

From Word to Lateral Movement in 1 Hour

By editor

Published: 2021-06-20 · Archived: 2026-04-05 22:03:08 UTC

Introduction

In May 2021, we observed a threat actor conducting an intrusion utilizing the IcedID payloads for initial access. They later performed a number of techniques from host discovery to lateral movement, using RDP and SMB to access the file servers within an enterprise domain.

IcedID (known as BokBot) first observed in 2017, continues to be an active and capable threat against both individuals and organizations. The [IcedID](#) malware utilizes a modular malware framework and incorporates a number of anti-forensic and defense evasion capabilities. This malware has like others before it moved into the initial access broker market being used as an entry point for follow on activity like Cobalt Strike, and has lead to multiple domain wide ransomware deployments such as [Revil](#) and [Conti](#).

Summary

We assess with medium confidence that the initial IcedID infection was delivered via a malspam campaign, which included an attachment with a password protected zip archive. Once extracted, the user would find a Word document with a macro, which upon execution, would deliver the initial DLL loader. Discovered in 2017, what started as a commodity malware, IcedID is now currently being deployed as an initial access broker by ransomware threat actors.

In this case, the threat actor appeared to have specific goals, and did not waste any time. Within 35 minutes after the initial infection, they made their way in to the network via a Cobalt Strike Beacon deployed from the IcedID infected host.

The first task of the threat actor was to enumerate the network by establishing a list of the domain admins using living off the land techniques, such as net.exe. A freely available tool Adfind.exe was also utilized to further enumerate the domain. The threat actor was also observed stealing credentials from the lsass.exe process.

Five minutes after the above discovery activity, we observed the actors moving laterally to other hosts on the network with the credentials of a domain administrator account. In this case, Cobalt Strike was also used to create the administrative token, and attempted to install a service using a windows service executable. The service was tasked to run an encoded PowerShell command which would download and execute the Cobalt Strike beacon over HTTP.

Based on the name of the hosts that the threat actors decided to pivot, we judge that they were able to digest the 'AdFind' results and focus on, what they believed to be, important targets – critical assets such as file servers, domain controllers, etc. It is also worth mentioning that even after the unsuccessful remote execution attempt

against a few servers due to AV, the actors decided to connect via RDP and spend over an hour looking for valuable data before disconnecting and leaving the network.

