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Weird Join Delete

This confused me for a few minutes today and I wanted to share to help avoid further confusion.

The specific code was this:

Names have been changed to protect the innocent.

In the above delete statement which table will have rows deleted from it?

A: Table1

B: Table2

C: Both Table1 and Table2

D: Neither Table1 and Table2

The answer is Table2. However at first glance I thought it was going to be Table1. Then I wrote the following sample code to prove the results.

Here is the full example script to show the results.

Before the delete the tables look like this:

After the delete, the tables look like this:

You can see that Table2 is the table that is missing the rows.

What if the SQL was written like this?

Still Table2 would have rows deleted from it.

How about this?

Now Table1 would have rows deleted from it.

And finally this one?

Table1 would have rows deleted.

This shows that in a DELETE statement with a JOIN it doesn't matter which table comes first, the one that is listed on the DELETE line is the one that has rows deleted.