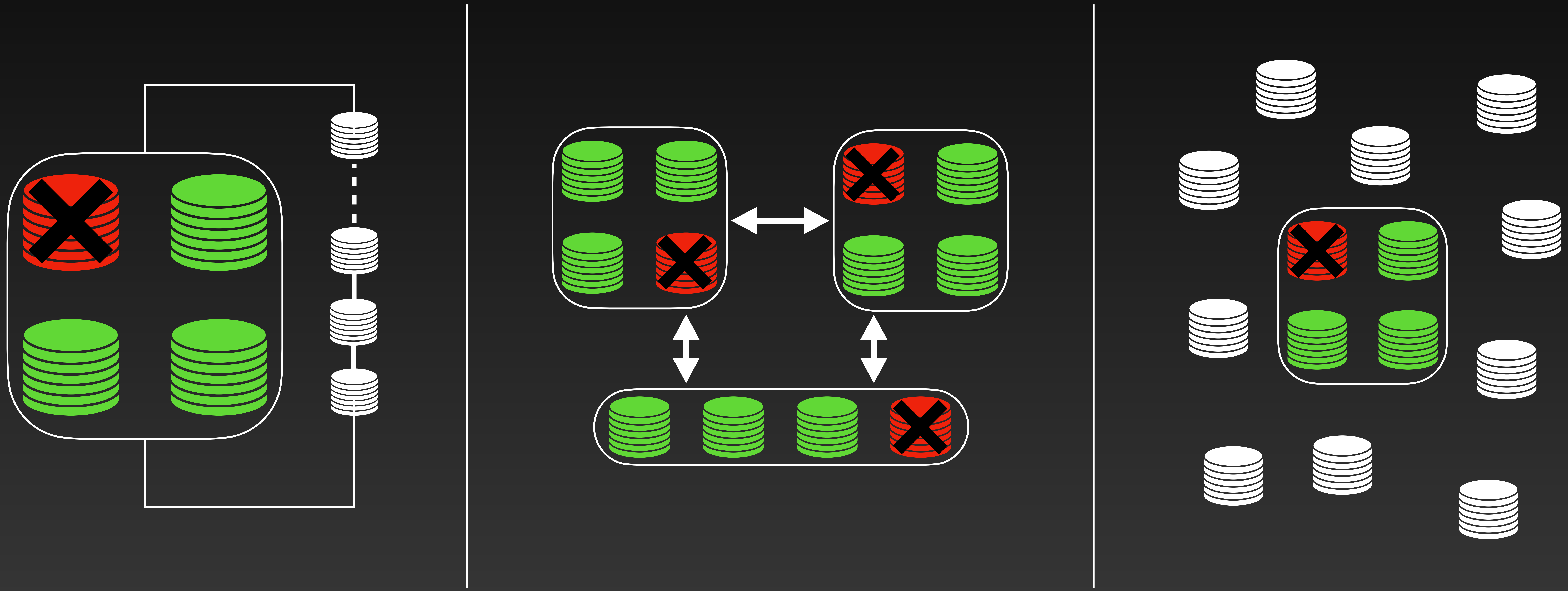
Increasing Throughput

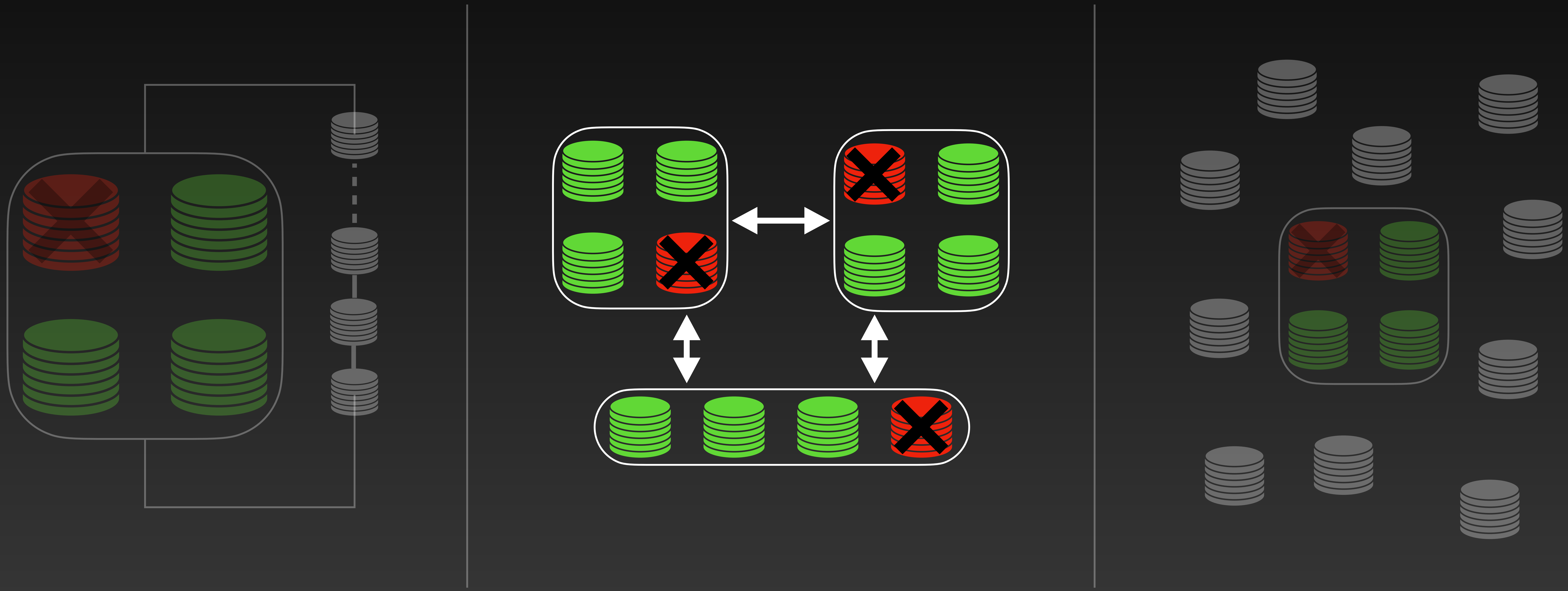
with Sharded Blockchains

Blockchains Study Hall

Scaling blockchains



Scaling blockchains



Hight throughput

BFT resilience

Fast finality

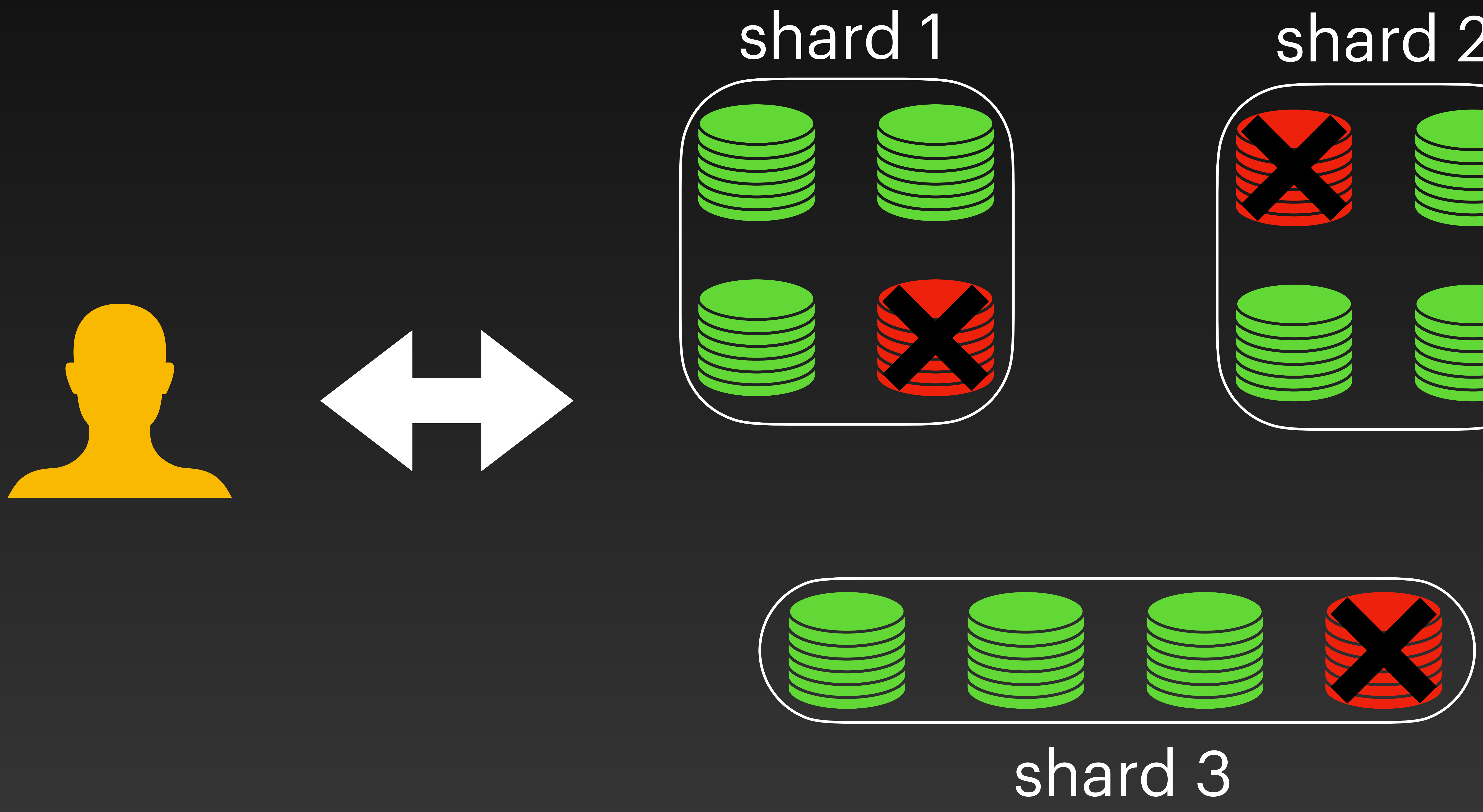
Linear scalability

The more machines you have, the bigger your throughput

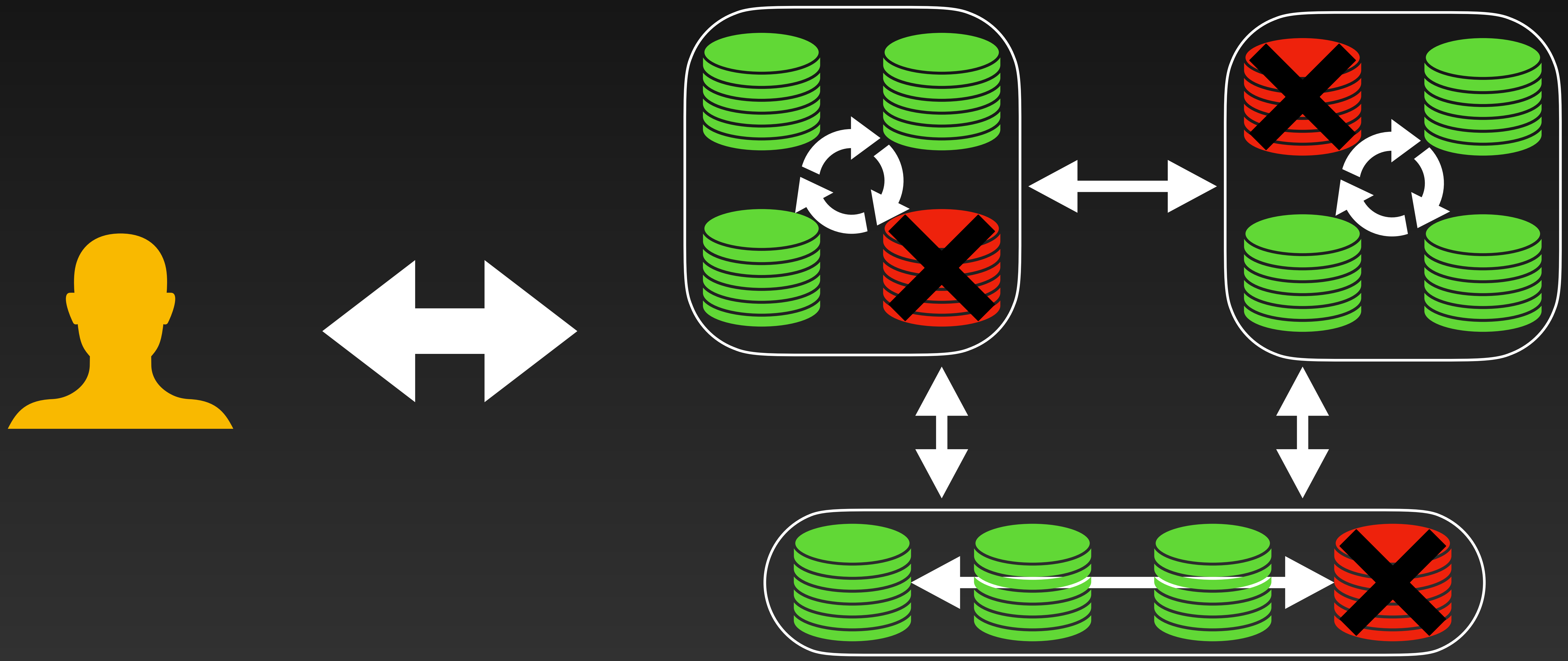
Scalability

State Sharding

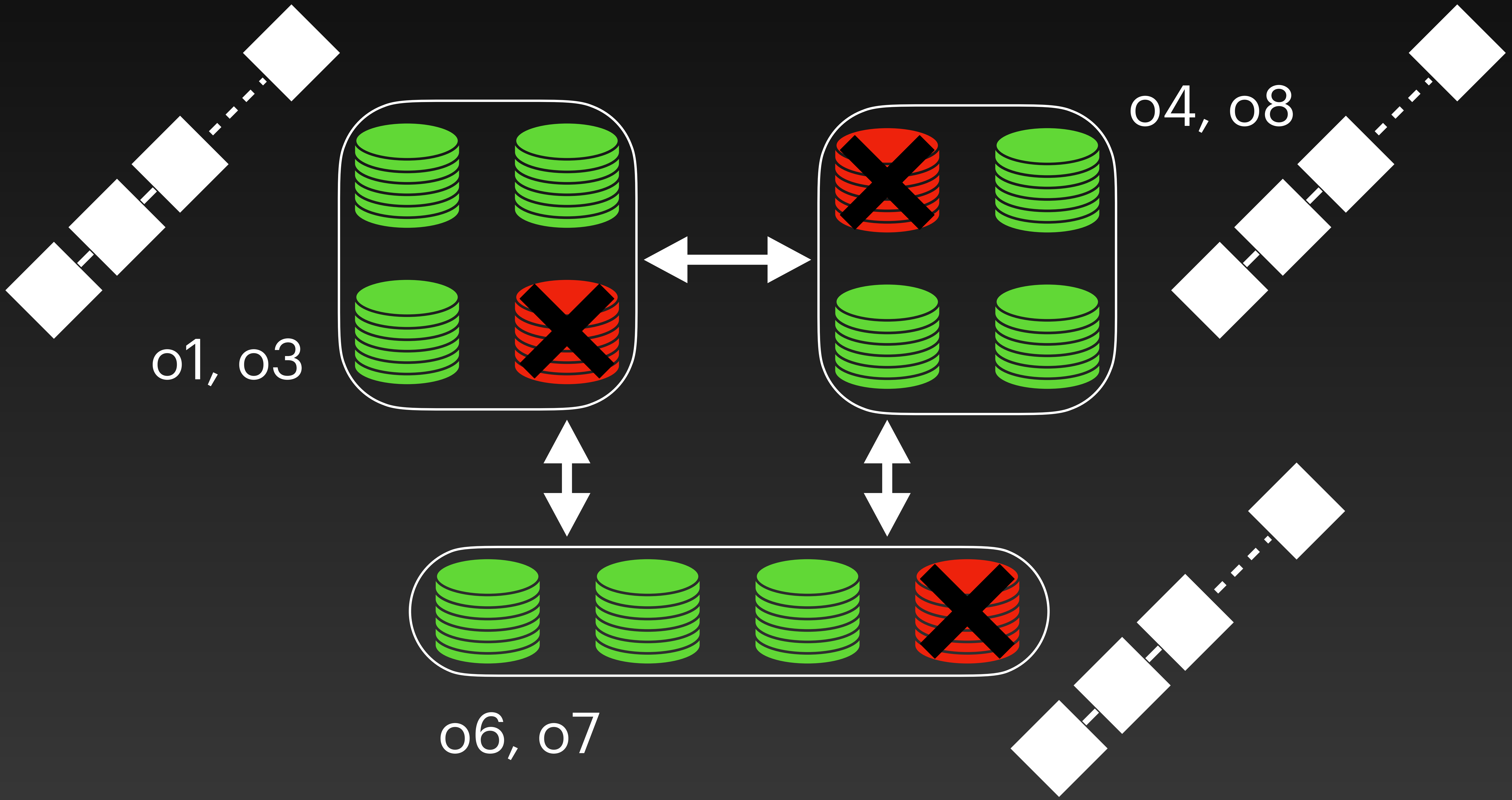
State Sharding



State Sharding

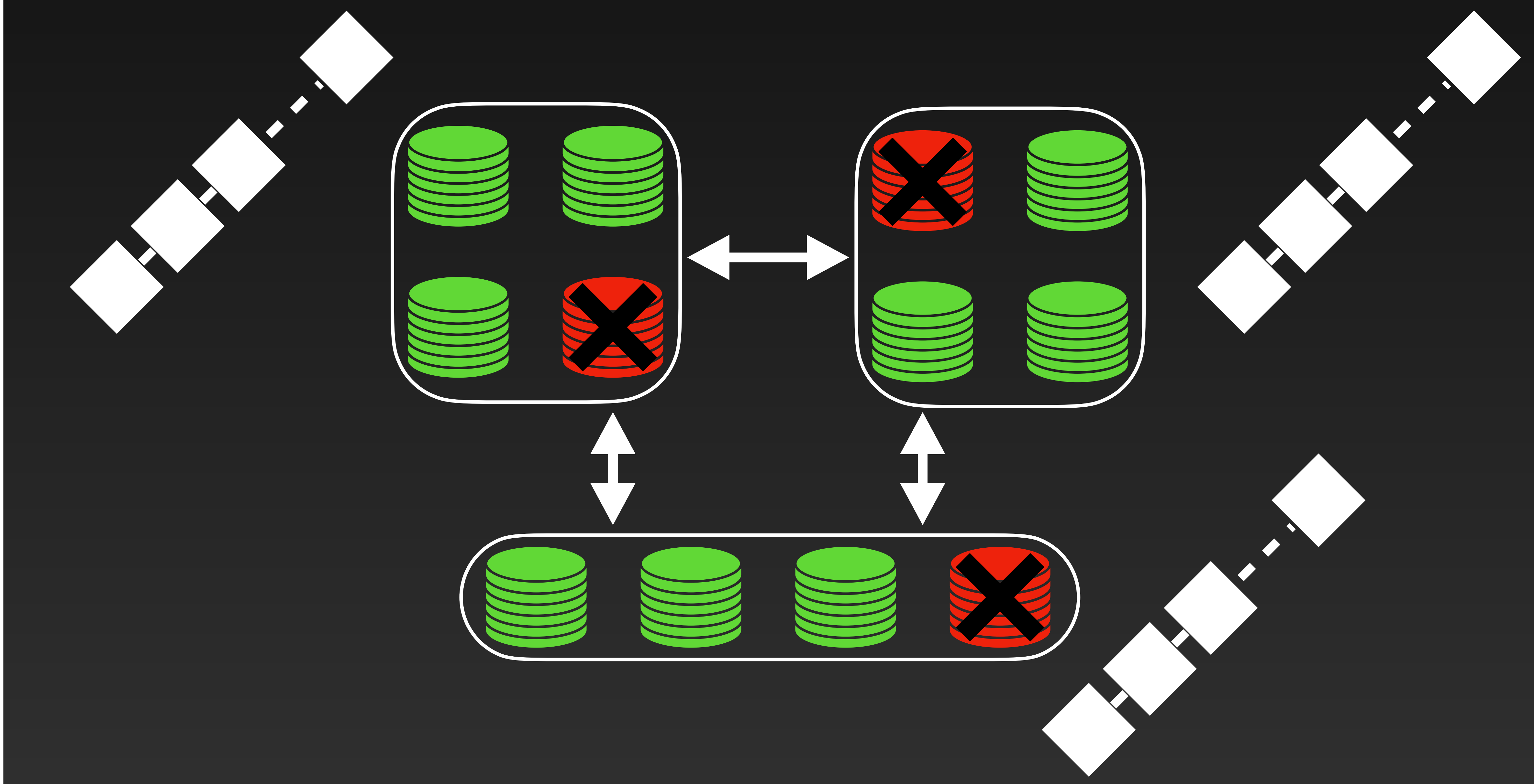


State Sharding



Traditional

Sharding



State Sharding

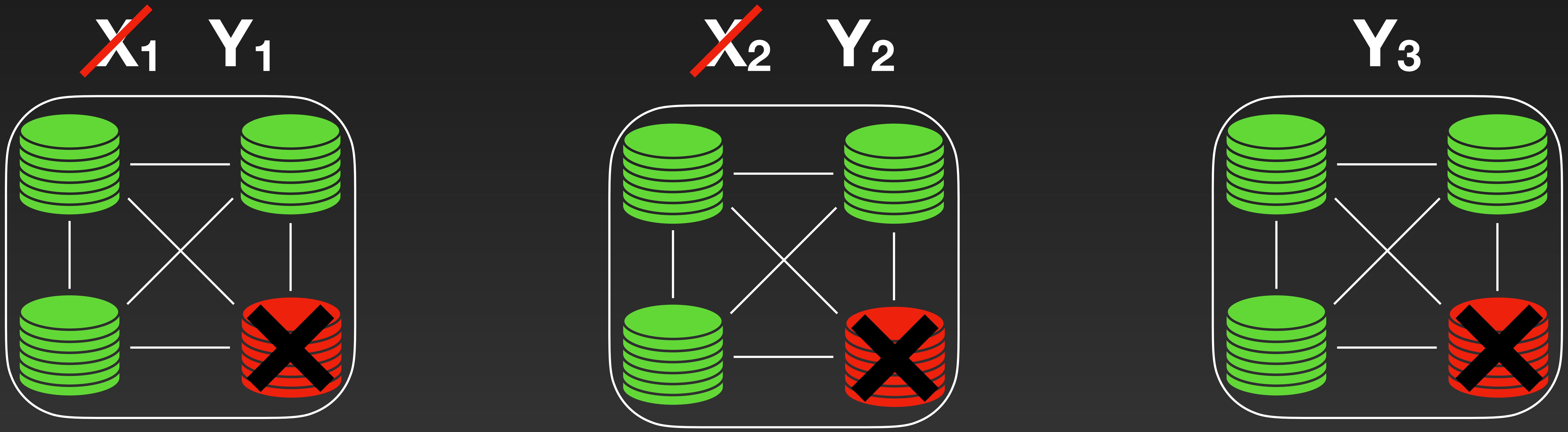
An example transaction

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$

State Sharding

An example transaction

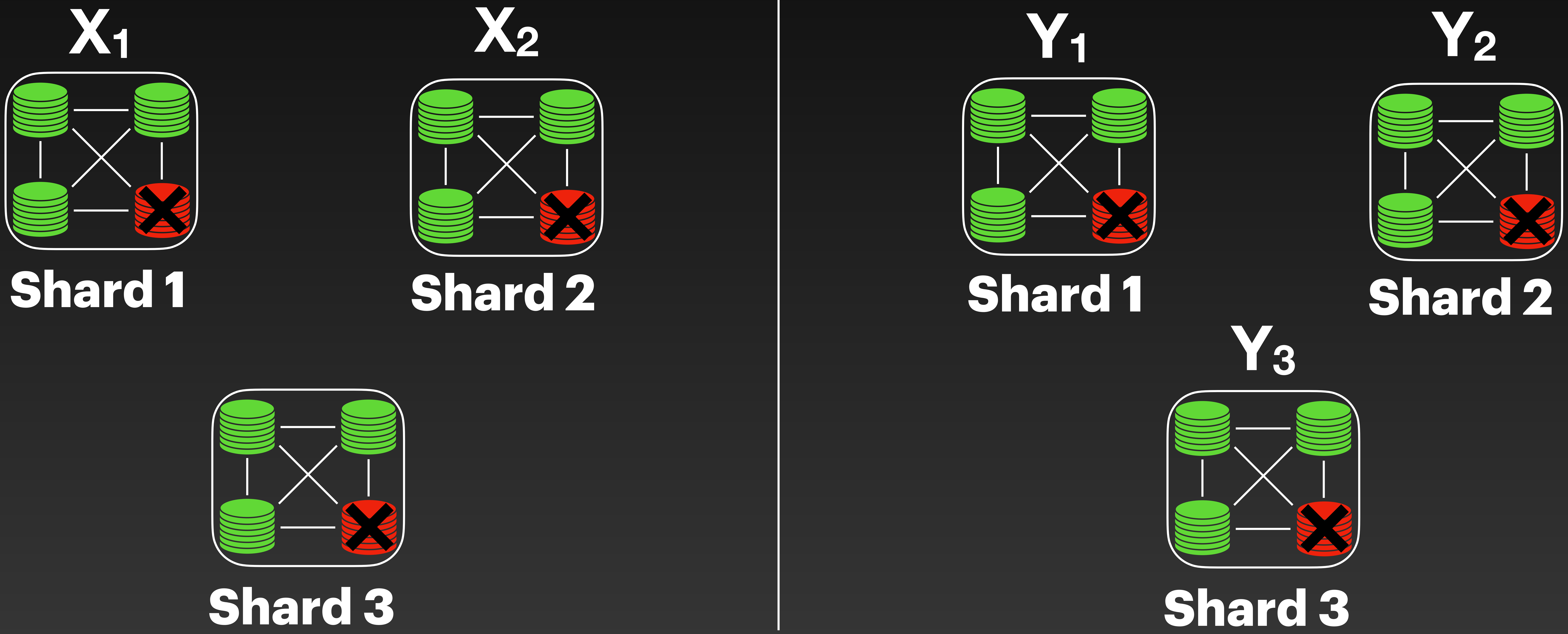
$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