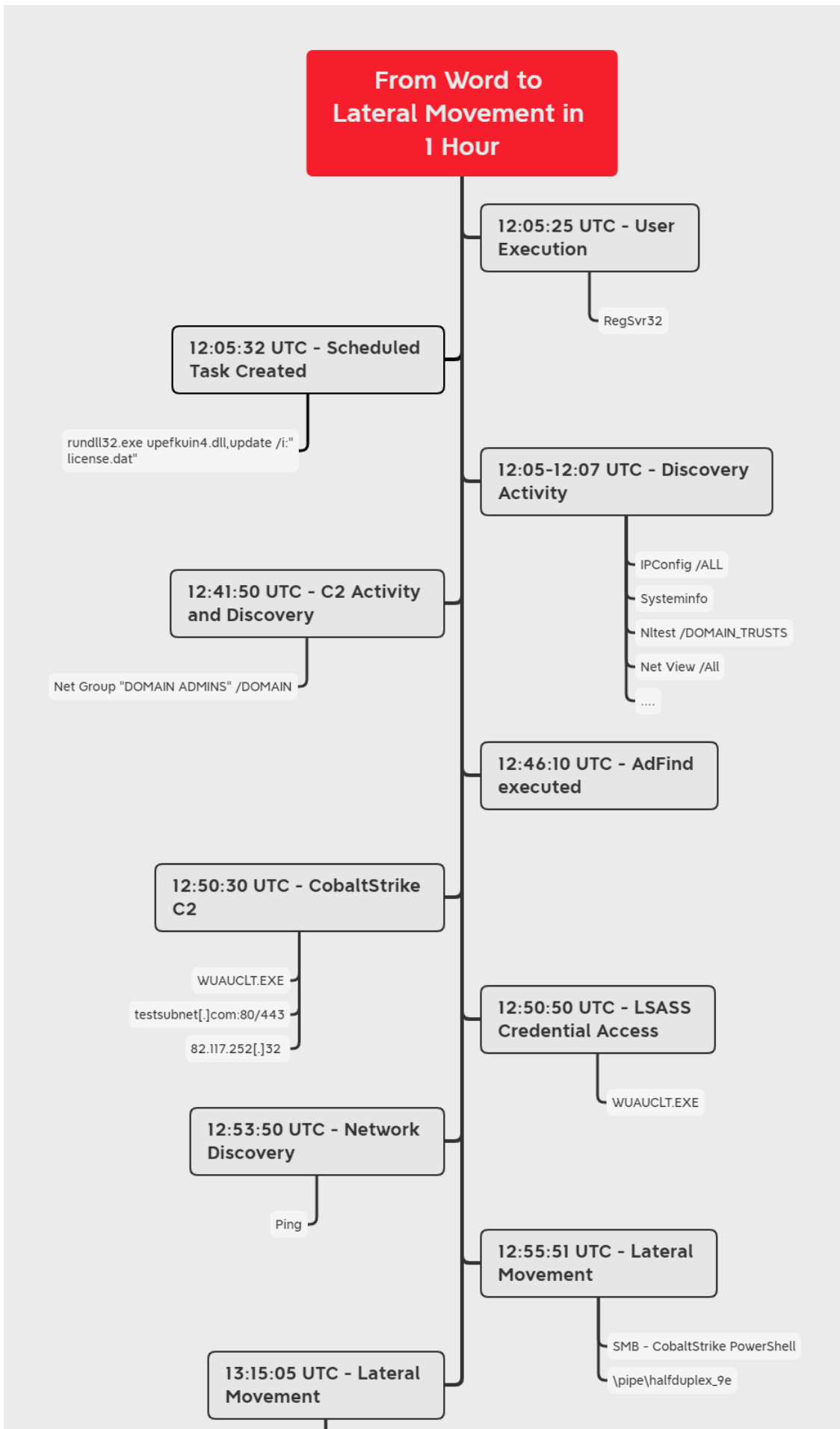
No exfiltration of data or impact to the systems was observed but at least one command and control. It is unclear why the actors decided not to continue with their operation. No attempt was made to clean up the intrusion by the actors – artifacts that were deployed were still in operation, including C2 implants.

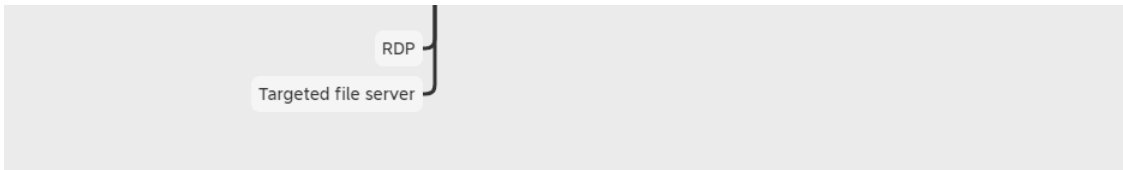
Services

We offer multiple services including a Threat Feed service which tracks Command and Control frameworks such as Cobalt Strike, Metasploit, Empire, PoshC2, etc. More information on this service and others can be found [here](#). The Cobalt Strike server used in this attack was added to our Threat Feed on 5/7/21.

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

Timeline





Analysis and reporting completed by [@kostastsale](#) and [@_pete_0](#)

Reviewed by [@tas_kmanager](#) and [@v3t0](#)

MITRE ATT&CK v9

Initial Access

The first stage of the IcedID malware that was executed on the host was dropped via a macro enabled Word document – as seen by Unit42.

