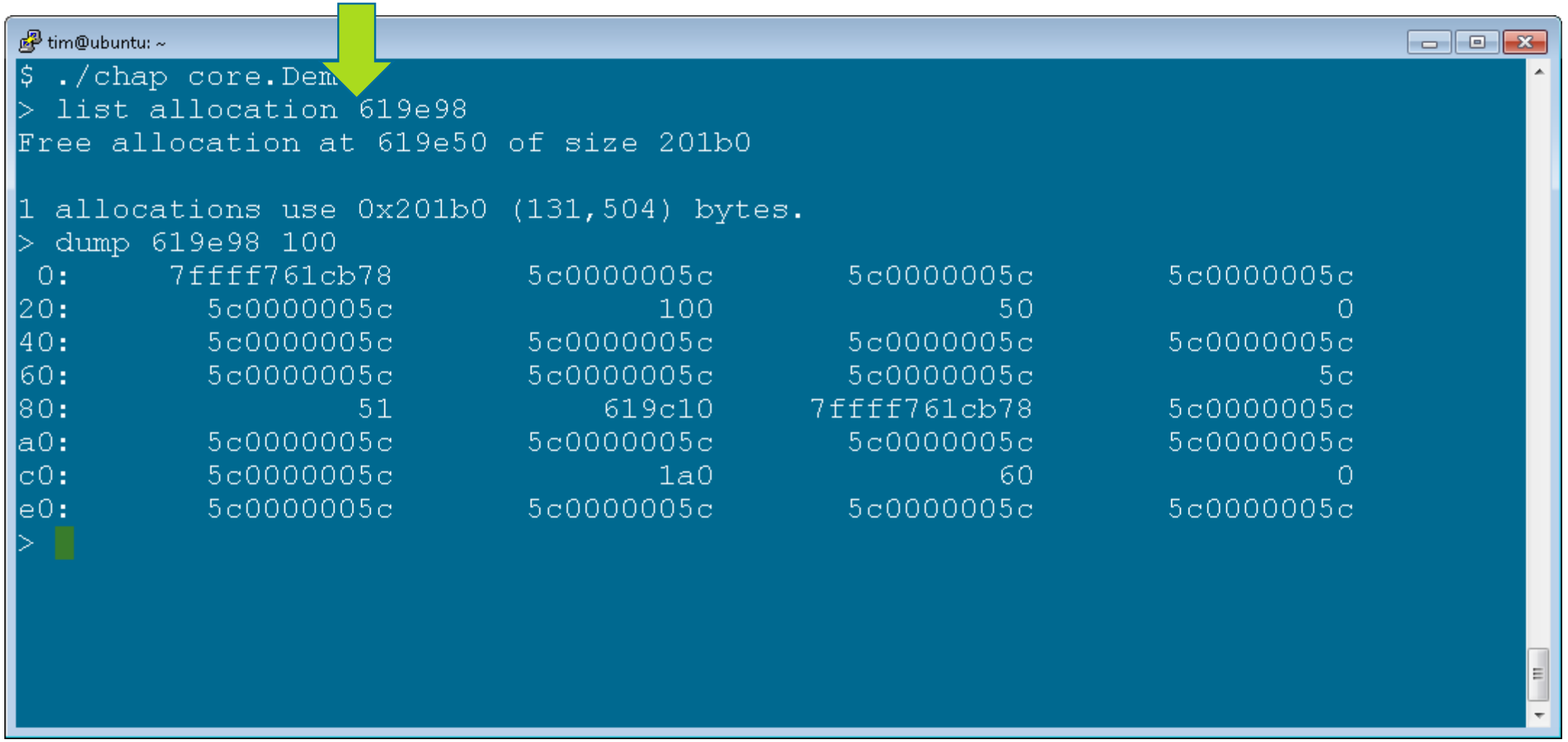
Analyze Corruption Issues – Looking at the Core With gdb



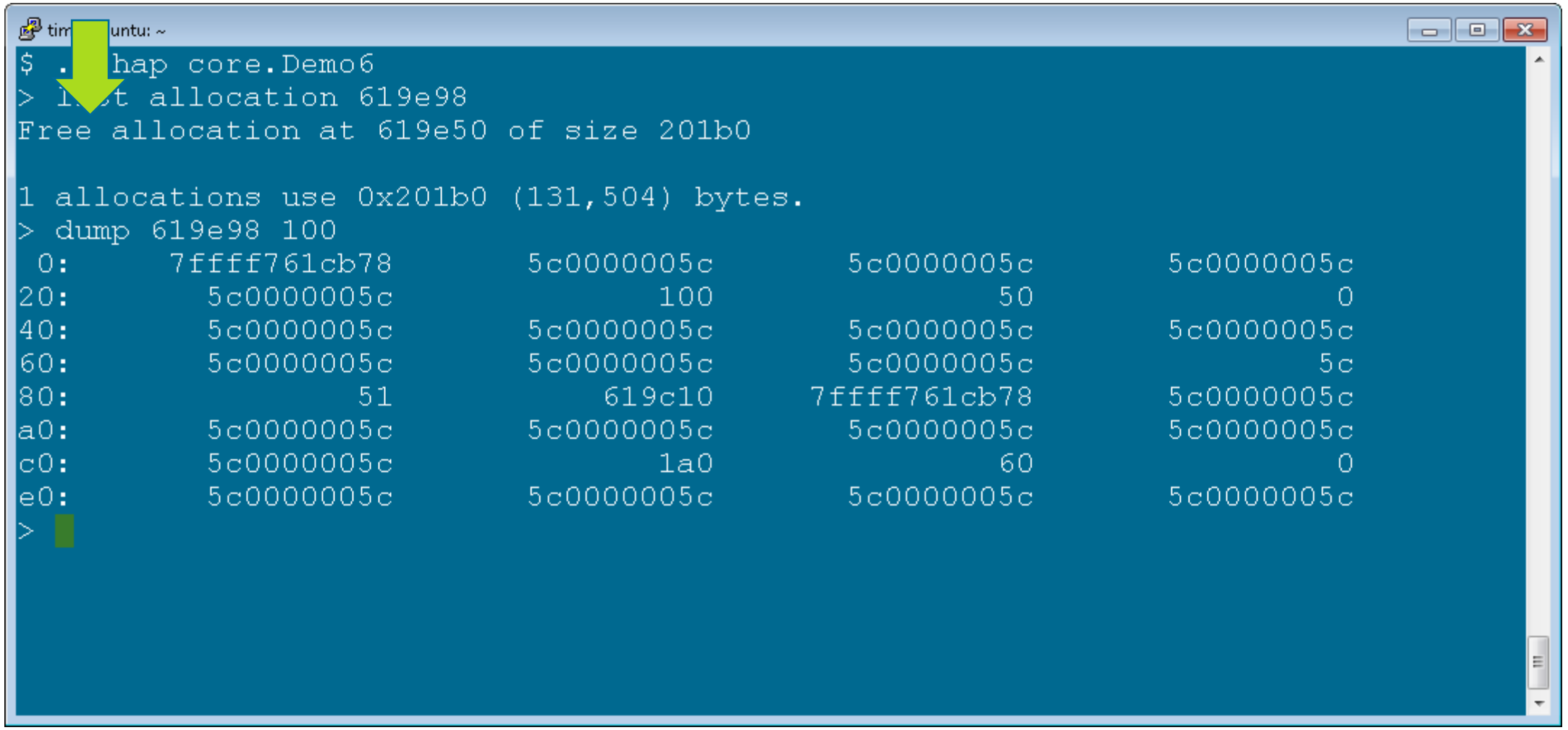
Analyze Corruption Issues – Looking at the Core With gdb



