

# ISCS 3523-003 Intrusion Detection and Incident Response

# Lab #04 Attack Analysis The SimSpace Cyber Range

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Prepared for Intrusion Detection and Incident Response 04/18/2024 Professor: Shawn Zumwalt

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In my initial investigation, I started with the Application log, where I noticed a series of entries related to LoadPerf which stated that description of Event ID 1000 could not be found(figure 1). LoadPerf is for managing performance counters on Windows systems, crucial for monitoring CPU usage, memory usage, disk activity, and network traffic. Additionally, within the same logs, I observed mentions of other services such as RSVP, QoS RSVP, PSched, Remote Access Routing, Routing and Remote Access, TermService, Terminal Services, MSDTC, and WmiApRpl (figure 2). Outside research revealed that if these services are either missing or corrupted, it can lead to significant implications. Network connectivity issues may arise, with disruptions to remote resource access or network service utilization due to problems with services like Remote Access Routing, Routing and Remote Access, or WmiAPRpl. Moreover, performance decline may occur, as critical services responsible for managing network traffic and ensuring quality of service, such as RSVP, PSched, QoS RSVP, and WmiAPRpl, may be compromised or absent, resulting in slower data transfer speeds and increased latency. Additionally, security risks may come up if essential networking, remote access, or management services fail to operate properly, potentially exposing the system to vulnerabilities. Attackers could exploit vulnerabilities to gain unauthorized access, intercept sensitive data, or execute malicious commands remotely. The absence of proper management and monitoring capabilities, particularly from services like WmiAPRpl, could make it challenging to effectively detect and respond to security incidents, furthering the system's vulnerability. In addition, I noticed that descriptions of both Event ID 5603, related to WinManagement, and Event ID 1800 (figure 3), linked to SecurityCenter (figure 4), were also absent in the logs. Similar to what I observed with LoadPerf, other services like RSOP Planning Mode Provider and root/RSOP were mentioned in the WinManagement logs. However, the Security Center logs did not list any additional services. WinMgmt typically refers to the Windows Management Instrumentation service, responsible for managing and controlling Windows operating systems and components. Security Center refers to the Windows Security Center service, which monitors the system's security status, including antivirus software and firewall protection (University Information Technology Services). Entries related to Security Center in the Application log might signal security-related events or issues, such as updates to security settings or alerts about security breaches or vulnerabilities. Finally, another occurrence of this is from Event ID 7,2,4, and 1 which the description from source crypt32 cannot be found, which the component that raises this event could be either not be installed on the local computer or the installation is corrupted (figure 7). This suggests that the component responsible for generating these events may either not be installed on the local computer or the installation could be corrupted. Crypt32.dll is a module bundled with Windows and Windows Server operating systems, tasked with implementing numerous cryptographic messaging and certificate functions within the CryptoAPI (Microsoft).

Frequently appearing logs, not just those above, also include those related to Network Configuration, indicating instances of both restoring and not restoring network configurations for adapters, specifically one with the MAC address 00:0C:29:7F:D7:02 (as shown in figure 5). Additionally, there were logs detailing the startup of the database engine, the creation of new

instances, the subsequent stopping of those instances, and ultimately the shutdown of the database engine (as depicted in figure 6).

These observations offer clues that could indicate a compromised system. The absence of event descriptions, particularly for critical services like LoadPerf and SecurityCenter, might signal unauthorized manipulation of event logs by an attacker, aimed at concealing their actions and evading detection by system administrators or security monitoring tools. Additionally, the mention of crypt32.dll, a crucial component responsible for cryptographic functions within the Windows operating system, heightens concern. The lack of event descriptions related to crypt32 raises the possibility of underlying issues with cryptographic operations or security-related events, essential for maintaining data integrity and confidentiality. Potential implications of missing or corrupted services, such as network connectivity issues, performance degradation, and security risks, increase concern about the overall system health and security posture. These issues could potentially expose the system to unauthorized access, data breaches, or other malicious activities organized by attackers.

