

PROJECT REPORT ON
ADVANCED WIRESHARK NETWORK FORENSICS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY

Submitted by

122004028 - AVINASH R – B.TECH ECE



**School of Computing
SASTRA DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY**

(A University established under section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)

Tirumalaisamudram

Thanjavur - 613401

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SHANMUGHA
ARTS, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & RESEARCH ACADEMY (SASTRA)
DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
(A University Established under section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)
TIRUMALAI SAMUDRAM, THANJAVUR – 613401



BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE

Certified that this project work entitled “**ADVANCED WIRESHARK NETWORK FORENSICS**” submitted to the Shanmuga Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA Deemed to be University), Tirumalaisamudram - 613401 by AVINASH R (REG NO. 122004028), B.TECH ECE in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY** in their respective program. This work is an original and independent work carried out under my guidance, during the period September 2020 - December 2020.

Submitted for Project-based Viva Voce held on **16.02.2021**

Examiner – I

Examiner – II

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ABBREVIATIONS

- IP-----→ Internet protocol**
- TCP -----→ Transmission control protocol**
- FTP-----→ File transfer protocol**
- HTTP-----→ Hyper Text transfer protocol**
- ARP-----→ Address resolution protocol**
- HxD-----→ Hex editor**
- PCAP-----→ Packet capture**
- DOS-----→ Disc-based operating system**
- SYN-ACK-----→ Synchronize acknowledge**
- DNS-----→ Domain name system**
- IOC-----→ Indicators of compromise**

ABSTRACT

In our rapidly evolving world, Computer Networks has become a very pre-dominant and intricate field of technology. At the same time, hackers across the globe are designing and inflicting various attacks through the internet for different reasons like machine corruption, hijacking & Information theft.

Wireshark is the most widely used network and protocol analyzer, while it is also a very essential tool for Network Forensics.

Network administrators should be able to investigate and analyze the network traffic to understand what is happening and to deploy immediate response in case of an identified attack.

Wireshark can be used in identifying and categorizing various types of attack signatures.

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate how Wireshark can be applied for network protocol diagnosis.

We will see how Wireshark is used to perform Network Forensics and solve real-world problems.

In this project, we will go through the basic terminologies and jargons that we would need to be familiar with for Network Forensic analysis. Then,

We will cover our first real-world problem, where we will look at network traffic and try to understand a few things about the virus, next we will reassemble the network bites to pull out the virus and analyze it.

Then, we are going to build on what we learnt and cover another real-world scenario where we are going to look at a series of attacks on both network level and application level and learn how to weed out the signal from the noise.

The reason for picking this topic is that there is not a lot of content on packet analysis & advanced network forensics, even the ones available do not cover the deep intricate details of it.

This project tries to build an understanding of the process as a whole than mere definitions and base level procedures.

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Finally, I thank my parents and all others who helped me acquire this interest in the project and aided me in completing it within the deadline without much struggle.

INTRODUCTION

Ever wondered how to track an attacker through a network?

Wireshark is a great tool for network analysis, it is prominent for analysis and troubleshooting of network traffic and there are plenty of rudimentary uses of Wireshark.

But instead, Wireshark can be used to perform Network Forensics analysis and solve real-world problems.

Understanding of protocol analyzers can help us bridge the gap between basic theory and real - world problems.

Forensics by definition has a specific meaning, it is to collect and prepare evidence for the purpose of litigation, while

Network Forensics is the capture, recording, and analysis of network events in order to discover the source of security attacks or other problem incidents.

We are going to analyze data collected by packet capture which is a part of network forensics as a whole.

Other areas are log analysis and net-flow data which aren't required for our analysis.

In the first place, we are going to get familiar with the definitions and processes that are going to be needed for analysis and investigation.

Basic understanding of below mentioned software and protocols is must:

1. Protocol Analyzers (Wireshark, TCP dump)
2. OSI and TCP/IP model
3. Major protocols (HTTP, DNS, TCP, UDP etc.)

Packet capture forensics analysis is downright depended on knowing ‘what to look for?’ and ‘where to look?’ to properly analyze a file within a reasonable amount of time.

Must have tool are:

1. Wireshark
2. Hex Editor (Hxd is more preferred for windows)

Optional tool:

1. Network miner
2. Scalpel
3. GeoIP database

Both these tools are used to understand how to manually do network based file carving, both these tools will help speed up the process and make it a little easier to deal with larger pcap files.

Also add a few columns to Wireshark to make it easier to point out things that are needed.

The Network Forensics Process

1. Know your triggering events
2. Have a goal
3. Packet capture analysis (draw conclusions and identify indicators of compromise)

Typically when presented with a capture file for analysis, so before getting started we have to know what has happened i.e what is the triggering event, after finding the triggering event, a series of focus goals have to be designed, these goals will help focus the investigation into achievable results

Finally, begin with the packet capture analysis.

At the end of this entire process, we'd have identified things looking for and allow us to draw conclusions and take appropriate actions

Triggering Events

When trying to understand the triggering events, these things might prompt an investigation:

1. IDS alert
2. Log or network anomalies (i.e DoS or virus activity)
3. Known malicious/compromised systems
4. Time frame, etc.

Have a Goal

1. Always have a goal for analysis (not having a goal could prolong a particular investigation)
2. Prioritize the goal

Looking at network packet captures is like looking for many needles in many haystacks, that is why knowing at least that what we are looking at is something important than just random information is very necessary.

PCAP Analysis Methodology

1. Pattern matching

This is where we have to identify and filter packets of interest by matching specific values or protocol metadata

2. List conversations

From there we can list all the conversation streams within the filtered captured data

3. Isolate and export

Then we can isolate and export specific conversation streams of interest.

4. Draw conclusions

Once isolated we can extract files or data streams to compile the data and draw conclusions based on it.

This is an iterative process which means that we may be going back to previous steps often as we find new data.

That is it, we are now ready to go forth and analyze the capture files.

Next we are going to see how all of this comes together in the first Real-World scenario.

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

SCENARIO 1:

A system is infested with malware and the antivirus on the system did not attack it and the malware has managed to lock up the system.

TRIGGERING EVENTS:

1. User reporting malware activity
2. Current AV solution does not have a signature for the virus; nor is the virus recoverable from the infected host.

What we know:

1. Full network packet capture for the day of the incident.
2. Host of interest : 12.183.1.55

GOALS:

IOC: indicators of compromise

1. Where did the user contract the malware from?
2. Malware file(if possible)
3. See the malwares activity on the system
(What kind of calls to the internet does it make?)
4. Does it try to self-propagate through the internal network?
(Is it a worm or a virus?)
5. Possible network traffic signatures that we can use to catch other systems potentially infected with the same piece of malware?

Wireshark setup:

Open the pcap file in Wireshark and the first thing to do is to add a few columns.

Right click on any column → column preferences → click on the plus sign and add two columns

Details for the first column are:

Title: stream ID

Fields: tcp.stream

Details for the second stream are:

Title: host

Fields: http.host

Place ‘stream ID’ between protocol and length and place ‘host’ between length and info.

Write the goals in a notepad.

Now that we have our Wireshark setup and goals written, network analysis can be started.

See [fig.1](#) for reference for the above process

Pattern matching:

We already know the IP address of the system we are interested in, so let us create a display filter to show us only the traffic related to that device

Type in:

“ ip.addr == 12.183.1.55 ”

Notice anything that looks suspicious.

An important pointer when investigating capture files is:

“What may be true for one network may not be true for another network”

In our pcap file, a ‘.ru’ domain name might seem suspicious but it is also possible that it is a multi-national company.

Either way let us check it,

Right click on it → follow → TCP stream

Few things we note from it:

1. There is no user agent.

It is kind-of strange because when normally using a web-browser to make a web request, the browser includes its user agents in the web headers.

2. It is an exe file, we can also find by seeing the first few bytes of the file signature.

Now write down the found out info in the notepad.

See [Fig.2](#) for reference.

Now,

To find the file type for the file signature noted.

Go to google → file signature database → garykessler.net

See [Fig.3](#) for reference.

Now that we have the bytes of the file, how to pull it with Wireshark:

1. Change the traffic we are looking at to only include the communication coming from the server to the client.
2. Show the raw bytes instead of the ASCII form.
3. Save the file as dump1.
(not as .exe because it is a live virus)

See [Fig. 4](#) for reference.

To get the original file, we need to strip off any and all protocol headers and footers.

In this case, to deal with the headers, we need Hex Editor.

Open the file in Hex Editor.

The way HTTP headers work is they let us know when headers end and the data starts by
“0D 0A 0D 0A”

So just delete everything before that.

See [Fig.5](#) for reference.

When done, the file will start with MZ, the first few bytes of the file signature.

Now save the file.

Before saving the file, we have to switch off the antivirus in the system because otherwise the antivirus would recognize and put the file in quarantine.

Immediately after carving out information in this investigation, we have to get the hash of the file. For which, we will use hash my file and get MD5 and SHA-256, doesn't matter whichever but make sure to get a value so that the process is repeatable so that the carved file and the original file can be matched together.

See [Fig.6](#) for reference.

File Analysis

Now for file analysis, we have to use VirusTotal.

" VirusTotal is an online service that analyzes files and URLs enabling the detection of viruses, worms, Trojans and other kinds of malicious content using antivirus engines and website scanners. It also can be used to detect false positives. "

Upload the file on VirusTotal and we will get details about the virus.

There is also a list of antivirus vendors where they note which AV can and cannot detect the virus.

See [Fig.7](#) for reference.

So we were able to collect and analyze the malware file, next we have to look at what kind of network traffic it generates.

We can filter out the virus download by filtering out TCP stream 5.

Write " ip.addr == 12.183.1.55 && !(tcp.stream ==5) "

We get a lot of DNS traffic, which seems to be somewhat randomly generated domain names.

See [Fig.8](#) for reference.

When scrolling down, quite a few 'syn' packets can be seen being sent, meaning they were all sent out in a short amount of time.

We would start to see connections that were being established and then closed immediately, this is pretty standard form for botnet persistence.

The virus comes with a preloaded list of domains or with a built-in way to generate domain names, It then reaches out to each domain names in the list of find out what is available online.