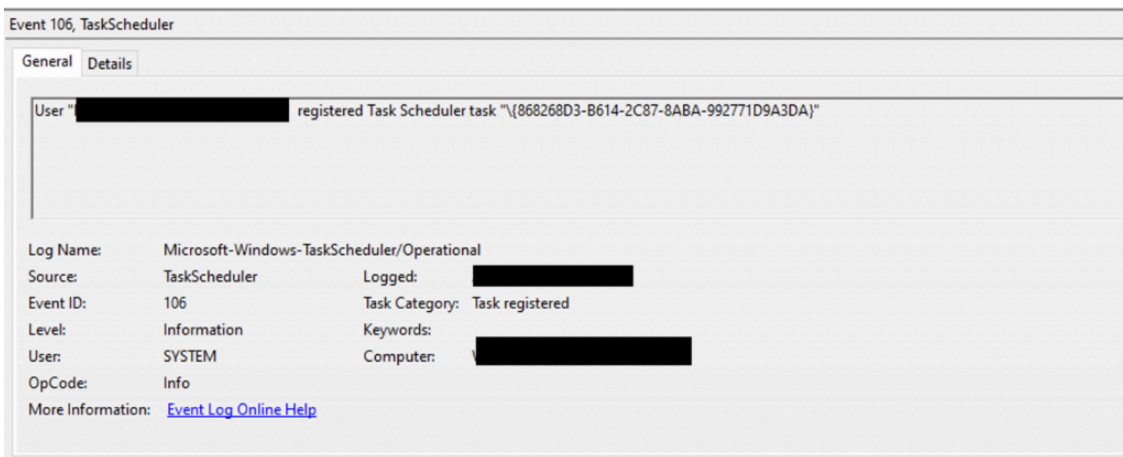
IOCs from Brad [here](#).

In our case, the [IcedID dll loader](#) was manually executed using regsvr32.

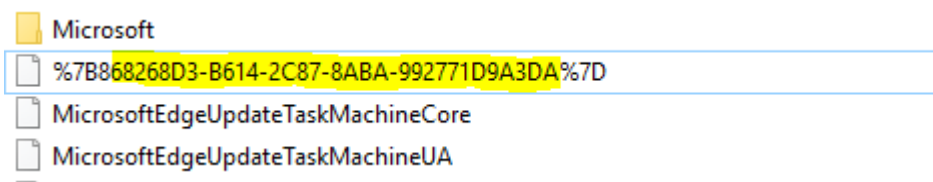
```
▼ ◎ Processes  
■ C:\Windows\system32\regsvr32.exe  
regsvr32 /s C:\Users\Admin\AppData\Local\Temp\6f57eb37bff30df1a66f848cb648799536dcbc05f6fb3.dll
```

Persistence

From the initial access, a scheduled task was created. This can be observed by EventID 106: New task registered:



Inspection of the task file located under 'c:\windows\system32\tasks':

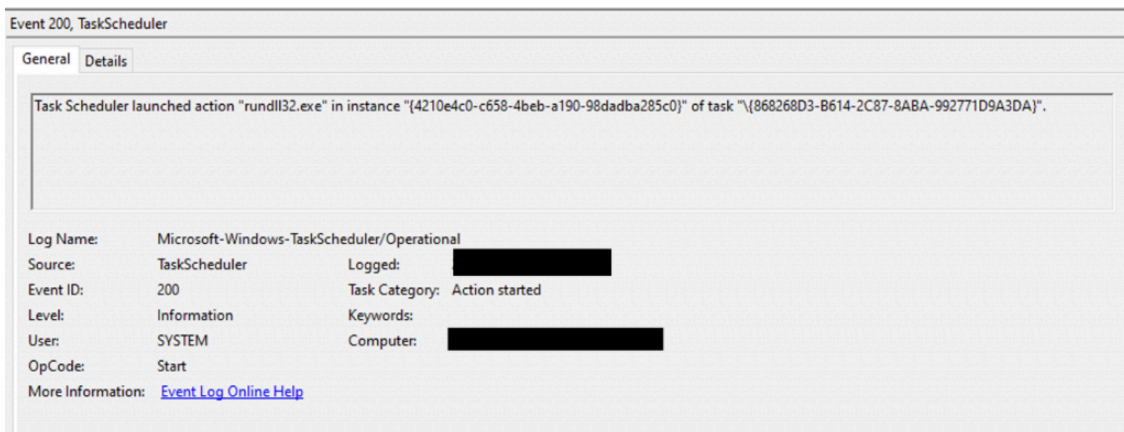


```
<Actions Context="Author">
  <Exec>
    <Command>rundll32.exe</Command>
    <Arguments>"C:\Users\██████████\AppData\Roaming\██████████\Fira\upefkuin4.dll",update
    /i:"EnjoyPyramid\license.dat"</Arguments>
  </Exec>
</Actions>
```