Next my investigation moves on to the analysis of the Security logs. In the Security log we see the same pattern of description of Events from different sources cannot be found. Here we have it from EventLog, SRService, Setup, W32Time and Print (figure 8). Considering the services currently running, it's recommended that the Simple Service Discovery Protocol (SSDP) should be disabled. SSDP is a network protocol responsible for discovering and advertising network services utilizing the UPnP (Universal Plug n Play) architecture. UPnP presents a security risk due to its capability for automatic discovery and attachment to network devices (Tenable). In a security-conscious environment, it's not recommended for workstations to automatically discover and connect to networked services. As noted by Skyway West, attackers can exploit this vulnerability to launch Denial of Service attacks, overwhelming a victim's server by flooding it with requests. Given this information, let's turn our attention to another service that follows this sequence, the Print Spooler service. It's an important part of the Windows operating system, designed to temporarily store print jobs in the computer's memory until they're ready to be printed (EPSON). If the Print Spooler service is active, it could indicate the presence of a network-connected printer. Additionally, noticing the lack of descriptions for events from the "Print" source in our earlier discussion suggests potential issues with the component responsible for generating these events, either it's missing from the local computer or it's corrupted. Reflecting on our previous conversation about how attackers might exploit this situation to hide their actions and avoid detection by system administrators or security monitoring tools, this printer could potentially serve as an access point for the attacker. the fact that SSDP is typically enabled by default on many systems is potentially exposing them to these risks without users' awareness.

One thing I also found during the security logs are constant Events from the source Tcpip stating that a network adapter was connected to the network and had initiated normal operations (figure 10). This may give us a clue as to when the attacker had gotten into the system and what he has been doing ever since the infiltration. By analyzing the timestamps of these Tcpip events, we can establish a timeline (starting at 7/8/2017) of the attacker's activities, including the initial compromise, movement within the network, and any malicious actions taken on compromised

systems. Considering that W32Time was also affected, experiencing similar issues with events initiated and sourced by that service but lacking descriptions, it's important to be cautious about relying on the accuracy of time synchronization on the compromised system.

Lastly, in the Security log, I came across a warning that TCP/IP had reached the security limit for concurrent TCP connect attempts. This suggests that the system might be facing an unusually high number of TCP connection attempts in a short time frame, possibly hinting malicious activity like network-based attacks, port scanning, or reconnaissance by an attacker. Going over the security limit for TCP connect attempts could affect the availability and performance of network services since legitimate connection requests might be delayed or denied. This limit is in place to safeguard against certain types of network attacks, like SYN flood attacks or other forms of resource exhaustion attacks. In addition to this warning, the logs showed that shortly afterward, an unknown user login was detected, which was the event discussed earlier regarding the network adapter being connected to the network. This sequence of events raises concerns that the attacker may have exploited the network congestion caused by the excessive TCP connection attempts to gain unauthorized access to the system.

After analyzing both the Application and Security logs, I proceeded to examine the network architecture using Network Miner. From the host results in Network Miner, it was evident that the IP address 192.168.134.129 stood out as the potential malicious host, primarily because it was running a Linux OS, which is uncommon in a professional environment (figure 12). Upon further investigation into this IP address, it was found to have one incoming session and six outgoing sessions. The incoming session indicated a significant volume of data being sent, with the network connection initiated by the victim computer, identified as APLOVERS computer, aligning with the time of the warning from the Security Log regarding the TCP/IP reaching the security limit for concurrent TCP connect attempts on 7/8/2017 (figure 13). For the outgoing sessions, four ports were identified: 445, 1000, 135, and 139. Notably, the majority of the packets were sent over a single port, 445 (figure 13). Looking deeper into this I looked at the "Parameters" tab and filtered out the Linux IP (figure 14). The result was many different type of SMB messages. From frame 34-38 we see a lot of SMB Native LAN Manager and SMB Native OS which both are indicates the operating system of the SMB client or server. It seems that the Linux IP is likely performing a port scan to identify potential targets and gather information about their systems. The fact that responses are received suggests that port 445 is open on the target system, which could be the entry point for the attacker. This is further supported by the SMB commands observed in frames 40-102, specifically "Tree Connect AndX Request 23793" and "NT Create AndX Request 23793" (as shown in figure 14). The "Tree Connect" command is used to establish connections to shared resources like folders or printers, while "NT Create" is a request to create or open a file, directory, or device on the remote server, according to Microsoft. Examining the parameter values such as "\192.168.134.132\IPC\$", "\SRVSVC", "\BROWSER", and "\SPOOLS", it's likely that these correspond to specific pipes used in the Server Message Block (SMB) protocol. Named pipes, like these, can be helpful for monitoring SMB activity and lateral movement. "\SRVSVC" is probably linked to the SRVSVC pipe, facilitating communication for server services in SMB. "\BROWSER" might represent the BROWSER pipe, managing browser service communication and network resource lists (MSRC). Lastly,

"\SPOOLS" may refer to the SPOOLS pipe, which handles print job management and communication between clients and print servers within SMB. A noteworthy point is the value "IPC\$" associated with the first parameter, which, according to Microsoft Learn, is a share created by the Windows Server service, enabling anonymous users to perform certain activities. Another interesting observation is that all these services, except the first one, were running on the compromised computer. Moreover, it was noted that the services SRVSVC and SPOOLS had missing log descriptions. Overall, the findings suggest a potentially successful reconnaissance and exploitation effort targeting the network.