That way if some of the domains in the list are blocked or shut down it still has a way to come home

Let us analyze a packet to find what TCP is trying to communicate on:

To see which of these domains it is connected to and it stayed connected to, very likely that it would be using http web traffic, so let us check the host headers.

Now write

```
"ip.addr == 12.183.1.55 && !(tcp.stream == 5) && http.host
```

We can see that most of the communication happens with one website.

See [Fig.9](#) for reference.

Now,

Right click on host → follow → TCP stream

To find out what kind of traffic is present.

It looks like a normal webpage, might have redirected the user to their site to buy a fake antivirus

Note all the information in the notepad.

See [Fig.10](#) for reference.

Last thing is if the virus tries to propagate over the network like a worm.

If the virus tries to reach out to other devices on the network, it might try to follow RFC 1918 and look for private IP addresses, there is also a chance that it takes the IP addresses of the infected machine and tries to reach out to other devices on the network as well.

RFC 1918 is the standard for private IP addressing.

We are going to build one large filter

The filter design is,

```
"ip.src == 12.183.1.55 && (ip.addr == 192.168.0.0/16 || ip.addr == 172.16.0.0/12 || ip.addr ==  
10.0.0.0/8 || ip.dst == 12.0.0.0/8)"
```

Store it in Wireshark, and we might get ICMP destination unreachable messages,

See [Fig.11](#) for reference.

This is actually a bug in the Wireshark filters where it thinks that the ICMP messages are sourced and destined for the same address.

Add a no ICMP to the end of the filter.

“&&!(icmp)”

At this point it does not look like there are any attempts from the virus to try and connect to other internal systems.

See [Fig.12](#) for reference.

Write this information in notepad too.

Let us now review what we have found.

1. Where did the user contract the malware from?

User made a direct call to the executable. There-fore, user either deliberately downloaded the malware, or there was a piece of malware sleeping on the system.

2. Malware file:

Malware file has been carved out and analyzed via virustotal.com

Write the MD5 and SHA256 hash values.

3. What kind of calls to the internet does it make?

-DNS queries for a number of domains

-HTTP communication for websites located on a few of those domains.

4. Does it try to self-propagate?

No communication to other internal addresses.

■ Network traffic signatures:

High volume of DNS queries within a short amount of time.

SCENARIO 2:

Client Network Attack

TRIGGERING EVENTS:

1. A denial of service (Dos) attack has been reported against FTP server 192.168.56.1
2. FTP traffic spikes were seen prior to the FTP server being taken offline

WHAT WE KNOW:

1. Captured traffic data this is narrowed down between an attacking host (192.168.56.101) and the FTP server (192.168.56.1).

WHAT WE WANT TO FIND OUT:

A little more abstract;

1. What caused the spike in FTP traffic?
2. What events took place prior to the FTP server being taken offline?

(Example, Were any files transferred to/from the FTO server or were any user accounts compromised)

Before getting started, document the goals, steps and results.

In this scenario, the goals are a little bit abstract and will depend on what we find in the ‘pcap’.

We want to know:

- What led up to the attack?
- What types of attacks did the attacker perform?
- Were they able to get in and what did they find?

Now that we have goals, open the ‘pcap’ file in Wireshark.

A lot of ARP frames are being sent, in most of these ARP requests the IP address is going up for each request.

First, take a look at how many conversations are within the capture file to begin with to find how many IP addresses are in this.

Go to;

Statistics→conversations

We can see that it has been already filtered for us.

Glancing at the TCP tab, notice that over 7000 TCP connections were made just between the two addresses.

See Fig.13 for reference.

→We know that this capture file has only two IP addresses, even then let us look through the attack traffic and try to find out what the attacker was able to see on our network.

Look at the ARP scans again, ARP scans work by sending out a bunch of ARP requests throughout the network, when another device on the network receives an ARP request, it will send an ARP reply.

Let us filter it down to show only the ARP replies.

We notice that there is a third address ‘.100’, we don’t have any information on it, it is possible that there was no communication from the attacker at all (or)

It could have been filtered out from the capture.

Make a note of the data found in the notepad.

See Fig.14 for reference.

We are done with the ARP traffic, so let us filter it out.

Now we are starting to see a flood of packets coming from our attacker and based on the changing port numbers, it is pretty obviously a **network port scan**.

To figure out what open ports the attacker was able to find in their scan of the system

Go to:

Transmission control protocol → flags → apply as filter → selected

When we send out a SYN, we expect to see a SYN ACK returned,

So let us filter by packets with the SYN ACK flag set and we are able to see the ports the attacker was able to find open.

Document all the data found.

See [Fig.15](#) for reference.

Still have a lot more data to come through.

We know this is a FTP server, so eliminate the obvious and filter out port 21;

With that we can separate the signal from the noise and verify that these are the only open ports the attacker was able to find.

“Following a formal methodology doesn’t just mean we will get the answer we want, also means we will get the context of those answers “

Now look at the FTP traffic at port 21,

We have already seen the traffic that’s part of stream-20, it was the port scan we have documented earlier.

But after, we see a lot of connection requests going straight to port 21.

Follow one of the streams and analyze,

Looks like a bunch of login attempts, hit the up arrow few times and check out the other streams
It definitely looks like a brute force attack.

See [Fig.16](#) for reference.

To figure if they did get in,

We see the FTP codes of incorrect Log- in, check out in google for the correct login FTP code.
It is FTP response code 230.

Put that in the filter and analyze,

We get only streams and both of them have the response 230.

Follow TCP streams for both the streams.

In the first one, they logged in but didn't go anywhere with it.

In the second one,

- They logged in with 'anon/anon'
- Listed the directories
- Changed to images
- Listed directory again
- Downloaded file "why we can't have nice cat.png"

Document the details found in the notepad.

See [Fig.17](#) for reference.

Since this is all over the network,

We can see the results of each command, hit the up arrow couple of times and step through the streams.

We see the contents of the first, second directory and then PNG that the attacker downloaded.

(Match with the first few bytes of file signature to find out the type of file).

See [Fig.18](#) for reference.

"In real-world capture files, it won't always be as easy as pressing the up arrow and streams list, sometimes the next streams or next several streams are actually part of other traffic, this is why we have to filter packets and list conversations as the first step when analyzing pcap files"

Another way to find the downloaded file is to look in the conversation lists, we know the size of the file given by FTP server response, so find a conversation that has at least the same number of bytes.

Then, filter by that and look at the stream.

See [Fig.19](#) for reference.

Save the '.png' file in raw form.

See [Fig.20](#) for reference.

Now that we have located the file, carve it out like in scenario 1 and take a hash of it.

That way, compare the hash and the hash of the original file on the server for integrity.

Document the hash data found.

See [Fig.21](#) for reference.

Last step,

Go ahead and open the file to see what the attacker was able to get his hands on.

See [Fig.22](#) for reference.

Investigation results

Attacker first initiated a ARP scan of the subnet

192.168.56.0/24

→ Following hosts were discovered:

192.168.56.1 &

192.168.56.100

Attacker then began a port scan of host 192.168.56.1

→ The following ports were found open:

21, 445, 139, 135, 49152, 49153, 49154, 49155, 49156.

Attacker followed up with an FTP brute force attack against FTP servers.

→ The credentials **anon/anon** were compromised.

Attacker successfully logged in as user anon with stolen credentials.

→ File “whycantwehaveanicecat.png” was downloaded.

→ MD5 sum of the file has been found.