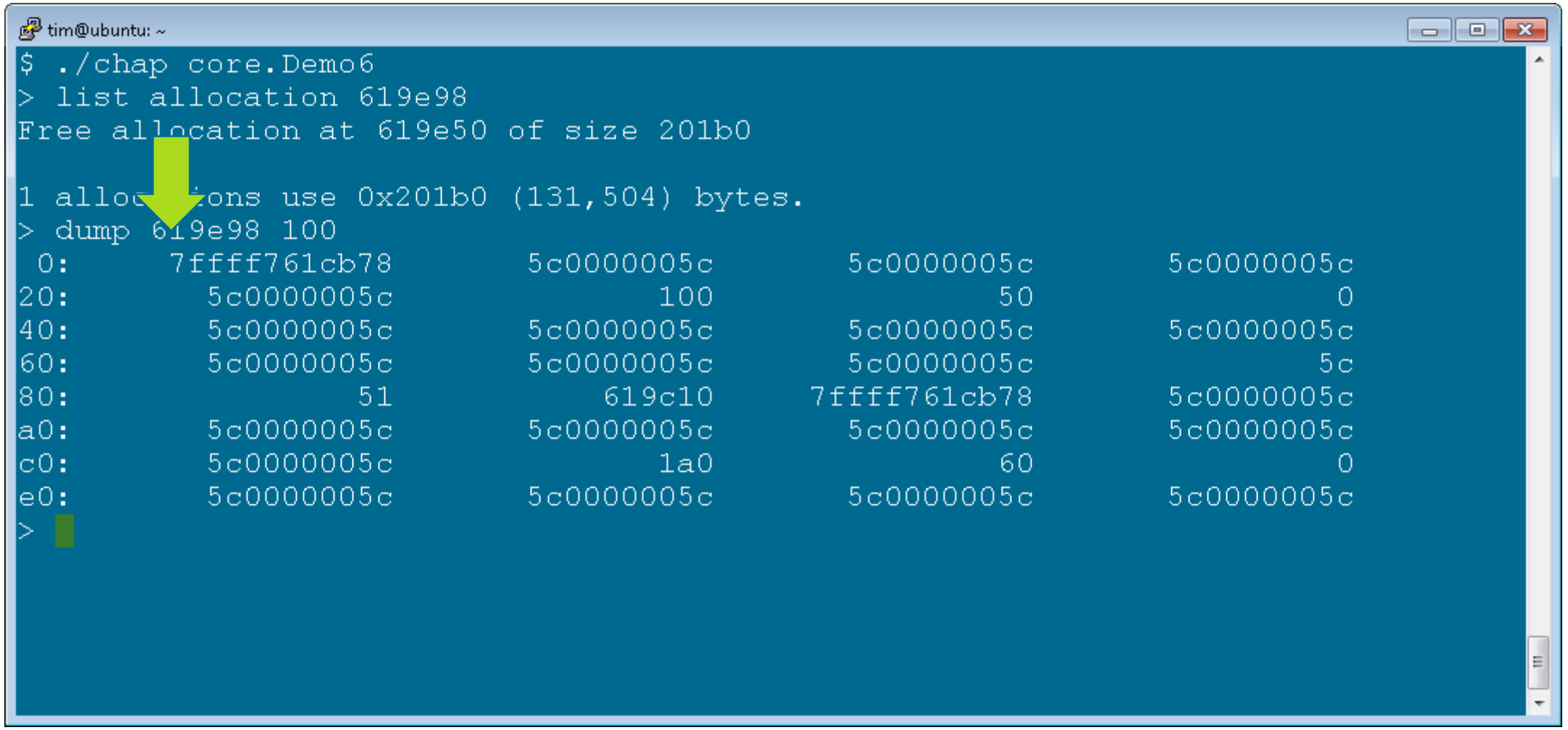
Analyze Corruption Issues – Looking at the Core With CHAP



Analyze Corruption Issues – Looking at the Core With CHAP



Analyze Corruption Issues – Looking at the Core With CHAP



Using CHAP to Examine Overhead

Understanding Overhead: A Simulation Utility Class

```
#include <list>
#include <vector>

struct ShortAndLongTerm {
   void Reset(int numSpins, std::size_t maxListSize, std::size_t vectorSize) {
      for (int spin = 0; spin < numSpins; spin++) {
         _l.clear();
         for (std::size_t  listSize = 0; listSize < maxListSize; listSize++) {
            _l.push_back(std::make_pair(listSize, (char *)(this)));
         }
      }
      _v.resize(vectorSize, ' ');
      _l.clear();
   }
   std::list<std::pair<std::size_t, char *> > _l;
   std::vector<char> _v;
};
```

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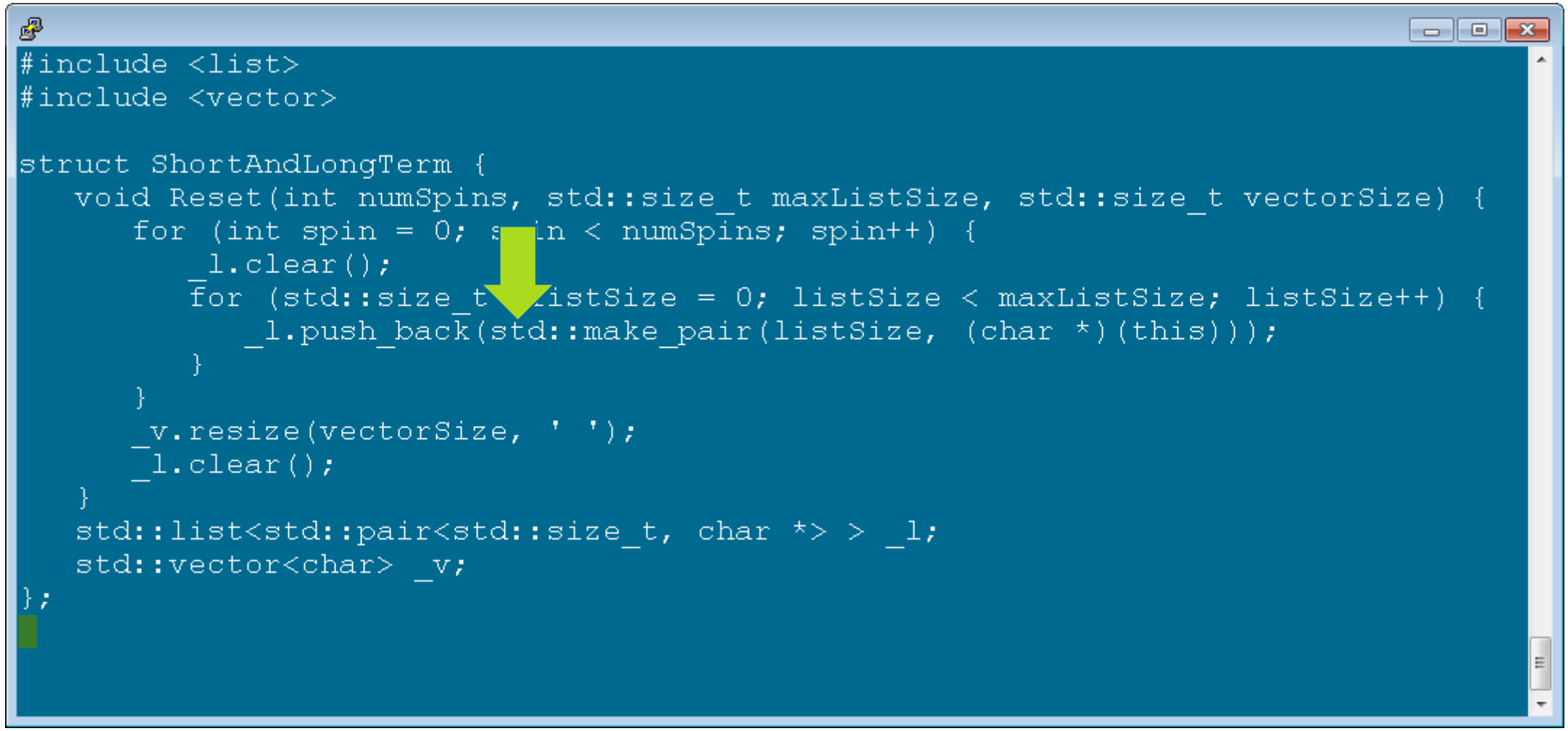
Understanding Overhead: A Simulation Utility Class