After reviewing my previous discoveries, I turn to Wireshark to inspect the network traffic further. One of my first steps is to analyze the I/O graph for any irregularities, particularly spikes in packet activity. I notice significant increases in packets labeled 711, 1437, and 2211, all within the same TCP stream. Upon closer examination, the data appears to be gibberish or garbage data (figure 16), but a particular phrase catches my attention, "This program cannot be run in DOS mode." This phrase is commonly found in the header of binary executable files on Windows systems. Its presence in the TCP packet data suggests that the packets may contain executable code, hinting at a potential attempt to execute a program or inject code. Given that these packets originate from the previously identified malicious Linux machine, I speculate that it might be running a Buffer Overflow program. Inspecting more of the random strings, I found the words "METERPRETER" (figure 17). Meterpreter is a Metasploit attack payload that provides an interactive shell from which an attacker can explore the target machine and execute code (Double Octopus). In addition to the buffer overflow program, I was speculating earlier could also contain instructions to download and execute the Meterpreter payload from an attacker-controlled server.

Next, I examined the Expert Information section for any significant summaries (figure 18). The output revealed the presence of malformed packets originating from a printer. This serves as initial evidence regarding the source of the attack. Upon further investigation of frame 87, two key points emerged. Firstly, the summary indicates "EnumPrinters," suggesting an attempt at enumeration to map out the victim's network and identify vulnerabilities. Secondly, it utilizes the SPOOLS protocol for printer interactions. However, upon closer inspection of figures 19 and 20, it becomes evident that the source is indeed a printer. The TCP frame information clearly identifies the device as the local printer connected to the host computer named APLOVERS. This printer is likely either physically connected to the machine or part of a local network automatically authenticated to the printer. Frame 2310 is the same information that was found in frame 87.

The attacker's strategy involved targeting the printer through an open port (445) on the network, successfully exploiting this entry point to penetrate the system. Leveraging vulnerabilities within the printer's SMB service, they executed a program capable of initiating a buffer overflow and deploying Meterpreter, a potent tool providing an interactive shell for further exploration and code execution within the target machine. Evidence of the attacker's exploitation efforts is reflected in the security logs, where successful login attempts associated with Meterpreter usage were recorded. Additionally, the attacker utilized SMB for various name pipes to facilitate file sharing and establish connections between the compromised printer and

the host computer, as evidenced by parameters extracted from Network Miner, specifically noting SMB Tree and SMB Create. The attacker's success in infiltrating the printer was facilitated by the victim computer's SSDP, which automatically established connections with the printer, potentially without the user's awareness. Once inside the victim's computer, the attacker leveraged higher-priority access to different services, potentially exploiting vulnerabilities and obscuring their actions by manipulating logs, as indicated by the absence of log descriptions. Further analysis of the data stream containing the executable code and references to "METERPRETER" revealed the use of encryption methods like RSA and SHA, suggesting potential data exfiltration activities. The presence of such encryption methods indicates the handling of important data in a specialized manner, potentially involving the extraction and transmission of sensitive information from the compromised system. This could be the reason why crypt32 was tampered with. In conclusion, the attacker's multi-faceted approach, targeting the printer as an entry point and leveraging vulnerabilities within SMB and Meterpreter, underscores the sophistication of their tactics. Through a combination of exploitation, lateral movement, and potential data exfiltration, the attacker posed a significant threat to the victim's security posture. It's clear that the attacker's strategies went beyond simply exploiting vulnerabilities. They demonstrated a deep understanding of system architecture and employed sophisticated methods to infiltrate and manipulate critical components. This high level of sophistication suggests a well-equipped and highly skilled threat actor, possibly operating with specific objectives in mind. Furthermore, their deliberate targeting of system processes and establishment of covert communication channels underscores a strategic approach aimed at long term persistence and data theft.