'License.dat' is an encrypted binary file and is a tell-tale indication of an IcedID compromise. The corresponding DLL (upefkuin4.dll) is used with license.dat to maintain persistence using the Task Scheduler. After decrypting License.dat using Binary Defense's [decryption tool](#), we can see some information stealing functionality:

file-offset	blacklist (97)	hint (61)	group (18)	value (4856)
0x0002630E	-	file	network	IPHLPAPI.DLL
0x0002569C	-	file	cryptography	CRYPT32.dll
0x00020804	-	file	-	.exe
0x00020920	-	file	-	\sqlite64.dll
0x00020F44	-	file	-	.txt
0x000212B0	-	file	-	.lnk
0x000217E8	-	file	-	.com
0x000218C8	-	file	-	passff.tar
0x00021B78	-	file	-	\SysWOW64\cmd.exe
0x000220F4	-	file	-	.dll
0x00022138	-	file	-	/sqlite64.dll
0x00022A78	-	file	-	b M8^M8?vaultcli.dll
0x00022C24	-	file	-	.tmp
0x000236A0	-	file	-	ntdll.dll
0x00023750	-	file	-	cookie.tar
0x00025322	-	file	-	gdiplus.dll
0x00025404	-	file	-	USER32.dll
0x000254A6	-	file	-	SHLWAPI.dll
0x00025736	-	file	-	GDI32.dll
0x000257EA	-	file	-	ntdll.dll
0x00025C64	-	file	-	ADVAPI32.dll
0x00025C72	-	file	-	OLEAUT32.dll
0x00025CBA	-	file	-	SHELL32.dll
0x00025D37	-	file	-	ole32.dll

EventID 200: Task executed shows the persistent IcedID core being executed, on average every 1 hour via Rundll32.exe.



Credential Access

installed Anti-virus software, network configuration, domain configuration and user accounts. The following are the commands that were executed:

```
WMIC /Node: localhost /Namespace: \\root \SecurityCenter2 Path AntiVirusProduct Get * /Format: List
ipconfig /all
systeminfo
net config workstation
nltest /domain_trusts
nltest /domain_trusts /all_trusts
net view /all /domain
net view /all
```

Using the information gathered, the IcedID operator was able to focus on specific targets, obtaining access to the privileged accounts and the high value hosts.

Once the IcedID operators were able to establish a C2 session to the initial compromised host, the operators were observed executing the following command:

```
net group "domain admins" /DOMAIN
```

Interestingly, we observed the operator deploying and utilizing AdFind to collect information about the hosts on the network. AdFind is an Active Directory query tool developed by [JoeWare](#), a useful utility for system administrators, but also popular among [threat actors](#).

```
cmd.exe /C C:\Recovery\AdFind.exe -f objectcategory=computer -csv name cn OperatingSystem dNSHostName
```

AdFind was transferred and executed on the beachhead host. The threat actor placed the AdFind binary and the results in the 'C:\Recovery' folder. We assess this folder location was chosen to avoid raising suspicion, as compared to executing from a user or temporary folder location.