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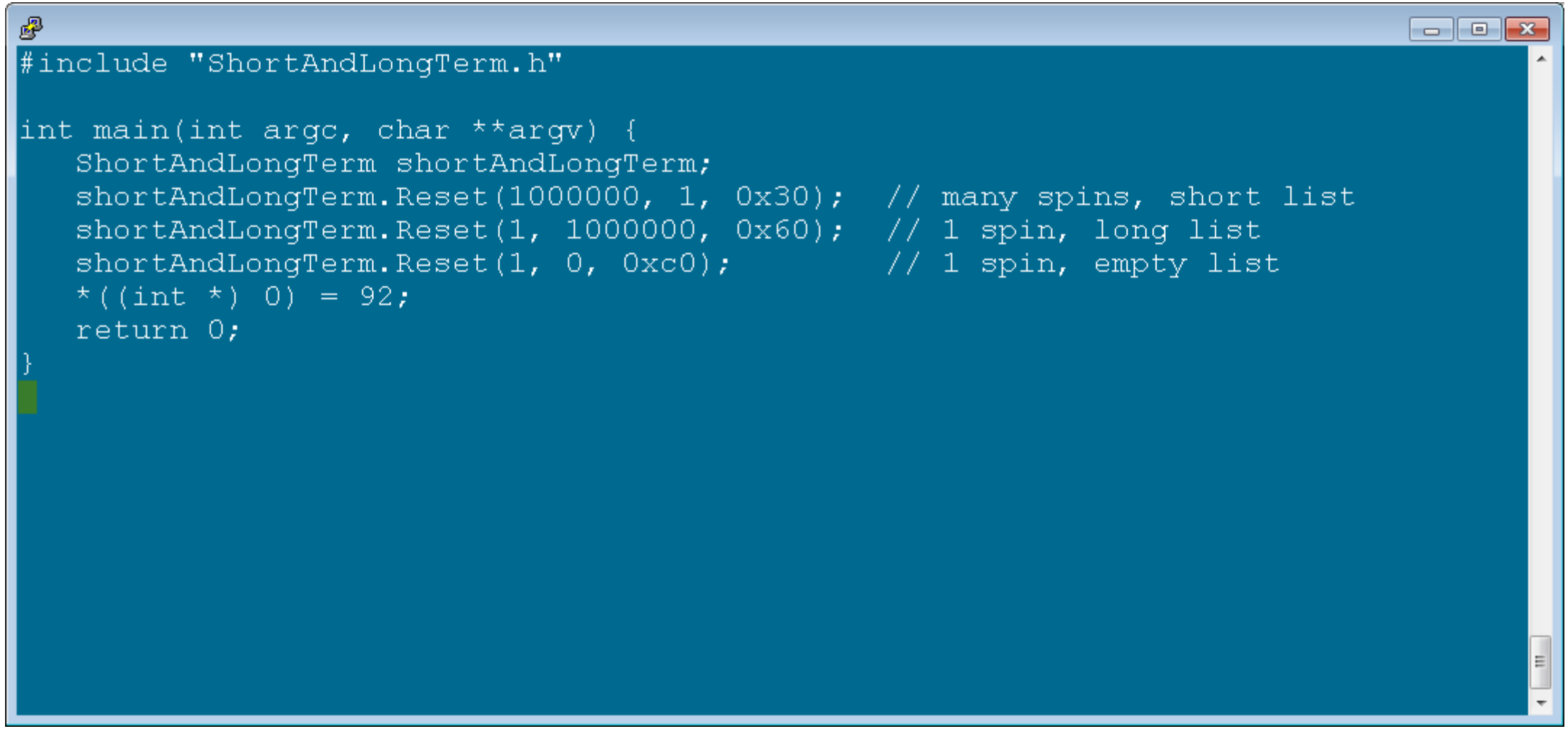
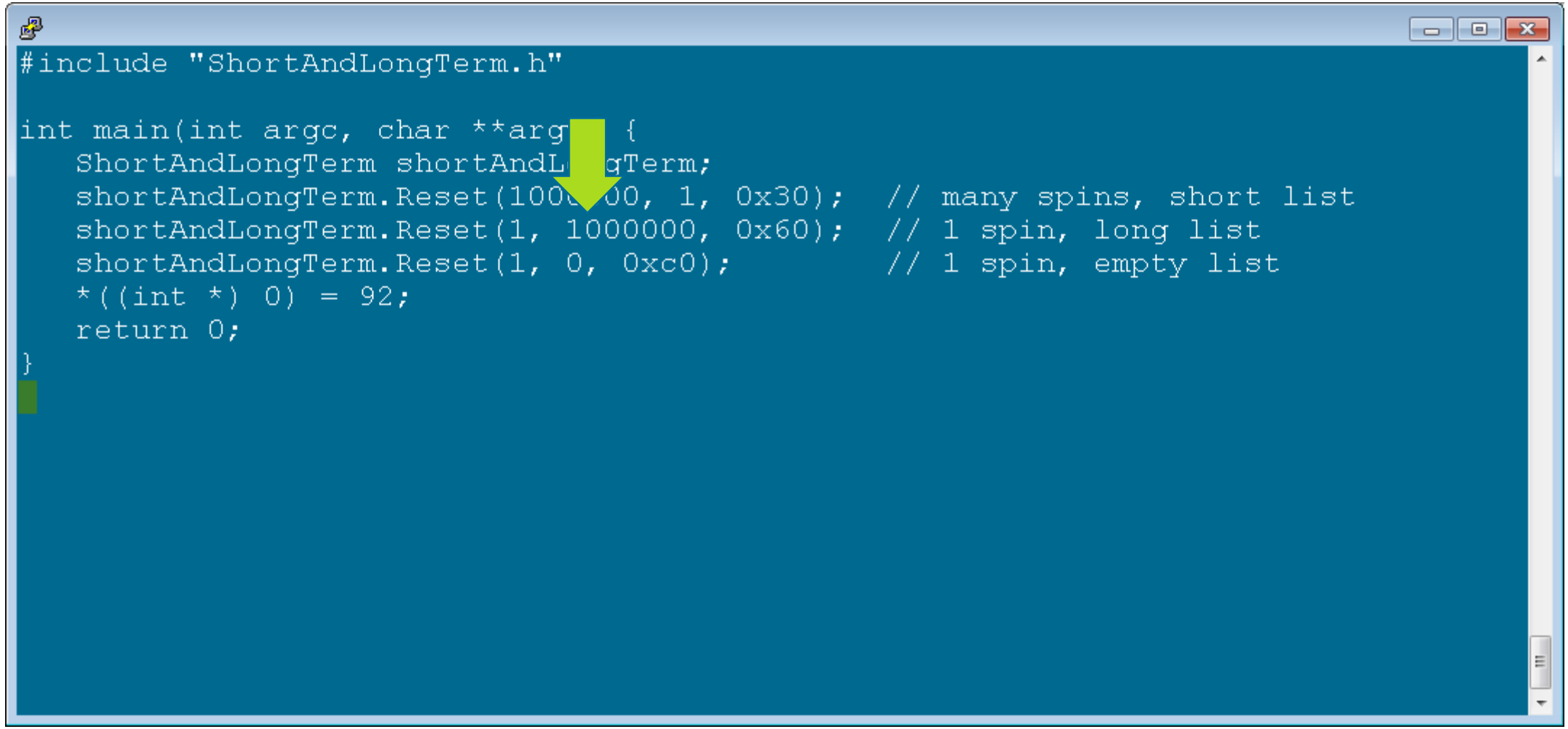
Understanding Overhead: A Simulation Class



```
#include "ShortAndLongTerm.h"

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    ShortAndLongTerm shortAndLongTerm;
    shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1000000, 1, 0x30);   // many spins, short list
    shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1, 1000000, 0x60);   // 1 spin, long list
    shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1, 0, 0xc0);         // 1 spin, empty list
    *((int *) 0) = 92;
    return 0;
}
```

