
Subject: Re: /proc pid number off-by-one? ... 2.6.18-028test003.1

Posted by [John Kelly](#) on Tue, 14 Nov 2006 17:35:23 GMT

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A race between SIGTERM and startproc is what I thought too. But then I put "sleep 1" between killproc and startproc, and the problem still happens.

The zombie pid is not the old pid that was killed; the old pid number is much lower (not just one lower); I can see that before killing it. The zombie pid is somehow related to the new instance of sendmail, though I am not sure how.

As another data point:

This morning I was using a debian etch VE, running aptitude interactively to install a package. But after downloading, it stalled, and went no further. Then I used another session to look with "ps ax" and I saw another zombie:

PID	TTY	STAT	TIME	COMMAND
1	?	Ss	0:00	init [2]
9359	?	Ss	0:00	/sbin/syslogd
9365	?	Ss	0:00	/sbin/klogd -x
9377	?	Ssl	0:00	/usr/sbin/named -u bind
9401	?	Ss	0:00	/usr/sbin/sshd
9405	?	Ss	0:00	/usr/sbin/vsftpd
9411	?	Ss	0:00	/usr/sbin/xinetd -pidfile /var/run/xinetd.pid -stayal
9432	?	Ss	0:00	/usr/sbin/cron
19964	?	Ss	0:00	sshd: root@pts/0
19967	pts/0	Ss	0:00	-bash
21510	?	Ss	0:00	sshd: root@pts/2
21513	pts/2	Ss	0:00	-bash
31876	pts/2	Zl+	0:08	[aptitude] <defunct>
31964	pts/0	R+	0:00	ps ax

This never happened to me before, with debian aptitude. Maybe there is some 2.6.18 kernel regression related to PIDs and zombies, but I don't know how to analyze it further.