## **Images**

Level	Date and Time	Source	Event ID	Task Category
Information	8/6/2016 4:05:15 PM	LoadPerf	1000	None
(i) Information	8/6/2016 4:05:38 PM	LoadPerf	1000	None
(i) Information	8/6/2016 4:05:40 PM	LoadPerf	1000	None
(i) Information	8/6/2016 4:06:54 PM	LoadPerf	1000	None
information	8/6/2016 4:06:56 PM	LoadPerf	1000	None

2

The electription for Event ID 1000 from yourse LoadPerf cannot be found. Either the component that raises this event is not installed on your local computer or the installation is compress. You can install or regar the component on the local computer. If the event originated on another computer, the display information had to be seved with the event.

The following information was included with the event.

ESSP

CNO POIS

The following information was included with the event:

PSched PSched

The following information was included with the event:

RemoteAccess

Routing and Remote Access

The following information was included with the event:

TermService Terminal Services

The following information was included with the event:

MSDTC MSDTC

The following information was included with the event:

WmiApRpl WmiApRpl

ART SSOX, WHAM	pot		
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Event ID:	5603	Tech Category:	Note
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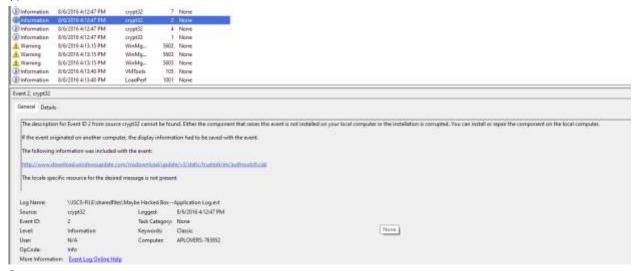
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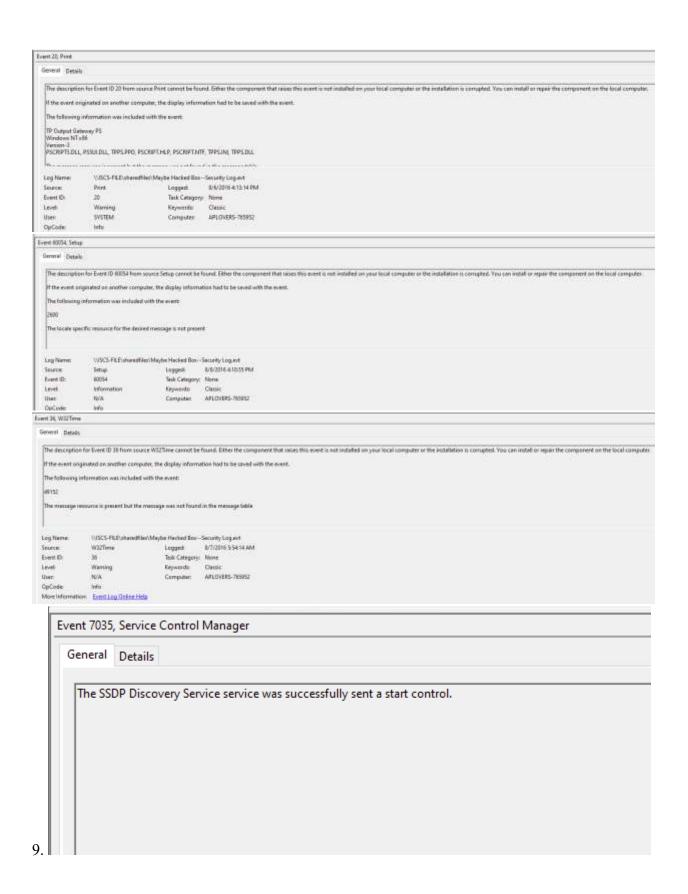
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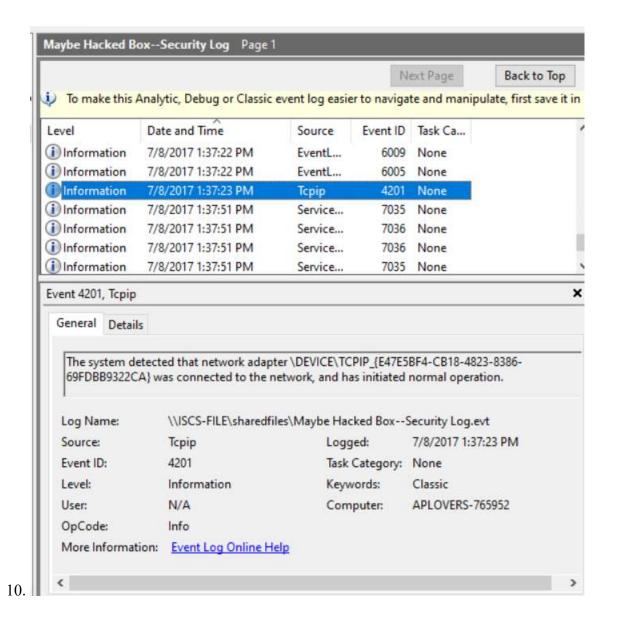
).				
Ev	ent 270, VMUpgrad	eHelper		
	General Details			
	Not restoring netv	vork configuration for adapter	with MAC addre	ess 00:0C:29:7F:D7:02. The device ID for this adapter is unchanged.
	1			
	Log Name:	\\ISCS-FILE\sharedfiles\Mayl	be Hacked Box	Application Log.evt
	Source:	VMUpgradeHelper	Logged:	8/8/2016 6:04:13 PM
	Event ID:	270	Task Category:	None
	Level:	Information	Keywords:	Classic
	User:	N/A	Computer:	APLOVERS-765952
	OpCode:	Info		
	More Information:	Event Log Online Help		