Understanding Overhead: A Simulation Class



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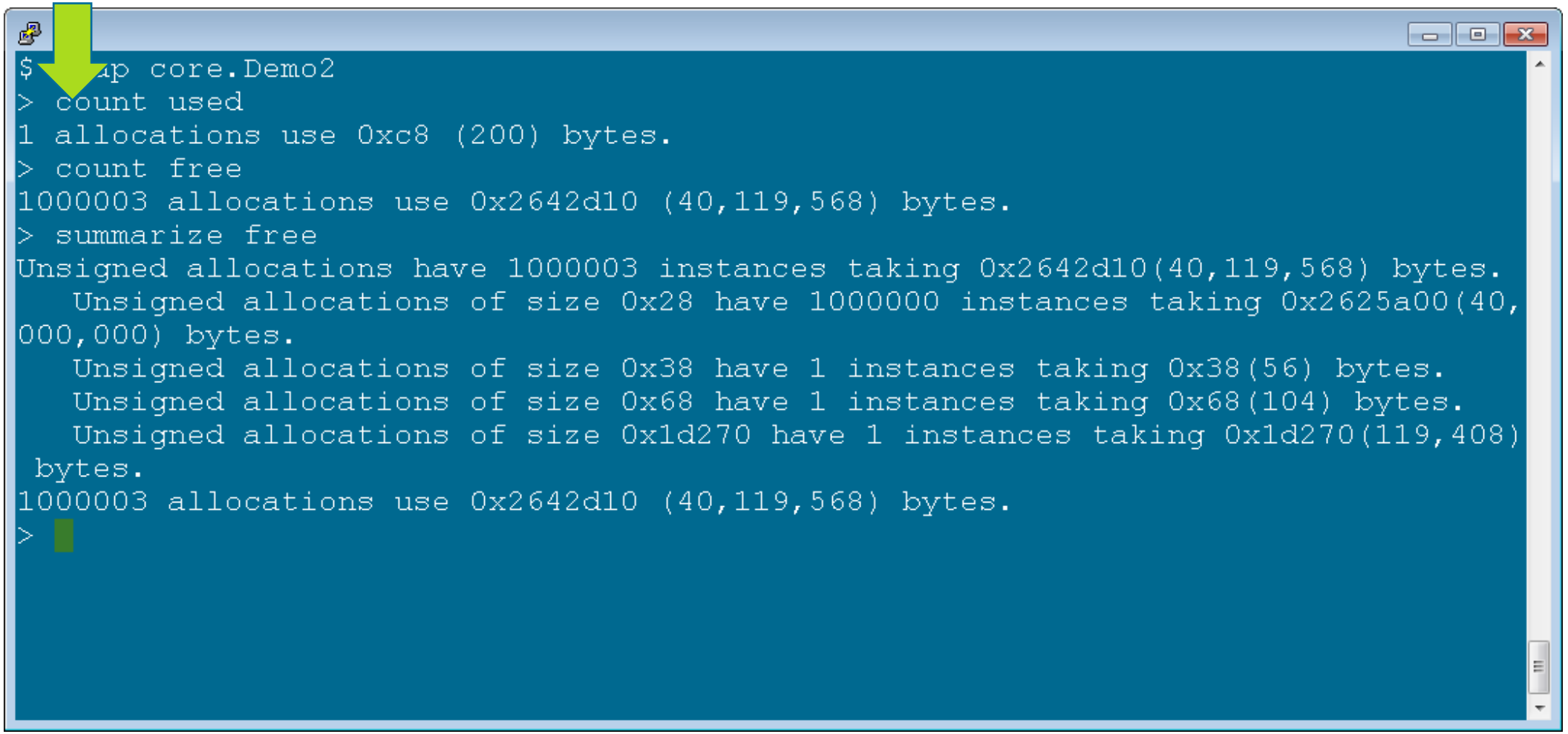
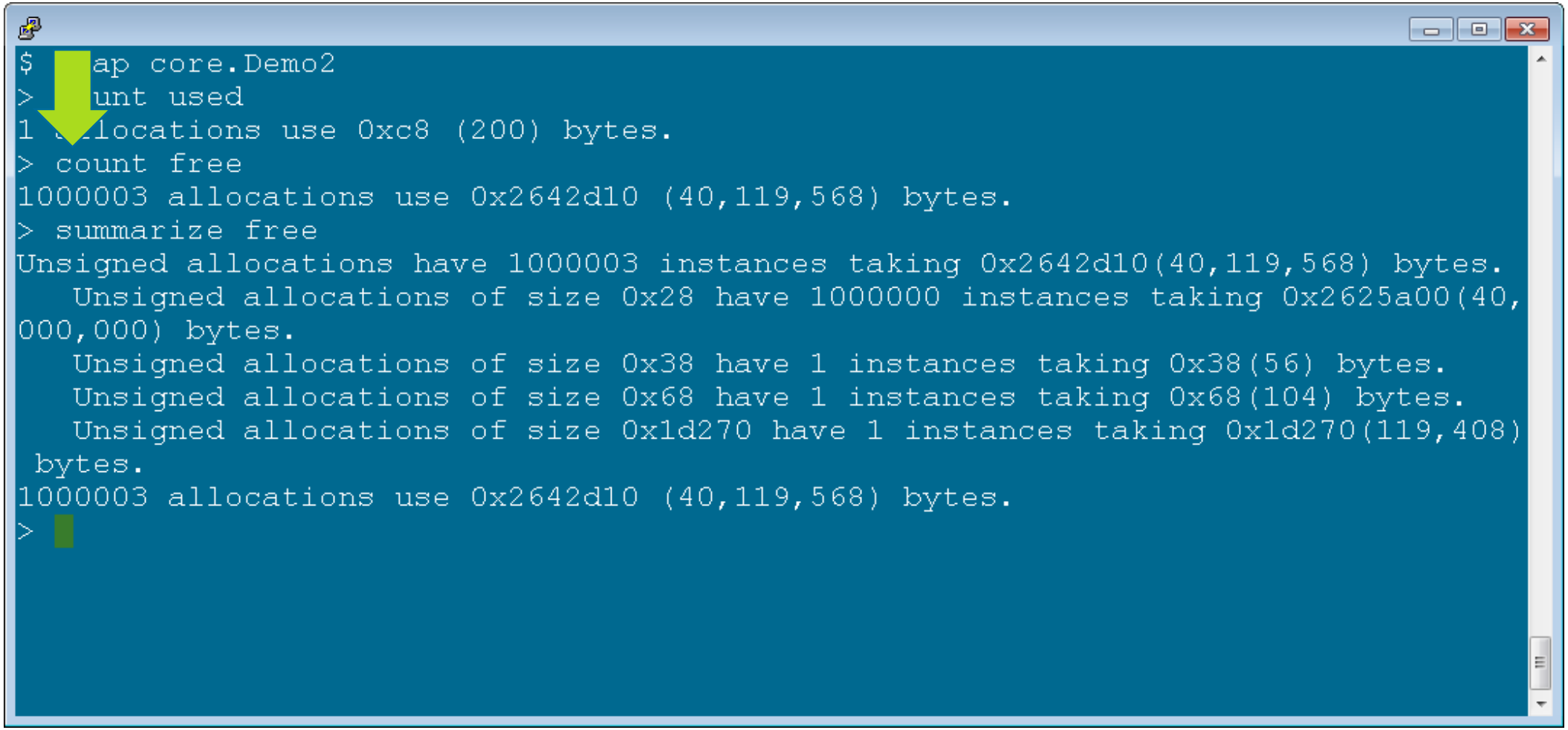
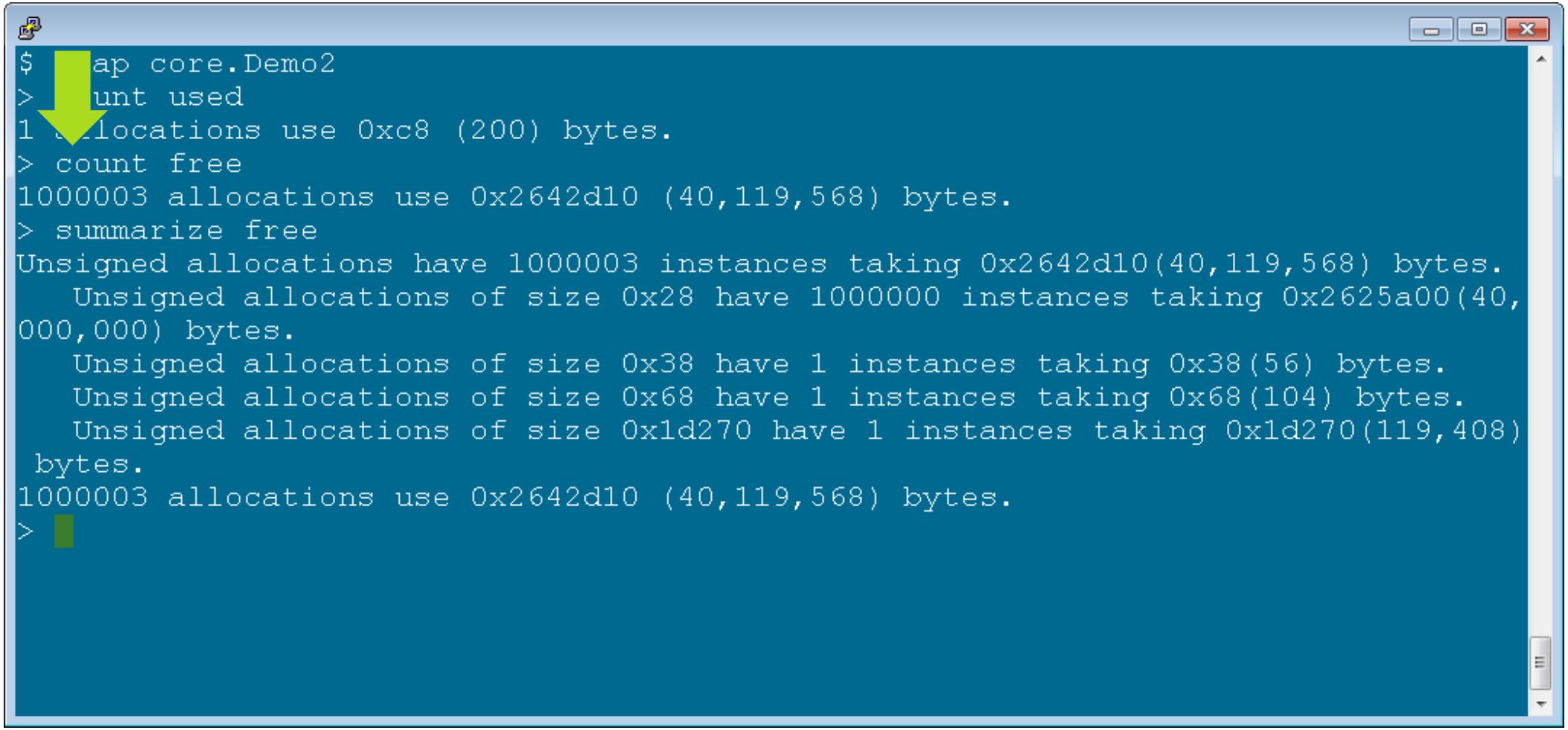
Understanding Overhead: Looking at the Core