Lateral Movement

The threat actors attempted and successfully managed to pivot laterally to various hosts on the domain. This was achieved by connecting via SMB and starting a service that would execute an encrypted PowerShell command with embedded Cobalt Strike SMB beacons.

allnezokila[.]cyou

2tothepollo[.]top

daserekolut[.]top

194.5.249[.]81

dsedertyhuiokle[.]top

5.149.252[.]179

JA3: a0e9f5d64349fb13191bc781f81f42e1

JA3s: ec74a5c51106f0419184d0dd08fb05bc

Certificate: [9b:84:ff:5d:0a:27:25:f6:a3:b3:b8:83:bd:36:50:88:4b:c7:20:06]

Not Before: 2021/04/28 15:18:08

Not After: 2022/04/28 15:18:08

Issuer Org: Internet Widgits Pty Ltd

Subject Common: localhost

Subject Org: Internet Widgits Pty Ltd

Public Algorithm: rsaEncryption

Cobalt Strike:

testsubnet.com

82.117.252.32

JA3: a0e9f5d64349fb13191bc781f81f42e1

Ja3s: ae4edc6faf64d08308082ad26be60767

Certificate: [92:da:38:08:d9:a0:67:2f:e5:67:2e:f0:40:d6:06:21:89:2c:54:cc]

Not Before: 2021/04/22 07:13:54

Not After: 2021/07/21 07:13:54

Issuer Org: Let's Encrypt

Subject Common: testsubnet.com [ns1.testsubnet.com ,ns2.testsubnet.com ,ns3.testsubnet.com ,ns4.testsubnet.com ,testsubnet.com]

Public Algorithm rsaEncryption

Cobalt Strike Beacon Config

```
Port 80
```

```
{
  "x64":{
    "time":1621059211662.0,
    "md5":"a30f7a3d511ddb7e2f856f6b4c9ea7be",
    "config":{
      "Polling":58302,
      "C2 Server":"testsubnet.com,\/ky",
      "Method 1":"GET",
      "Method 2":"POST",
      "Beacon Type":"0 (HTTP)",
      "Jitter":37,
      "Port":80,
      "Spawn To x86":"%windir%\syswow64\WUAUCLT.exe",
      "Spawn To x64":"%windir%\sysnative\WUAUCLT.exe",
      "HTTP Method Path 2":"\/ky"
    },
    "sha256":"1636859125648337be180f36ca54bce1f64e20d3a5d0a22ab5d0a99860e268cd",
    "sha1":"8686f6b651ce3869bdb67f766215b5b030b75cf6"
  },
  "x86":{
    "time":1621059210330.3,
    "md5":"c86cc90291ab6807eda6dc23c53a57c7",
    "config":{
      "Polling":58302,
      "C2 Server":"testsubnet.com,\/ky",
      "Method 1":"GET",
      "Method 2":"POST",
      "Beacon Type":"0 (HTTP)",
      "Jitter":37,
      "Port":80,
      "Spawn To x86":"%windir%\syswow64\WUAUCLT.exe",
      "Spawn To x64":"%windir%\sysnative\WUAUCLT.exe",
      "HTTP Method Path 2":"\/ky"
    },
    "sha256":"d1057cc0a144418ee3ae350fe1a1f70705df03d6455997751773e260568e8651",
    "sha1":"03f57b0356467a54c4e6537fff4756cbb52a729e"
  }
}
```

```
} Port 443
```

```
{
  "x64":{
    "time":1621059212744.4,
    "md5":"95d0a4208e72b4015d7cc18e7bcffe77",
    "config":{
      "Polling":58302,
      "C2 Server":"testsubnet.com,\/ur",