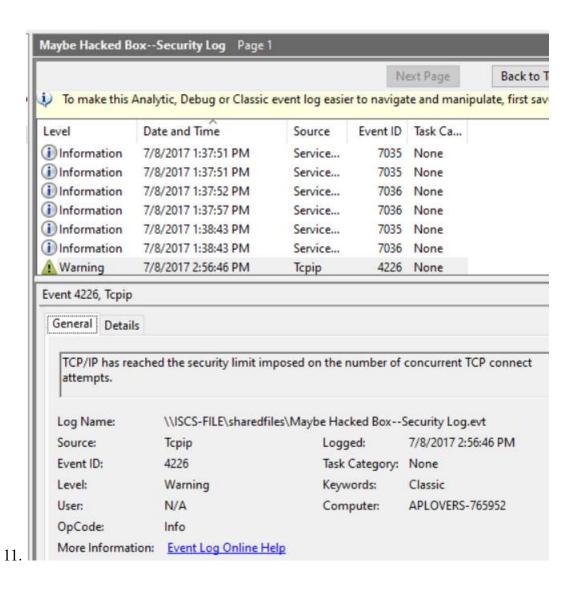
wuauclt (1588) The database engine 5.01.2600.5512 started. 6. Event 102, ESENT General Details wuaueng.dll (1588) SUS20ClientDataStore: The database engine (%5.%6.%7.%8) is starting a new instance (%4). Event 103, ESENT General Details wuaueng.dll (1588) SUS20ClientDataStore: The database engine stopped the instance (0). Dirty Shutdown: %6 Internal Timing Sequence: %5 Event 101, ESENT General Details wuauclt (1588) The database engine stopped.