Shard 1 **Shard 2** **Shard 3**

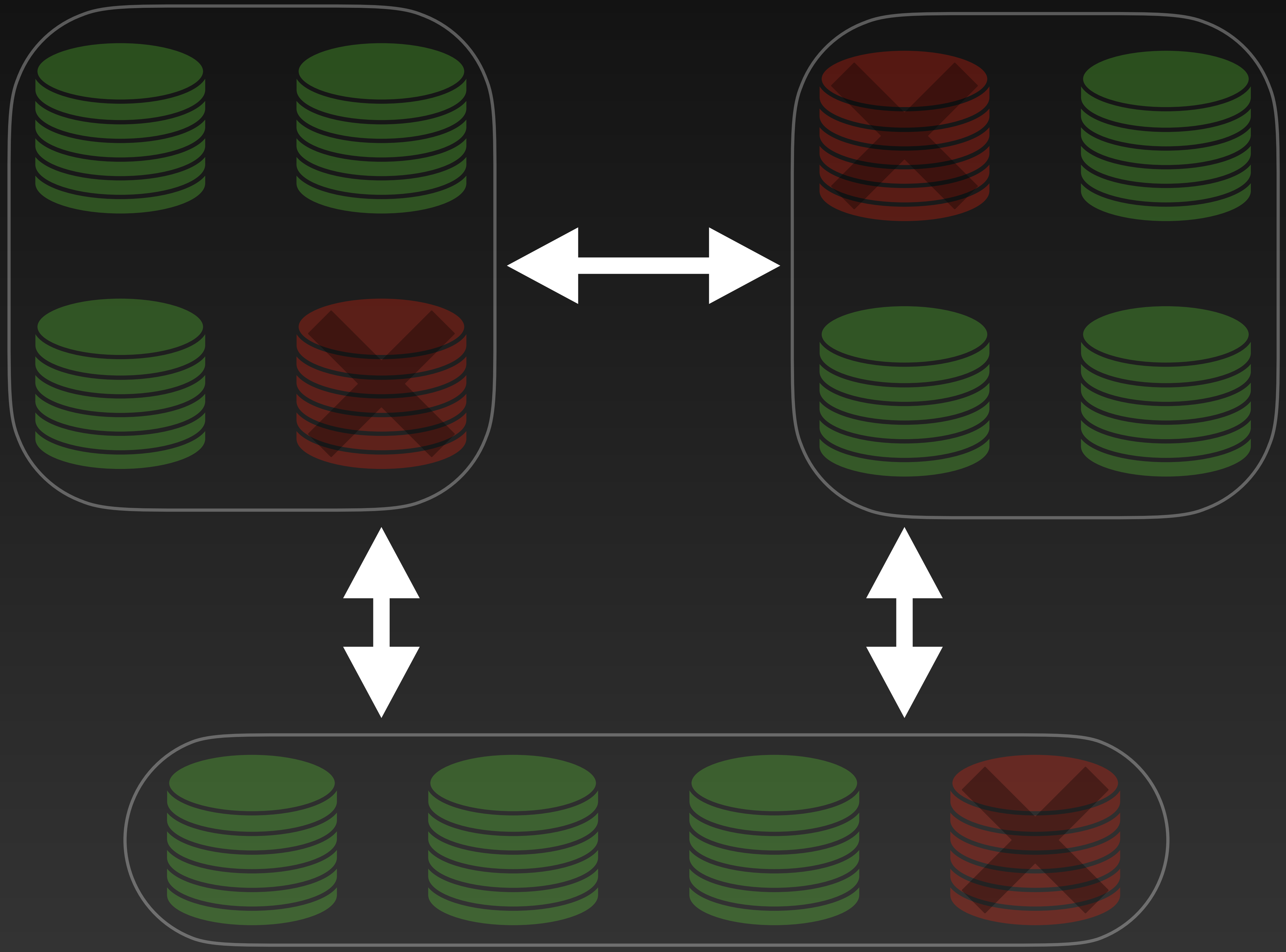
State Sharding

Only two acceptable final states



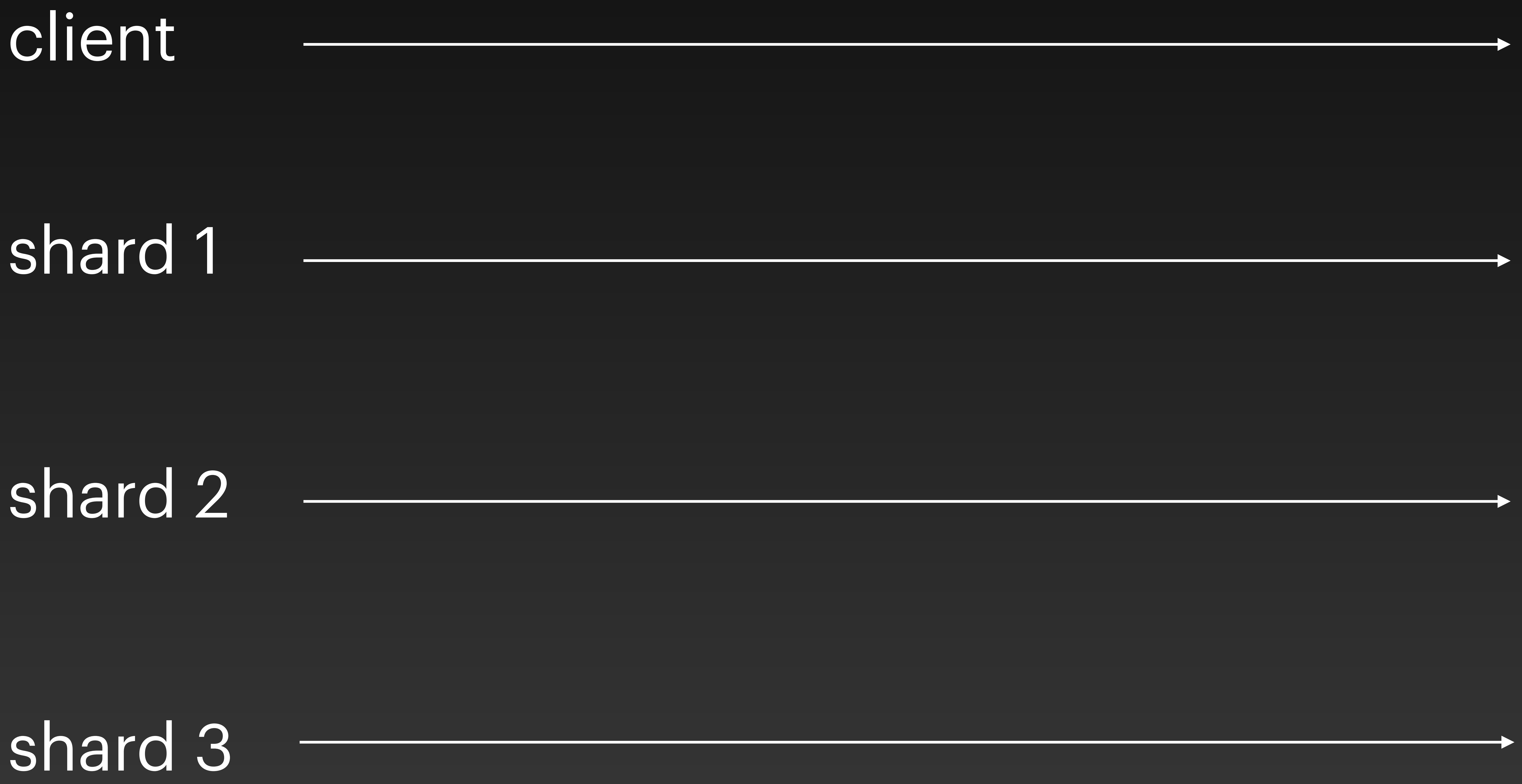
Cross-Shard Consensus

How do shards communicate with each other?



Mutex-Based Protocols

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$


client

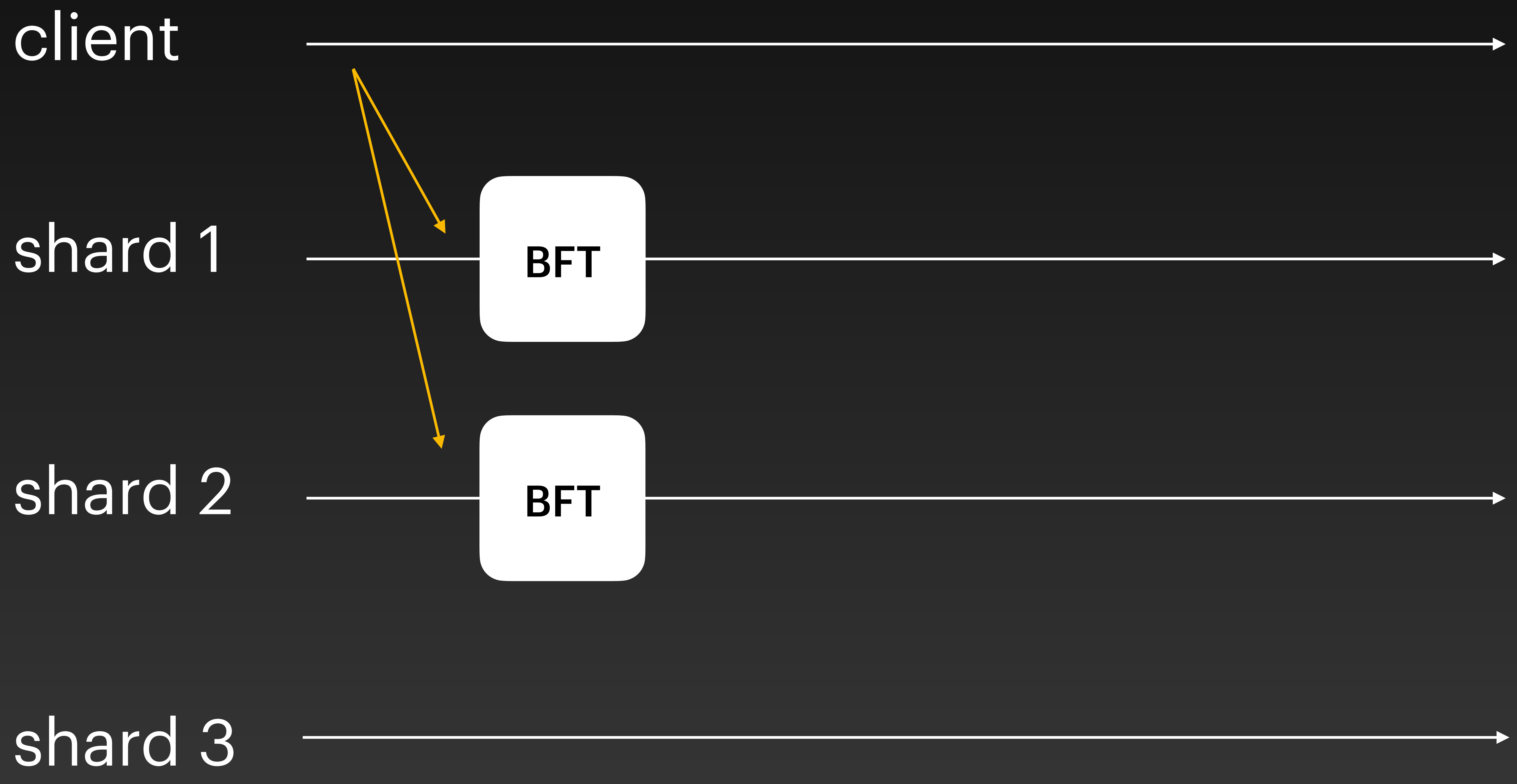
shard 1

shard 2

shard 3

Mutex-Based Protocols

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



client

shard 1

shard 2

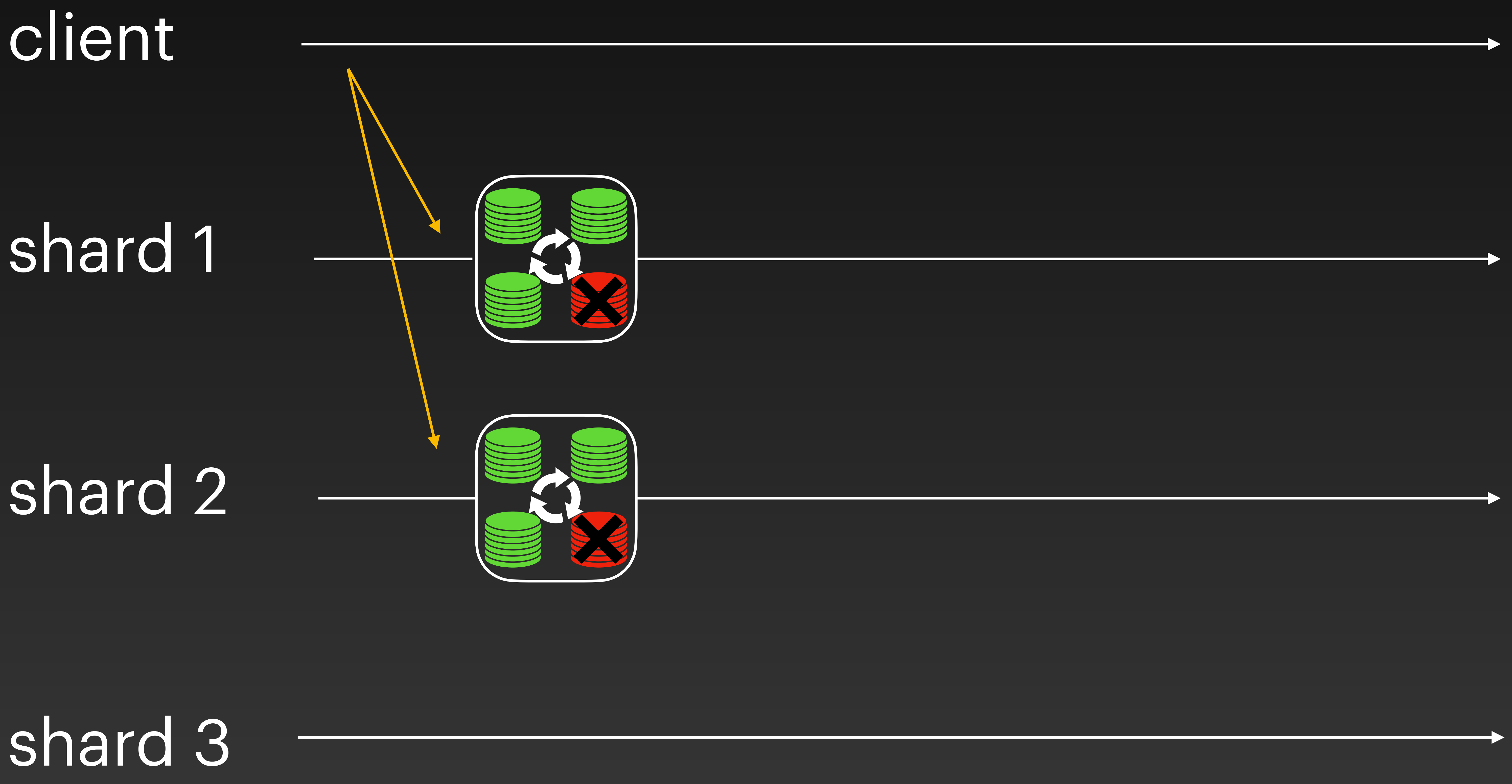
shard 3

BFT

BFT

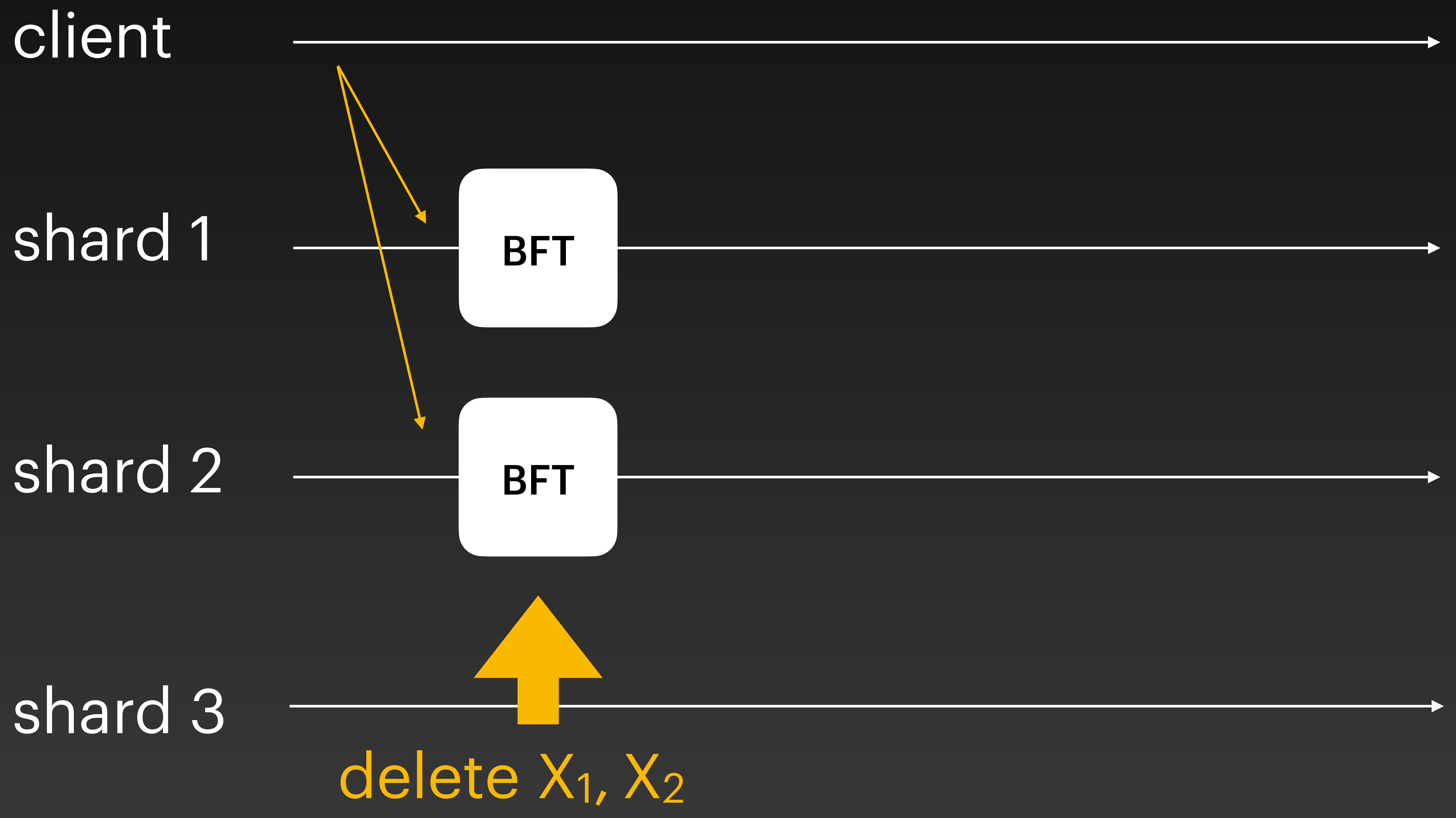
Mutex-Based Protocols

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



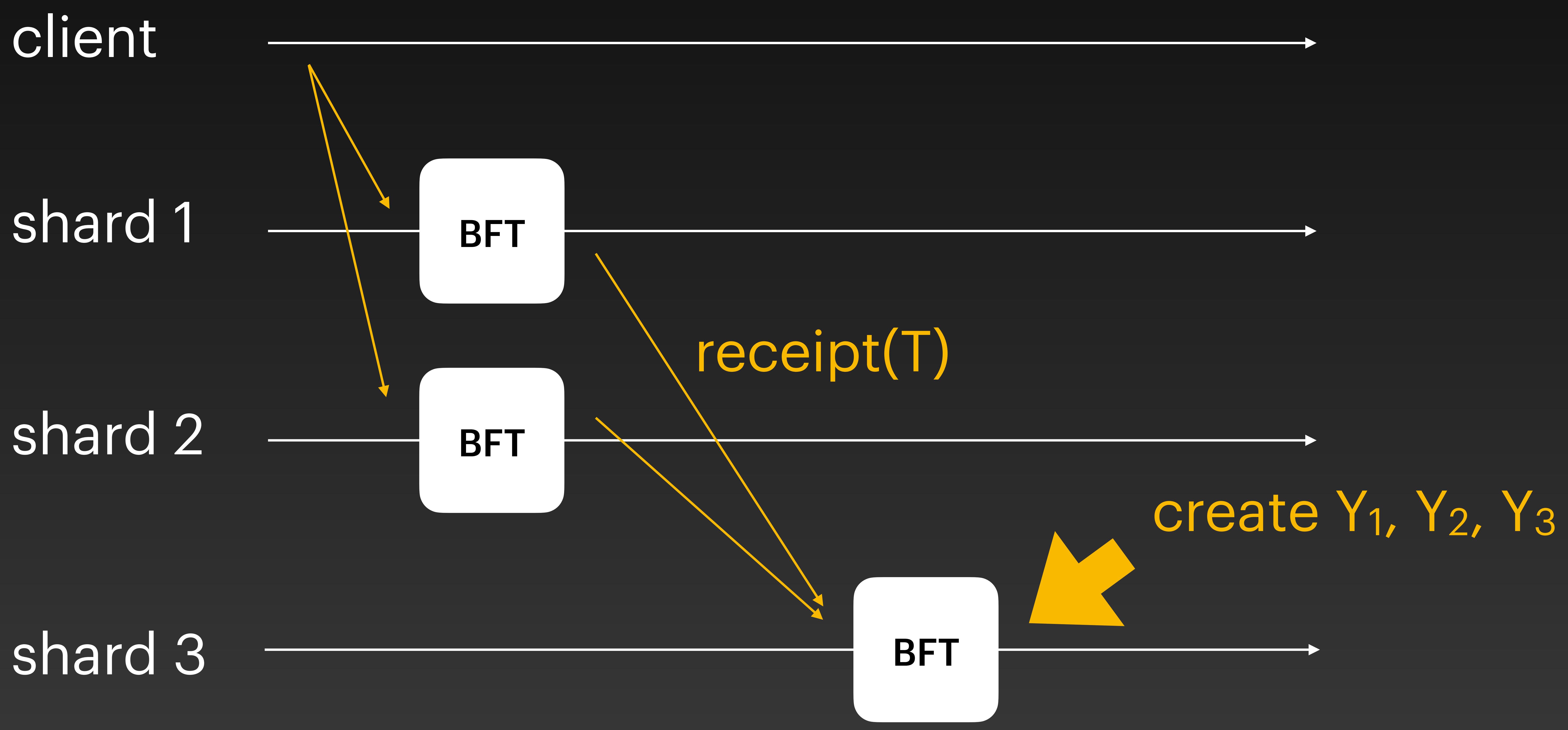
Mutex-Based Protocols

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



Mutex-Based Protocols

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



client

shard 1

shard 2

shard 3

BFT

BFT

BFT

receipt(T)

create Y_1, Y_2, Y_3

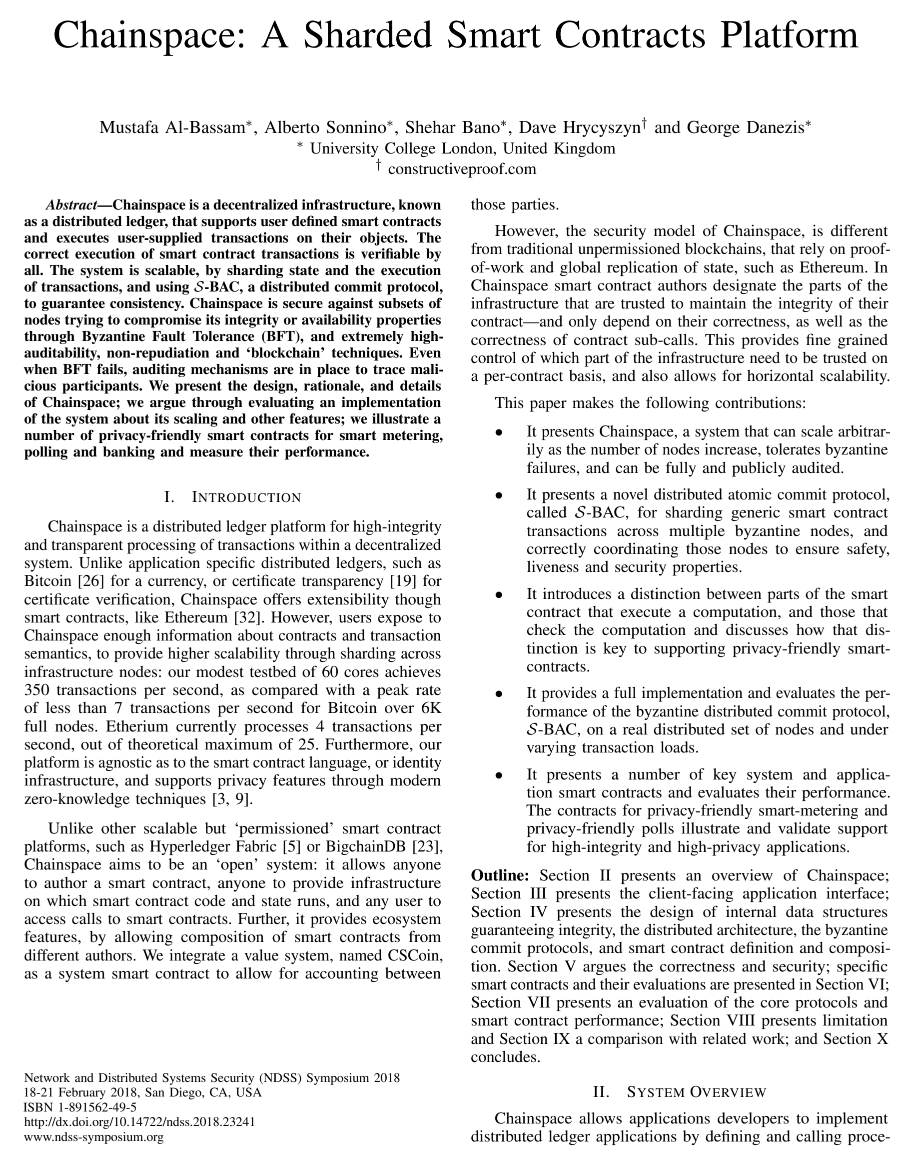
Mutex-Based Protocols

Choose the assumptions

- Synchrony (for safety): Add an expiration to the receipt
- Infinite memory: Keep receipts forever

2PC Protocols

S-BAC



Chainspace: A Sharded Smart Contracts Platform

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* University College London, United Kingdom
† constructiveproof.com

***Abstract*—Chainspace is a decentralized infrastructure, known as a distributed ledger, that supports user defined smart contracts and executes user-supplied transactions on their objects. The correct execution of smart contract transactions is verifiable by all. The system is scalable, by sharding state and the execution of transactions, and using $\mathcal{S}$-BAC, a distributed commit protocol, to guarantee consistency. Chainspace is secure against subsets of nodes trying to compromise its integrity or availability properties through Byzantine Fault Tolerance (BFT), and extremely high-auditability, non-repudiation and 'blockchain' techniques. Even when BFT fails, auditing mechanisms are in place to trace malicious participants. We present the design, rationale, and details of Chainspace; we argue through evaluating an implementation of the system about its scaling and other features; we illustrate a number of privacy-friendly smart contracts for smart metering, polling and banking and measure their performance.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Chainspace is a distributed ledger platform for high-integrity and transparent processing of transactions within a decentralized system. Unlike application specific distributed ledgers, such as Bitcoin [26] for a currency, or certificate transparency [19] for certificate verification, Chainspace offers extensibility though smart contracts, like Ethereum [32]. However, users expose to Chainspace enough information about contracts and transaction semantics, to provide higher scalability through sharding across infrastructure nodes: our modest testbed of 60 cores achieves 350 transactions per second, as compared with a peak rate of less than 7 transactions per second for Bitcoin over 6K full nodes. Etherium currently processes 4 transactions per second, out of theoretical maximum of 25. Furthermore, our platform is agnostic as to the smart contract language, or identity infrastructure, and supports privacy features through modern zero-knowledge techniques [3, 9].

Unlike other scalable but 'permissioned' smart contract platforms, such as Hyperledger Fabric [5] or BigchainDB [23], Chainspace aims to be an 'open' system: it allows anyone to author a smart contract, anyone to provide infrastructure on which smart contract code and state runs, and any user to access calls to smart contracts. Further, it provides ecosystem features, by allowing composition of smart contracts from different authors. We integrate a value system, named CSCoin, as a system smart contract to allow for accounting between those parties.

However, the security model of Chainspace, is different from traditional unpermissioned blockchains, that rely on proof-of-work and global replication of state, such as Ethereum. In Chainspace smart contract authors designate the parts of the infrastructure that are trusted to maintain the integrity of their contract—and only depend on their correctness, as well as the correctness of contract sub-calls. This provides fine grained control of which part of the infrastructure need to be trusted on a per-contract basis, and also allows for horizontal scalability.

This paper makes the following contributions:

- It presents Chainspace, a system that can scale arbitrarily as the number of nodes increase, tolerates byzantine failures, and can be fully and publicly audited.
- It presents a novel distributed atomic commit protocol, called $\mathcal{S}$-BAC, for sharding generic smart contract transactions across multiple byzantine nodes, and correctly coordinating those nodes to ensure safety, liveness and security properties.
- It introduces a distinction between parts of the smart contract that execute a computation, and those that check the computation and discusses how that distinction is key to supporting privacy-friendly smart-contracts.
- It provides a full implementation and evaluates the performance of the byzantine distributed commit protocol, $\mathcal{S}$-BAC, on a real distributed set of nodes and under varying transaction loads.
- It presents a number of key system and application smart contracts and evaluates their performance. The contracts for privacy-friendly smart-metering and privacy-friendly polls illustrate and validate support for high-integrity and high-privacy applications.

Outline: Section II presents an overview of Chainspace; Section III presents the client-facing application interface; Section IV presents the design of internal data structures guaranteeing integrity, the distributed architecture, the byzantine commit protocols, and smart contract definition and composition. Section V argues the correctness and security; specific smart contracts and their evaluations are presented in Section VI; Section VII presents an evaluation of the core protocols and smart contract performance; Section VIII presents limitation and Section IX a comparison with related work; and Section X concludes.

II. SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Chainspace allows applications developers to implement distributed ledger applications by defining and calling proce-

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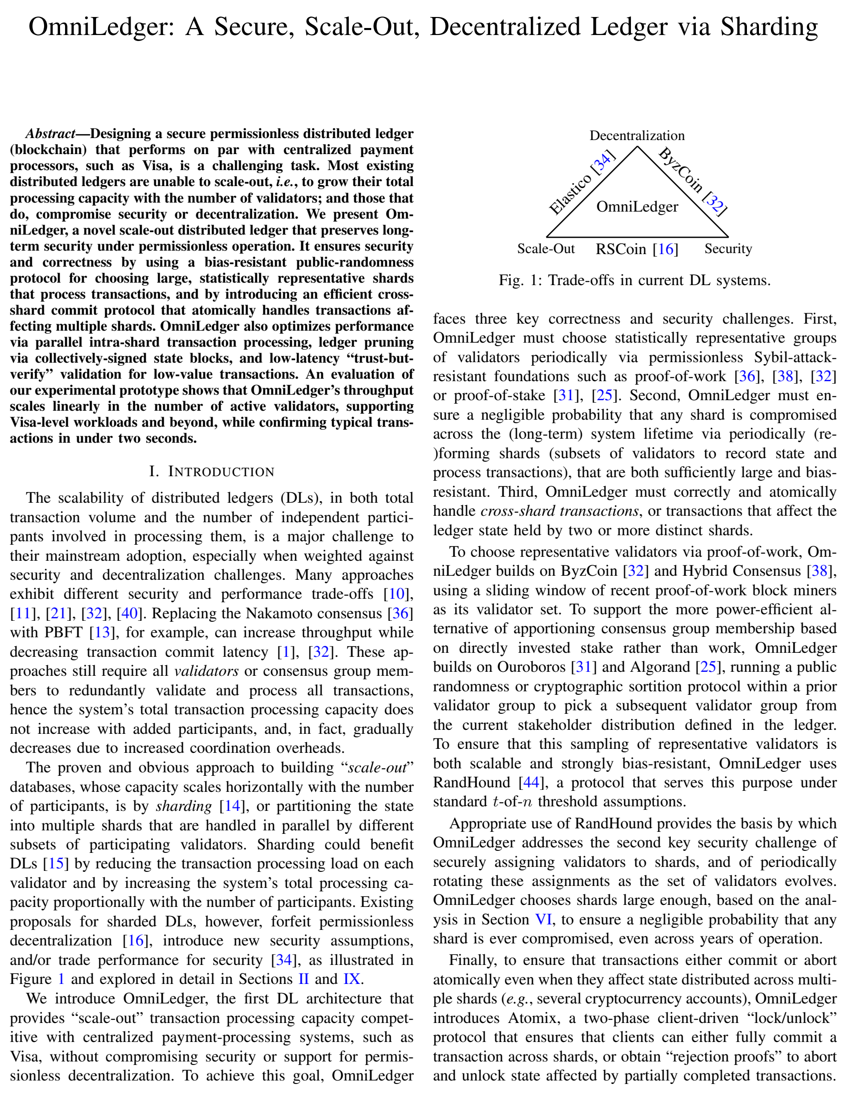
NDSS'18

Atomix



OmniLedger: A Secure, Scale-Out, Decentralized Ledger via Sharding

***Abstract*—Designing a secure permissionless distributed ledger (blockchain) that performs on par with centralized payment processors, such as Visa, is a challenging task. Most existing distributed ledgers are unable to scale-out, *i.e.*, to grow their total processing capacity with the number of validators; and those that do, compromise security or decentralization. We present OmniLedger, a novel scale-out distributed ledger that preserves long-term security under permissionless operation. It ensures security and correctness by using a bias-resistant public-randomness protocol for choosing large, statistically representative shards that process transactions, and by introducing an efficient cross-shard commit protocol that atomically handles transactions affecting multiple shards. OmniLedger also optimizes performance via parallel intra-shard transaction processing, ledger pruning via collectively-signed state blocks, and low-latency "trust-but-verify" validation for low-value transactions. An evaluation of our experimental prototype shows that OmniLedger's throughput scales linearly in the number of active validators, supporting Visa-level workloads and beyond, while confirming typical transactions in under two seconds.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The scalability of distributed ledgers (DLs), in both total transaction volume and the number of independent participants involved in processing them, is a major challenge to their mainstream adoption, especially when weighted against security and decentralization challenges. Many approaches exhibit different security and performance trade-offs [10], [11], [21], [32], [40]. Replacing the Nakamoto consensus [36] with PBFT [13], for example, can increase throughput while decreasing transaction commit latency [1], [32]. These approaches still require all *validators* or consensus group members to redundantly validate and process all transactions, hence the system's total transaction processing capacity does not increase with added participants, and, in fact, gradually decreases due to increased coordination overheads.

The proven and obvious approach to building "*scale-out*" databases, whose capacity scales horizontally with the number of participants, is by *sharding* [14], or partitioning the state into multiple shards that are handled in parallel by different subsets of participating validators. Sharding could benefit DLs [15] by reducing the transaction processing load on each validator and by increasing the system's total processing capacity proportionally with the number of participants. Existing proposals for sharded DLs, however, forfeit permissionless decentralization [16], introduce new security assumptions, and/or trade performance for security [34], as illustrated in Figure 1 and explored in detail in Sections II and IX.

We introduce OmniLedger, the first DL architecture that provides "scale-out" transaction processing capacity competitive with centralized payment-processing systems, such as Visa, without compromising security or support for permissionless decentralization. To achieve this goal, OmniLedger faces three key correctness and security challenges. First, OmniLedger must choose statistically representative groups of validators periodically via permissionless Sybil-attack-resistant foundations such as proof-of-work [36], [38], [32] or proof-of-stake [31], [25]. Second, OmniLedger must ensure a negligible probability that any shard is compromised across the (long-term) system lifetime via periodically (re-)forming shards (subsets of validators to record state and process transactions), that are both sufficiently large and bias-resistant. Third, OmniLedger must correctly and atomically handle *cross-shard transactions*, or transactions that affect the ledger state held by two or more distinct shards.

Fig. 1: Trade-offs in current DL systems.

To choose representative validators via proof-of-work, OmniLedger builds on ByzCoin [32] and Hybrid Consensus [38], using a sliding window of recent proof-of-work block miners as its validator set. To support the more power-efficient alternative of apportioning consensus group membership based on directly invested stake rather than work, OmniLedger builds on Ouroboros [31] and Algorand [25], running a public randomness or cryptographic sortition protocol within a prior validator group to pick a subsequent validator group from the current stakeholder distribution defined in the ledger. To ensure that this sampling of representative validators is both scalable and strongly bias-resistant, OmniLedger uses RandHound [44], a protocol that serves this purpose under standard t-of-n threshold assumptions.

Appropriate use of RandHound provides the basis by which OmniLedger addresses the second key security challenge of securely assigning validators to shards, and of periodically rotating these assignments as the set of validators evolves. OmniLedger chooses shards large enough, based on the analysis in Section VI, to ensure a negligible probability that any shard is ever compromised, even across years of operation.

Finally, to ensure that transactions either commit or abort atomically even when they affect state distributed across multiple shards (*e.g.*, several cryptocurrency accounts), OmniLedger introduces Atomix, a two-phase client-driven "lock/unlock" protocol that ensures that clients can either fully commit a transaction across shards, or obtain "rejection proofs" to abort and unlock state affected by partially completed transactions.