Understanding Overhead: Looking at the Core



Understanding Overhead: Looking at the Core

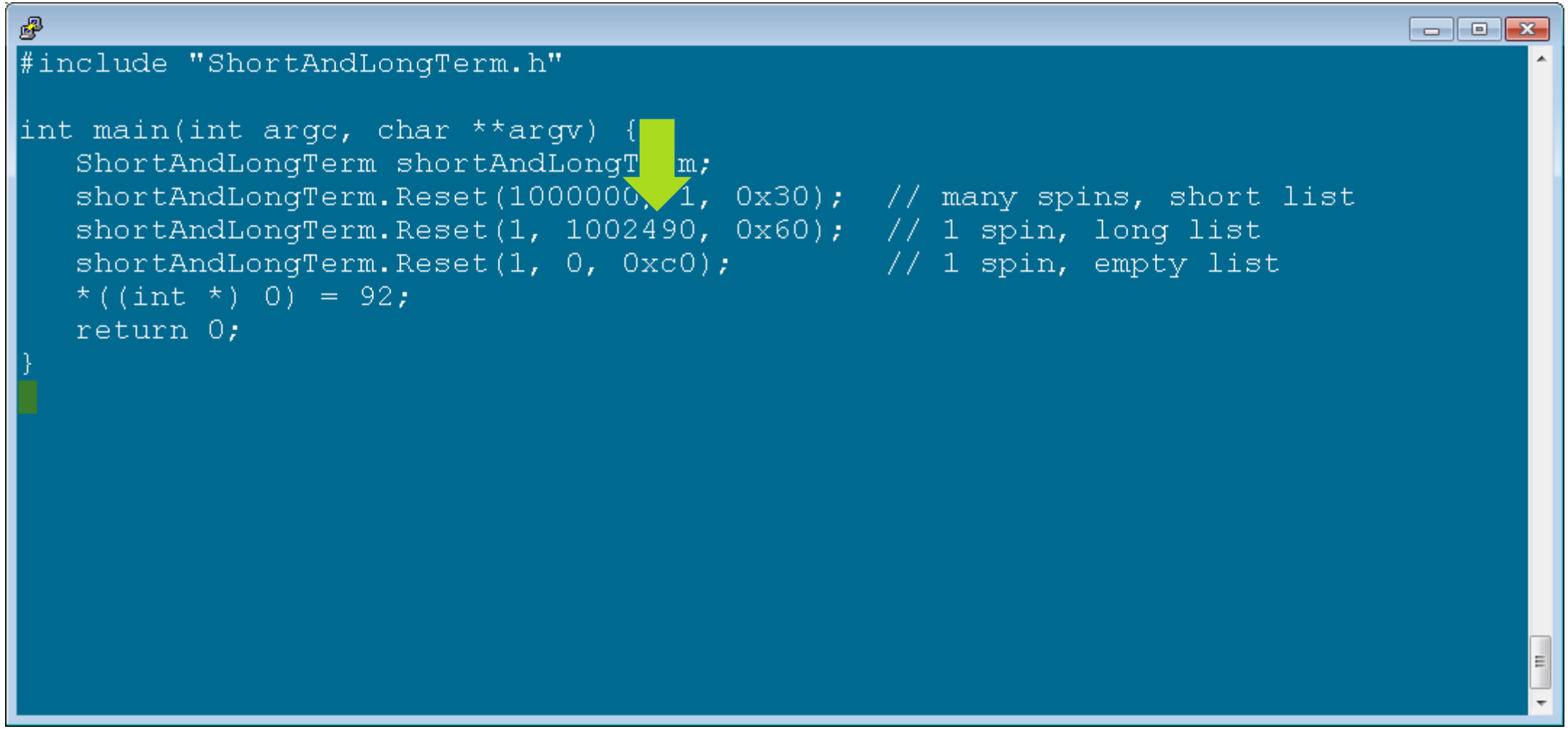


Understanding Overhead: A Similar Simulation

```
#include "ShortAndLongTerm.h"

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    ShortAndLongTerm shortAndLongTerm;
    shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1000000, 1, 0x30);   // many spins, short list
    shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1, 1002490, 0x60);   // 1 spin, long list
    shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1, 0, 0xc0);         // 1 spin, empty list
    *((int *) 0) = 92;
    return 0;
}
```

Understanding Overhead: A Similar Simulation



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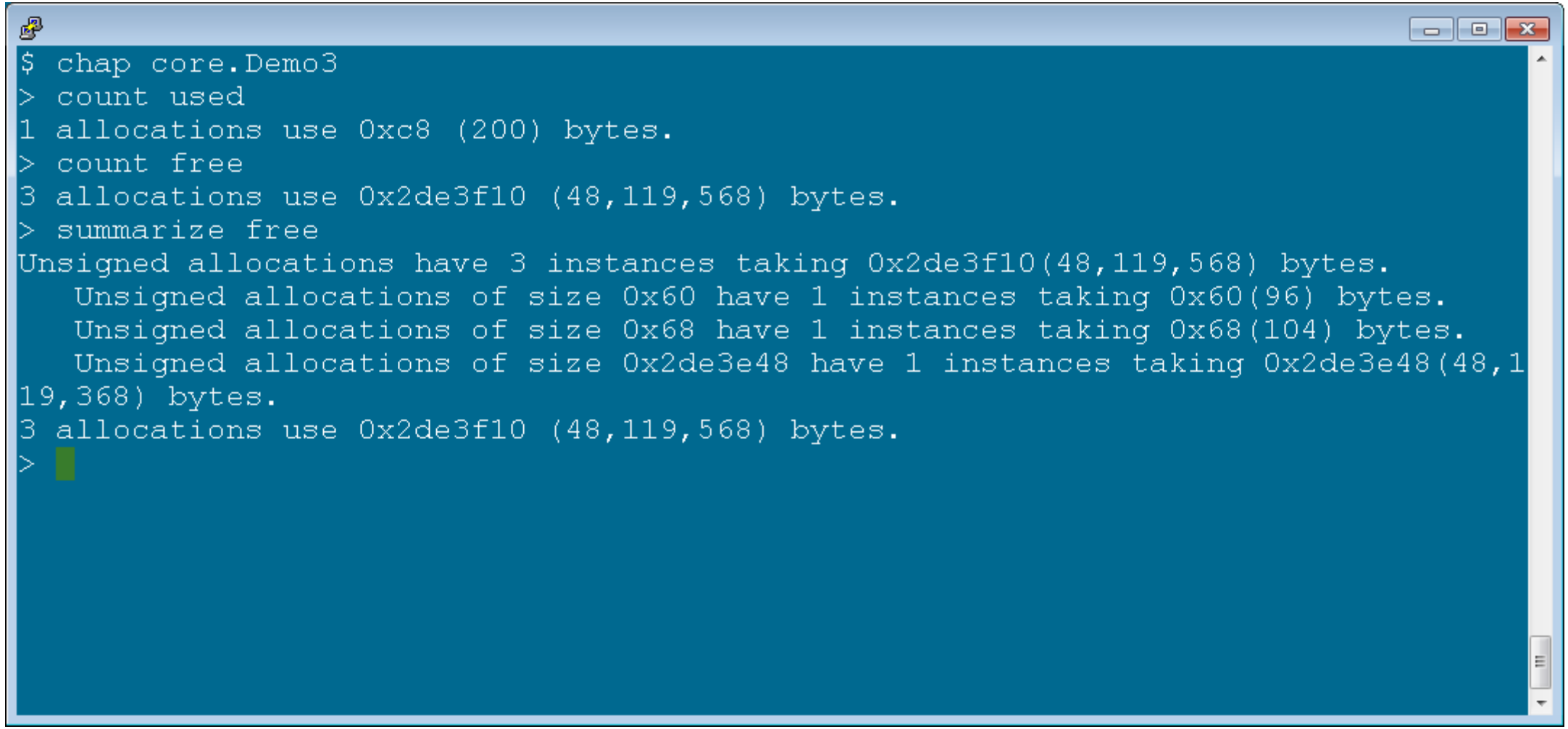