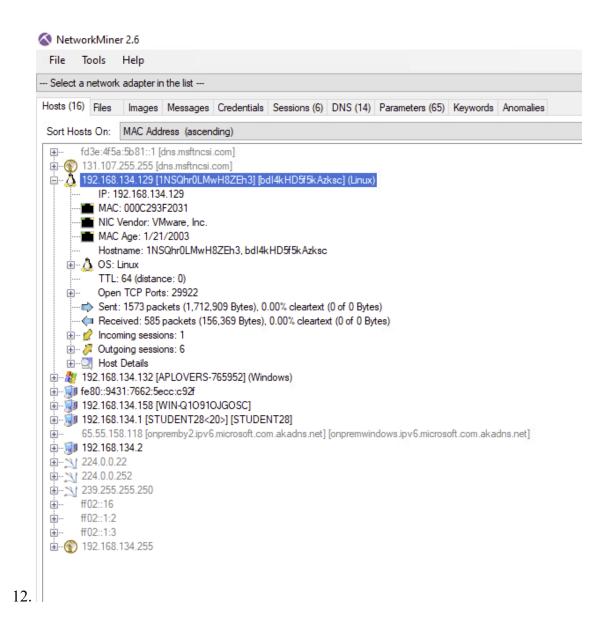












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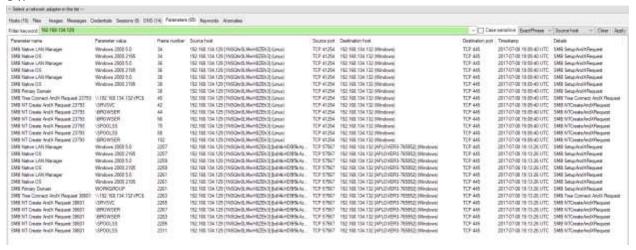
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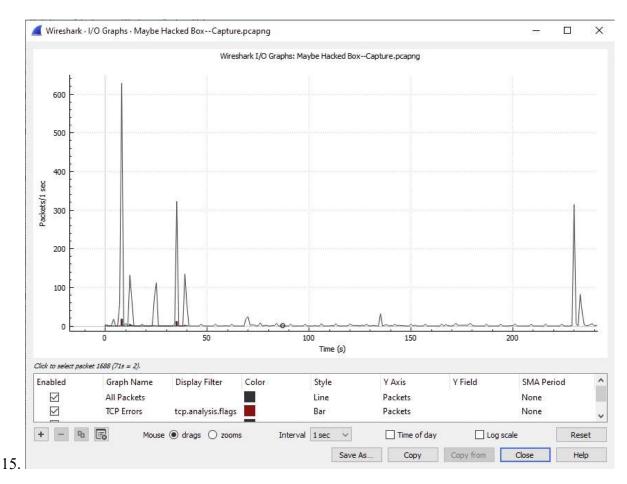
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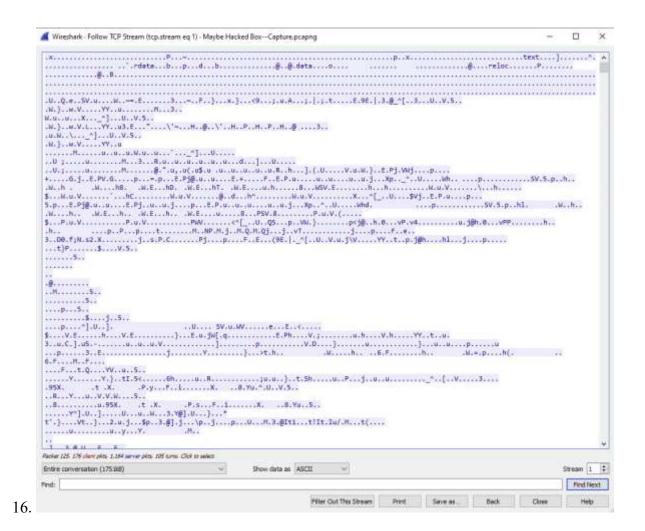
Server: 132 161 134 132 [HILDORIA] (Mendermen TCP 45)

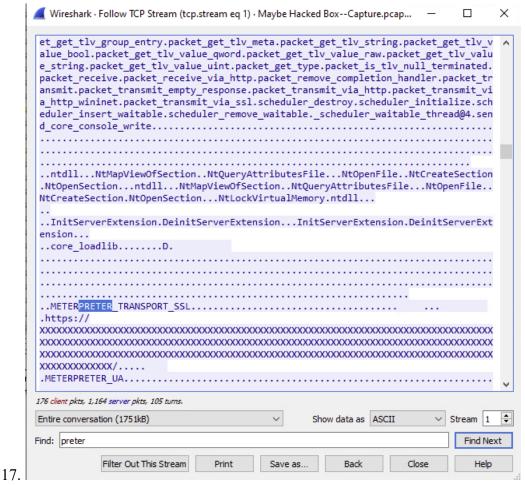
Server: 132 161 134 132 [HILDORIA] (Mendermen TCP 45)

Server: 132 161 134 132 [HILDORIA] (Mendermen TCP 45)
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1 Q

Wireshark - Expert Information - Maybe Hackest Box -- Capture.pcapng Pactert Summary Group Protocol Court 29922 -- 1241 [ACK] Seq=737709 Ack=1 Win=14600 Len=1... Malformed HITTE Mattermed Factet (Exception occurred)
EnumPrinters response, level 1[Mattermed Packet] 2315 EnumPrinters response, level 1(Melformed Packet)
Connection reset (IIST) Malformed SPOOLSS Warning Sequence TCP Warning TCP Zero Window segment Elegal characters found in header name TCP window specified by the receiver is now completely full Warning Protocol HITTE Warning TCP Sequence DNS query retranomission. Original request in frame 17. Fault: nca\_s\_fault\_ndr Warning Protocol Note DICERPO Response Sequence Chit MISEARCH \* HTTP/T.TV/W Chat TCP window update Connection finish (FP4) TEP Sequence Chat Chat Connection establish acknowledge (SYN+ACK) server por... Connection establish request CSYNs server port 445 TEP

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