SCREENSHOTS

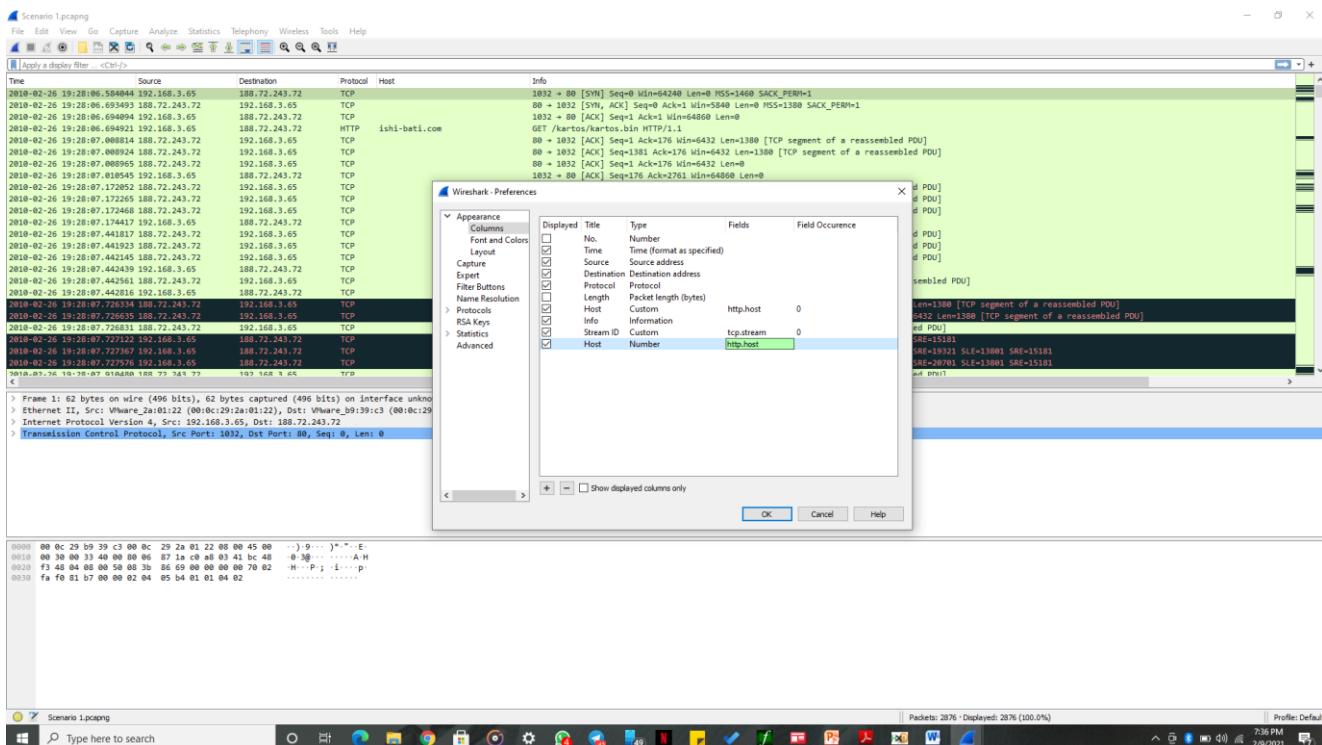


Fig.1

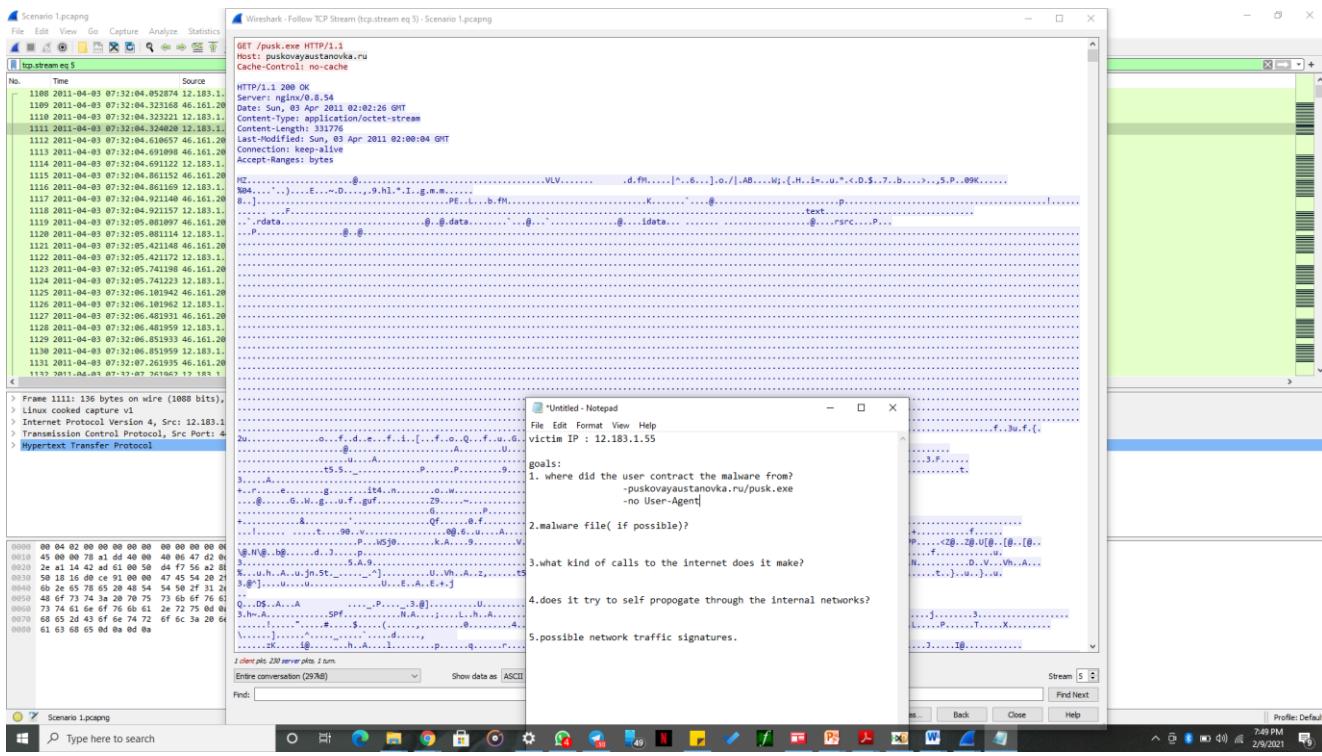


Fig.2

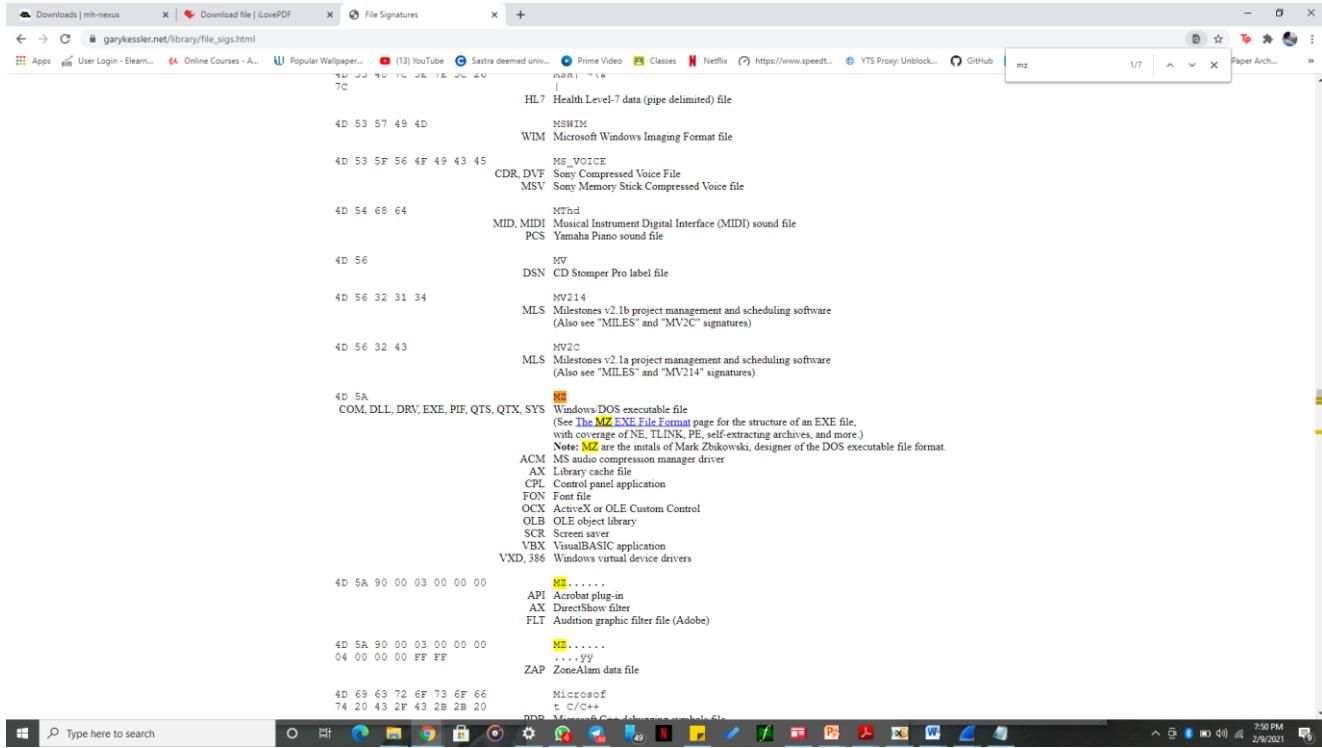


Fig.3



Fig.4

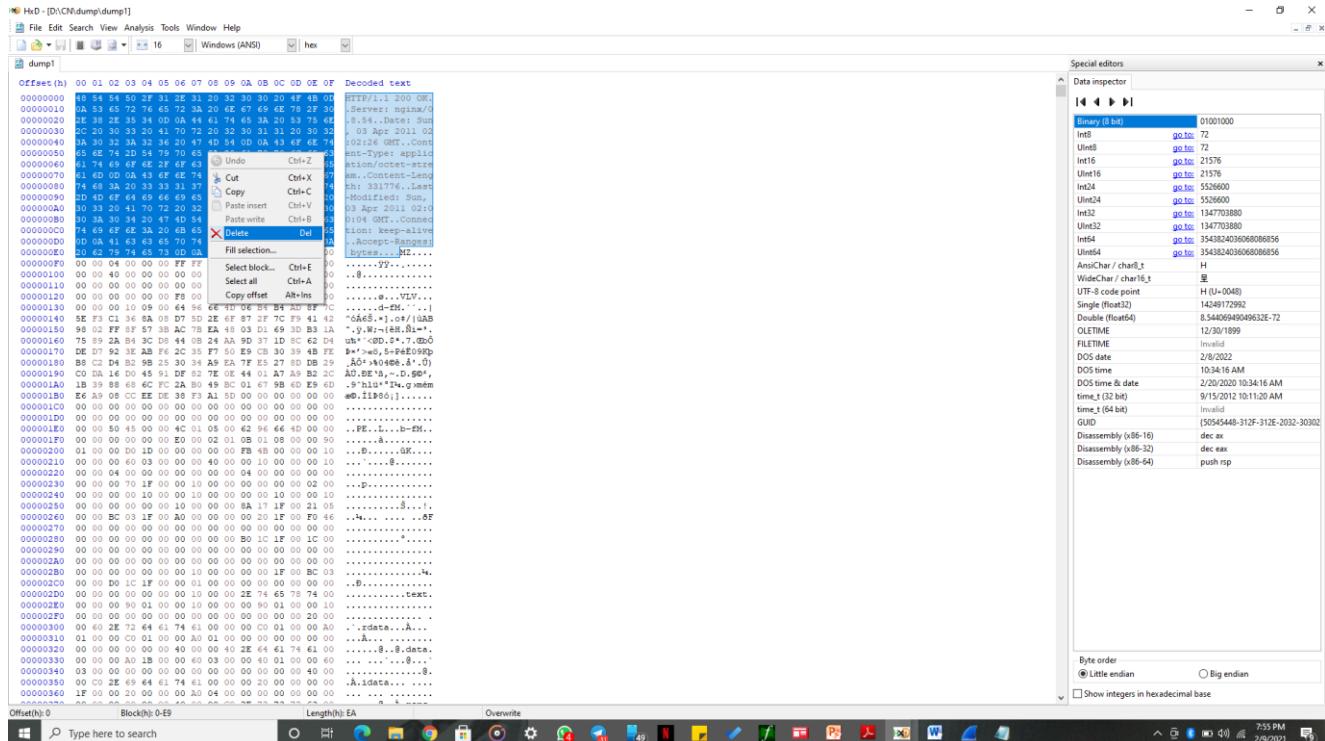


Fig.5

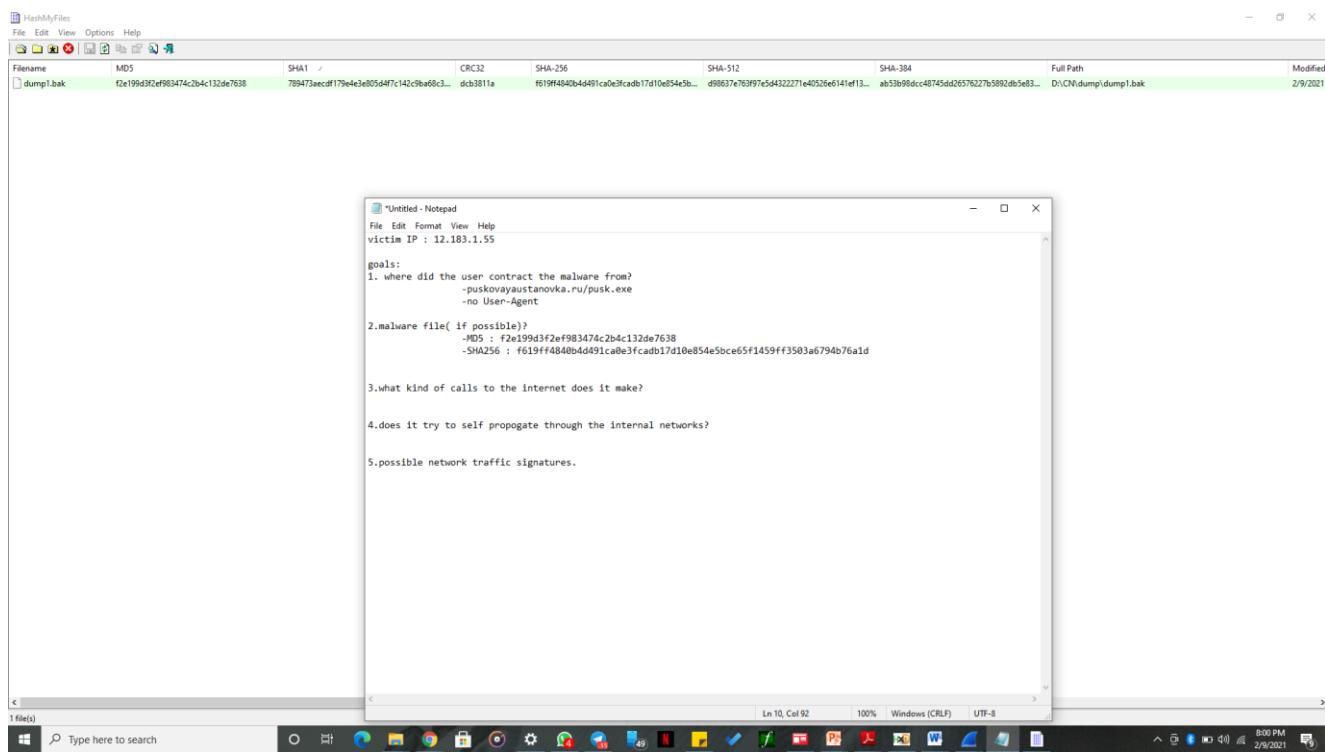


Fig.6

Fig.7

Fig.8

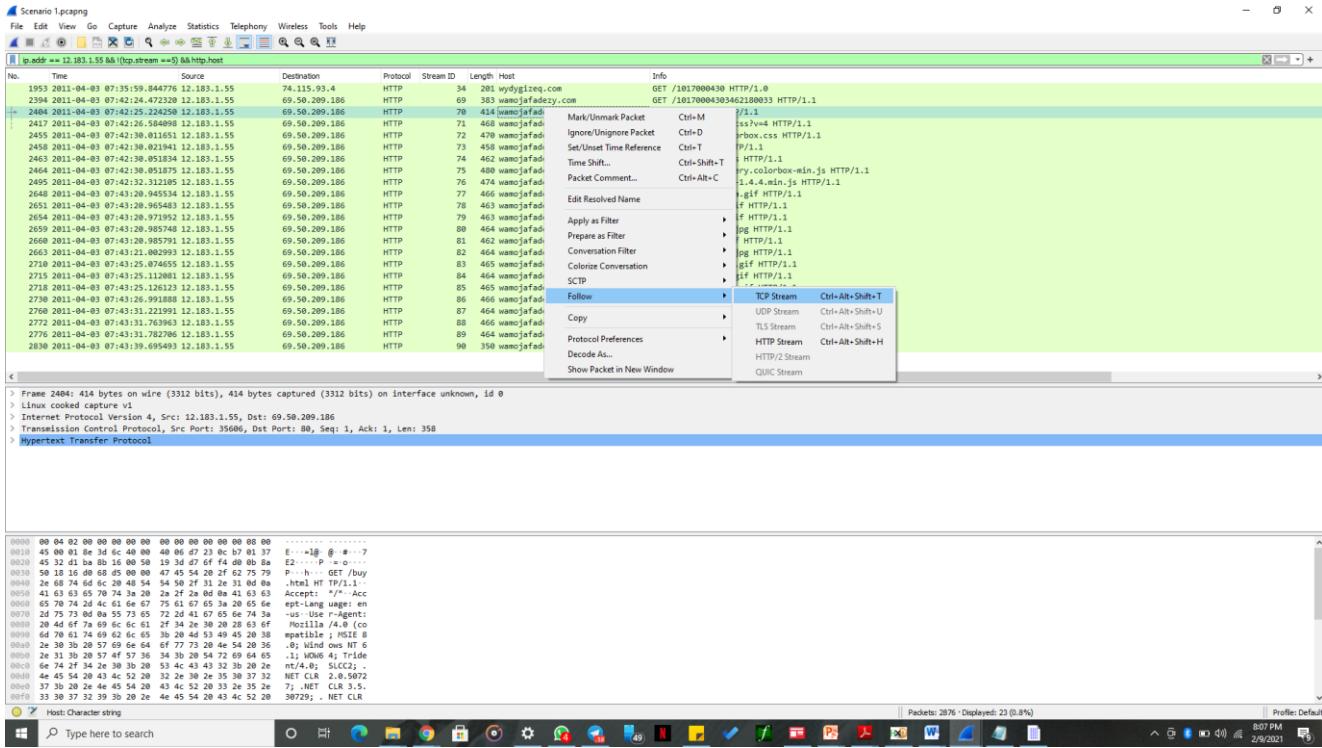


Fig.9

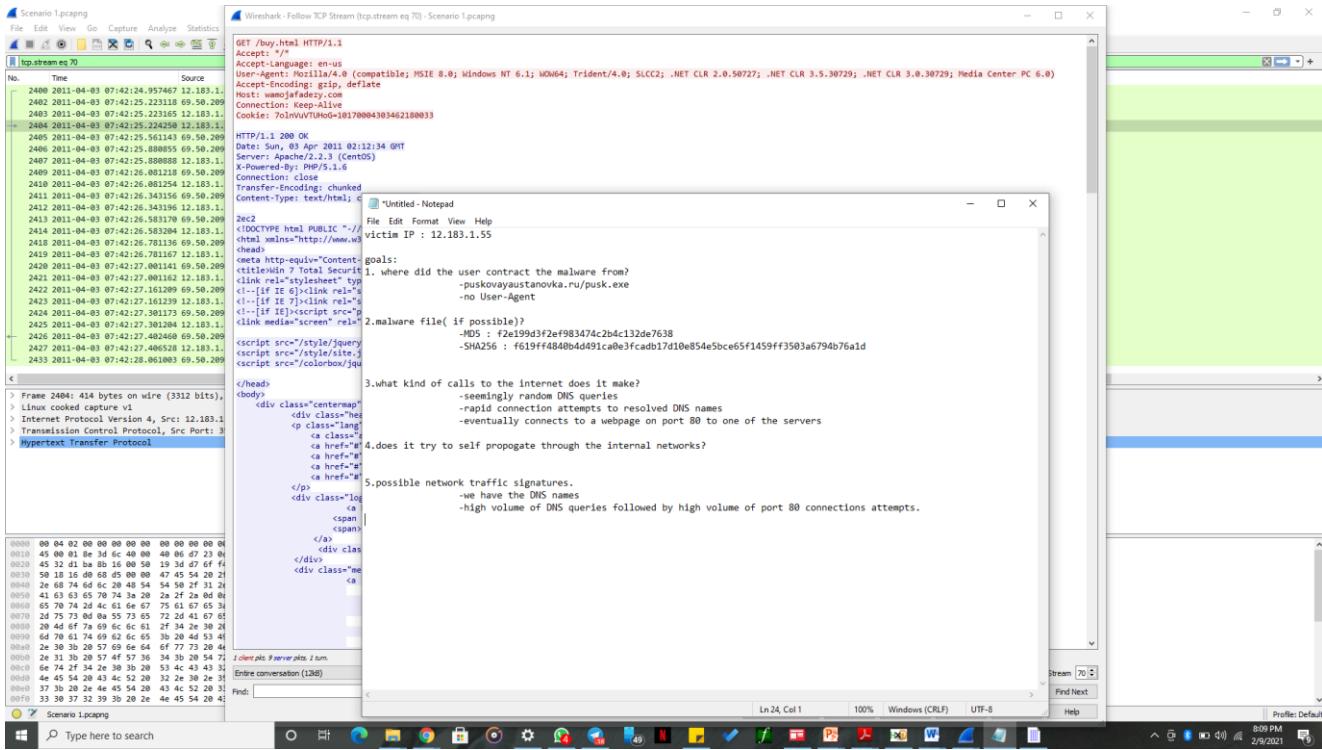


Fig.10

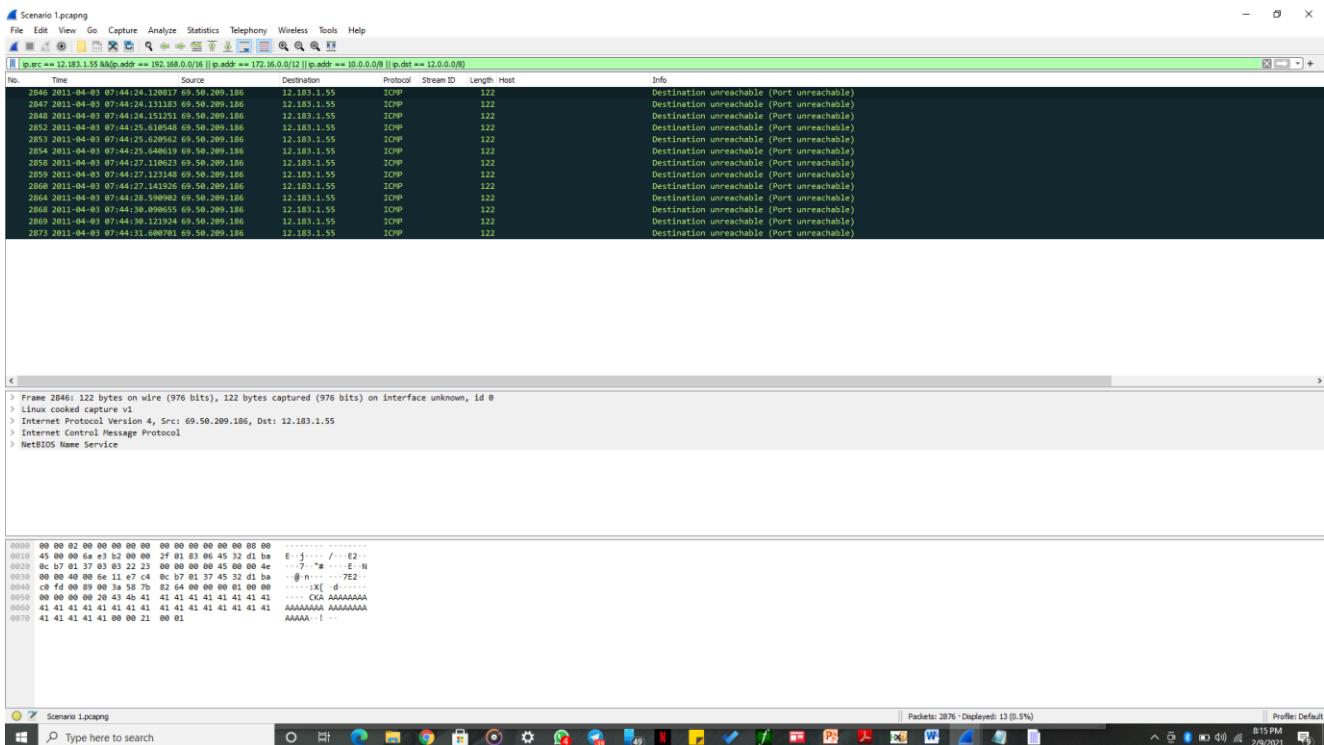


Fig.11

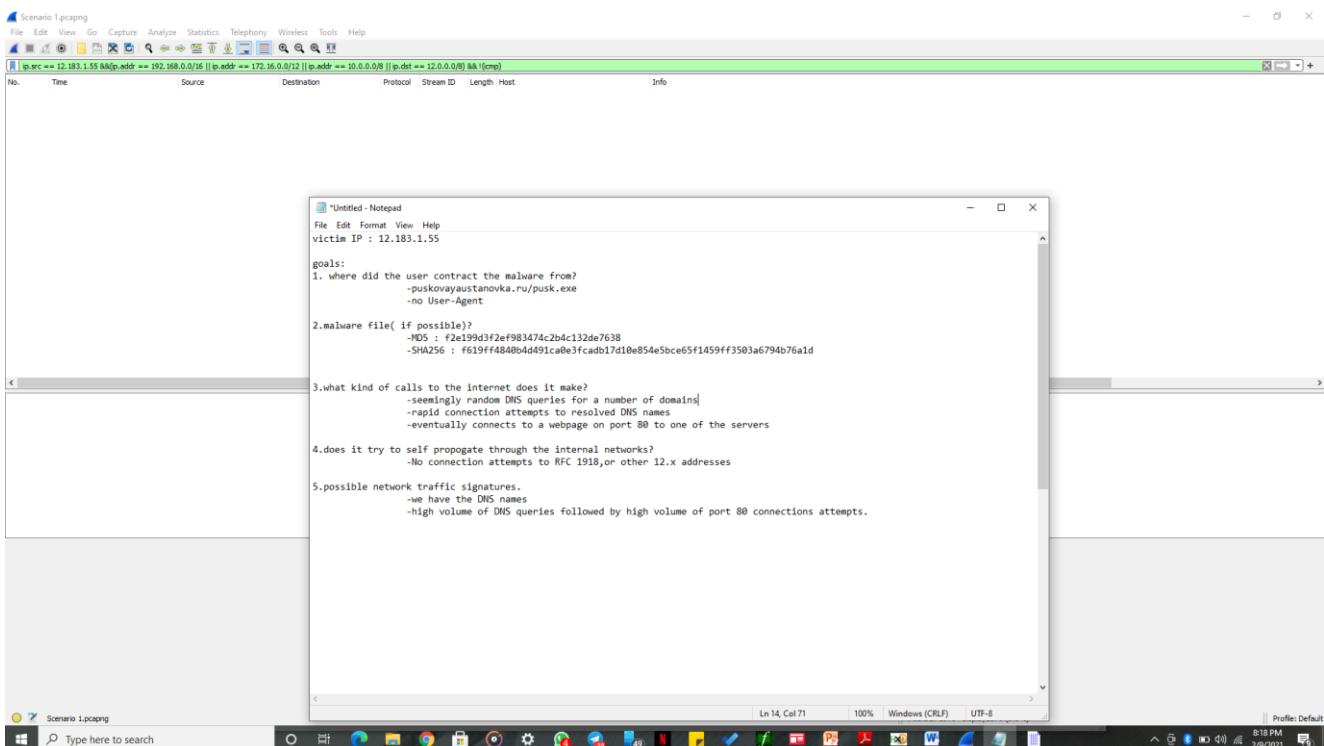


Fig.12

SCENARIO-2

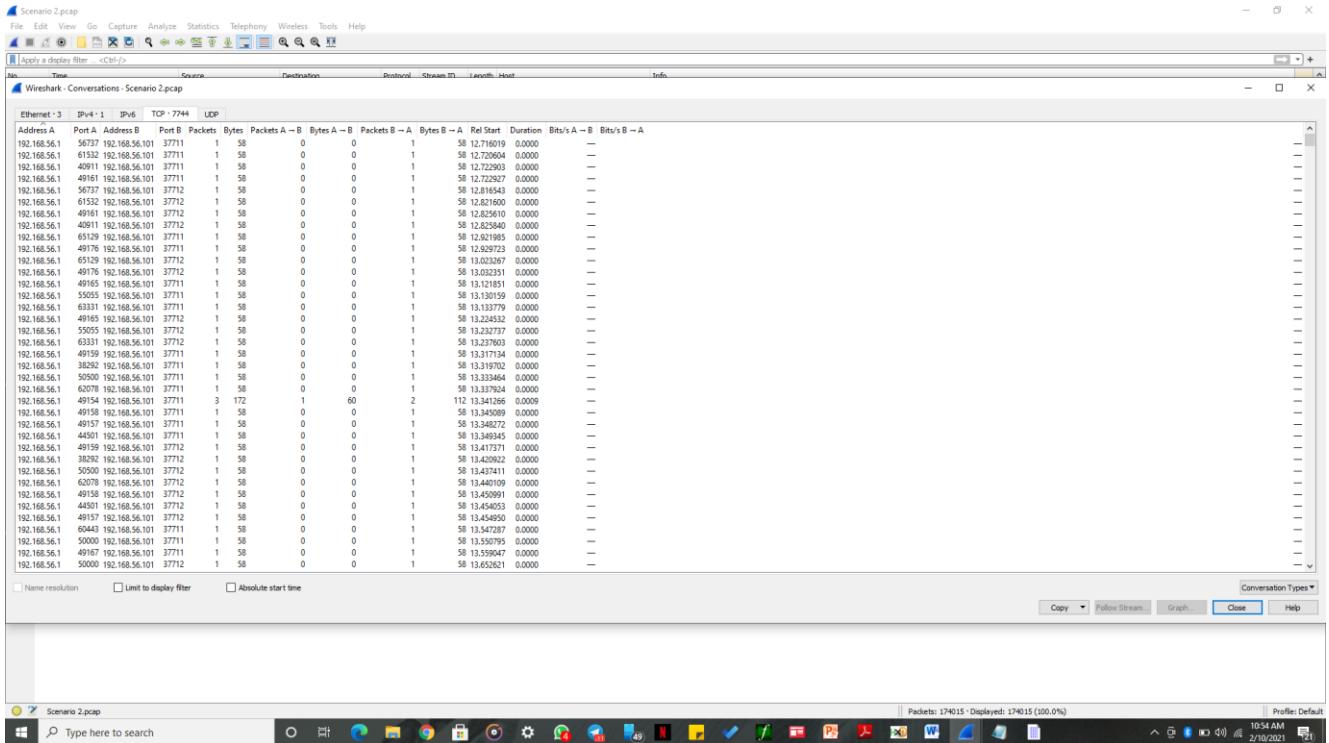


Fig.13

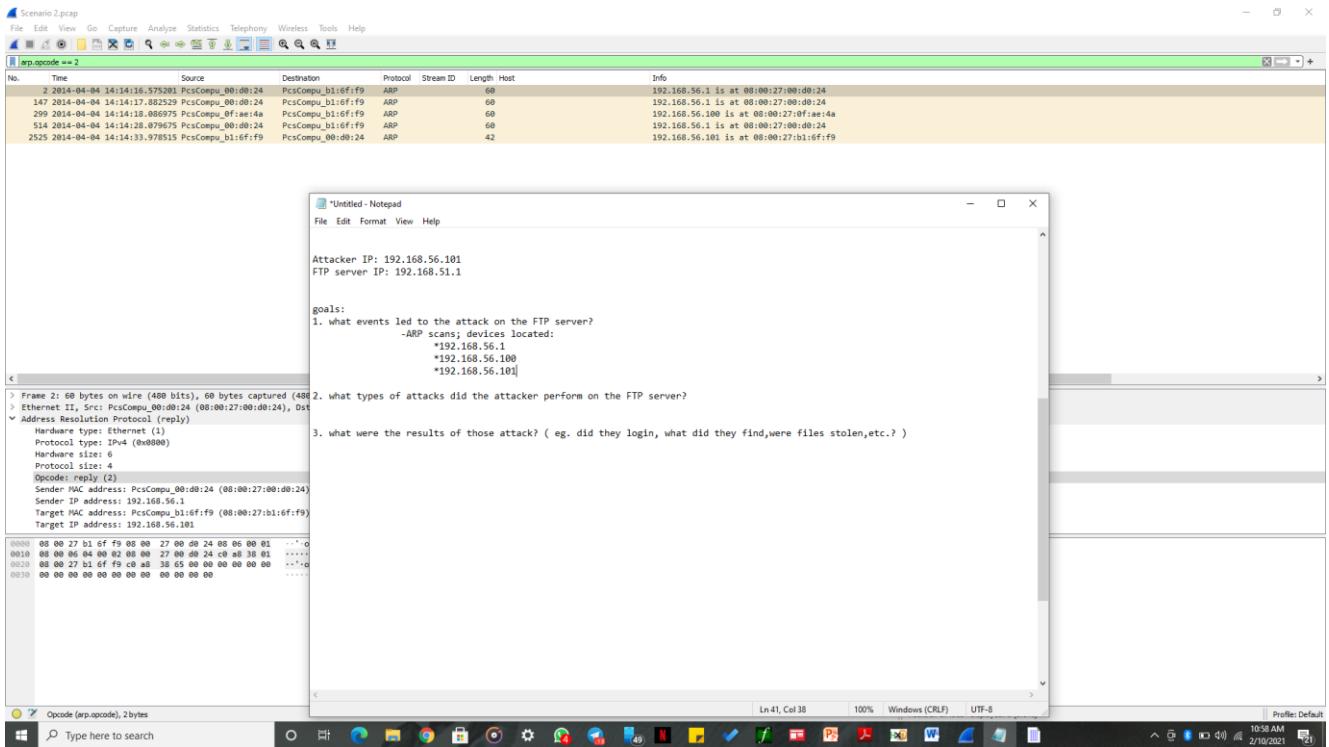


Fig.14