```

```

    "Method 1": "GET",
    "Method 2": "POST",
    "Beacon Type": "8 (HTTPS)",
    "Jitter": 37,
    "Port": 443,
    "Spawn To x86": "%windir%\syswow64\WUAUCLT.exe",
    "Spawn To x64": "%windir%\sysnative\WUAUCLT.exe",
    "HTTP Method Path 2": "\/ky"
  },
  "sha256": "6f2a49796f4ea603bb63e31ac24579af2eacd937ecfe335ea2437745462a8d5d",
  "sha1": "84c1e6d042a6c4fb38f2083ea1ce0591a3162aec"
},
"x86": {
  "time": 1621059209510.8,
  "md5": "f218b1297cd3d9d567dd2e6cbc6c7afe",
  "config": {
    "Polling": 58302,
    "C2 Server": "testsubnet.com, \/ur",
    "Method 1": "GET",
    "Method 2": "POST",
    "Beacon Type": "8 (HTTPS)",
    "Jitter": 37,
    "Port": 443,
    "Spawn To x86": "%windir%\syswow64\WUAUCLT.exe",
    "Spawn To x64": "%windir%\sysnative\WUAUCLT.exe",
    "HTTP Method Path 2": "\/ky"
  },
  "sha256": "4875c6abfa0d5658ec2f6f082300380f983d9505cddd0e81627470d3d941f2e4",
  "sha1": "9fde1a8103b7a19e617681555ecc4d27b9fb2492"
}
}
}

```

Exfiltration

No exfiltration was observed; however, we were able to determine that access to the File server was achieved, with multiple access attempts and successes.

Impact

No impact was observed nor any follow-on activities to deny, disrupt or destroy data or systems.

IOCs

Network

IcedID C2

```
allnezokila[.]cyou  
2tothepollo[.]top  
daserekolut[.]top  
194.5.249[.]81|443  
dsedertyhuiokle[.]top  
5.149.252[.]179|443
```

CobaltStrike C2

```
testsubnet[.]com  
82.117.252[.]32|80  
82.117.252[.]32|443
```

Files

```
upefkuin4.dll  
332cd0a48e0f7be3e132858877430c90  
c63f98d65e809a8f461ca5c825f056b93ccc1eb0  
666570229dd5af87fed86b9191fb1e8352d276a8a32c42e4bf4128a4f7e8138
```

```
license.dat  
3c6263a9c4117c78d26fc4380af014f2  
eca410dd57af16227220e08067c1895c258eb92b  
29d2a8344bd725d7a8b43cc77a82b3db57a5226ce792ac4b37e7f73ec468510e
```

```
AdFind.exe  
12011c44955fd6631113f68a99447515  
4f4f8cf0f9b47d0ad95d159201fe7e72fbc8448d  
c92c158d7c37fea795114fa6491fe5f145ad2f8c08776b18ae79db811e8e36a3
```

Detections

Network

ET RPC DCERPC SVCCTL – Remote Service Control Manager Access
ET POLICY SMB2 NT Create AndX Request For an Executable File
ET DNS Query to a *.top domain – Likely Hostile
ET INFO HTTP Request to a *.top domain
ET TROJAN W32/Photoloader.Downloader Request Cookie
ET POLICY OpenSSL Demo CA – Internet Widgits Pty (O)

Sigma

- [Suspicious In-Memory Module Execution](#)

- [Suspicious Encoded PowerShell Command Line](#)
- [Malicious Base64 Encoded PowerShell Keywords in Command Lines](#)
- [Suspicious PowerShell Parent Process](#)
- [Abused Debug Privilege by Arbitrary Parent Processes](#)
- [Non-Interactive PowerShell](#)
- [PowerShell Network Connections](#)