S&P'18

Cross-Shard Consensus

Byzantine Agreement

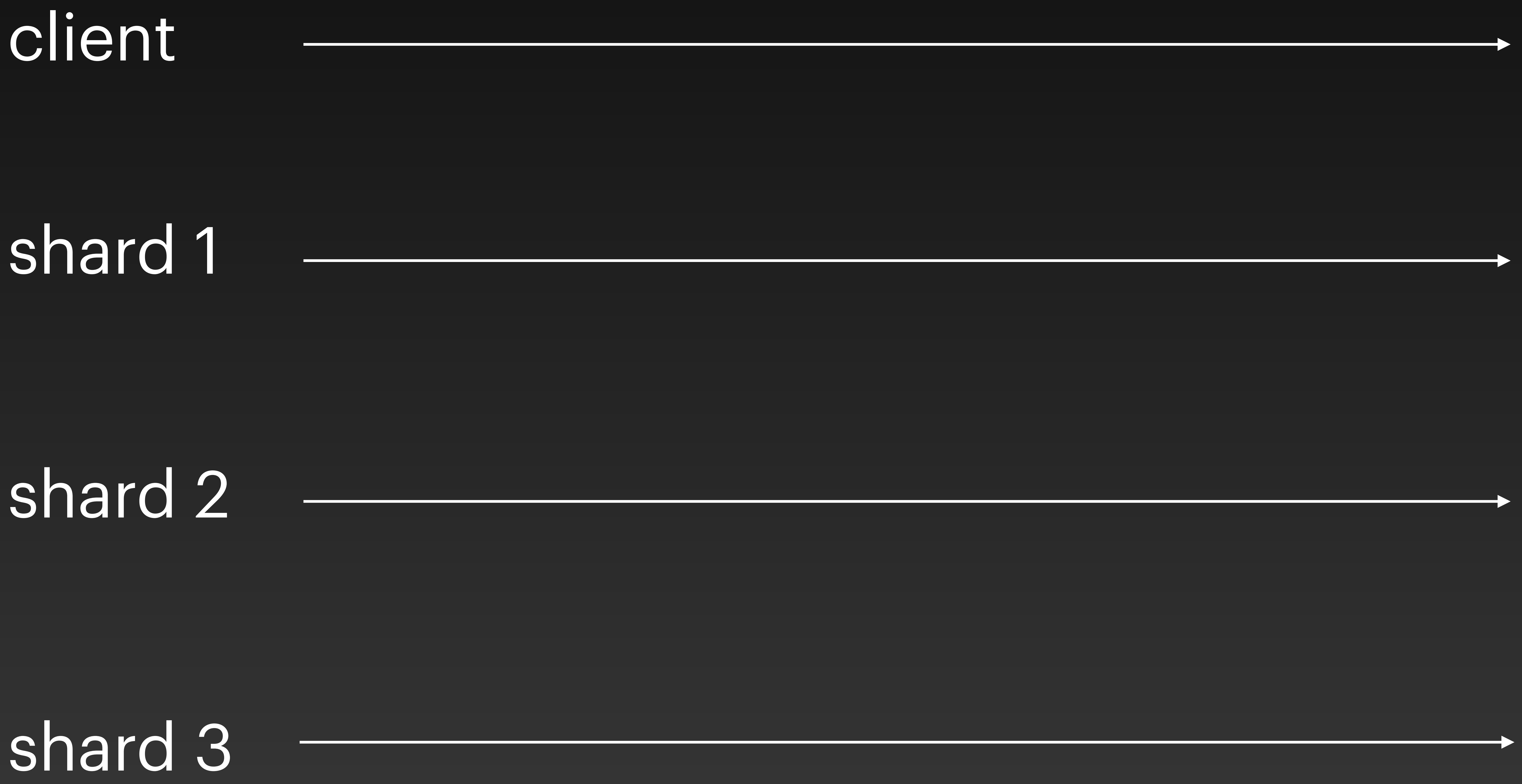
+

2-Phases Atomic Commit

Spoiler alert: Insecure under parallel composition

S-BAC

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



client

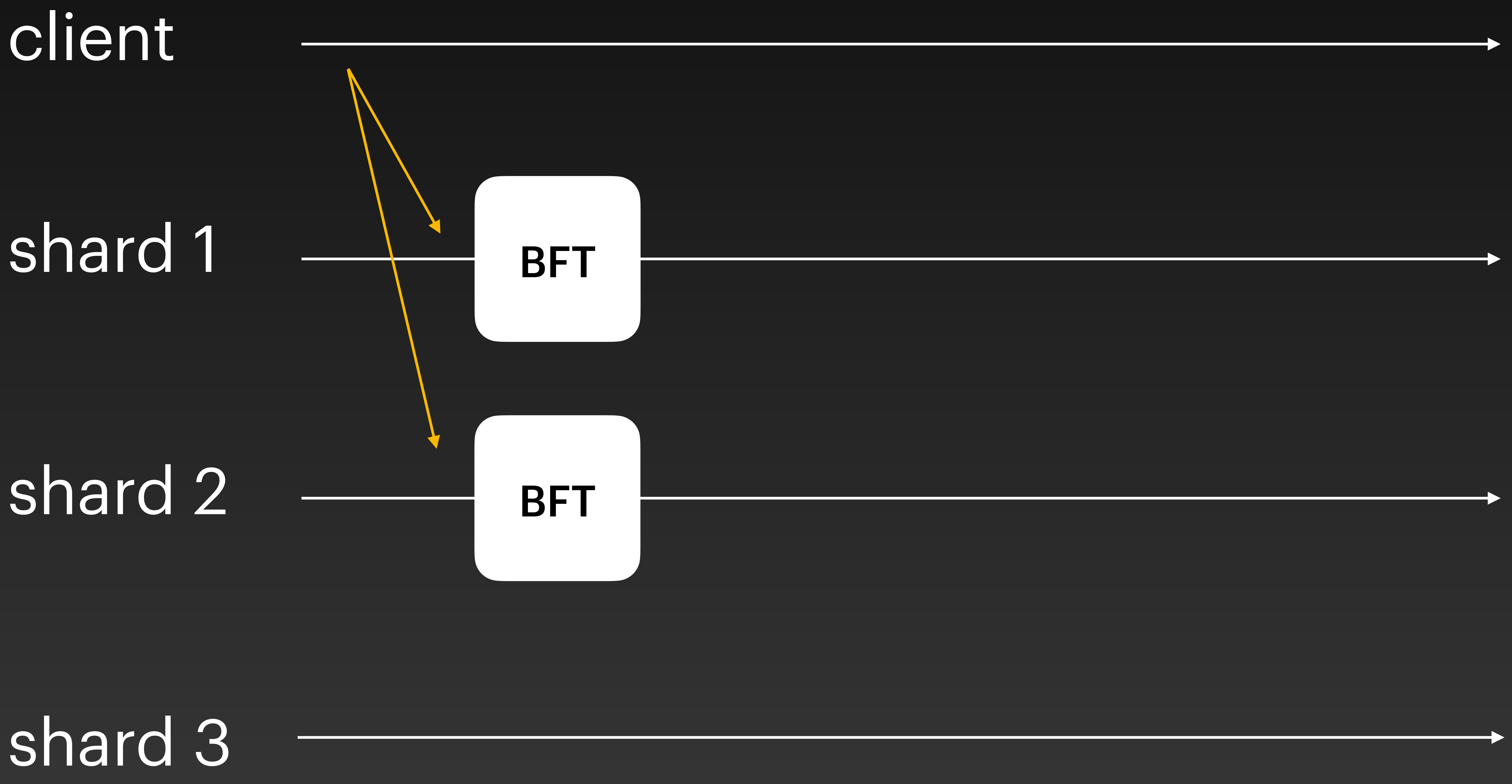
shard 1

shard 2

shard 3

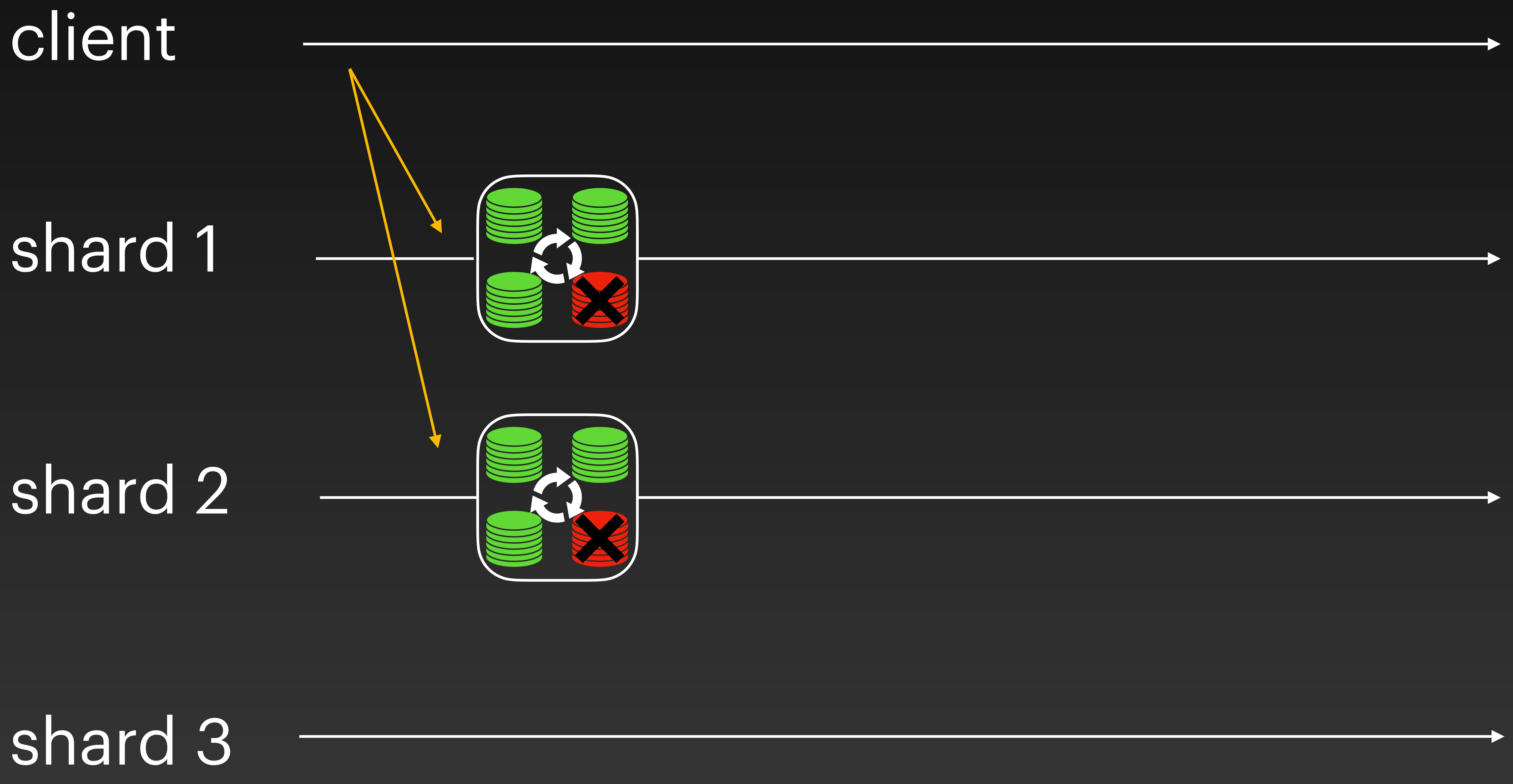
S-BAC

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



S-BAC

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



client

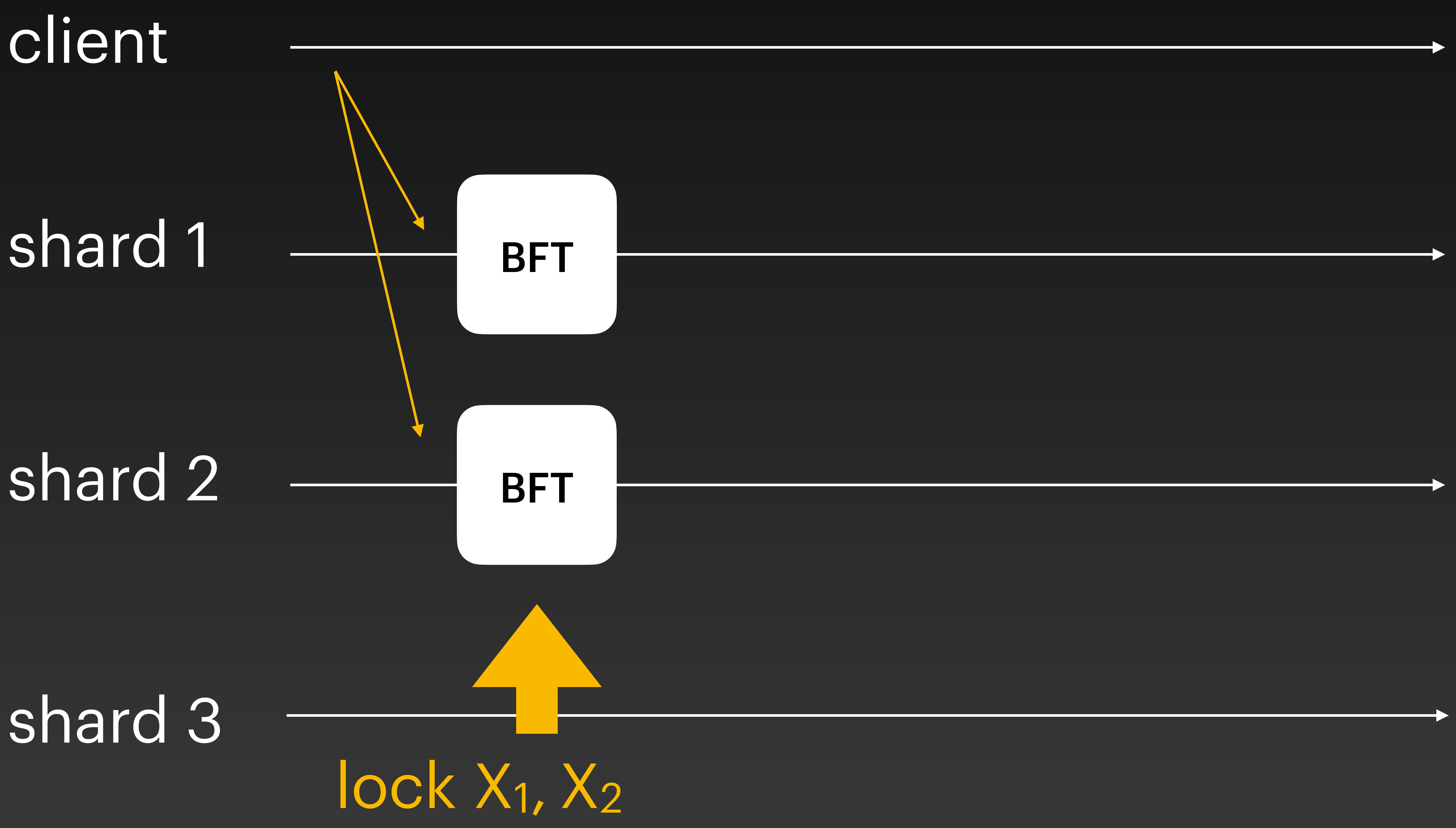
shard 1

shard 2

shard 3

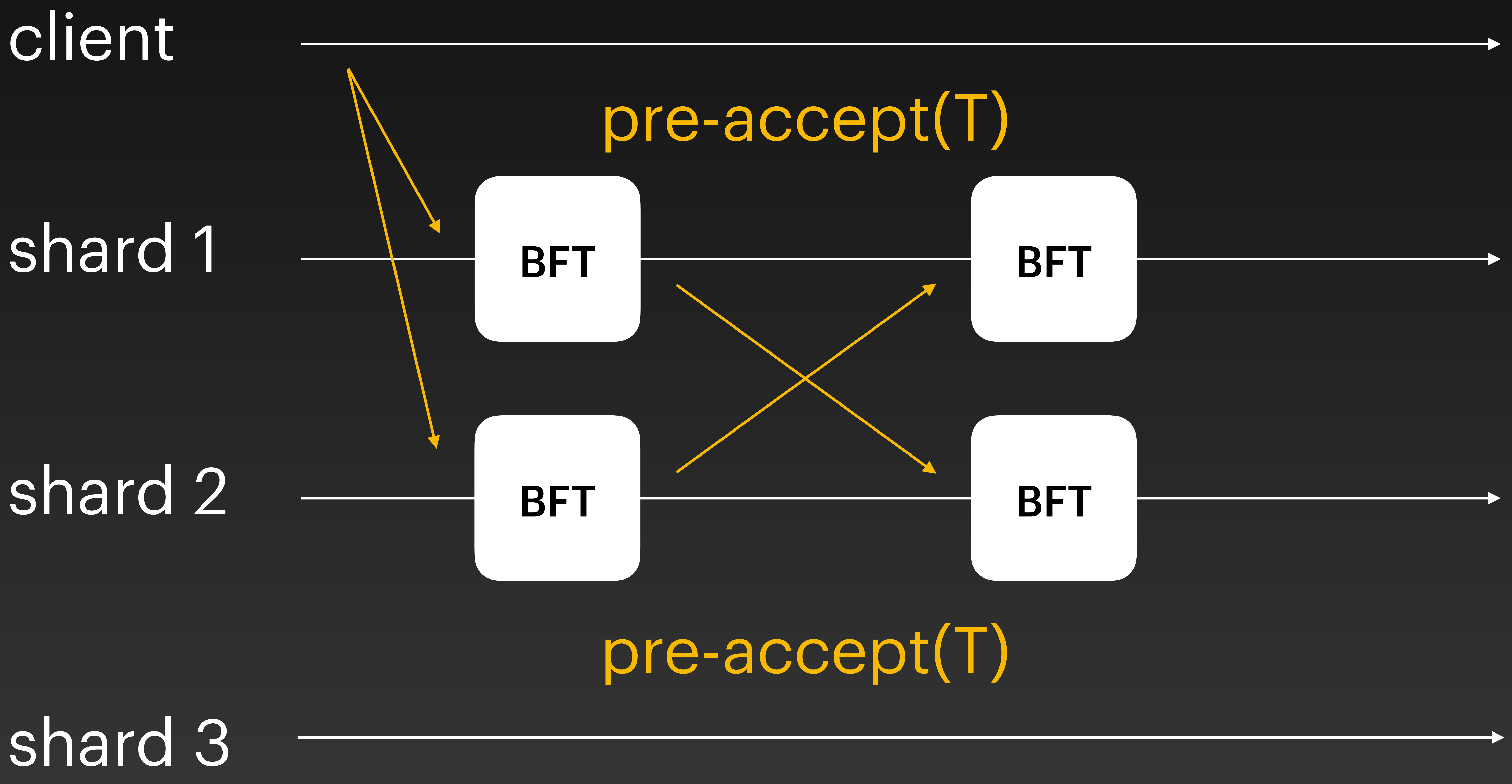
S-BAC

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



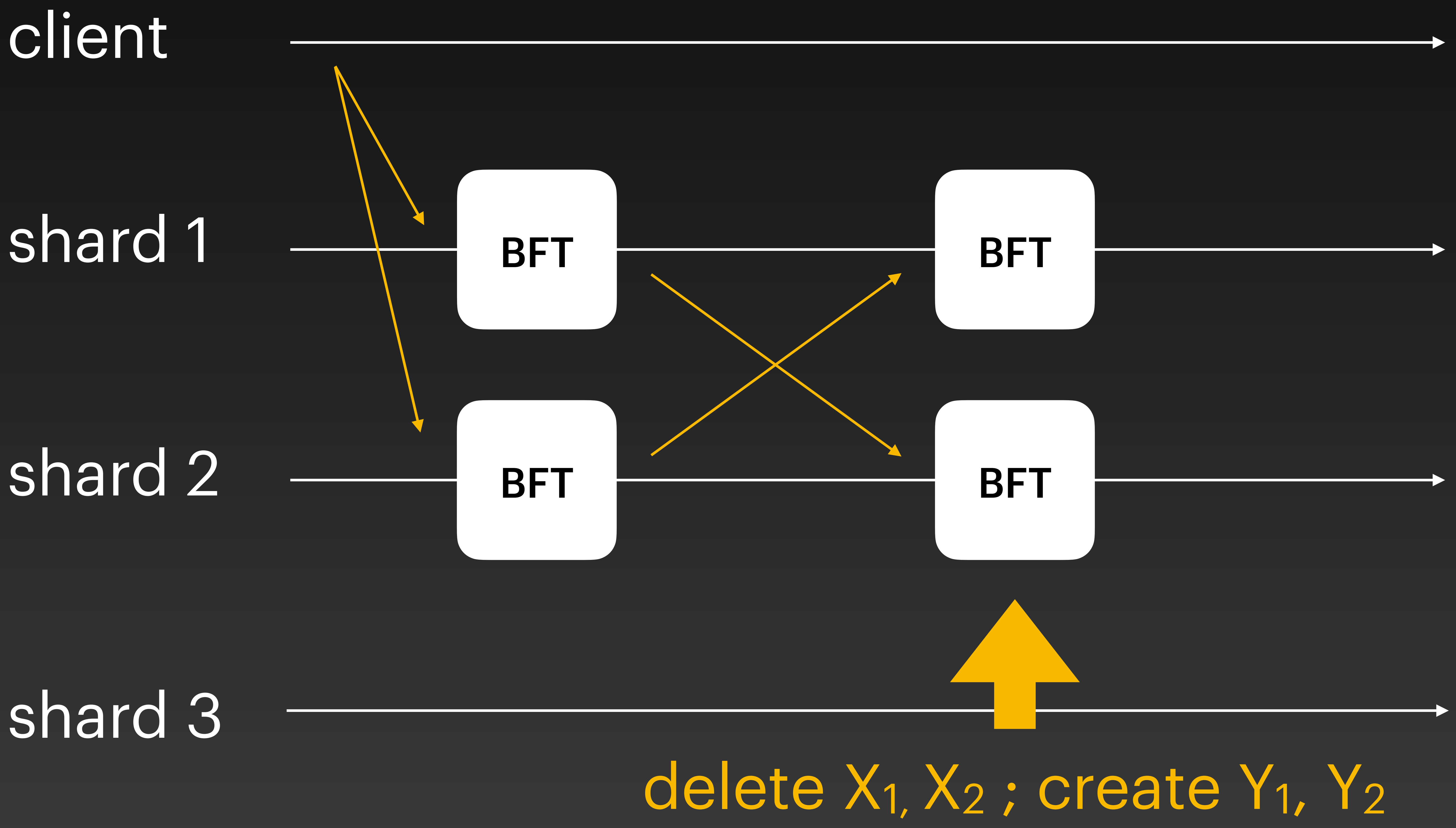
S-BAC

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



S-BAC

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



client

shard 1

shard 2

shard 3

BFT

BFT

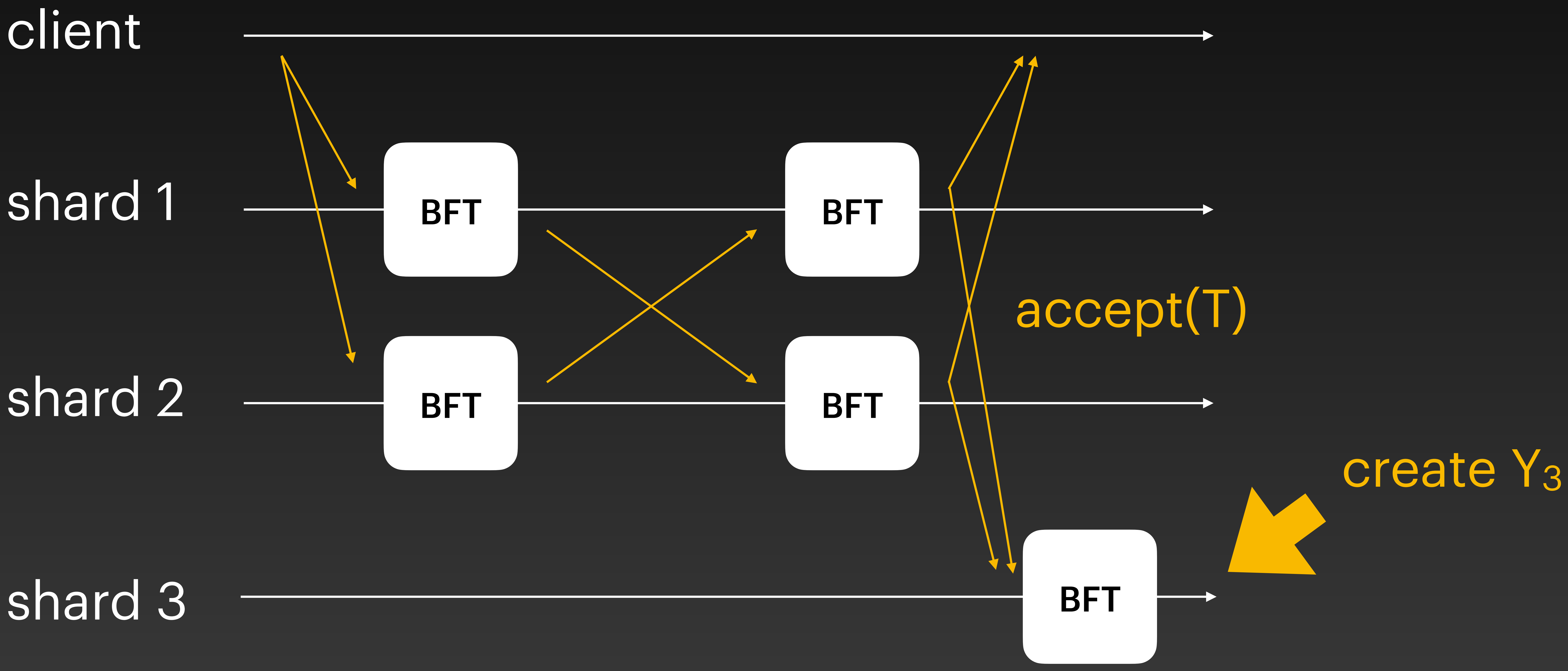
BFT

BFT

delete X_1, X_2 ; create Y_1, Y_2

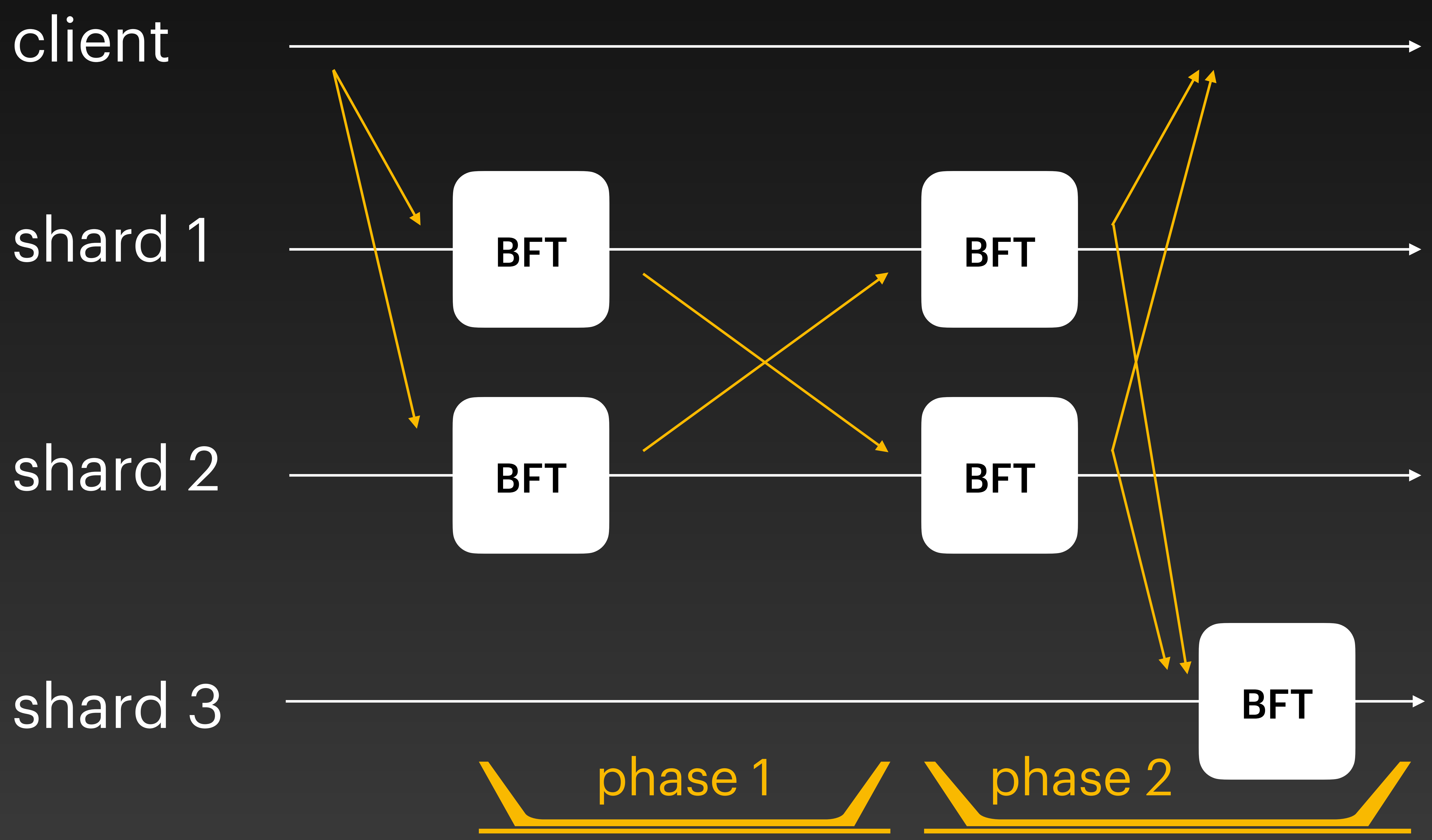
S-BAC

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



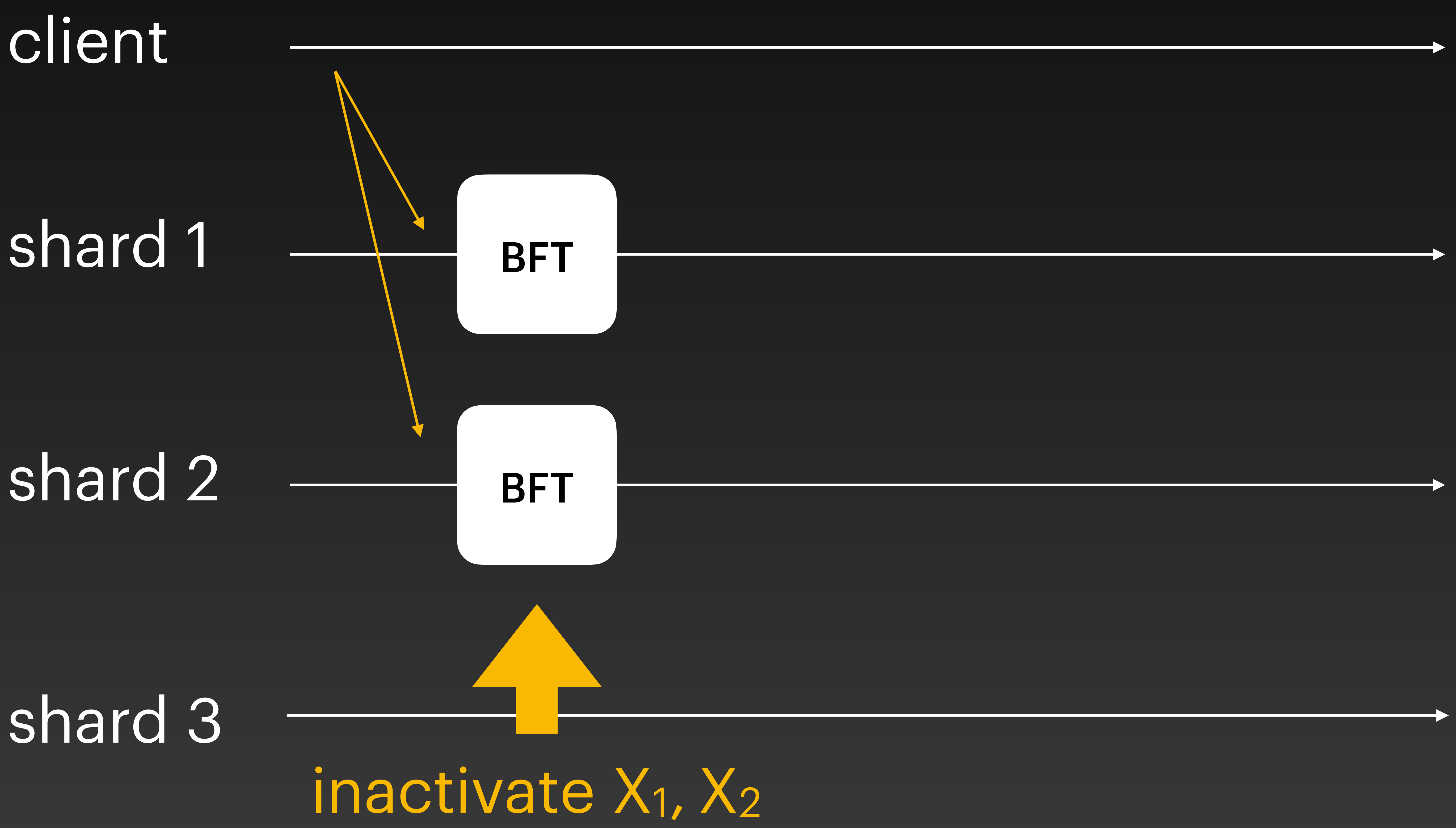
S-BAC

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



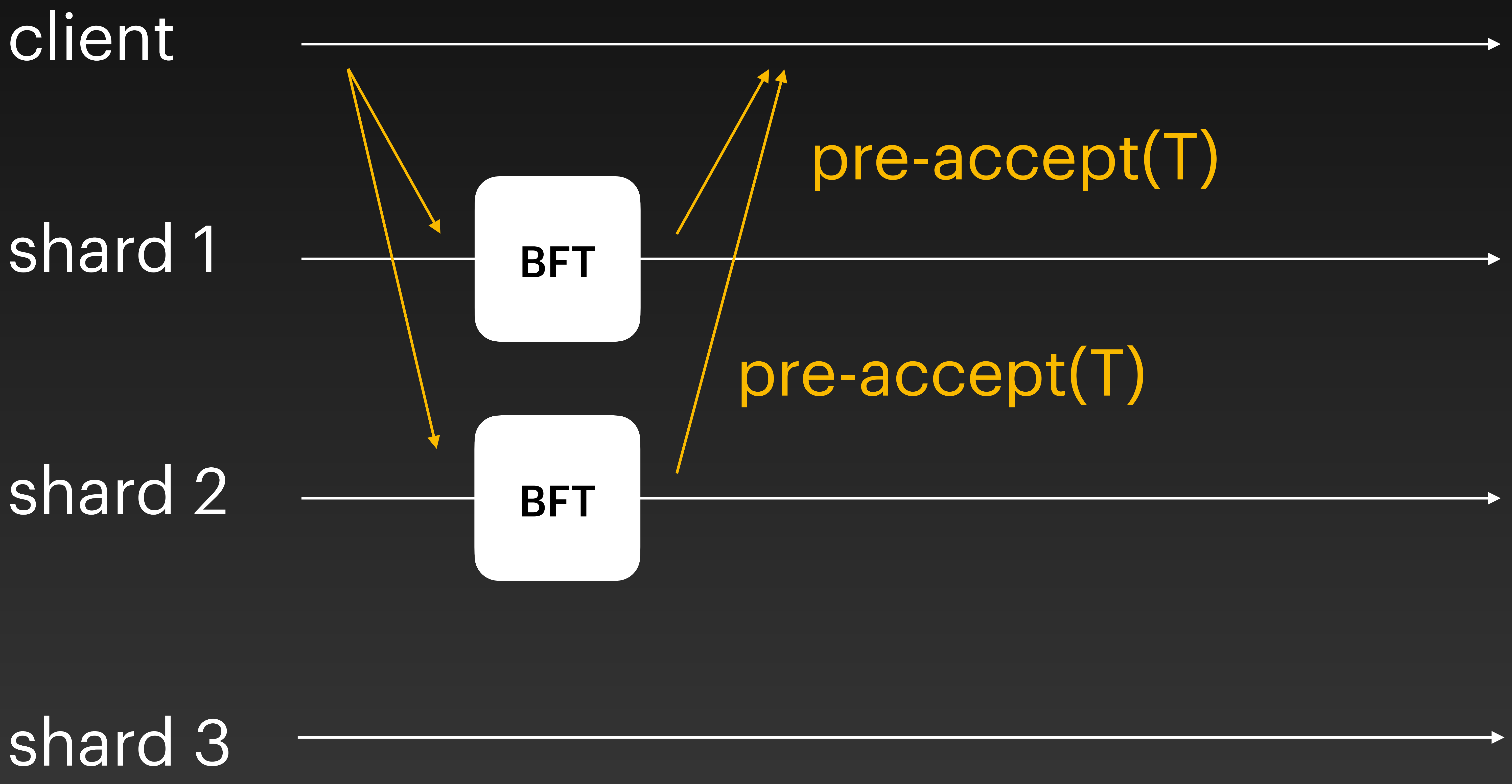
Atomix

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



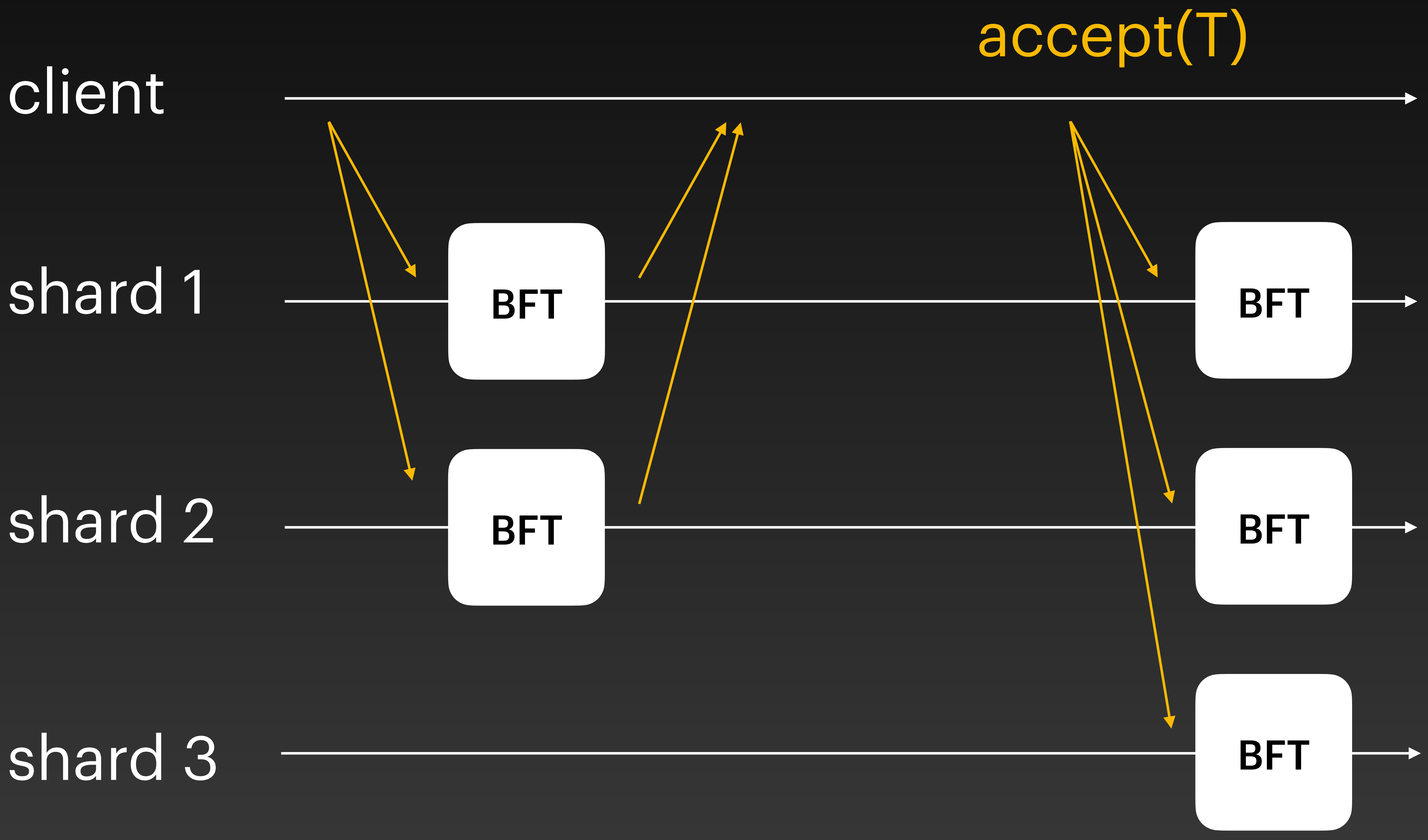
Atomix

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



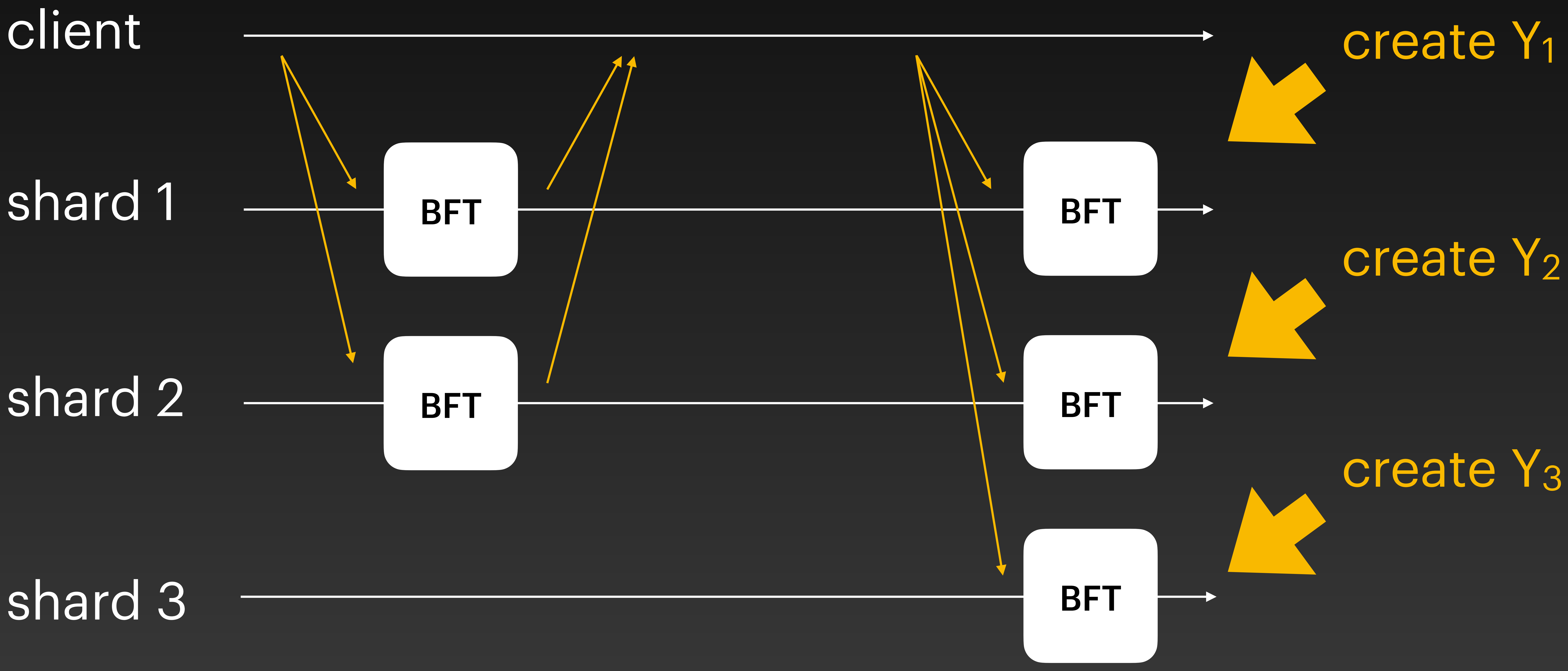
Atomix

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



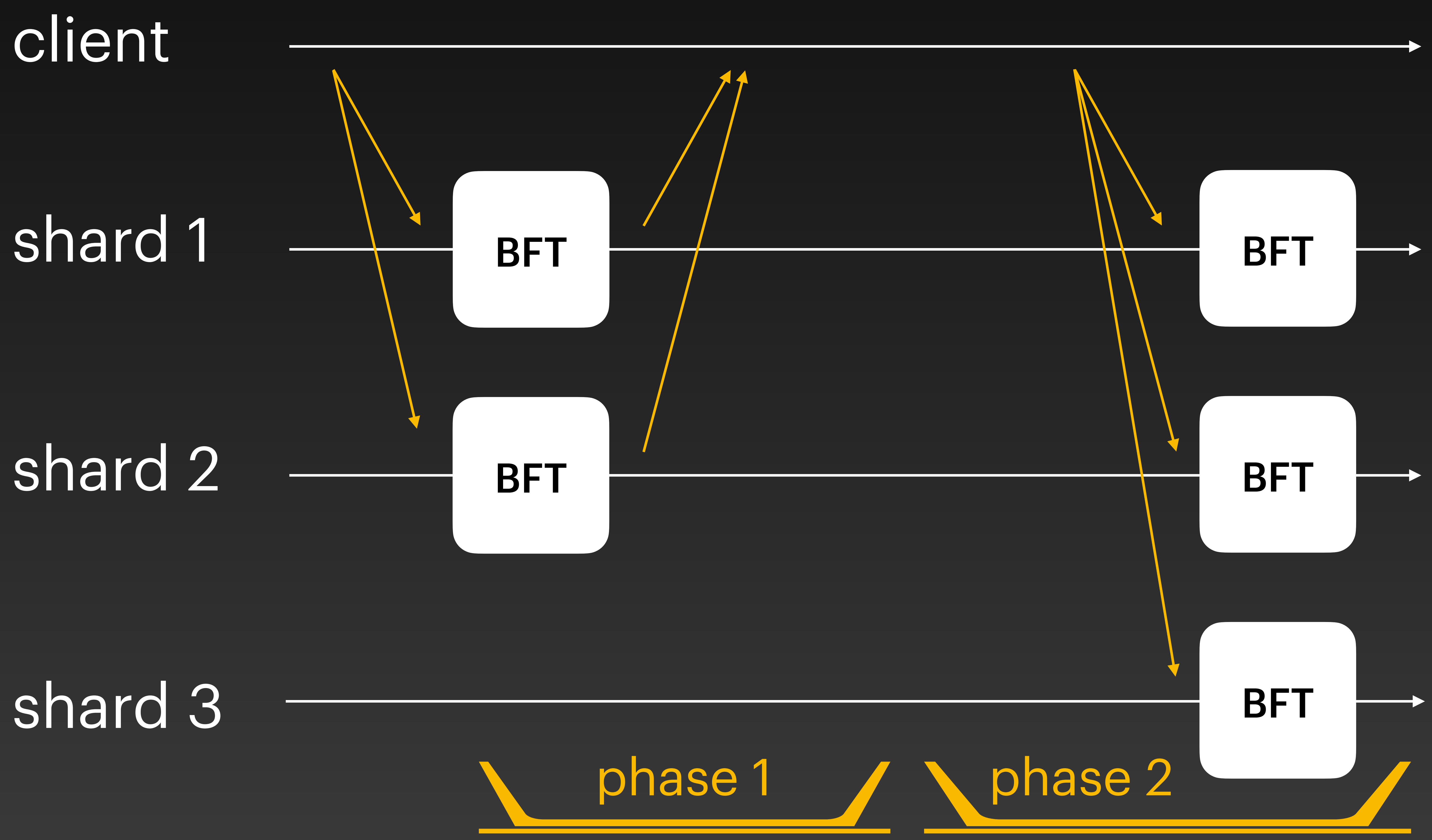
Atomix

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



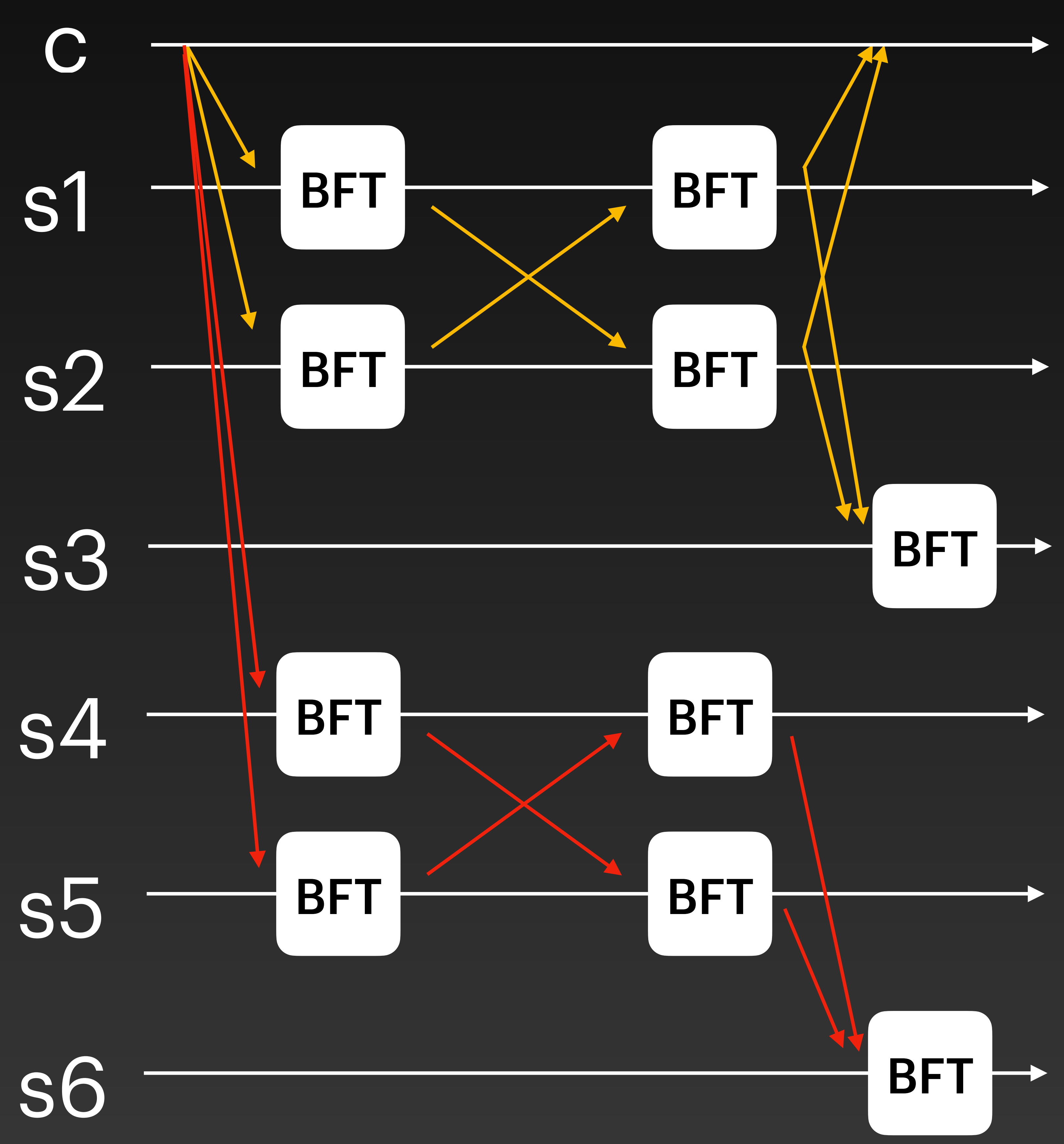
Atomix

$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



Cross-Shard Consensus

How does it achieve linear scalability?