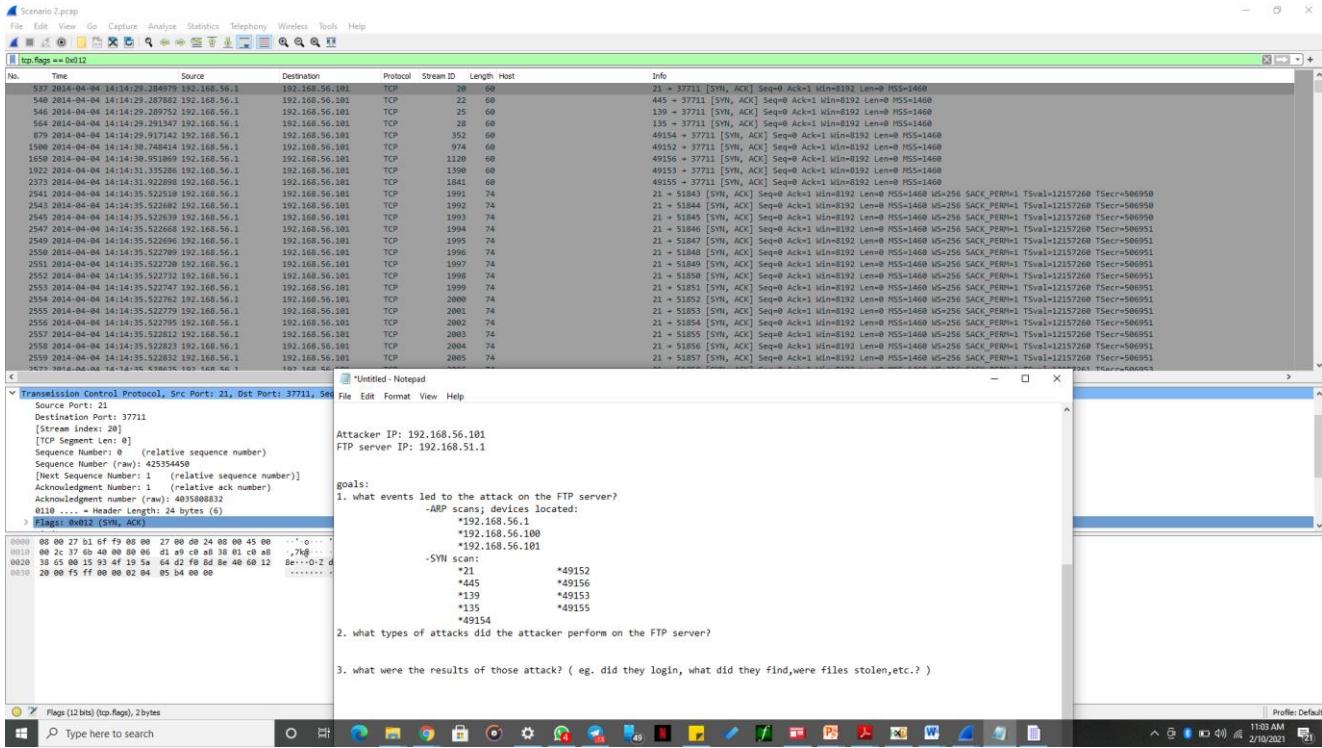


Fig.15

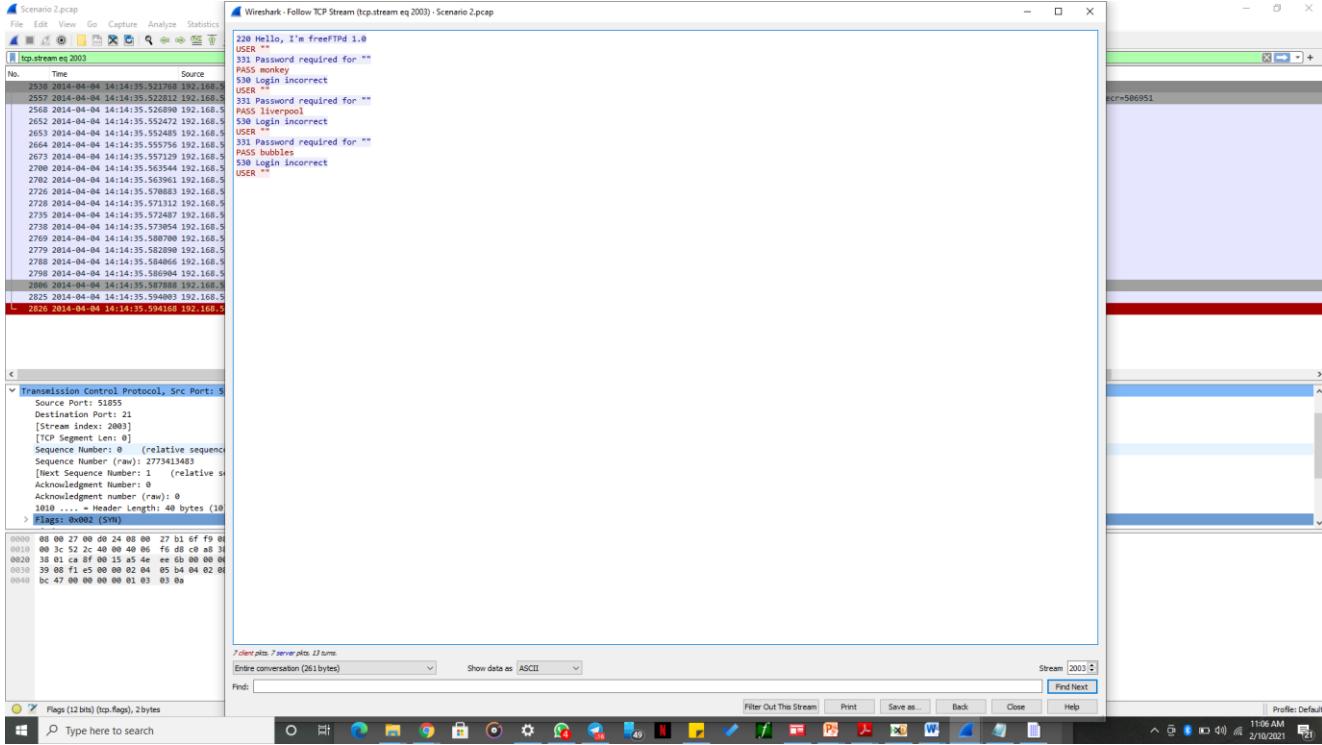


Fig.16

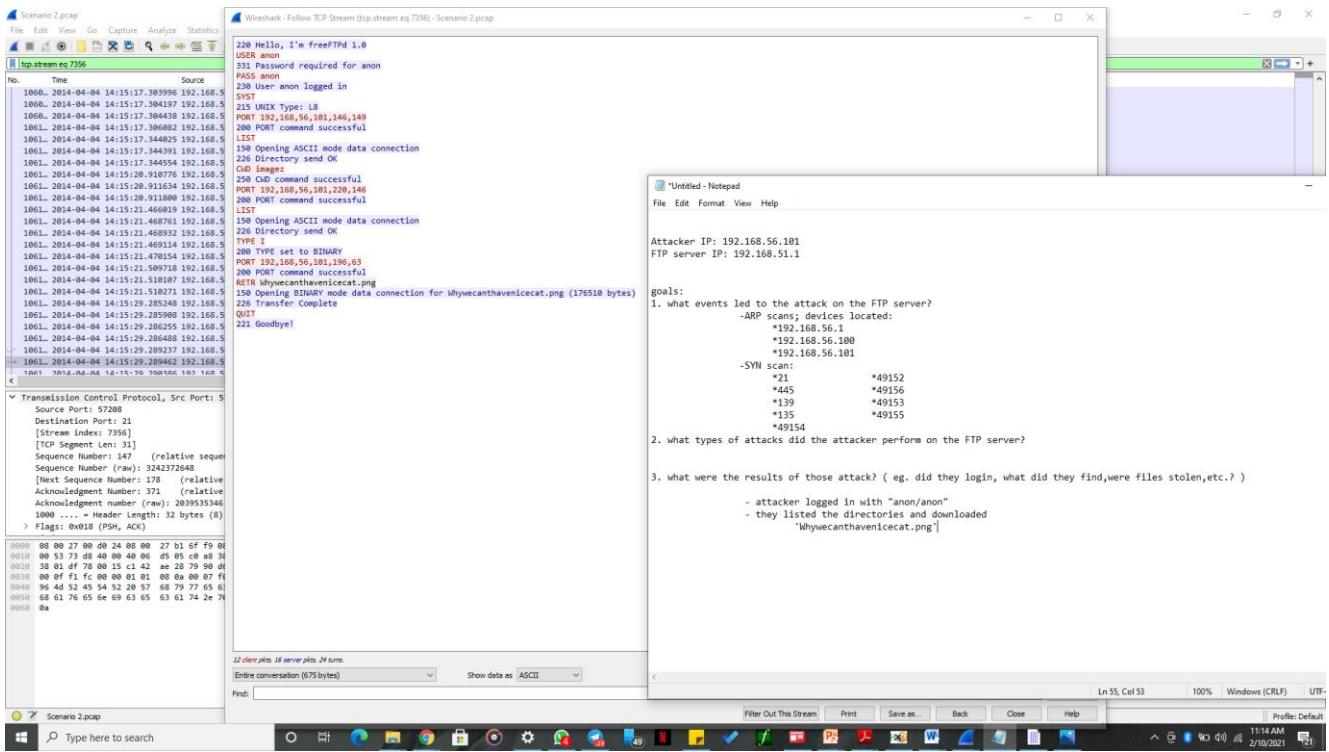


Fig.17

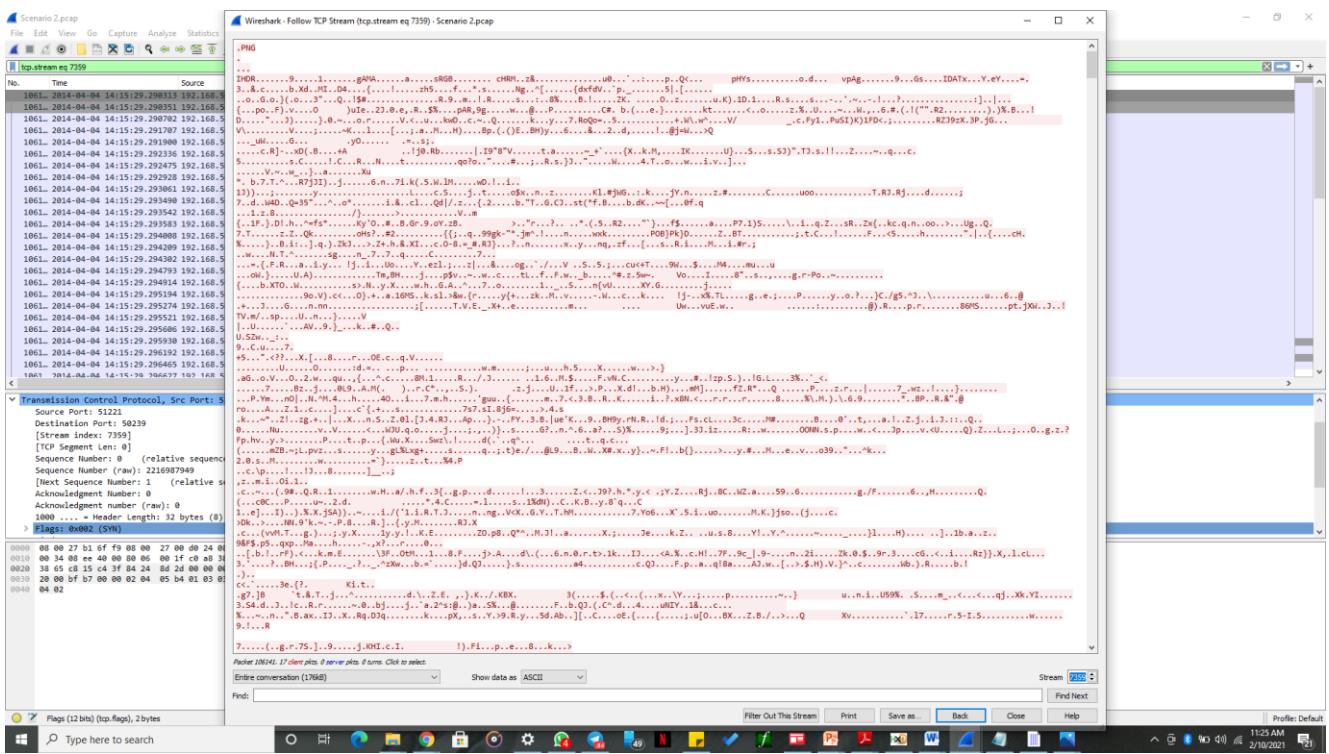


Fig.18

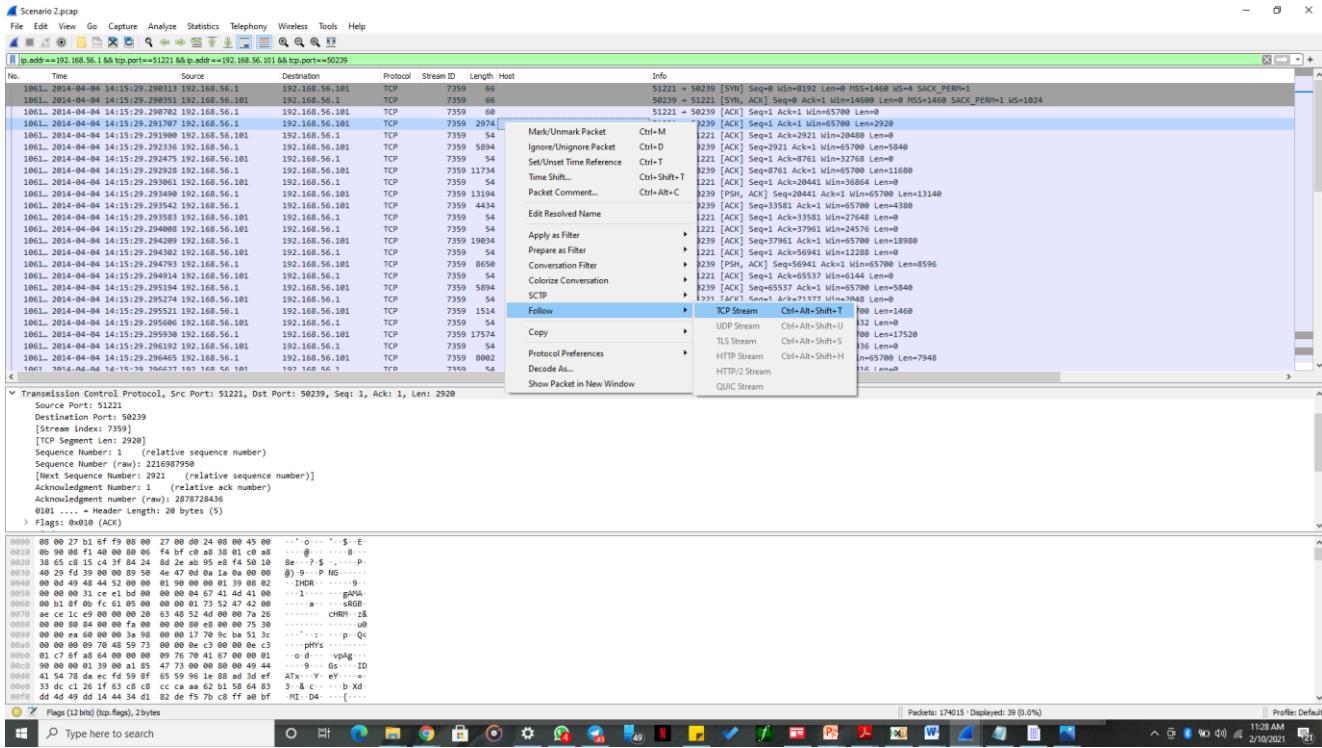


Fig.19

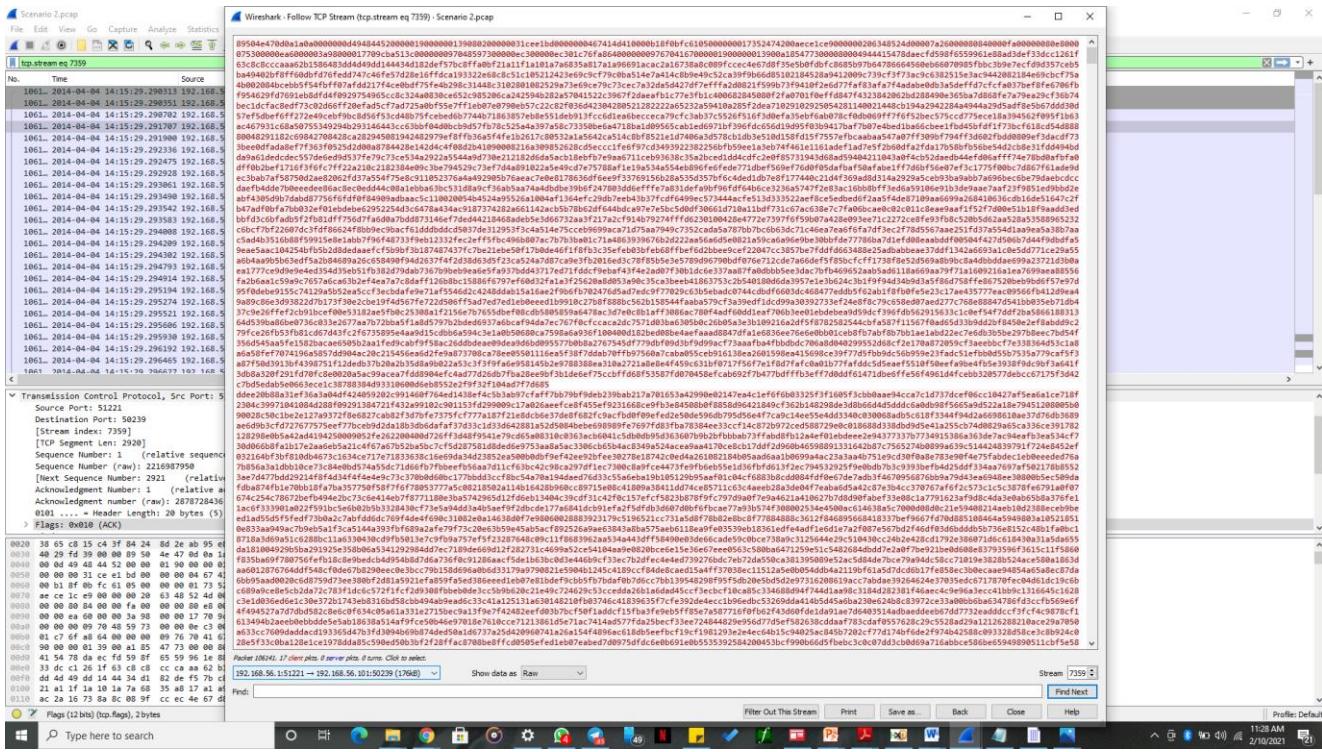


Fig.20

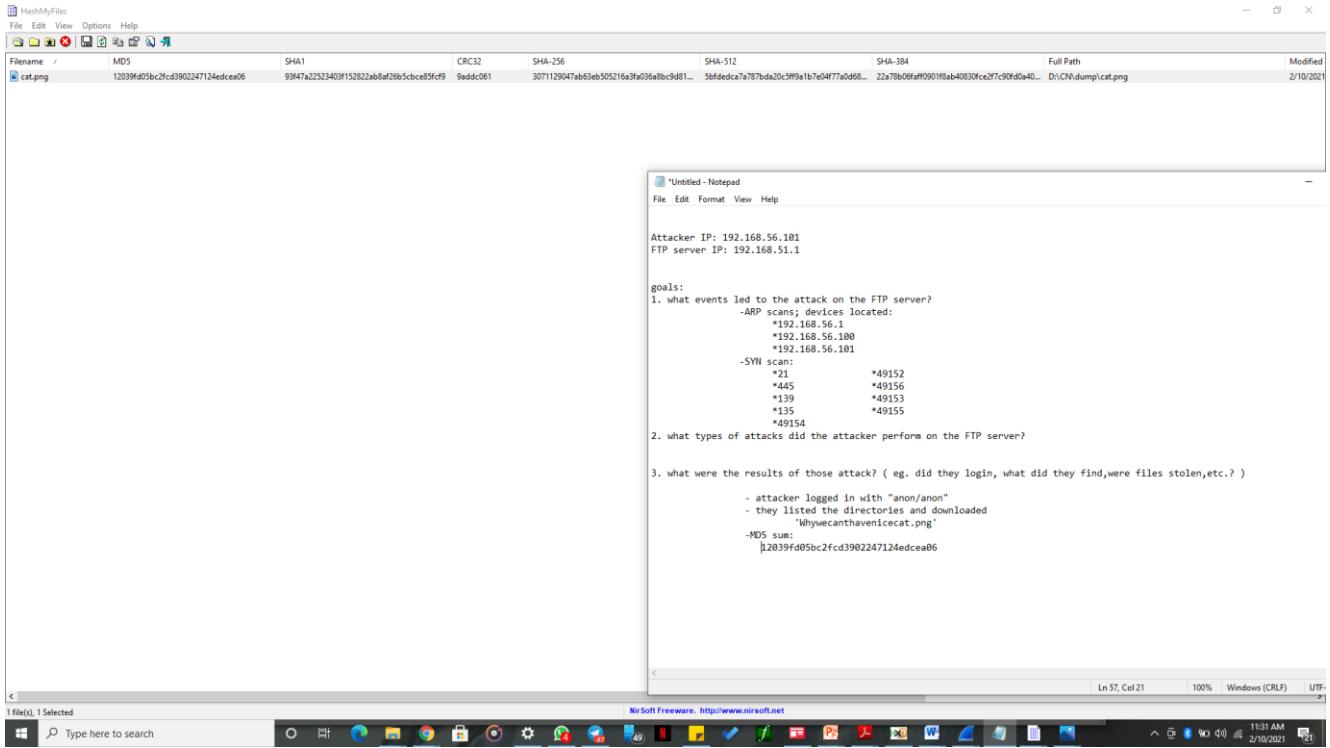


Fig.21

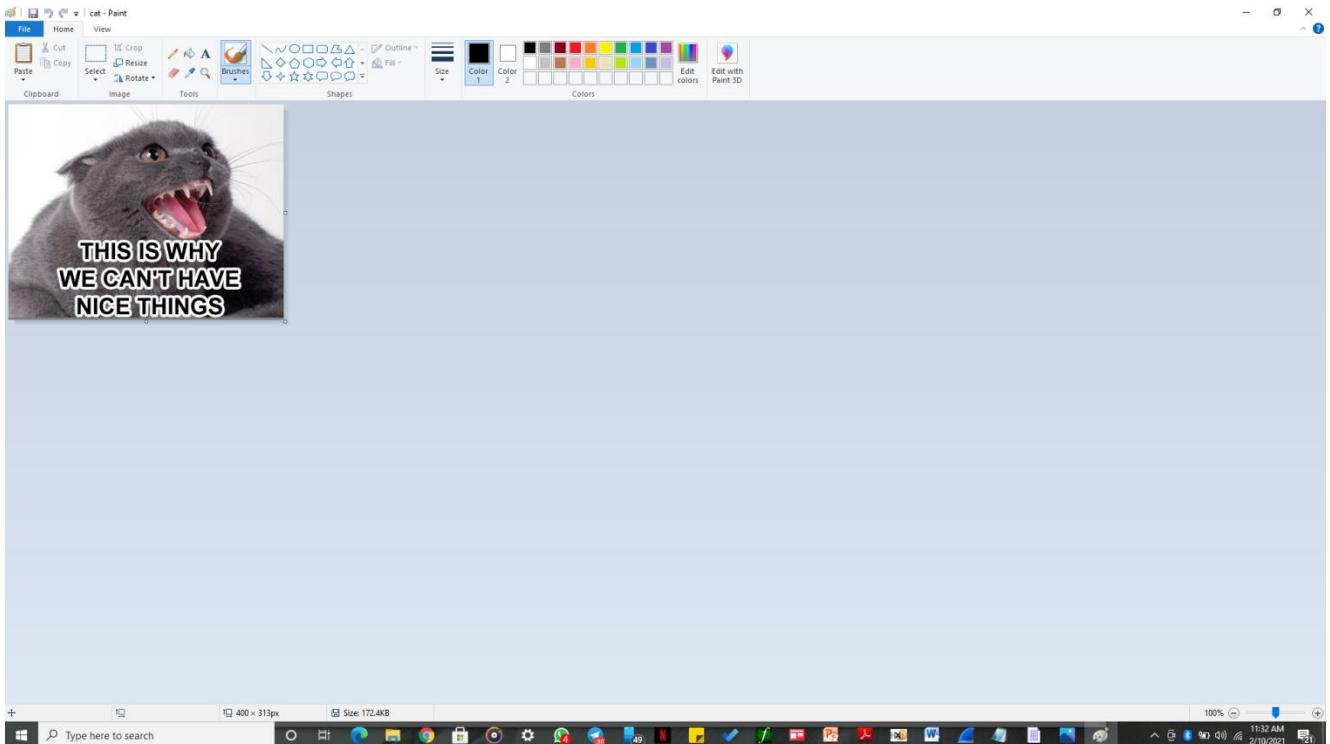


Fig.22

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORKS

The cases of packet analysis demonstrated during this paper help us to understand packet analyzers, especially Wireshark are crucial to