YARA

```
/*
YARA Rule Set
Author: The DFIR Report
Date: 2021-06-09
Identifier: 3930
Reference: https://thedfirreport.com
*/

/* Rule Set ----- */

import "pe"

rule icedid_upefkuin4_3930 {
meta:
description = "3930 - file upefkuin4.dll"
author = "The DFIR Report"
reference = "https://thedfirreport.com"
date = "2021-06-09"
hash1 = "666570229dd5af87fede86b9191fb1e8352d276a8a32c42e4bf4128a4f7e8138"
strings:
$s1 = "UAWAVAUATVWSH" fullword ascii
$s2 = "AWAVAUATVWUSH" fullword ascii
$s3 = "AWAVATVWUSH" fullword ascii
$s4 = "update" fullword ascii /* Goodware String - occurred 207 times */
$s5 = "?ortpw@YAHXZ" fullword ascii
$s6 = "?sortyW@YAHXZ" fullword ascii
$s7 = "?sorty@YAHXZ" fullword ascii
$s8 = "?keptyu@YAHXZ" fullword ascii
$s9 = "*UUUUr#L" fullword ascii
$s10 = "*UUUUr!" fullword ascii
$s11 = "PluginInit" fullword ascii
$s12 = "*UUUUr\" fullword ascii
$s13 = "AVVWSH" fullword ascii
$s14 = "D$4iL$ " fullword ascii
$s15 = "X[]_A\\A]A^A_" fullword ascii
$s16 = "D$4iT$ " fullword ascii
$s17 = "H[]_A\\A]A^A_" fullword ascii
$s18 = "L94iL$ " fullword ascii
```

```
$s19 = "D$ iD$ " fullword ascii
$s20 = "*=UUUUr " fullword ascii
condition:
uint16(0) == 0x5a4d and filesize < 700KB and
( pe.imphash() == "87bed5a7cba00c7e1f4015f1bdae2183" and ( pe.exports("?keptyu@YAHXZ") and pe.expor
}

rule icedid_license_3930 {
meta:
description = "3930 - file license.dat"
author = "The DFIR Report"
reference = "https://thedfirreport.com"
date = "2021-06-09"
hash1 = "29d2a8344bd725d7a8b43cc77a82b3db57a5226ce792ac4b37e7f73ec468510e"
strings:
$s1 = "iEQc- A1h" fullword ascii
$s2 = "%n%DLj" fullword ascii
$s3 = "n{Y@.hnPP#5\"~" fullword ascii
$s4 = "(5N&#jUBE\"0" fullword ascii
$s5 = "~JCyP+Av" fullword ascii
$s6 = "iLVIy\\" fullword ascii
$s7 = "RemwDVL" fullword ascii
$s8 = "EQiH^,>A" fullword ascii
$s9 = "#wmski;H" fullword ascii
$s10 = "aHVAh}X" fullword ascii
$s11 = "GEKK/no" fullword ascii
$s12 = "focbZjQ" fullword ascii
$s13 = "wHsJJX>e" fullword ascii
$s14 = "cYRS:F#" fullword ascii
$s15 = "EfNO\"h{" fullword ascii
$s16 = "akCevJ]" fullword ascii
$s17 = "8IMwmm}!" fullword ascii
$s18 = "NrzMP?<>" fullword ascii
$s19 = ".ZNrzLrU" fullword ascii
$s20 = "sJlCJP[" fullword ascii
condition:
uint16(0) == 0x02ee and filesize < 1000KB and
8 of them
}

rule icedid_win_01 {
meta:
description = "Detects Icedid"
author = "The DFIR Report"
date = "15/05/2021"
description = "Detects Icedid functionality. incl. credential access, OS cmds."
```

```
sha1 = "3F06392AF1687BD0BF9DB2B8B73076CAB8B1CBBA"  
score = 100  
  
strings:  
$s1 = "DllRegisterServer" wide ascii fullword  
$x1 = "passff.tar" wide ascii fullword  
$x2 = "vaultcli.dll" wide ascii fullword  
$x3 = "cookie.tar" wide ascii fullword  
$y1 = "powershell.exe" wide ascii fullword  
$y2 = "cmd.exe" wide ascii fullword  
  
condition:  
  
( uint16(0) == 0x5a4d and int32(uint32(0x3c)) == 0x00004550 and filesize < 500KB and $s1 and ( 2 of  
}  
  
rule fake_gzip_bokbot_202104 {  
  
meta:  
  
author = "Thomas Barabosch, Telekom Security"  
date = "2021-04-20"  
description = "fake gzip provided by CC"  
  
strings:  
  
$gzip = {1f 8b 08 08 00 00 00 00 00 00 75 70 64 61 74 65}  
  
condition:  
  
$gzip at 0  
  
}  
  
rule win_iceid_gzip_ldr_202104 {  
  
meta:  
  
author = "Thomas Barabosch, Telekom Security"  
date = "2021-04-12"  
description = "2021 initial Bokbot / Icedid loader for fake GZIP payloads"  
  
strings:  
  
$internal_name = "loader_dll_64.dll" fullword  
  
$string0 = "_gat=" wide  
$string1 = "_ga=" wide  
$string2 = "_gid=" wide  
$string3 = "_u=" wide  
$string4 = "_io=" wide  
$string5 = "GetAdaptersInfo" fullword  
$string6 = "WINHTTP.dll" fullword
```

```
$string7 = "DllRegisterServer" fullword
$string8 = "PluginInit" fullword
$string9 = "POST" wide fullword
$string10 = "aws.amazon.com" wide fullword

condition:

uint16(0) == 0x5a4d and
filesize < 5000KB and
( $internal_name or all of ($s*) )
or all of them
}

rule win_iceid_core_ldr_202104 {

meta:

author = "Thomas Barabosch, Telekom Security"
date = "2021-04-13"
description = "2021 loader for Bokbot / Icedid core (license.dat)"

strings:
$internal_name = "sabl_64.dll" fullword
$string0 = "GetCommandLineA" fullword
$string1 = "LoadLibraryA" fullword
$string2 = "ProgramData" fullword
$string3 = "SHLWAPI.dll" fullword
$string4 = "SHGetFolderPathA" fullword
$string5 = "DllRegisterServer" fullword
$string6 = "update" fullword
$string7 = "SHELL32.dll" fullword
$string8 = "CreateThread" fullword

condition:

uint16(0) == 0x5a4d and
filesize < 5000KB and
( $internal_name or all of ($s*) )
or all of them
}

rule win_iceid_core_202104 {

meta:

author = "Thomas Barabosch, Telekom Security"
date = "2021-04-12"
description = "2021 Bokbot / Icedid core"

strings:
```

```
$internal_name = "fixed_loader64.dll" fullword

$string0 = "mail_vault" wide fullword
$string1 = "ie_reg" wide fullword
$string2 = "outlook" wide fullword
$string3 = "user_num" wide fullword
$string4 = "cred" wide fullword
$string5 = "Authorization: Basic" fullword
$string6 = "VaultOpenVault" fullword
$string7 = "sqlite3_free" fullword
$string8 = "cookie.tar" fullword
$string9 = "DllRegisterServer" fullword
$string10 = "PT0S" wide

condition:

uint16(0) == 0x5a4d and
filesize < 5000KB and
( $internal_name or all of ($s*) )
or all of them

}
```