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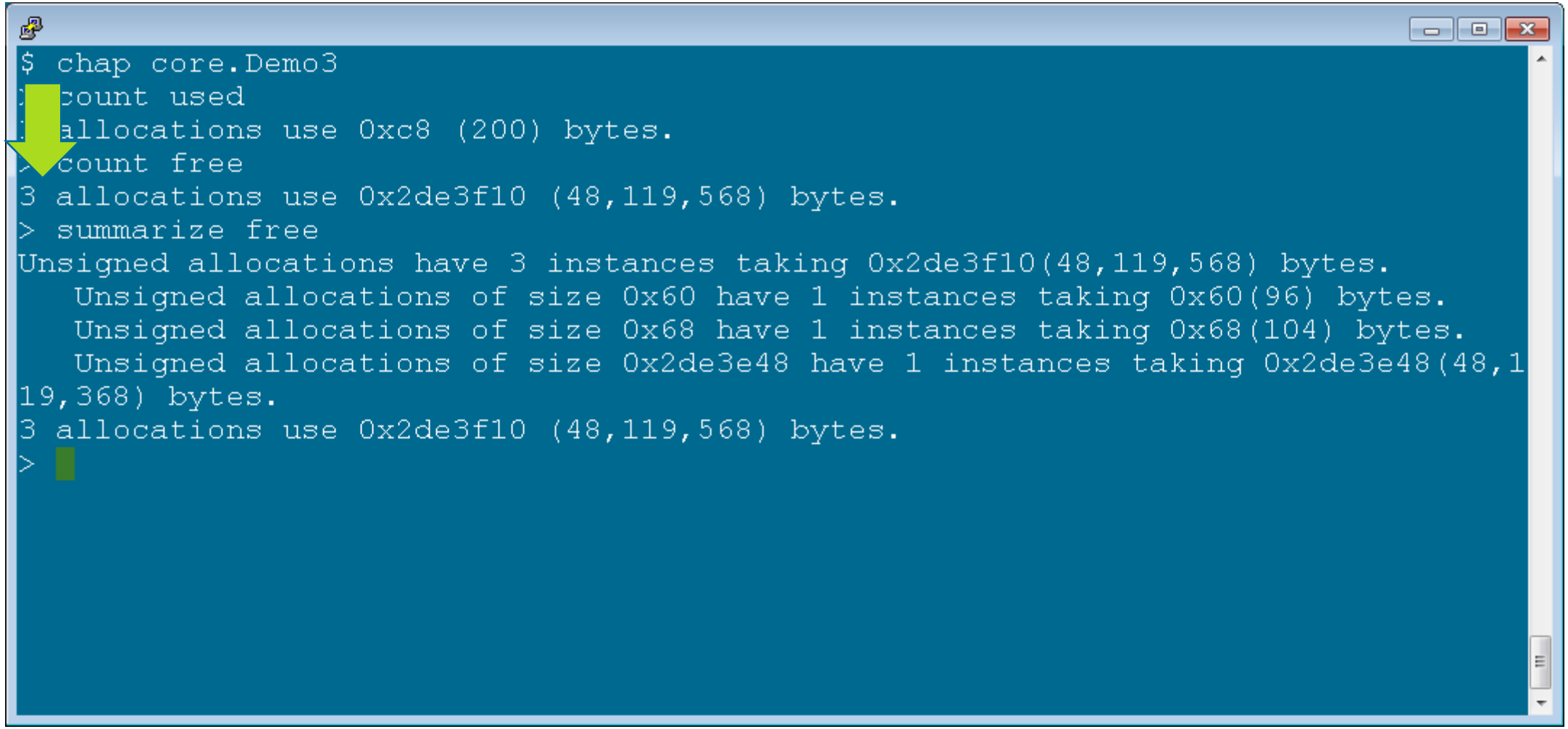