Insecure under parallel composition

Attacks

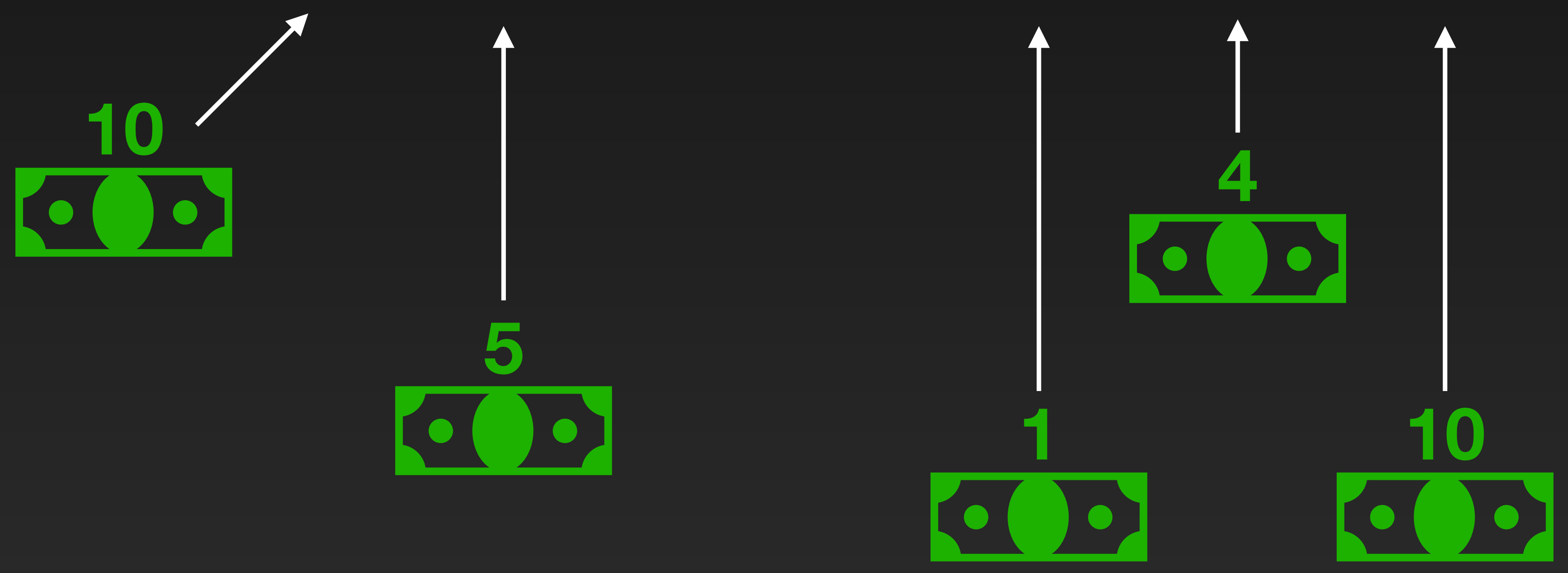
Double spend any object

- Does not need to collude with any node
- Acts as client or passive observer
- Re-orders network messages (not always needed)

Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1

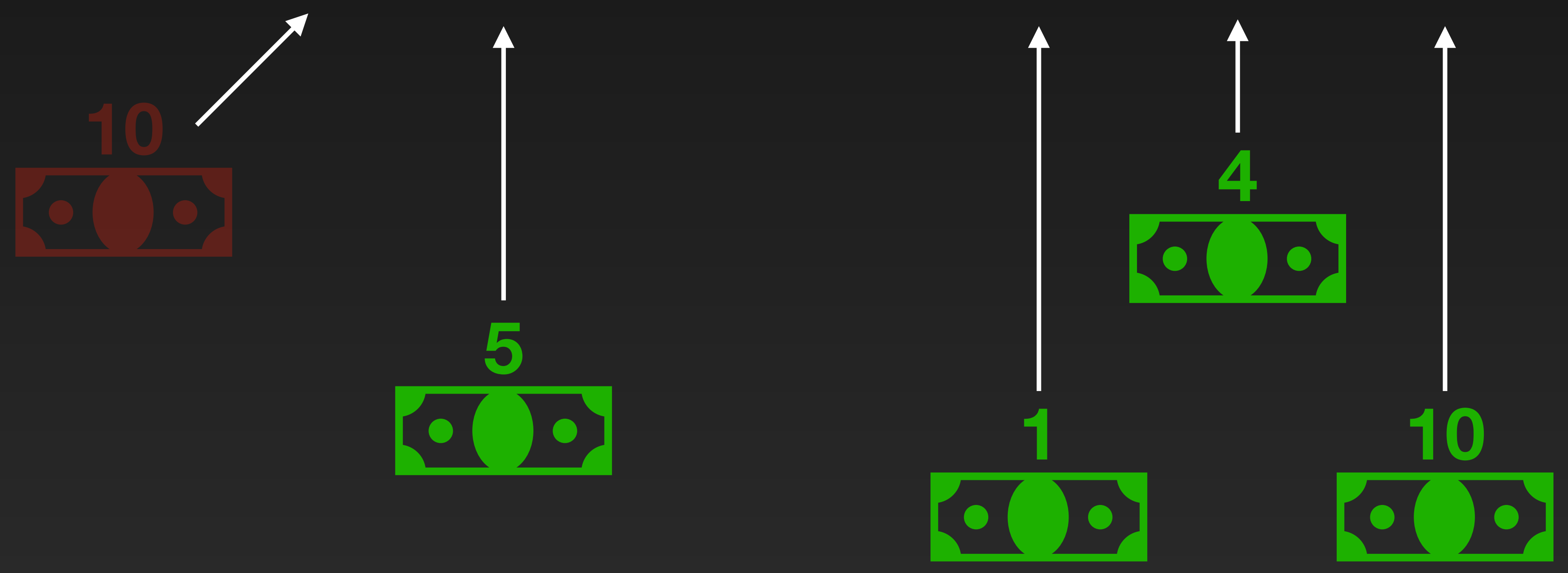
$$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1

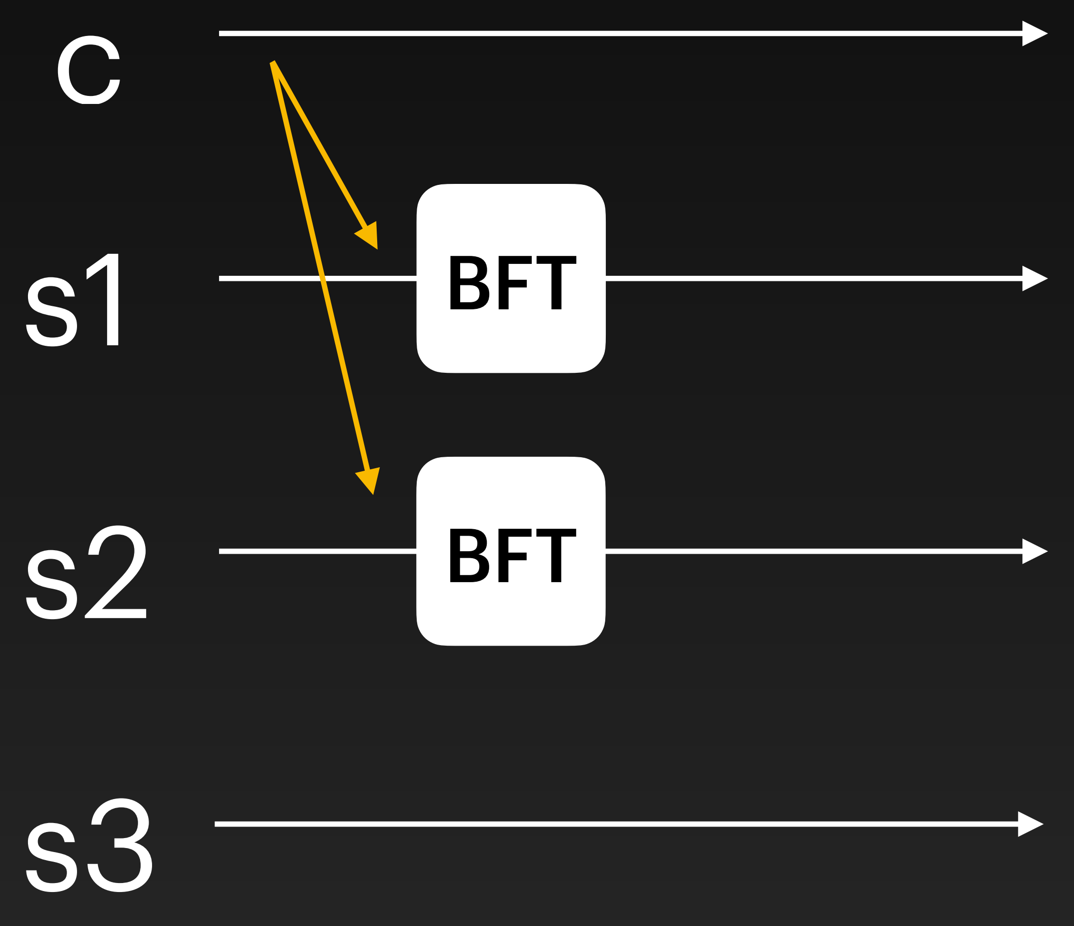
$$T'(\widetilde{x_1}, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$



Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X₁

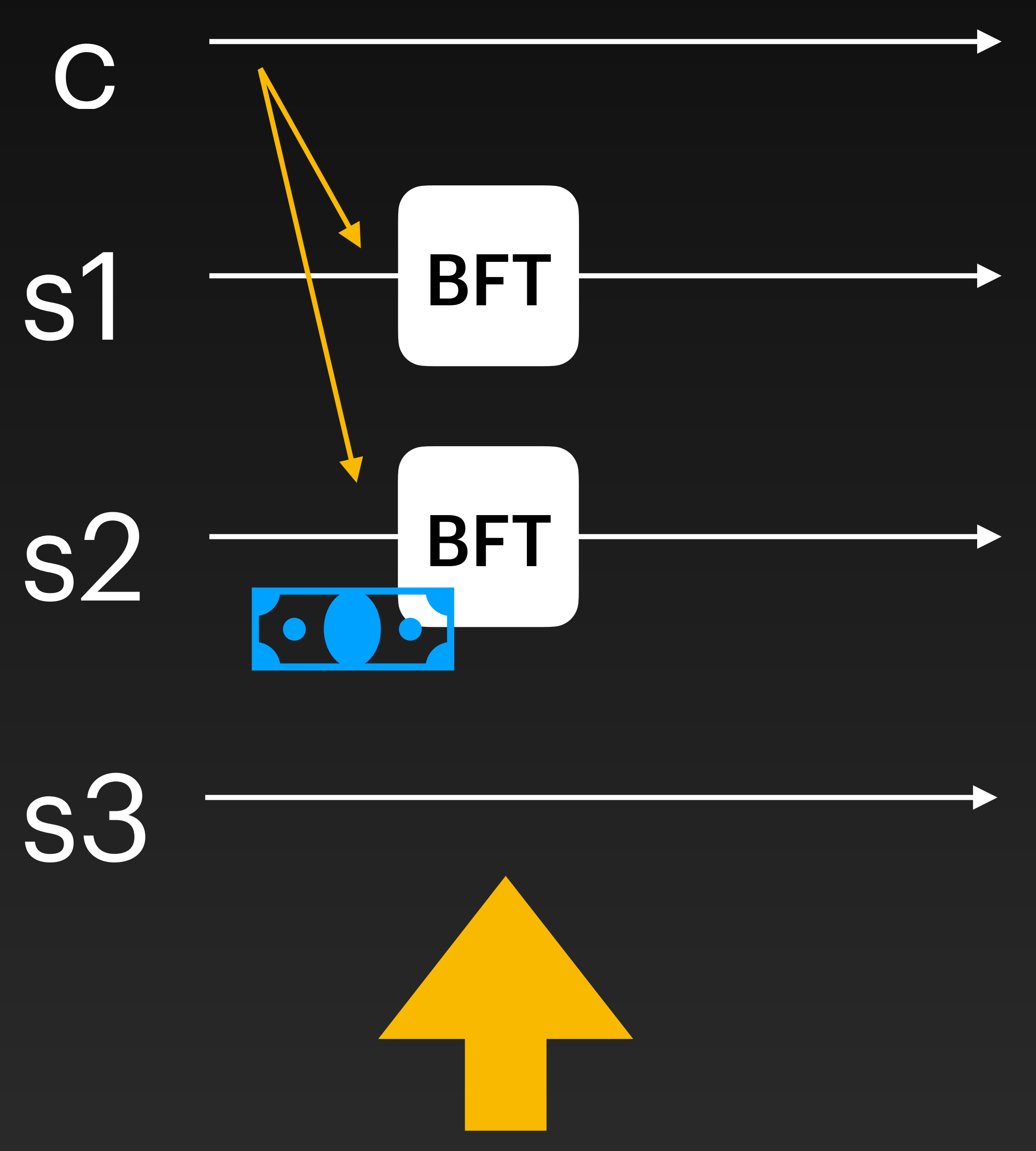
$T'(\widetilde{x_1}, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$



Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1

$T'(\widetilde{x_1}, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$

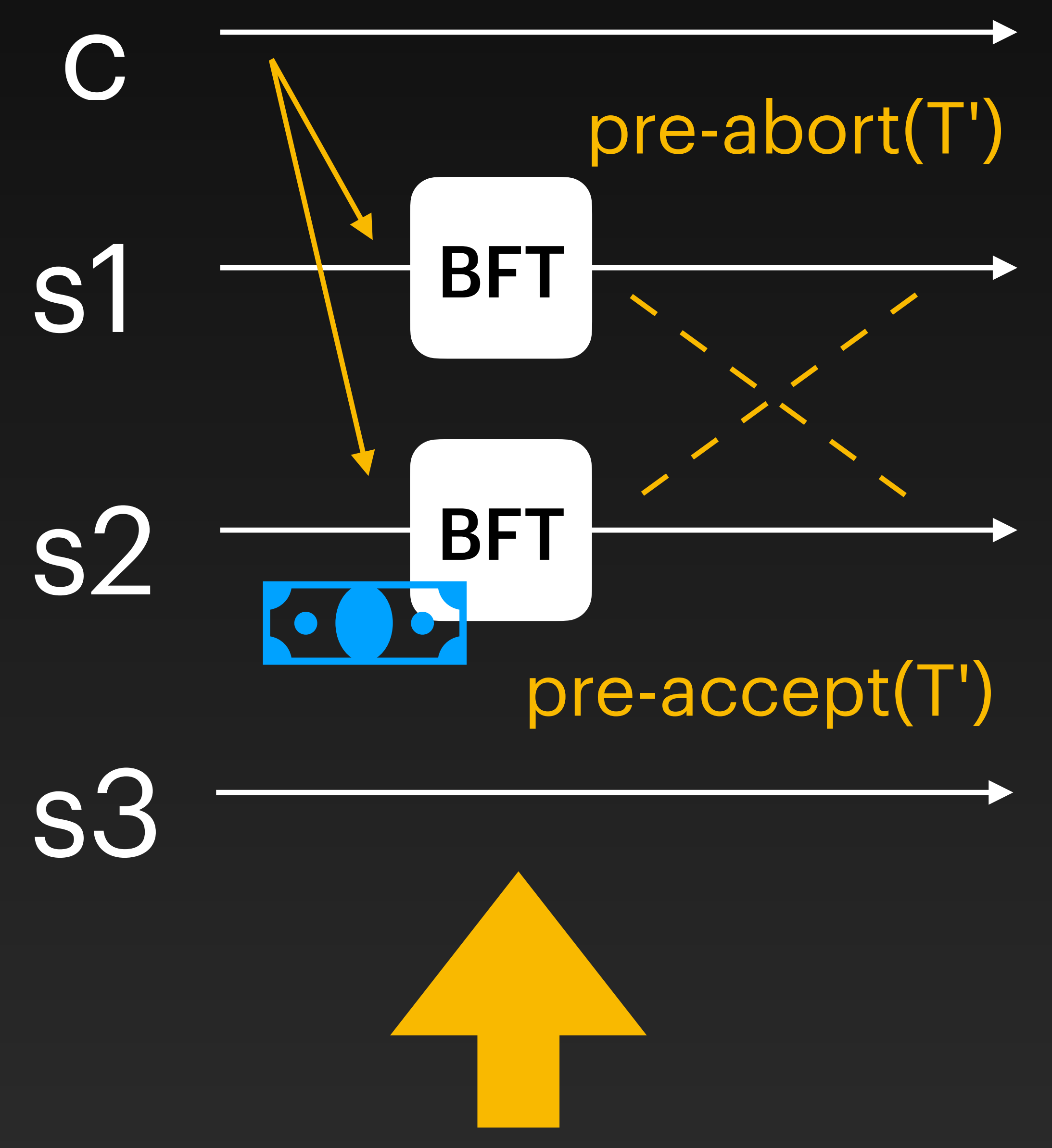


lock X_2

Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1

$$T'(\widetilde{x_1}, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$$

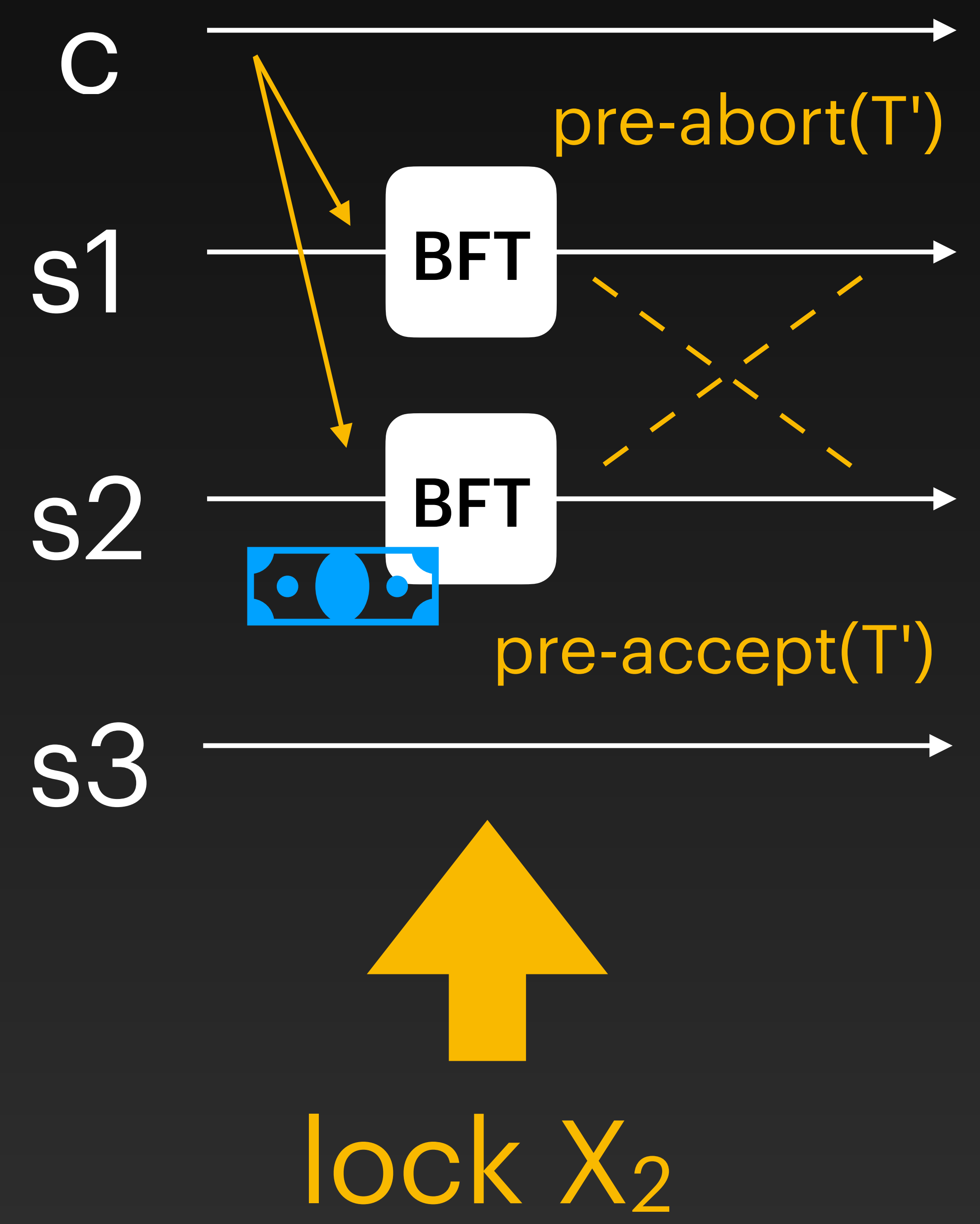


lock X_2

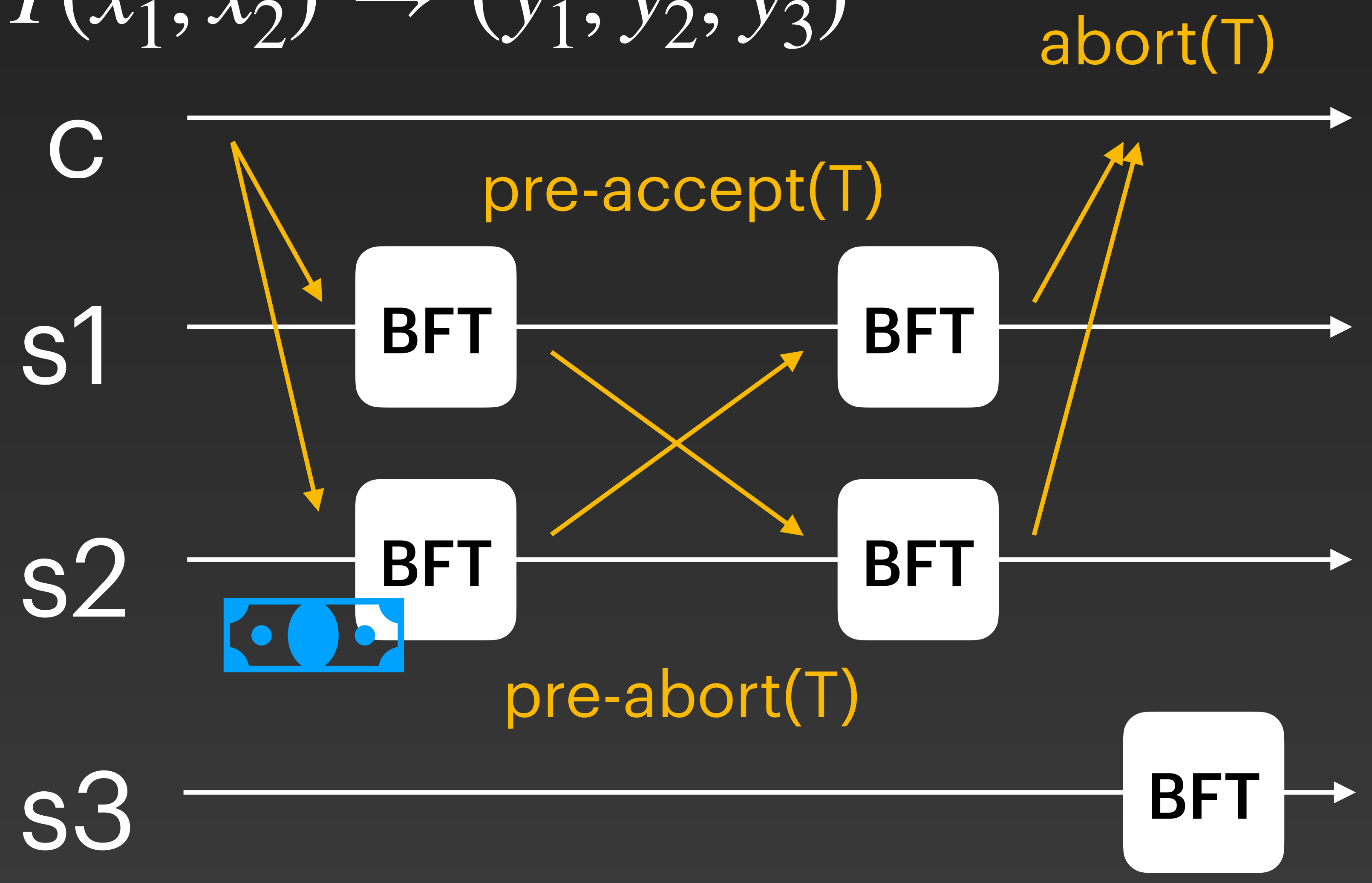
Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1

$T'(\widetilde{x_1}, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$



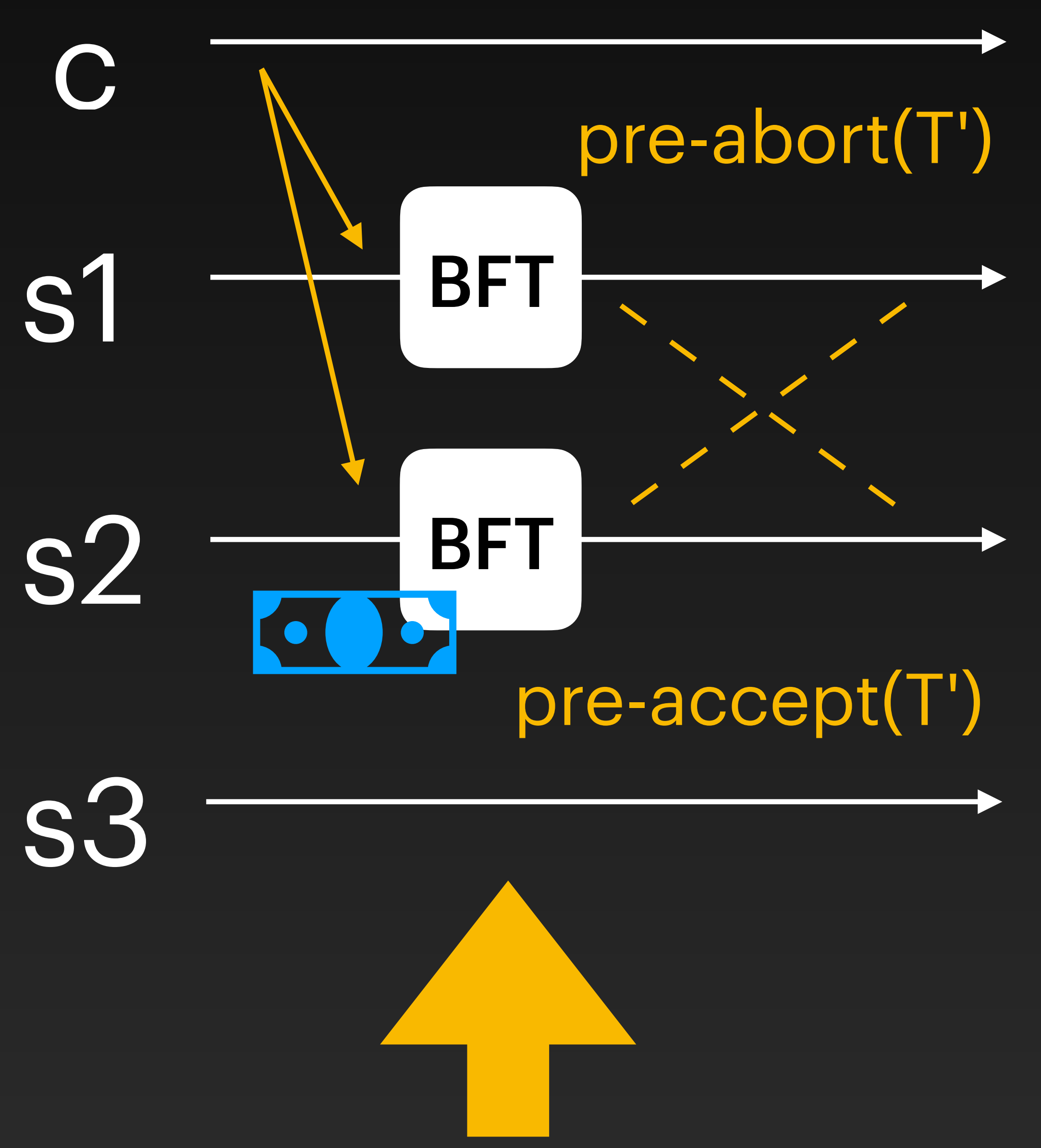
$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$