MITRE ATT&CK Techniques

Remote System Discovery – T1018
Security Software Discovery – T1518.001
System Information Discovery – T1082
System Network Configuration Discovery – T1016
Domain Account – T1087.002
Domain Trust Discovery – T1482
Application Layer Protocol – T1071
Ingress Tool Transfer – T1105
PowerShell – T1059.001
Scheduled Task/Job – T1053
Process Injection – T1055
Rundll32 – T1218.011
LSASS Memory – T1003.001
SMB/Windows Admin Shares – T1021.002
Remote Desktop Protocol – T1021.001

References

- IcedID GZIPLoader Analysis, Binary Defense – <https://www.binarydefense.com/icedid-gziploader-analysis/>
- IcedDecrypt, Binary Defense – <https://github.com/BinaryDefense/IcedDecrypt>

- Security Primer – IcedID, Center for Internet Security, <https://www.cisecurity.org/white-papers/security-primer-icedid/>
- IcedID YARA Rules, Thomas Barabosch – https://github.com/telekom-security/icedid_analysis
- TA551 Pushing IcedID IoCs, Unit42, <https://github.com/pan-unit42/tweets/blob/master/2021-05-10-IoCs-for-TA551-pushing-IcedID.txt>
- AdFind – <http://www.joeware.net/freetools/tools/adfind/>
- NMap NSE Grab CobaltStrike Configuration, Whickey-R7 – https://github.com/whickey-r7/grab_beacon_config

Internal case 3930

Source: <https://thedfirreport.com/2021/06/20/from-word-to-lateral-movement-in-1-hour/>