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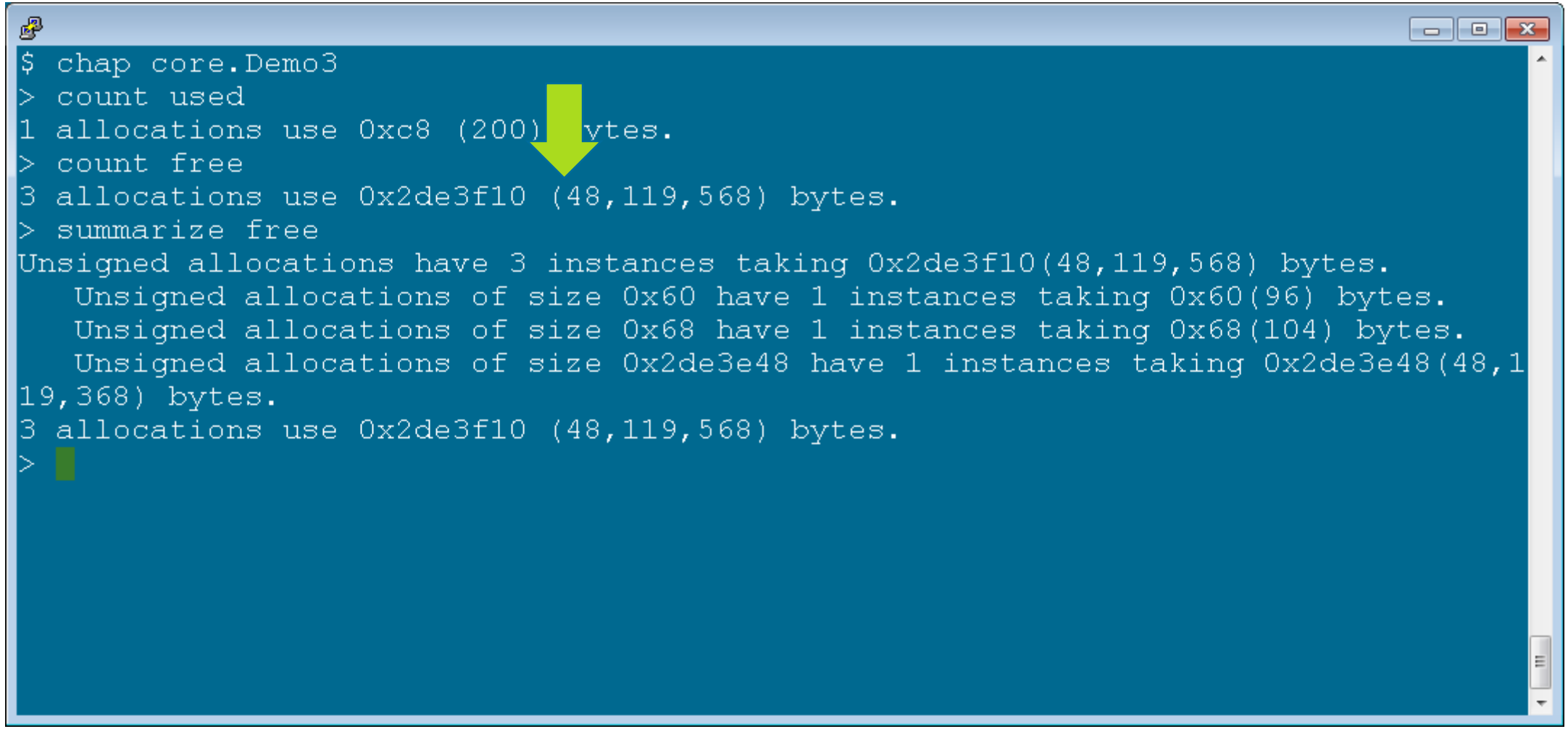
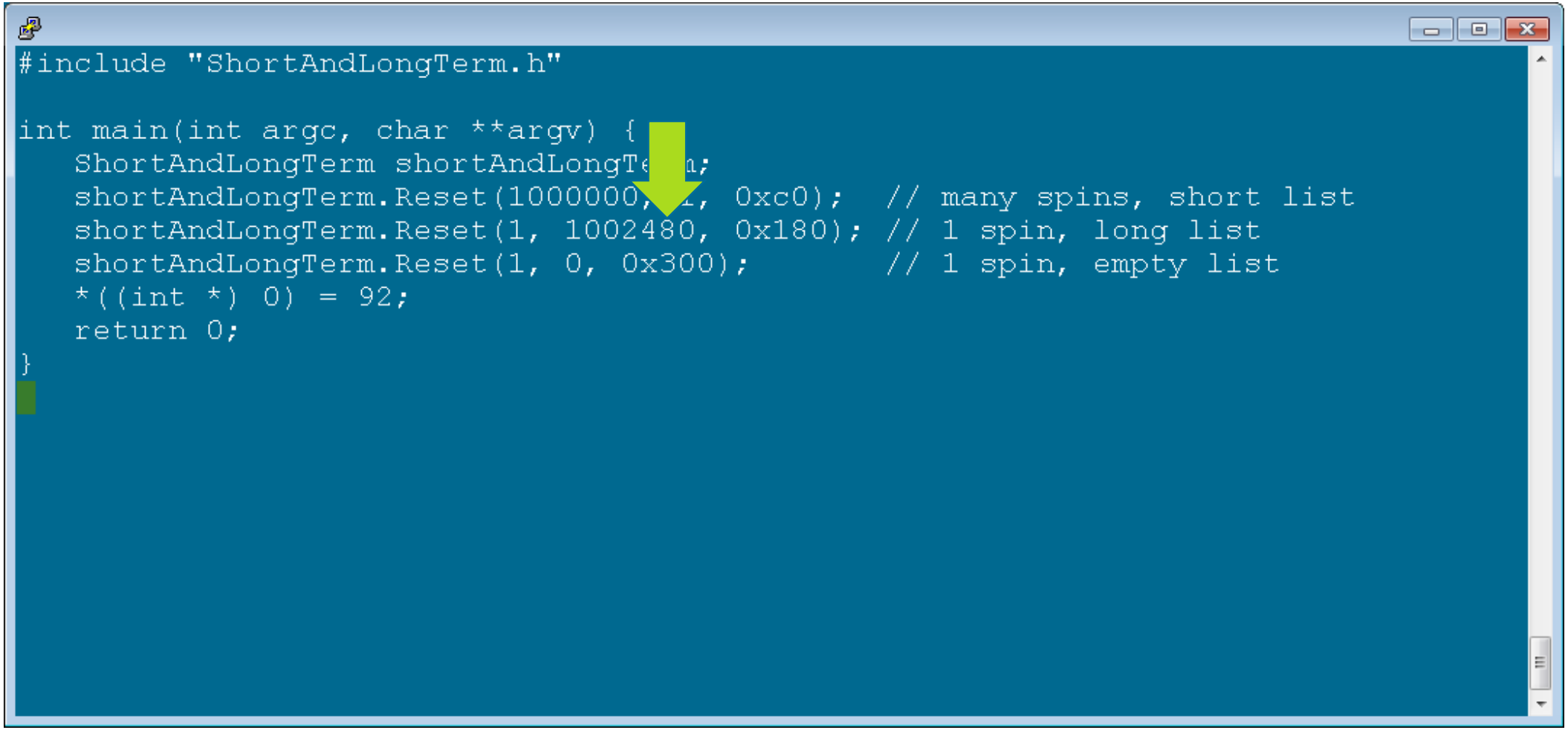


Understanding Overhead: Another Similar Simulation



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int main(int argc, char **argv) {
   ShortAndLongTerm shortAndLongTerm;
   shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1000000, 1, 0xc0);  // many spins, short list
   shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1, 1002480, 0x180); // 1 spin, long list
   shortAndLongTerm.Reset(1, 0, 0x300);       // 1 spin, empty list
   *((int *) 0) = 92;
   return 0;
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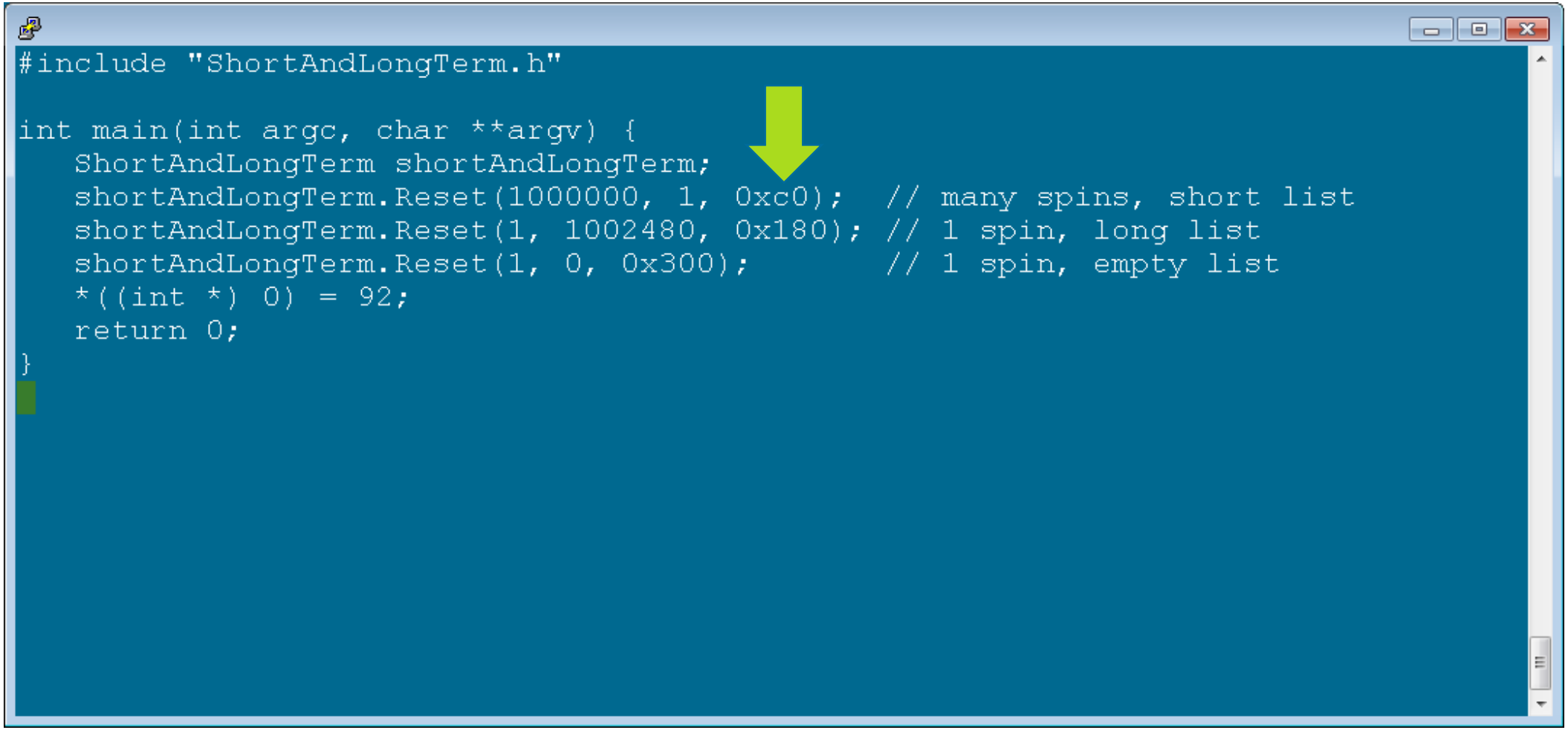
Understanding Overhead: Another Similar Simulation