Attack against S-BAC

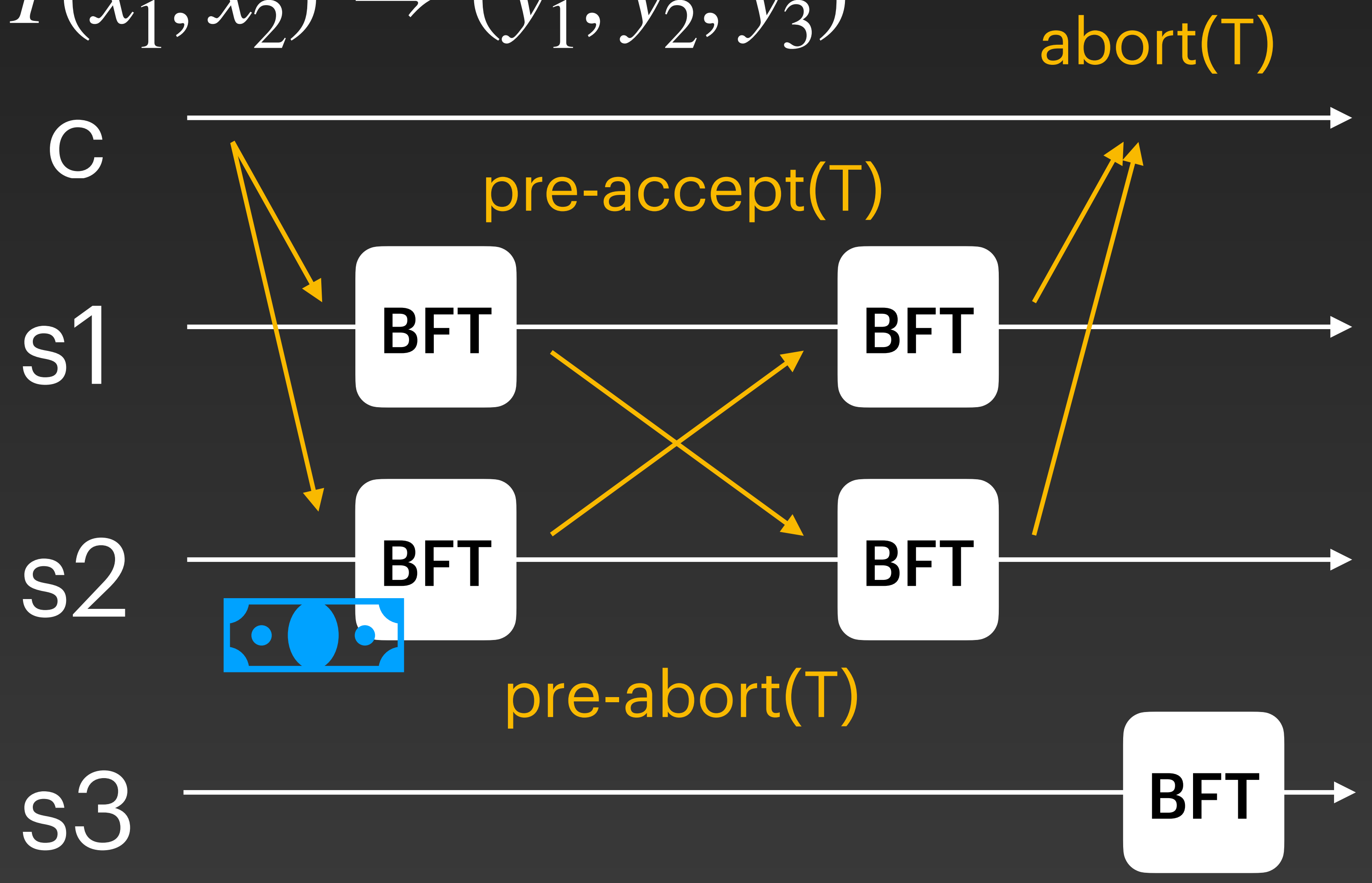
Double-spend X₁

$T'(\widetilde{x_1}, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$



lock X_2

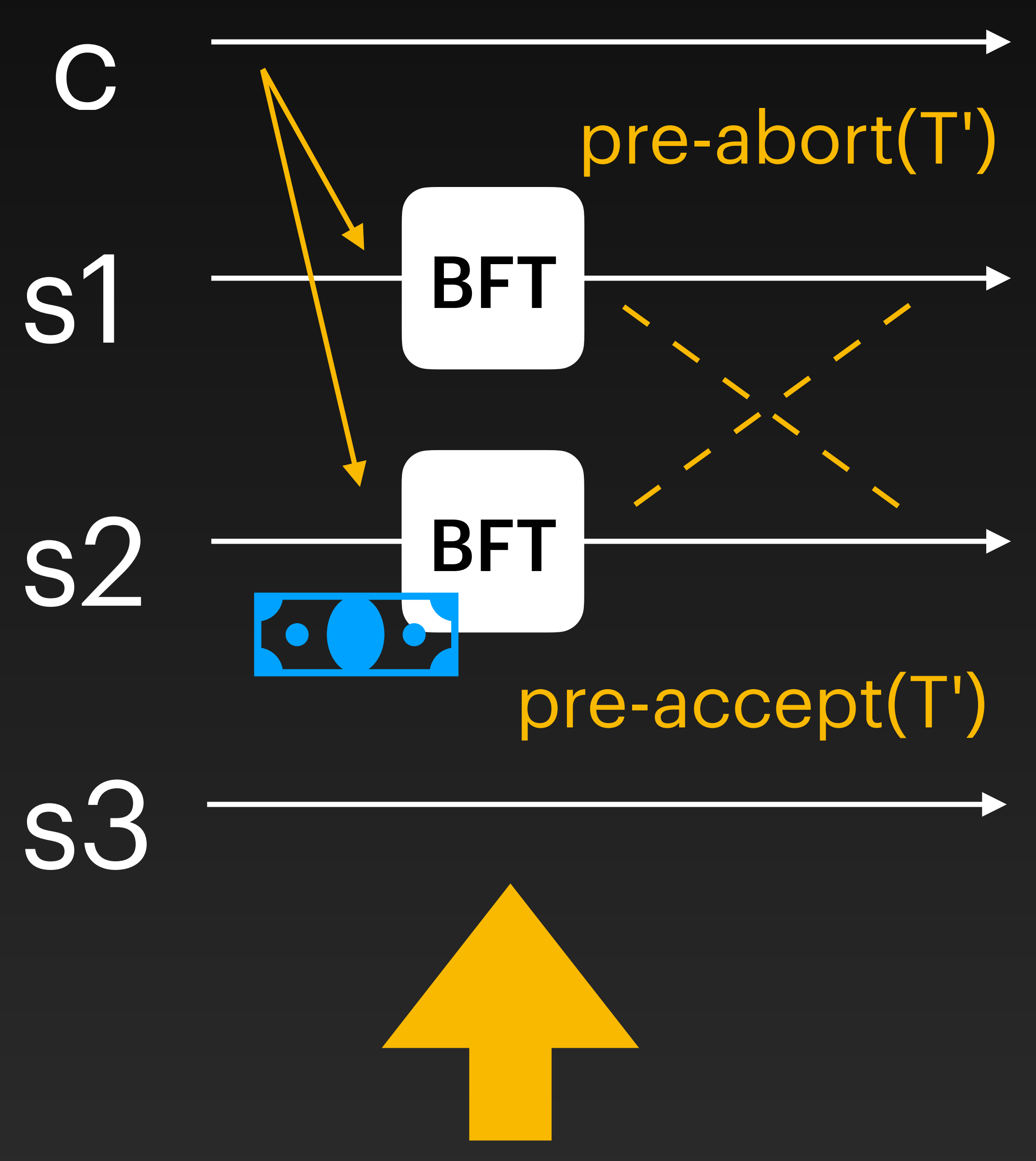
$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$



Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1

$T'(\widetilde{x_1}, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$

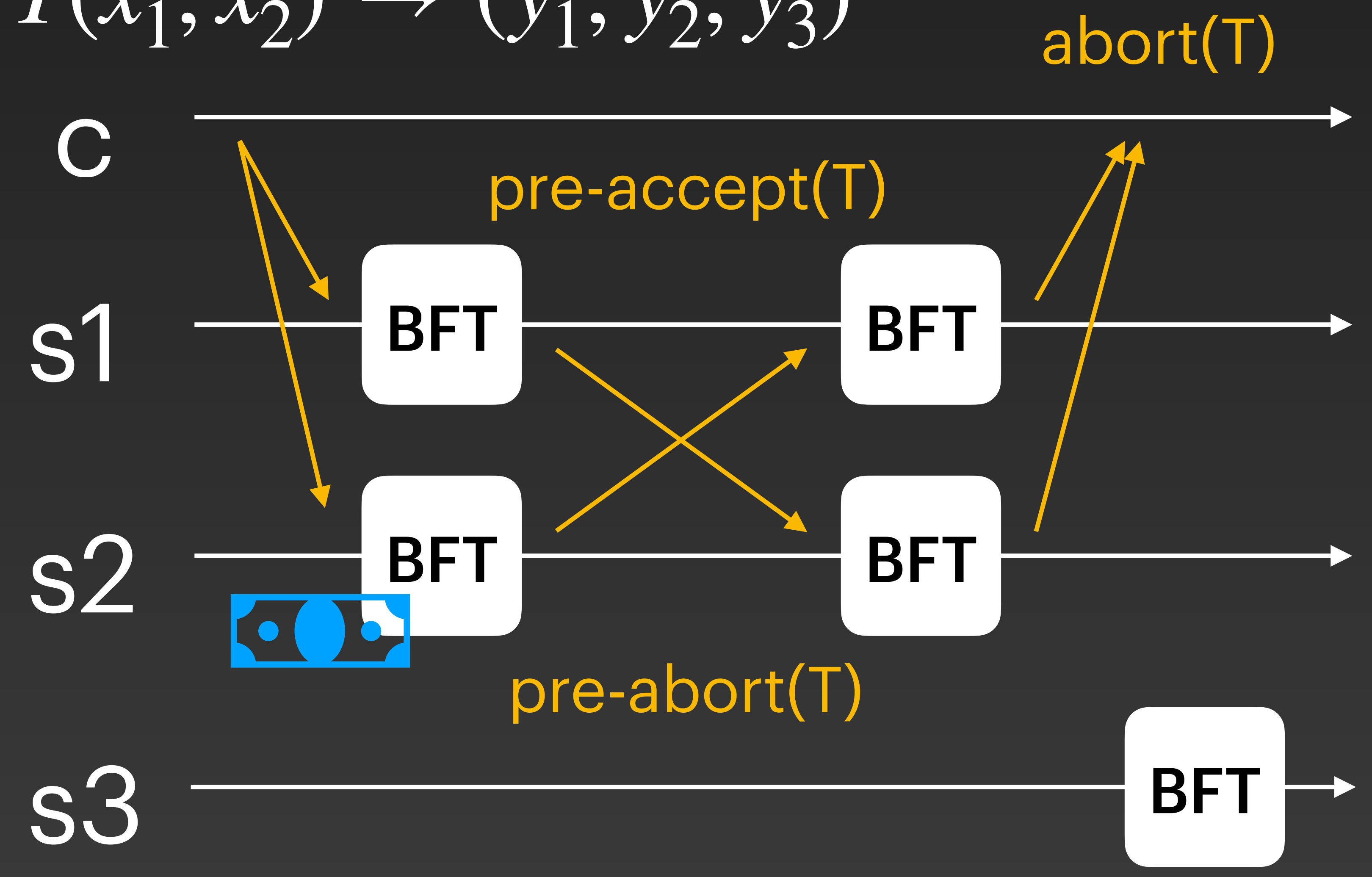


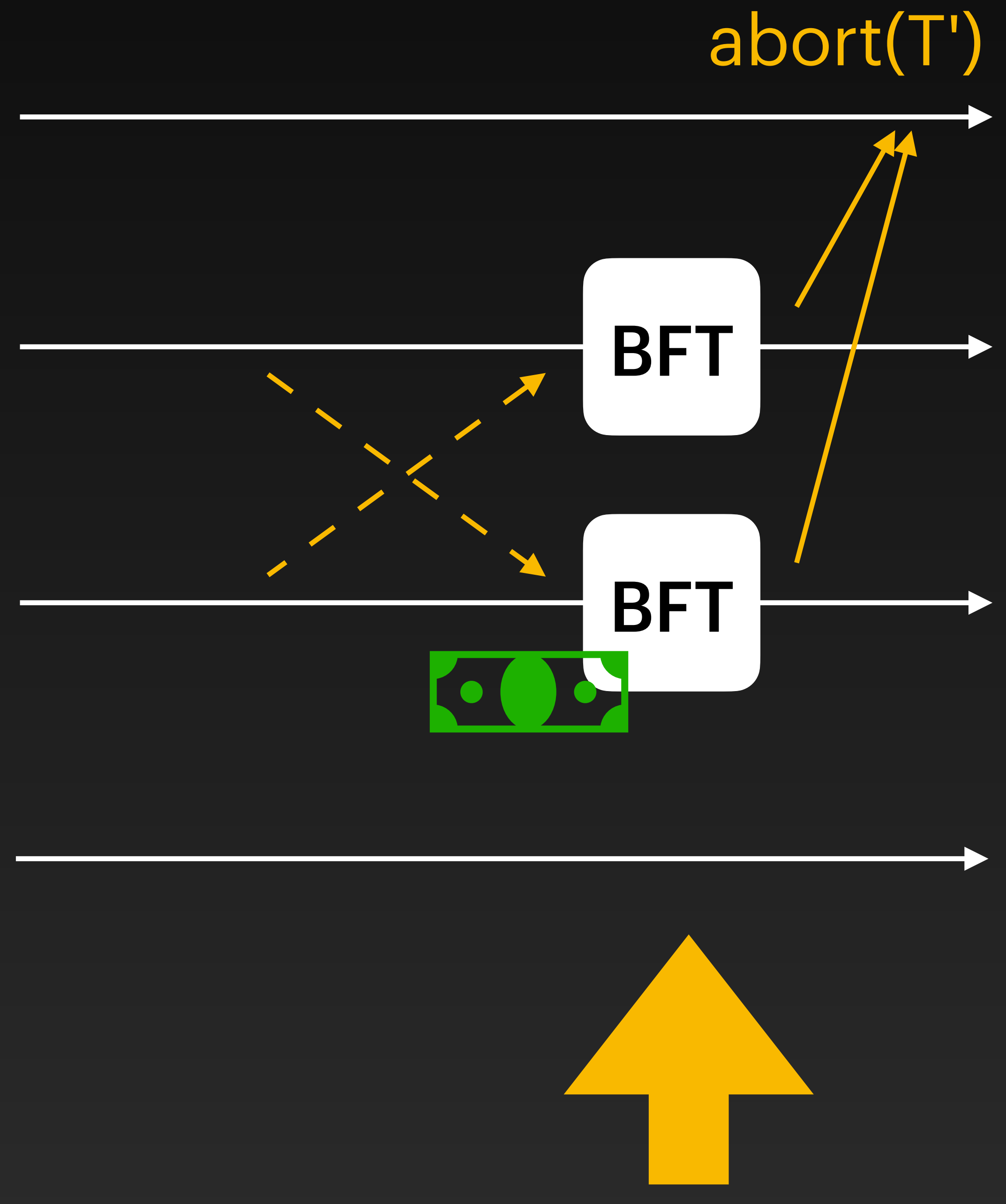
lock X_2

pre-accept(T)

from shard 1

$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$



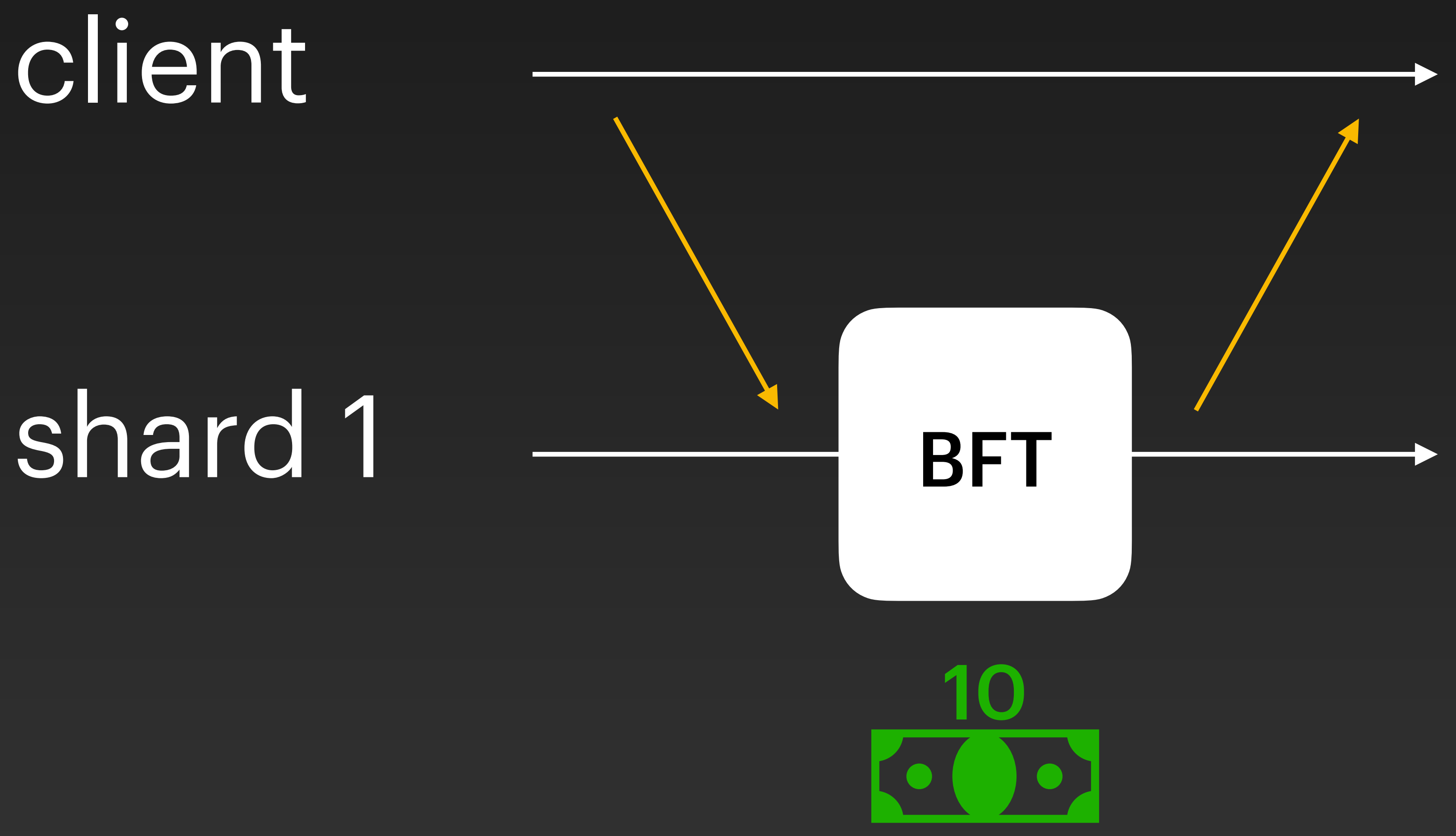


unlock X_2

Attack against S-BAC

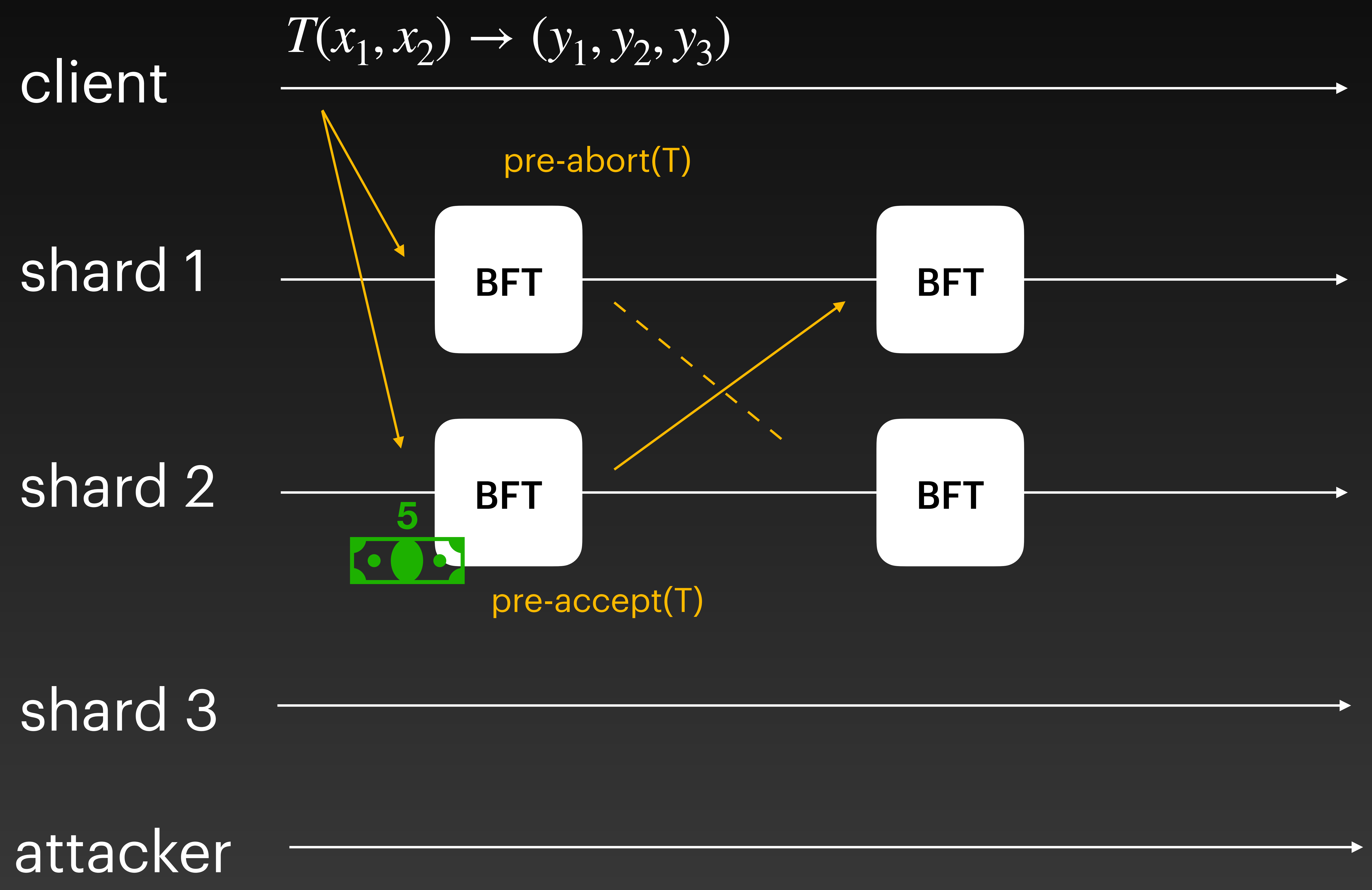
Double-spend X_1

$$T^*(x_1) \rightarrow (y_*)$$



Attack against S-BAC

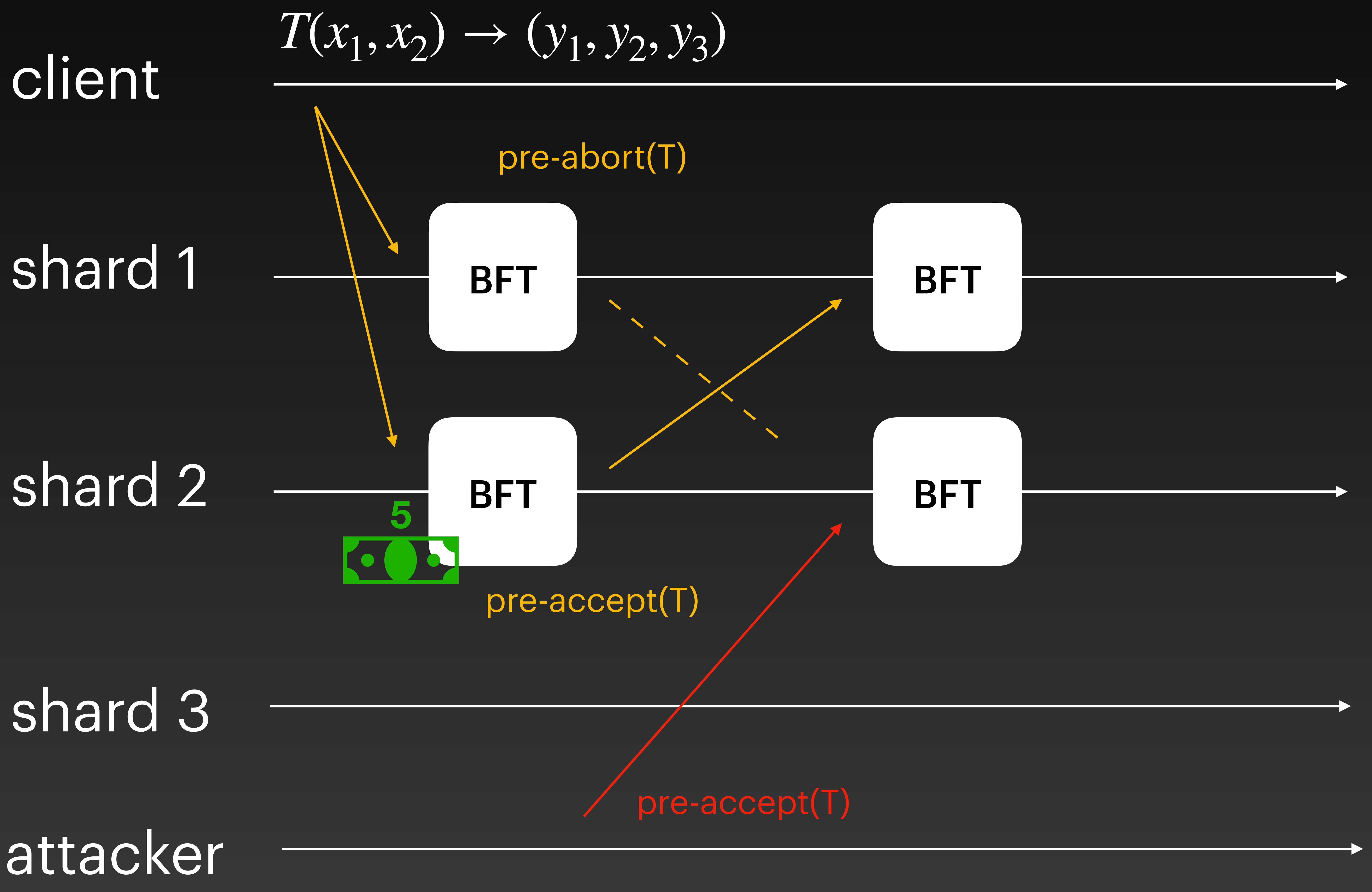
Double-spend X_1



$T(x_1, x_2) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)$

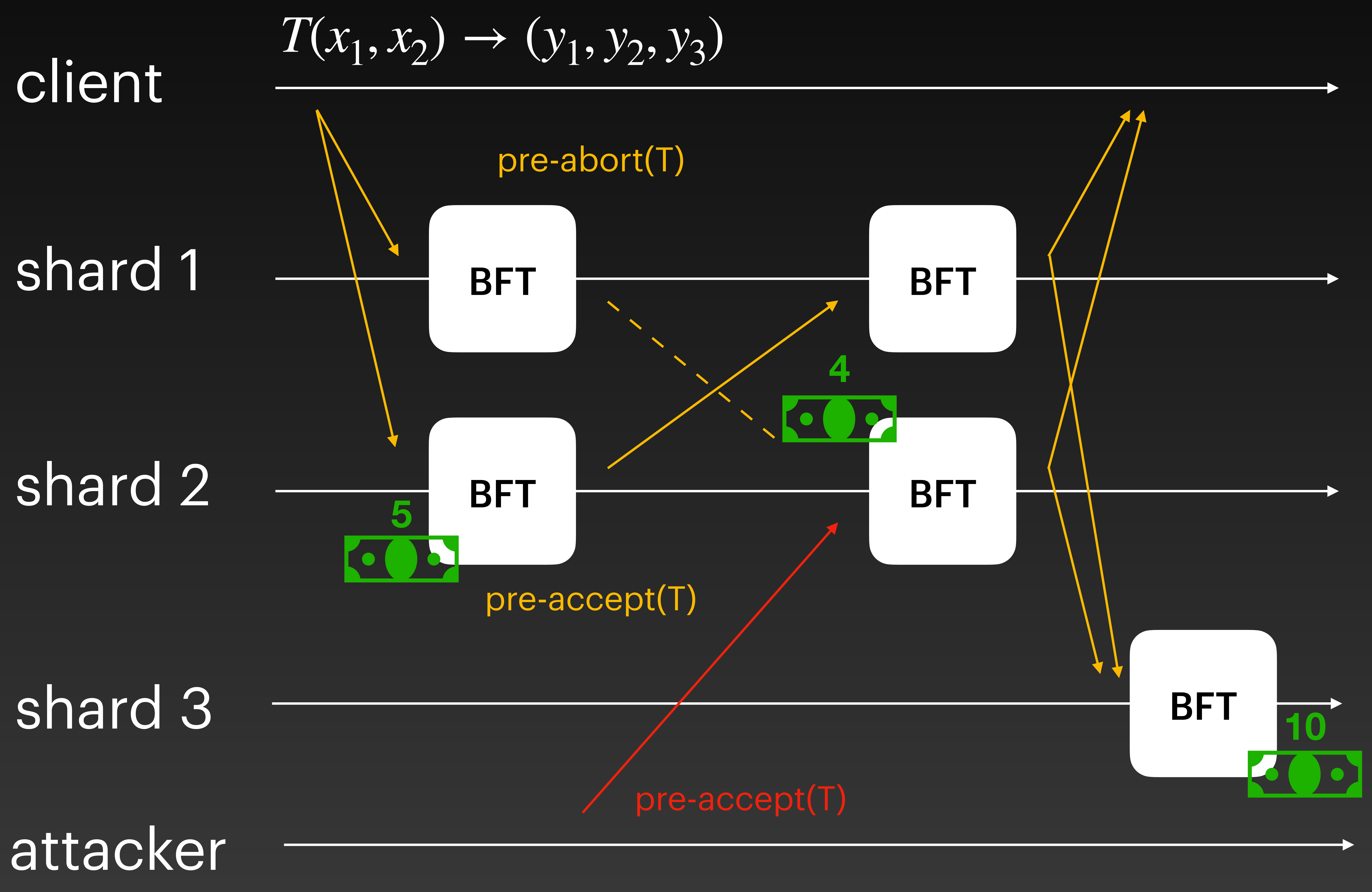
Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1



Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1



Attack against S-BAC

Double-spend X_1

Before attack

X_1 💵 10

X_2 💵 5

After attack

Y_* 💵 10

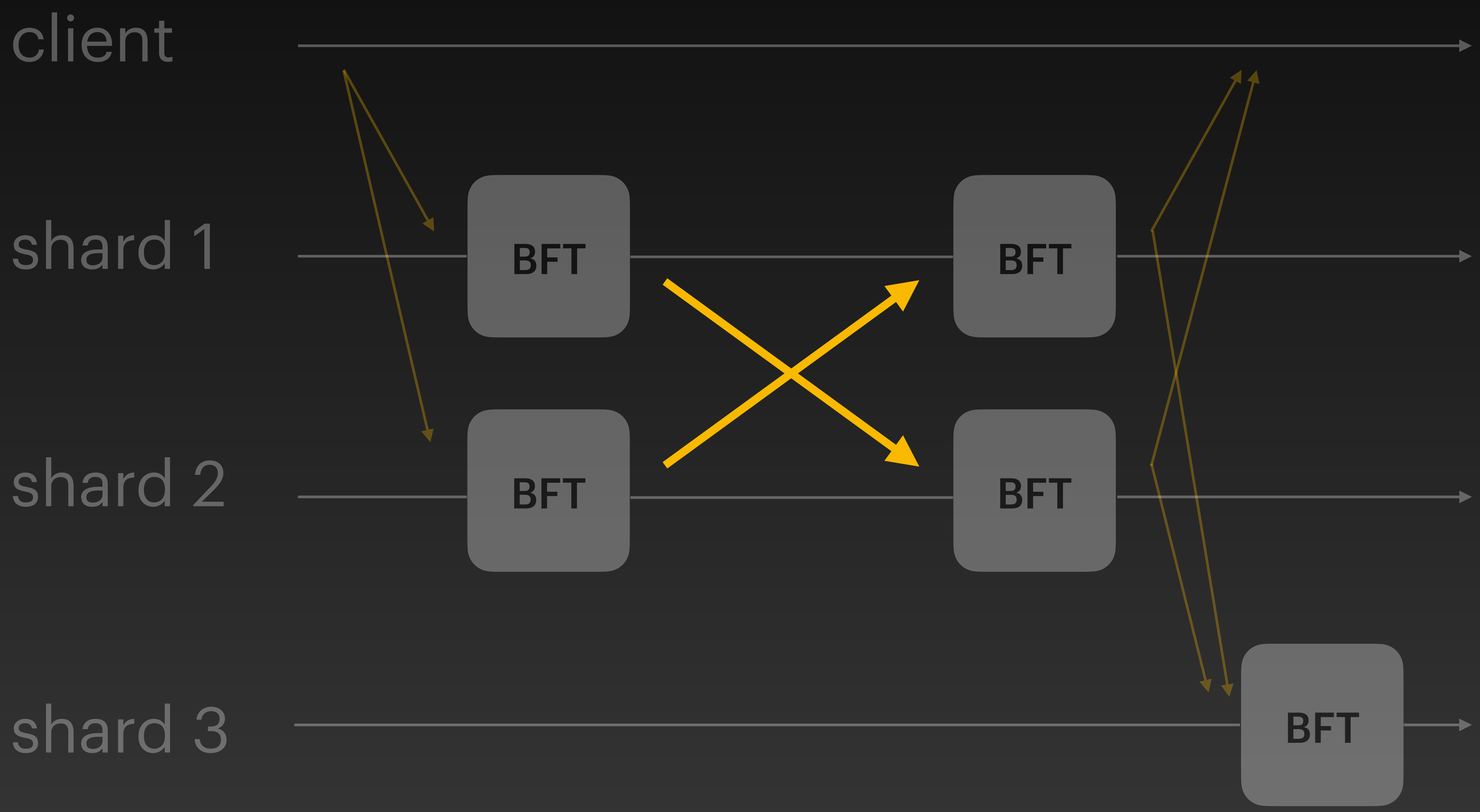
Y_2 💵 4

Y_3 💵 10

If it is not implemented, it does not work

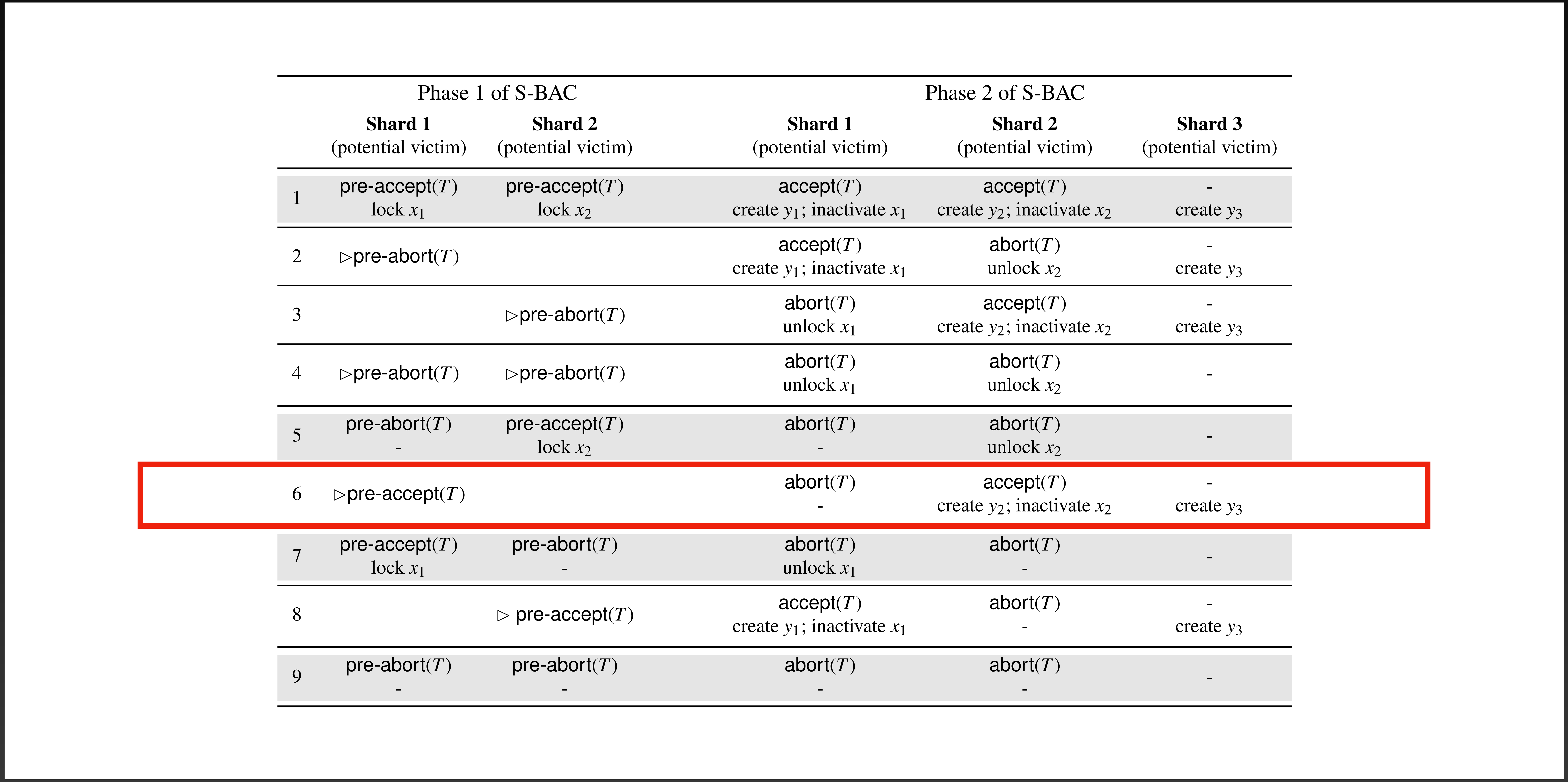
Attacks against S-BAC

First phase



Attacks against S-BAC

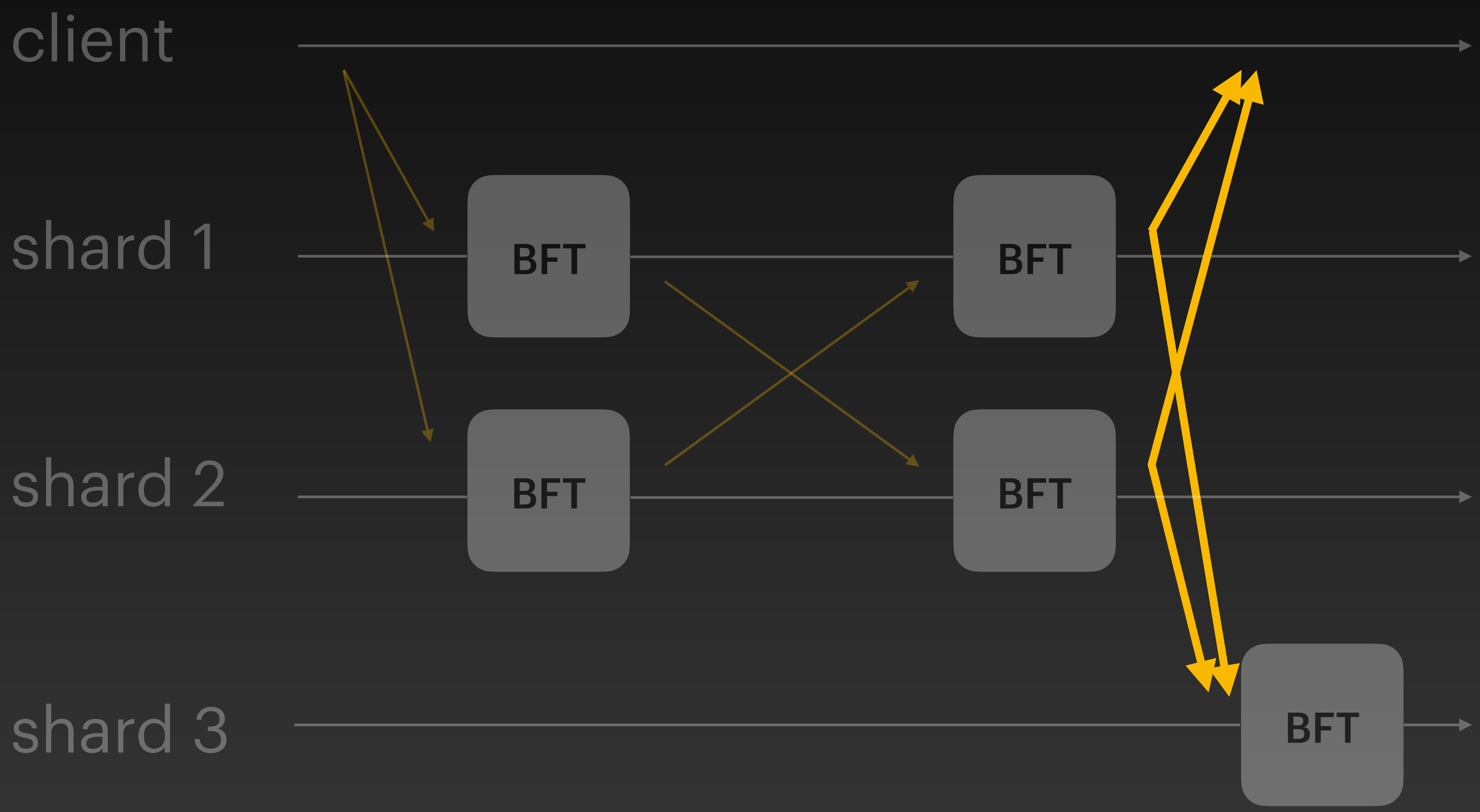
First phase



	Phase 1 of S-BAC		Phase 2 of S-BAC		
	Shard 1 (potential victim)	**Shard 2** (potential victim)	**Shard 1** (potential victim)	**Shard 2** (potential victim)	**Shard 3** (potential victim)
1	pre-accept(T) lock x_1	pre-accept(T) lock x_2	accept(T) create y_1; inactivate x_1	accept(T) create y_2; inactivate x_2	- create y_3
2	▷pre-abort(T)		accept(T) create y_1; inactivate x_1	abort(T) unlock x_2	- create y_3
3		▷pre-abort(T)	abort(T) unlock x_1	accept(T) create y_2; inactivate x_2	- create y_3
4	▷pre-abort(T)	▷pre-abort(T)	abort(T) unlock x_1	abort(T) unlock x_2	-
5	pre-abort(T) -	pre-accept(T) lock x_2	abort(T) -	abort(T) unlock x_2	-
6	▷pre-accept(T)		abort(T) -	accept(T) create y_2; inactivate x_2	- create y_3
7	pre-accept(T) lock x_1	pre-abort(T) -	abort(T) unlock x_1	abort(T) -	-
8		▷ pre-accept(T)	accept(T) create y_1; inactivate x_1	abort(T) -	- create y_3
9	pre-abort(T) -	pre-abort(T) -	abort(T) -	abort(T) -	-

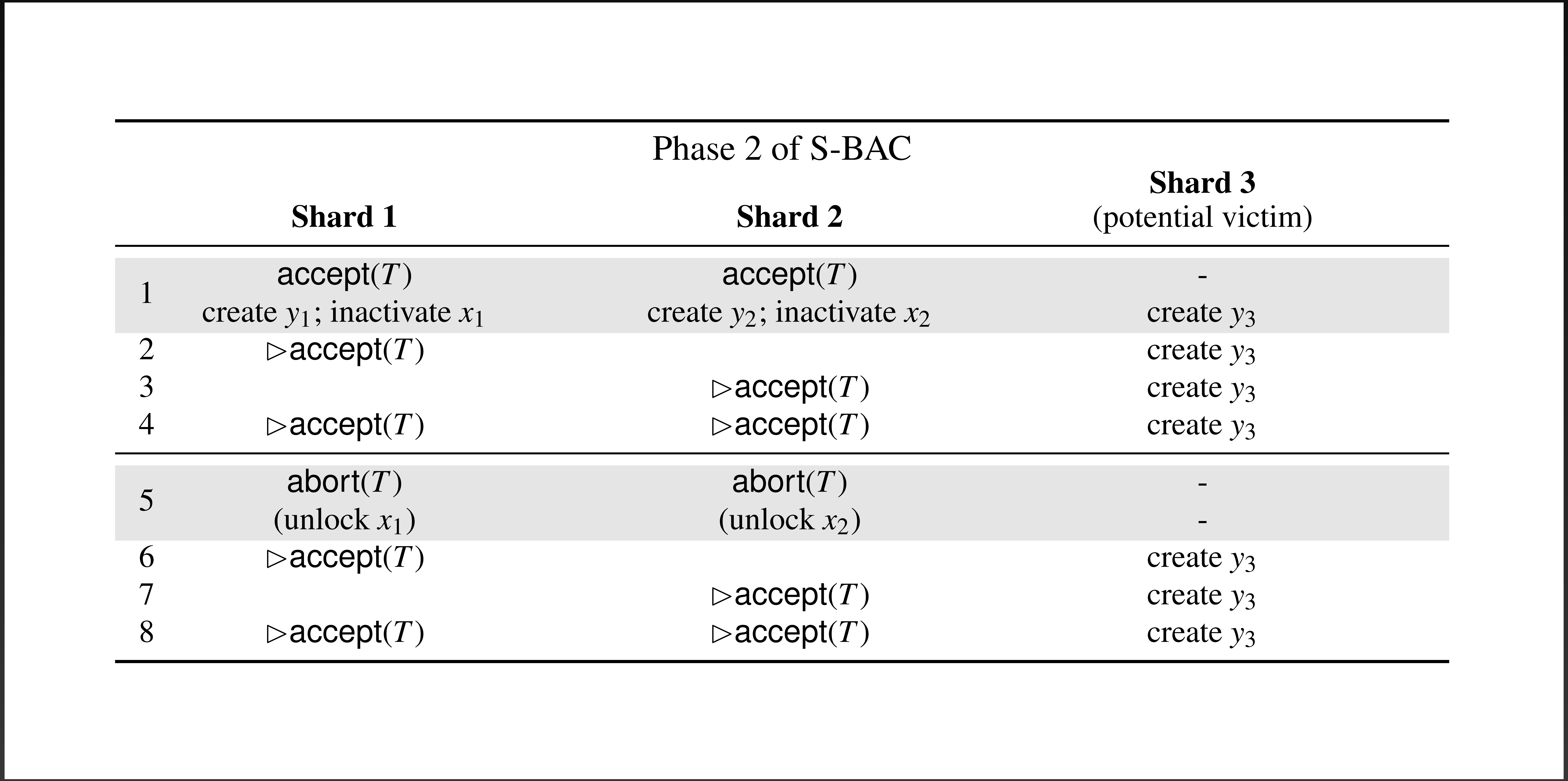
Attacks against S-BAC

Second phase



Attacks against S-BAC

Second phase



		Phase 2 of S-BAC	
	Shard 1	**Shard 2**	**Shard 3** (potential victim)
1	accept(T) create y_1; inactivate x_1	accept(T) create y_2; inactivate x_2	- create y_3
2	$\triangleright$accept(T)		create y_3
3		$\triangleright$accept(T)	create y_3
4	$\triangleright$accept(T)	$\triangleright$accept(T)	create y_3
5	abort(T) (unlock x_1)	abort(T) (unlock x_2)	- -
6	$\triangleright$accept(T)		create y_3
7		$\triangleright$accept(T)	create y_3
8	$\triangleright$accept(T)	$\triangleright$accept(T)	create y_3

What causes these issues?

Issue 1. Input shards cannot associate protocol messages to a specific protocol execution.

Issue 2. Output shards (that are not also input shards) do not experience the first phase of the protocol

Easy Fix?

Global sequence numbers?

~~Linear~~ ~~alability~~

Wait for messages to arrive?

~~Hight T~~ ~~oughput~~

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S-BAC + Atomix

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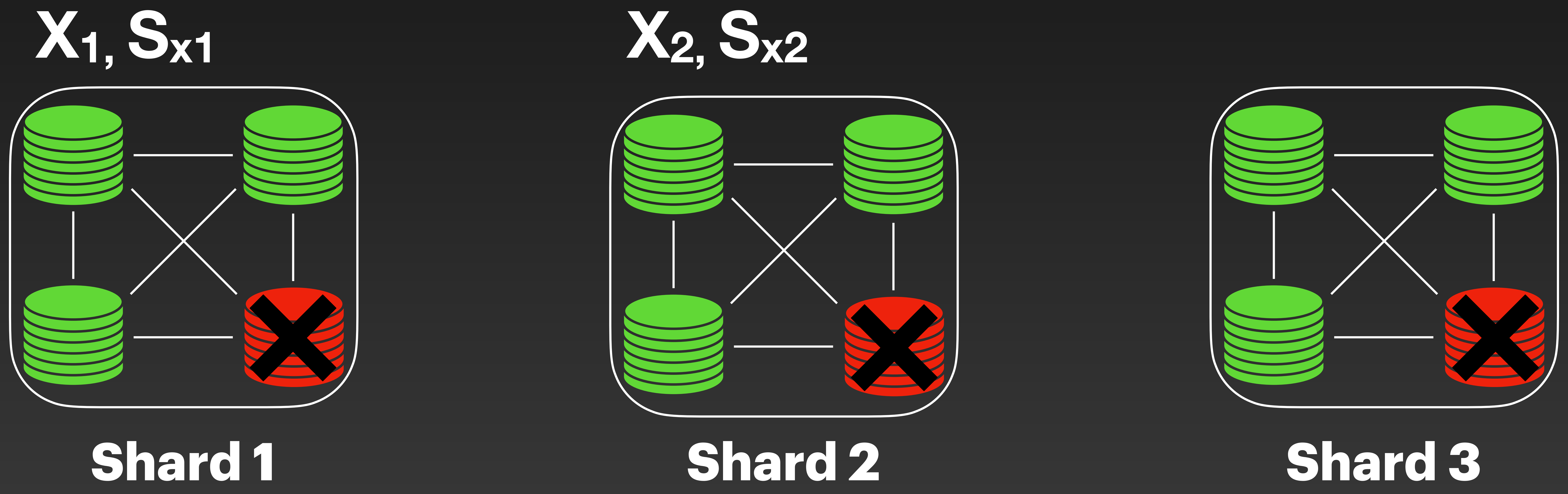
Fix issue 1

Add sequence numbers per object



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Fix issue 2

Dummy objects for output shards

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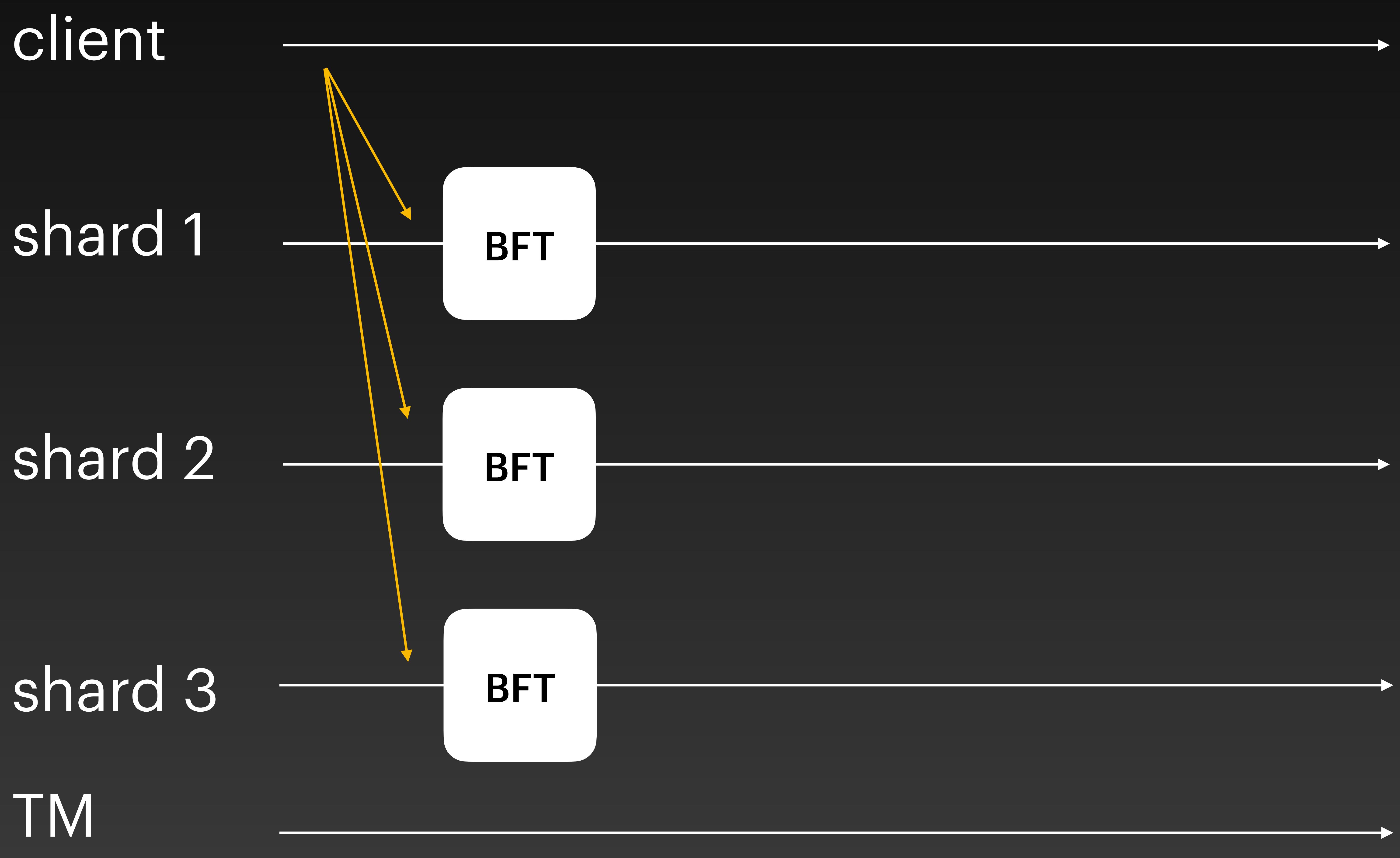
$$\{S_T, T(x_1, x_2, d_3) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)\}$$



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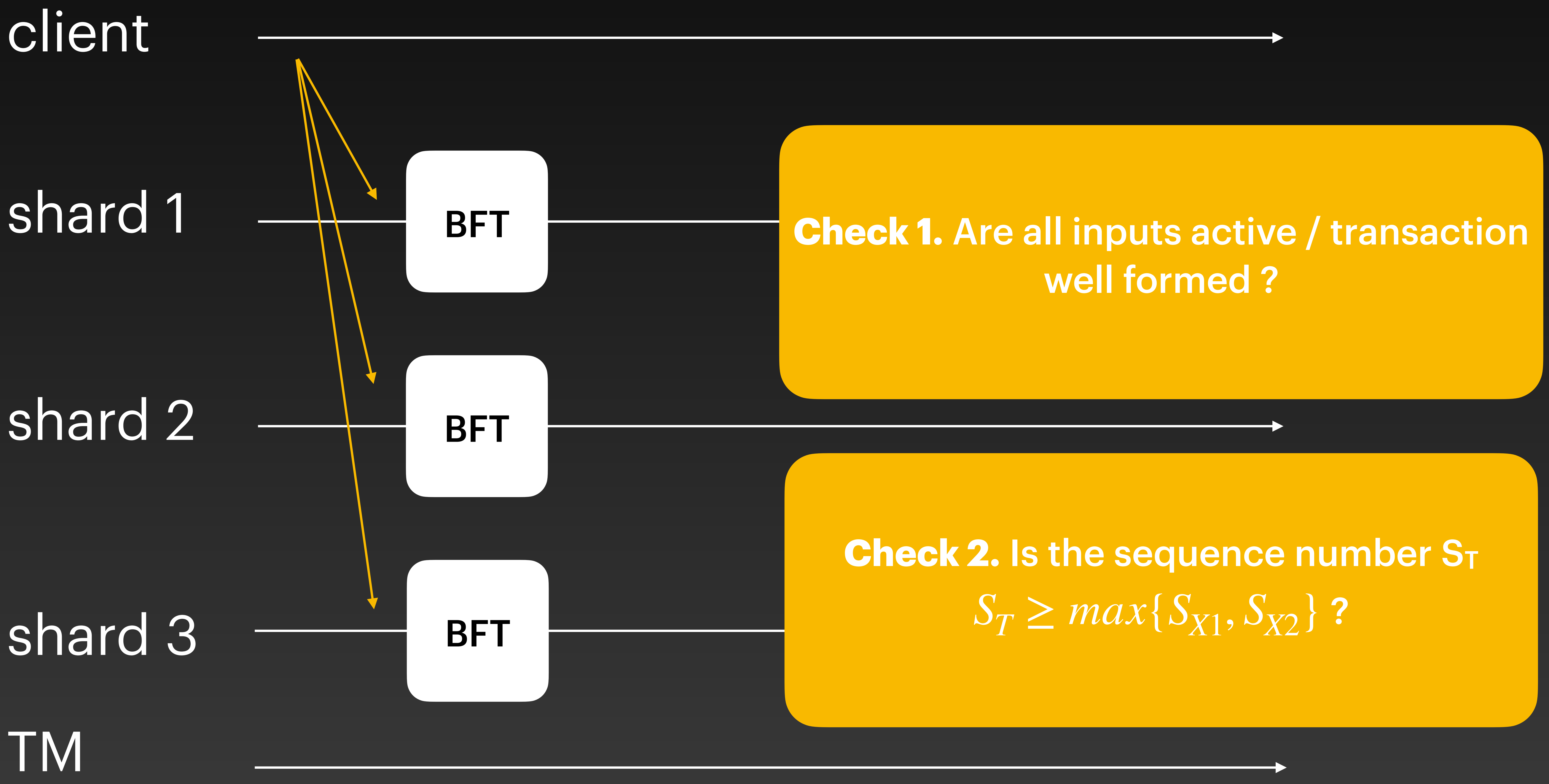
$$\{S_T, T(x_1, x_2, d_3) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)\}$$



Check 1. Are all inputs active / transaction well formed ?