network forensics. the necessity for network packet analysis is raised by the very fact that the methods currently employed by most users for network security aren't effective enough to detect all the pc attacks, especially the newest ones as an example , antivirus software has always been the primary choice for many of enterprise and residential users. However, most antivirus software uses a signature detection method, what makes this approach inefficient for several reasons.

First, many new virus signatures are discharged yearly, and antivirus will solely discover viruses for noted valid signatures and also the unknown signatures escape the detection. Second, in line with the discussion during this paper, today's networks face threats quite virus, like malware, denial of service, port scanning covert channels, and data theft; but, antivirus computer code will solely take terribly restricted action on these varied threats. Third, hackers also can target the antivirus computer code running on a machine, resulting in multiple vulnerabilities of the system while not the notice of the user. For these totally different reasons, network traffic analysis at the packet level is critical, and it will determine many alternative threats and attacks that would stay unheeded by antivirus computer code.

In the past, packet analyzers were terribly valuable and proprietary. Wireshark has modified all that. Wireshark is one in all the simplest open supply packet analyzers obtainable these days, and it displays packet knowledge as elaborate as attainable. However, despite its wealthy toolset, it's vital to stay in mind that Wireshark isn't an intrusion detection system. Wireshark won't warn you once somebody does strange things on your network that he's not allowed to try to, and it'll not manipulate things on the network like causation packets. The quality of Wireshark is that it's a convenient and effective tool that may facilitate network security professionals discern what's very happening within the network if strange things happen, packet analysis in Wireshark will discover a broad vary of security threats and attacks against networked laptop systems.

For further scenarios to be solved, go to:

1. <http://www.forensicscontest.com/puzzles>
2. <http://www.honeypots.org/challenges>
3. <http://www.malware-traffic-analysis.net/>

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