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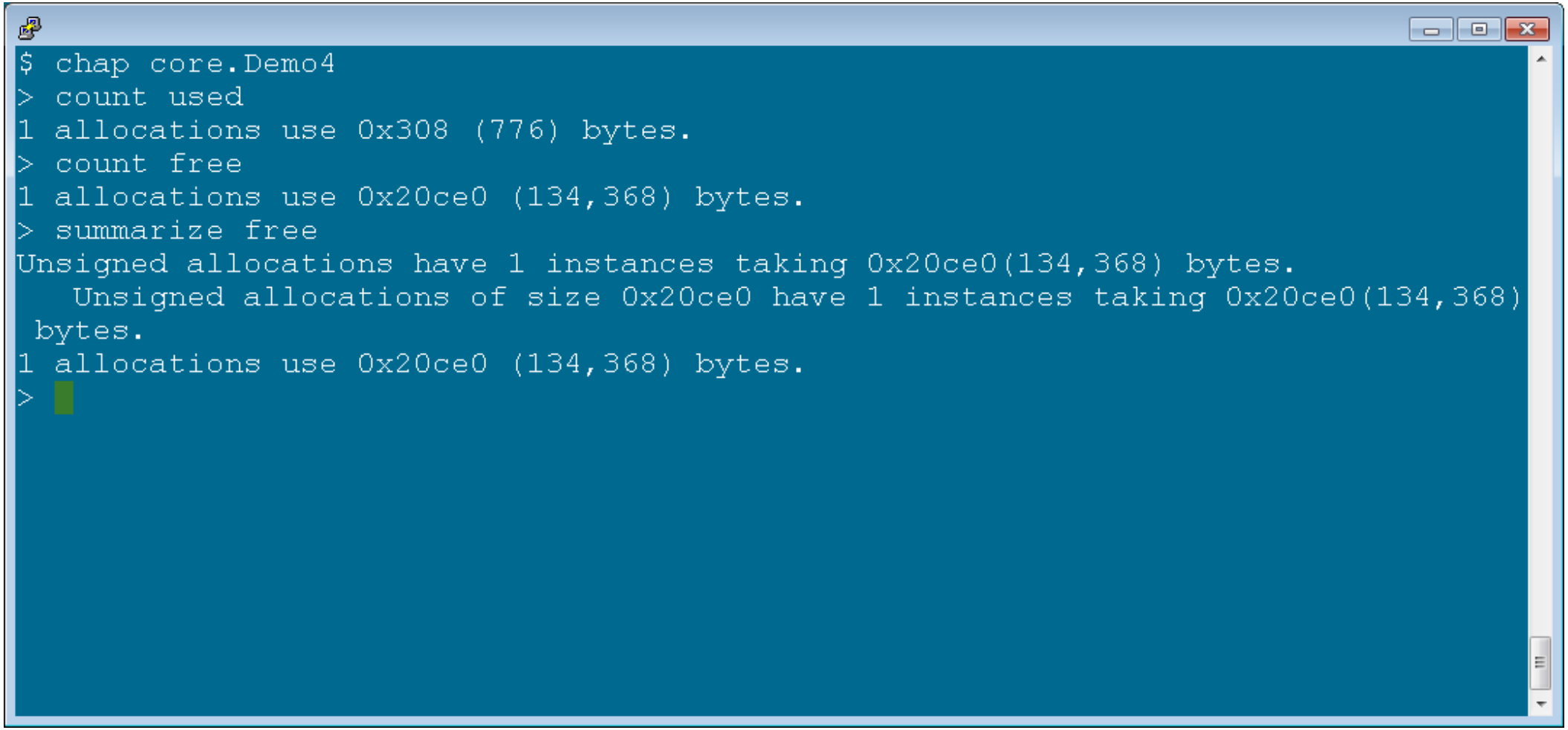
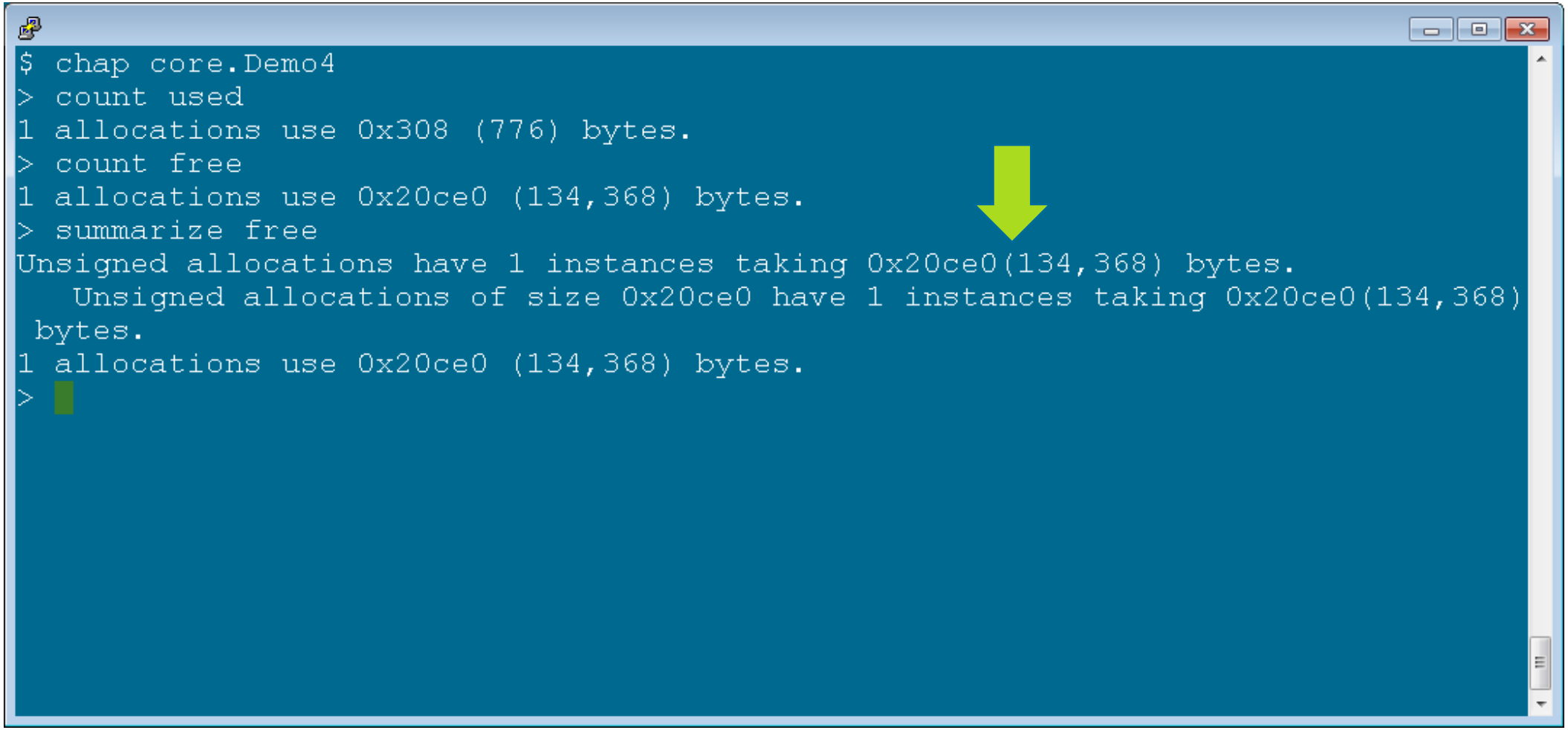


Understanding Overhead: Looking at the Core



Future Directions, Q&A

- Add DWARF awareness to improve type identification and reduce false edges
- Support other allocators
  - Allocators used in production
  - Allocators used for debugging
  - Custom allocators
- Add more corruption analysis and make it more accurate
- Improve recovery in case of corruption or incomplete process images
- Add new verbs (e.g. annotate)
- Add new objects (e.g. fast bin list, allocator-specific objects)
- Add more code to identify common types and data structures

Thank You

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CHAP

vmware