Check 2. Is the sequence number S_T

$S_T \geq max\{S_{X1}, S_{X2}\}$?

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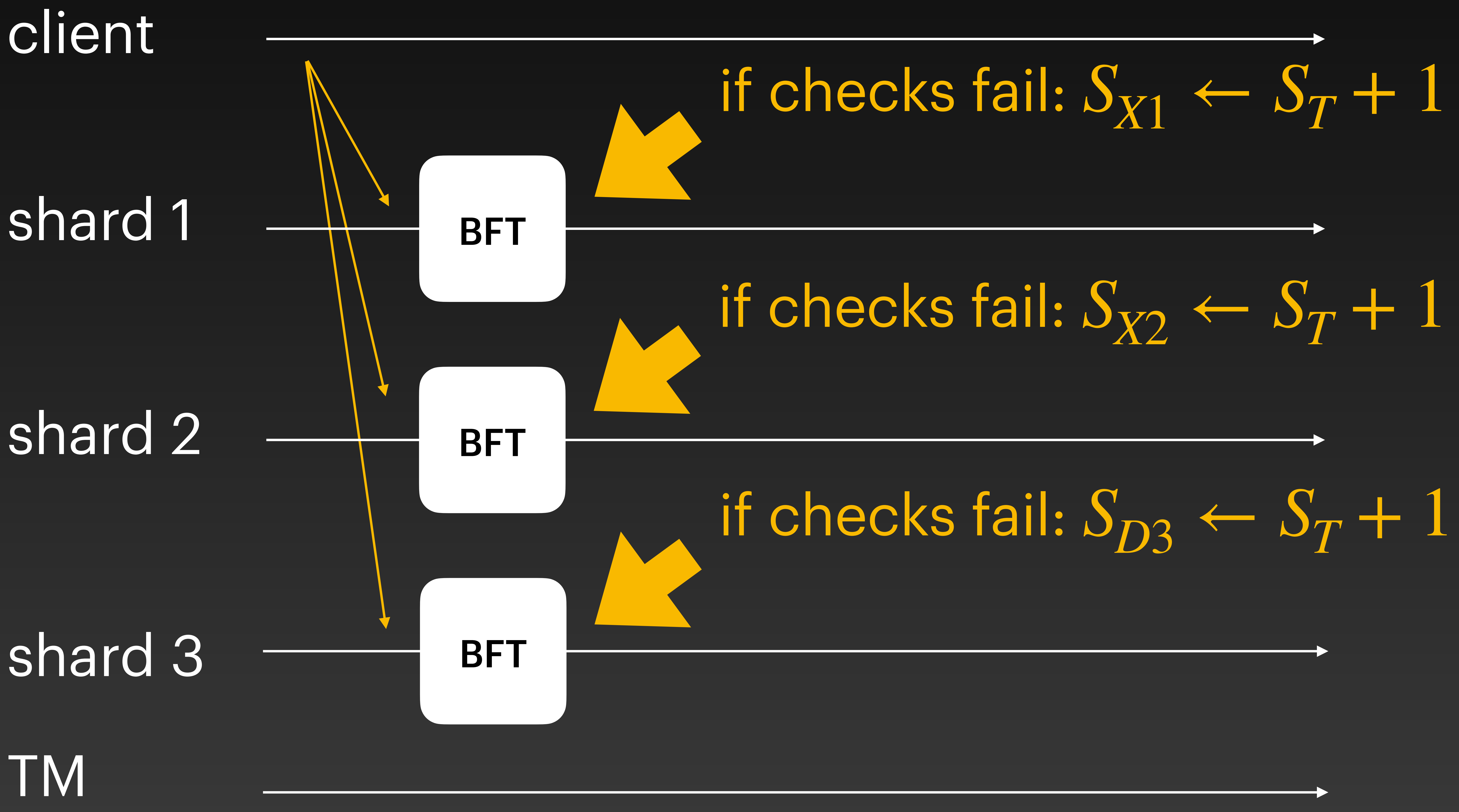
$$\{S_T, T(x_1, x_2, d_3) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)\}$$



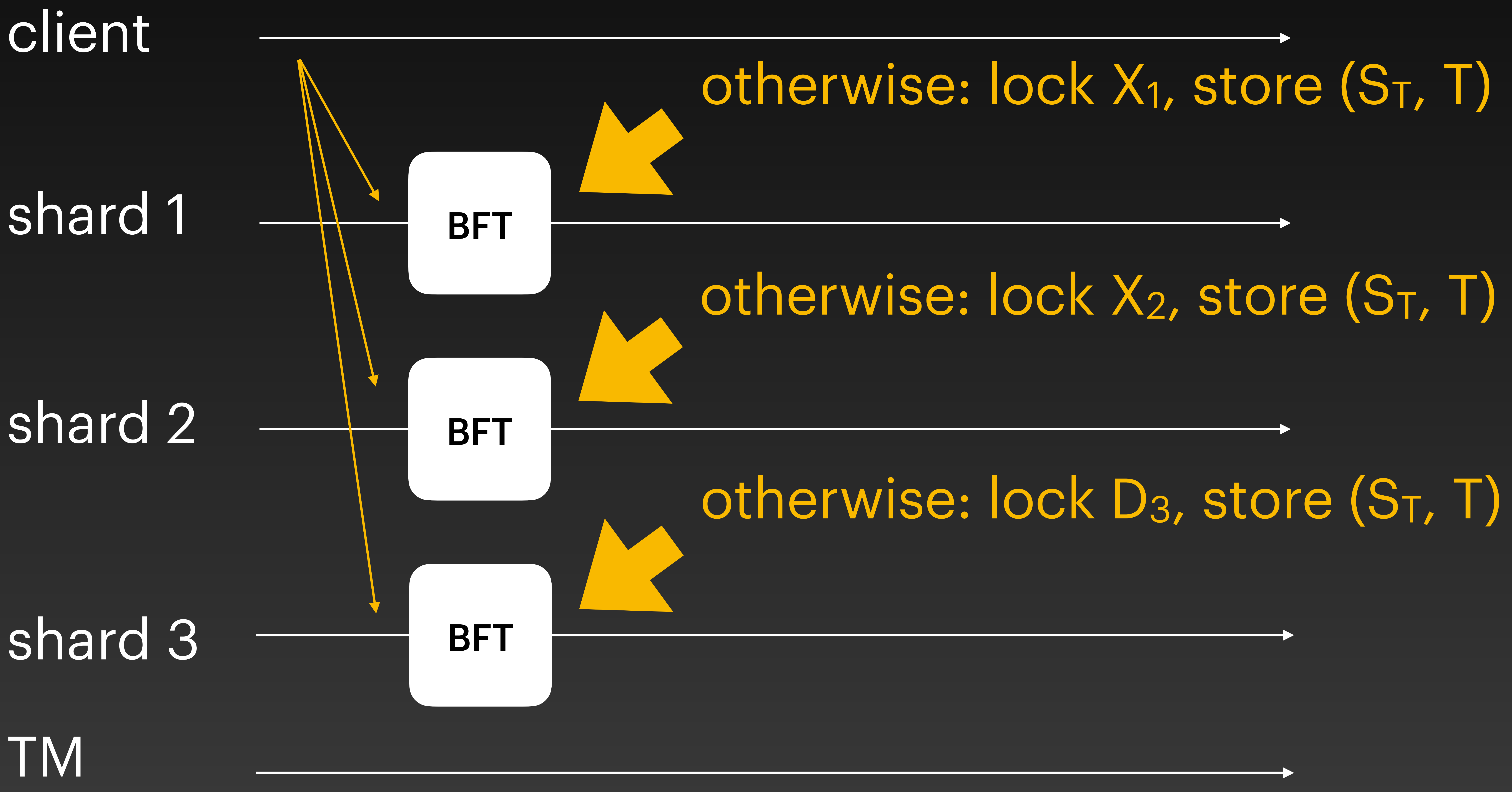
if checks fail: $S_{X1} \leftarrow S_T + 1$

if checks fail: $S_{X2} \leftarrow S_T + 1$

if checks fail: $S_{D3} \leftarrow S_T + 1$

Byzcuit

$$\{S_T, T(x_1, x_2, d_3) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)\}$$



otherwise: lock X_1, store (S_T, T)

otherwise: lock X_2, store (S_T, T)

otherwise: lock D_3, store (S_T, T)

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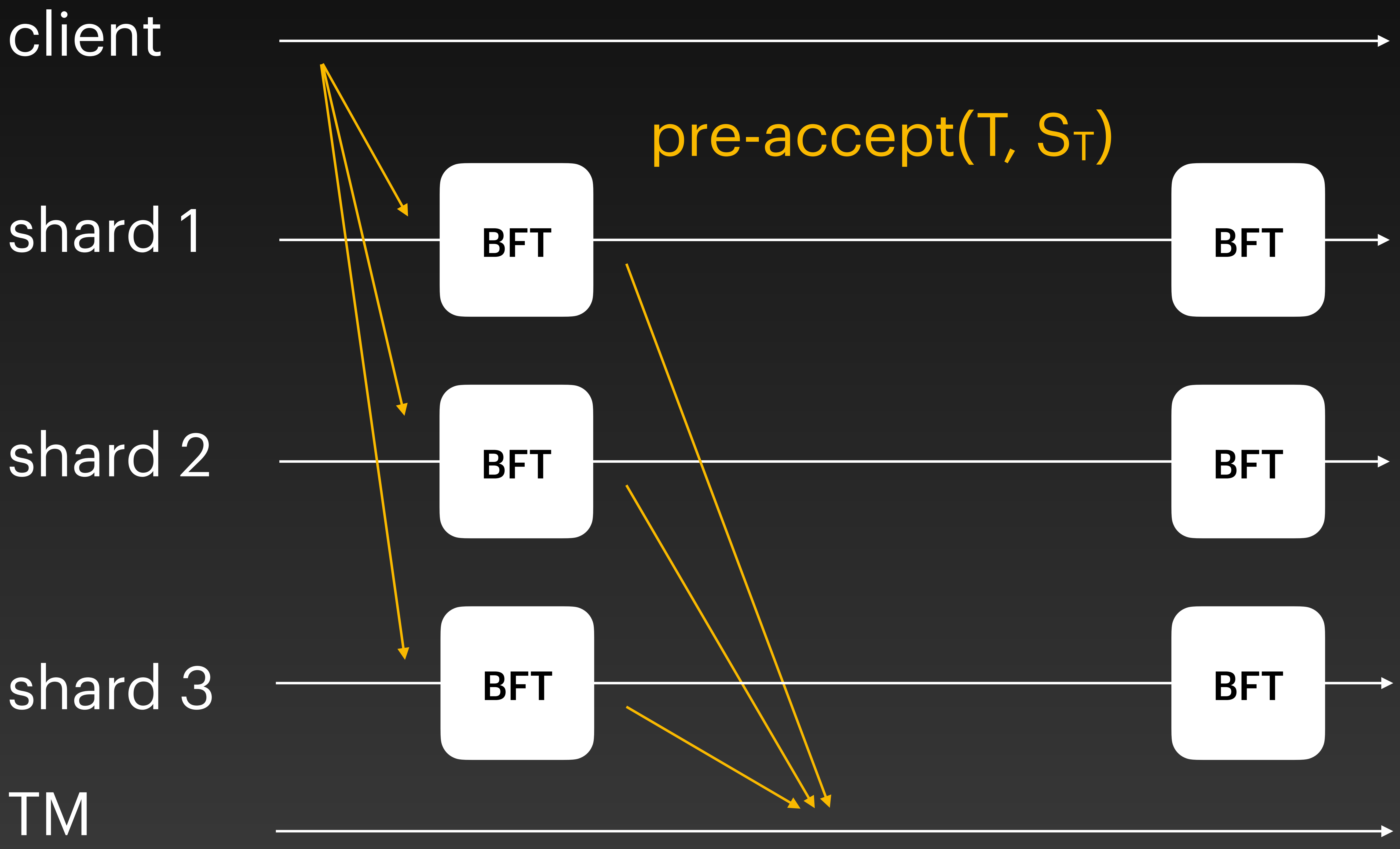
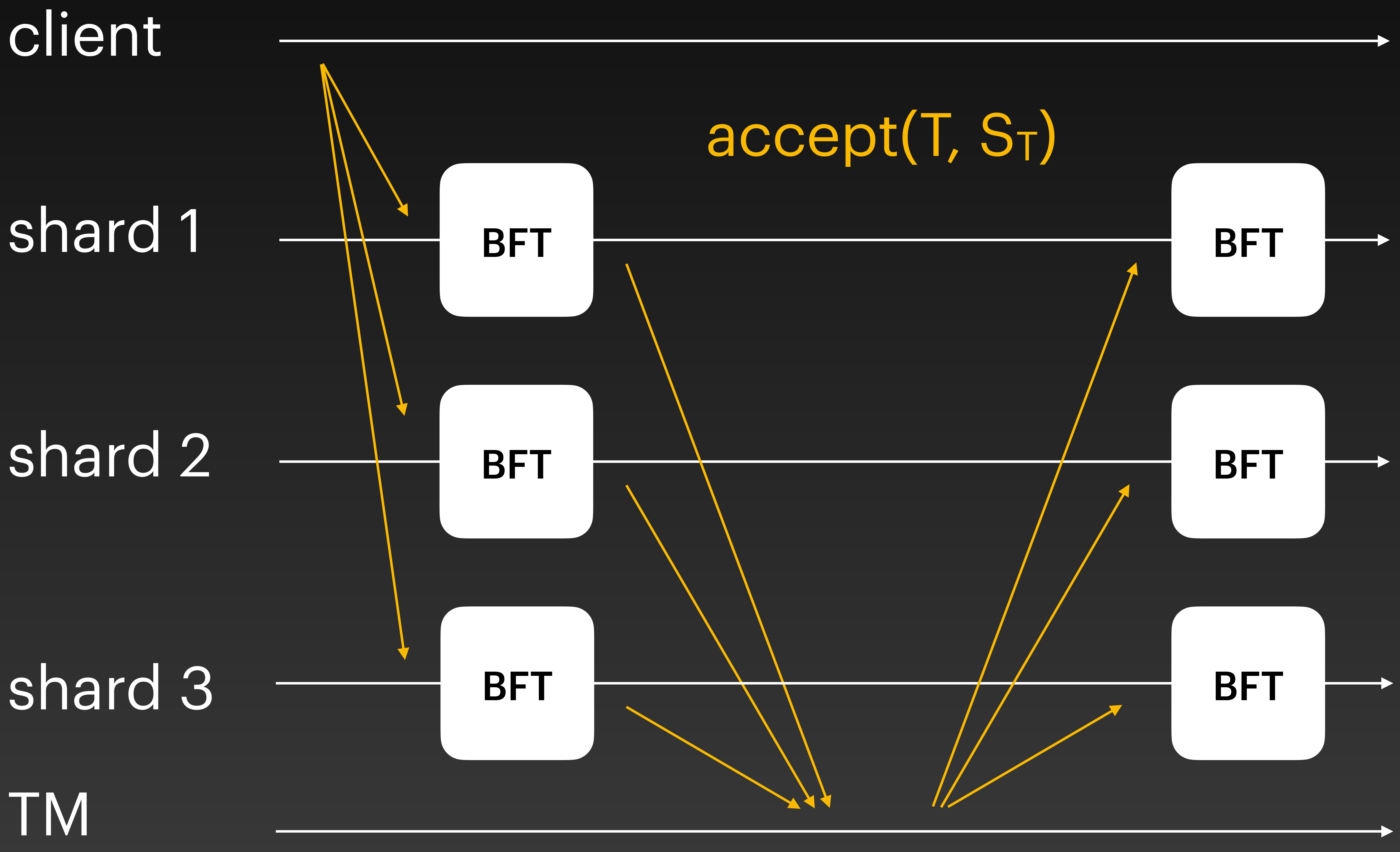
$$\{S_T, T(x_1, x_2, d_3) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)\}$$



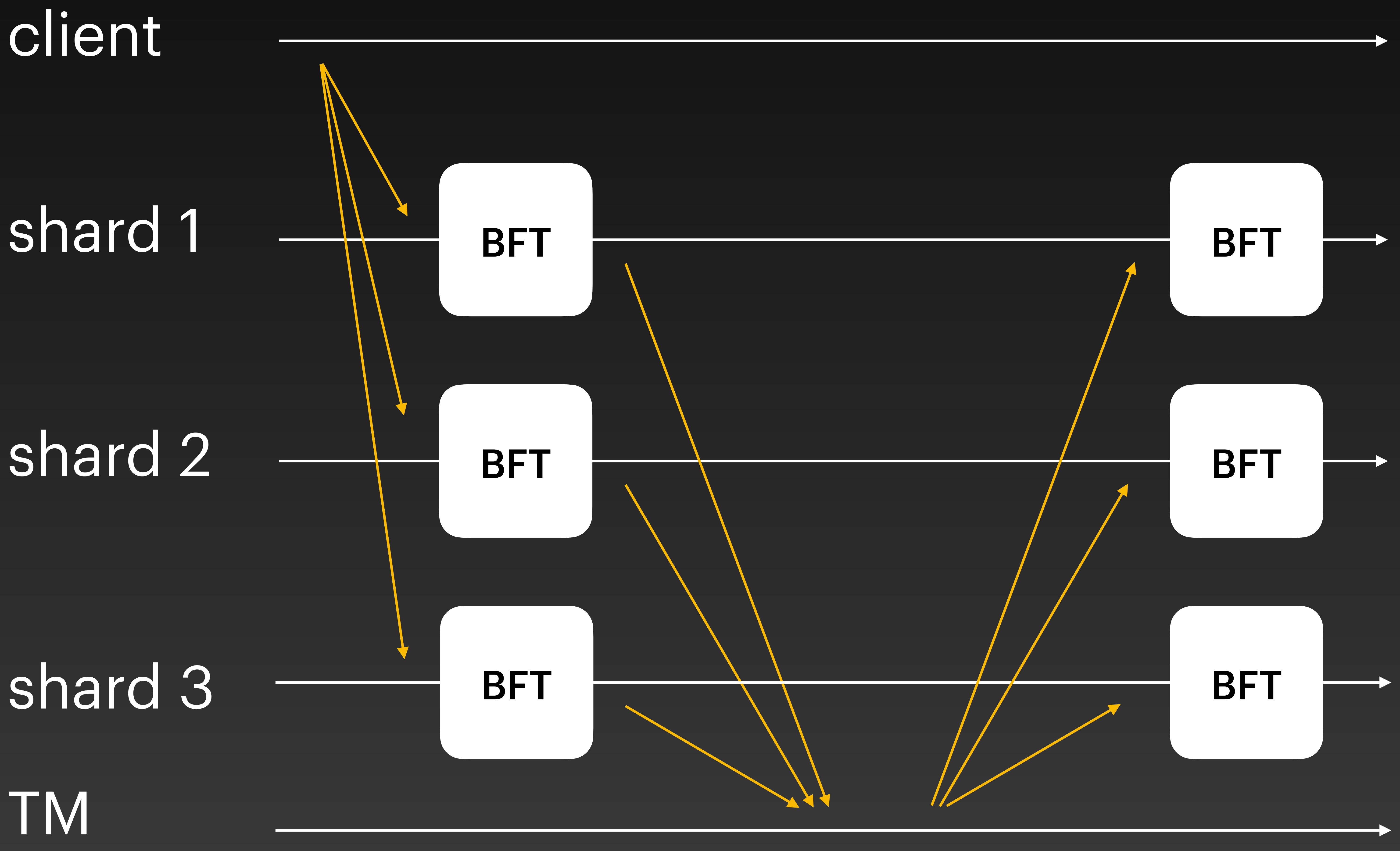
Byzcuit

$$\{S_T, T(x_1, x_2, d_3) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)\}$$



Byzcuit

$$\{S_T, T(x_1, x_2, d_3) \rightarrow (y_1, y_2, y_3)\}$$



if (T, ST),

inactivate X_1, X_2, D_3

create Y1, Y2, Y3

Why is Byzcuit secure?

Issue 1. Input shards cannot associate protocol messages to a specific protocol execution.

Sequence numbers:

act as session ID

Issue 2. Output shards (that are not also input shards) do not experience the first phase of the protocol

Dummy objects:

all shards experience the first phase of the protocol

Anyone can be a TM

Byzcuit

Implementation

- Fork of Java Chainspace
- Based on BFT-SMART
- Only a prototype to demonstrate its properties

https://github.com/sheharbano/byzcuit

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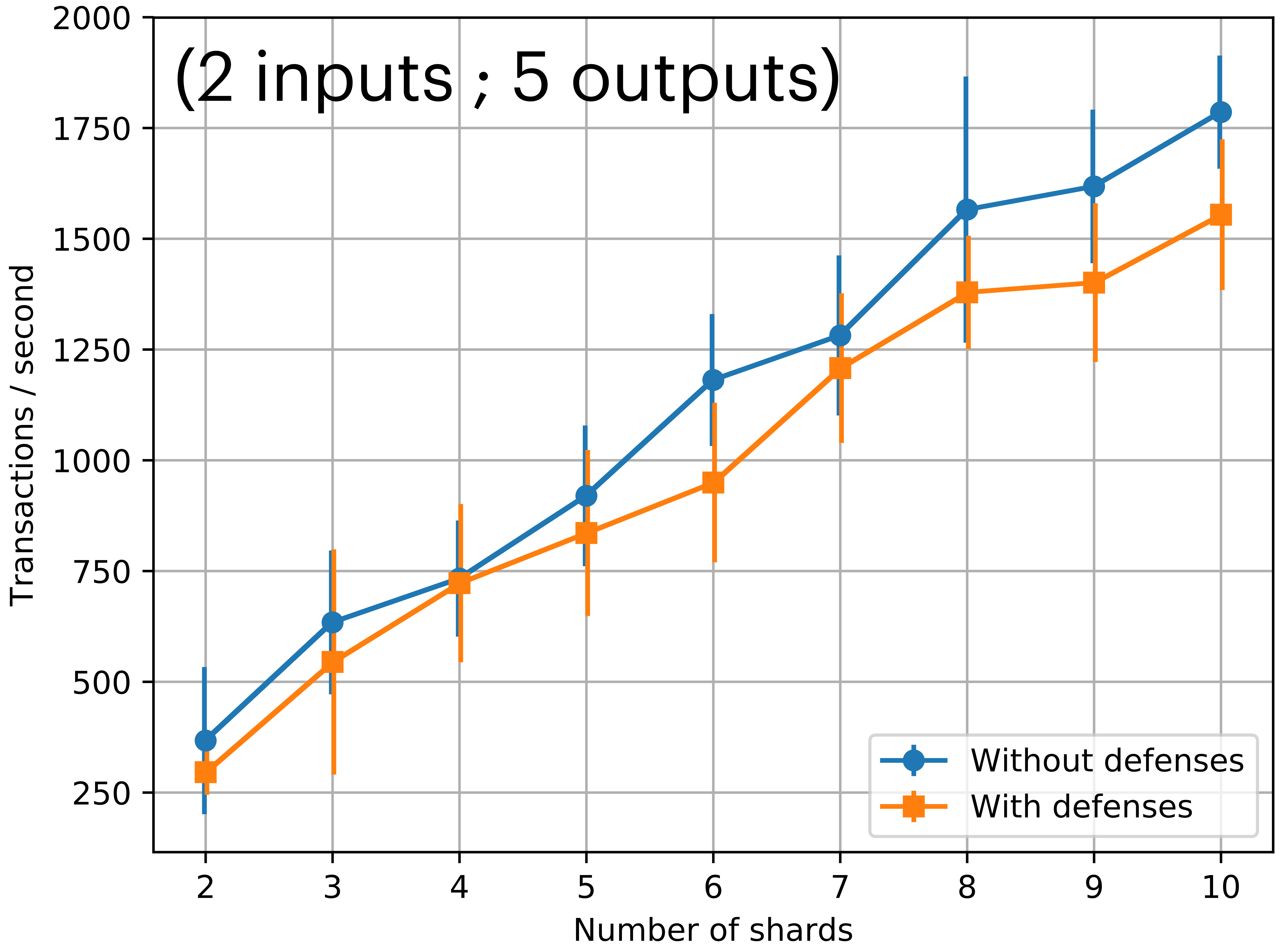
Linear scalability



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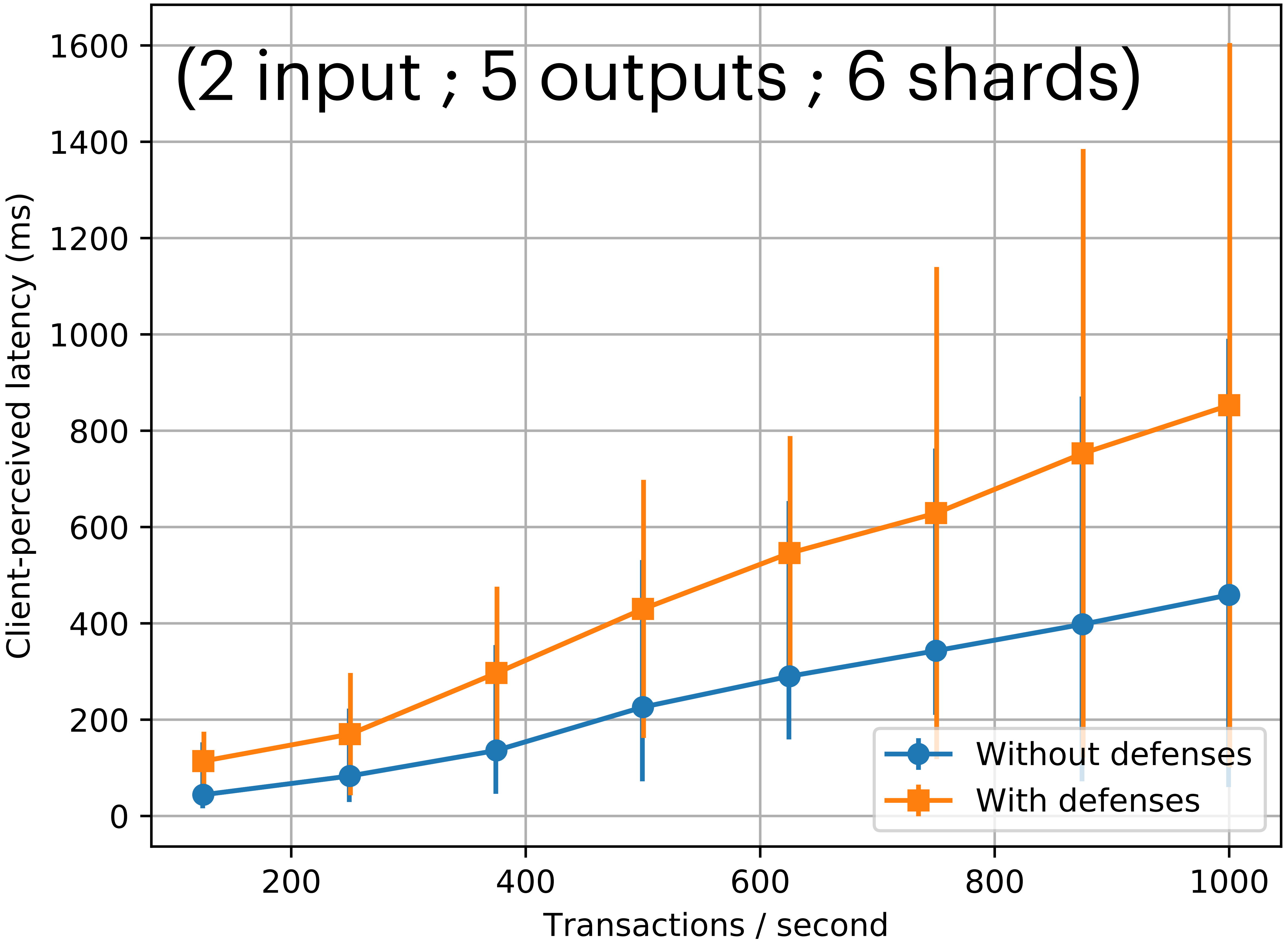
Finality



Open Questions

- Easy DoS by exhausting the sequence numbers
- Load balancing of objects
- The Mega transaction

Conclusion

Part I - Increasing Throughput

Byzcuit

- S-BAC + Atomix
- High throughput, linear scalability, BFT resilience, Fast finality

- **Paper:** https://arxiv.org/abs/1901.11218
- **Code:** https://github.com/sheharbano/byzcuit