Endpoint Forensics Incident Documentation: KrakenKeylogger

***Case**:* KrakenKeylogger Endpoint Compromise
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***Date:** 01/18/2026*

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1. Executive Summary

The SOC initiated an investigation into **an endpoint compromise** following reports of a **ransom demand**. An employee trying to outsource an office task **was socially engineered** to download **the malicious payload** through an **instant messaging app**. The investigation unveiled that the attacker used **a password-protected ZIP file** to make it **evade initial analysis**. Once run, the malware abused **"Living Off The Land" (LOLBin) tactics** leveraging the legitimate app **Greenshot** and set up communication channel The attacker subsequently utilized **AnyDesk** for data exfiltration. **All malicious artifacts**, **domains,** and **attacker IPs** have been identified and documented.

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2. Tools

Tool	Purpose
DB Browser for SQLite	Analyzing Windows Notification databases **(`wpndatabase.db`)** to reconstruct chat history and retrieve credentials.
Notepad++	A lightweight text editor for quickly viewing, editing, and analyzing text and log files.
Timeline Explorer	Reviewing **CSV exports** of forensic artifacts for chronological analysis.
SrumECmd	Analyzing **System Resource Usage Monitor (SRUM)** data to track network usage by specific applications.
AmcacheParser	To extract and analyze Windows application execution history from the Amcache artifact for forensic investigations.

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3. Questions & Answers

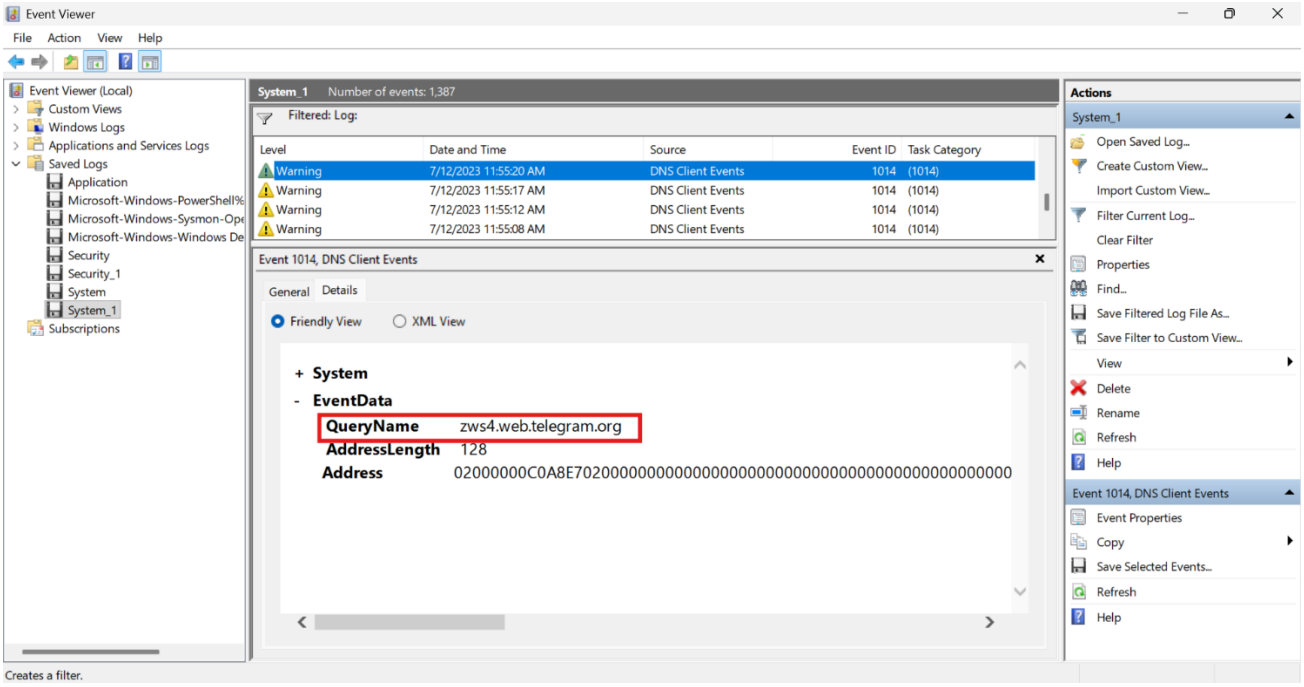
1. What is the web messaging app the employee used to talk to the attacker?

The investigation started with the checking of **the Desktop** for **any low-hanging fruits** and **obvious files**, **shortcuts**, or **evidence of communication**; **no relevant evidence was identified**. I then reviewed **browser history,** focusing first on **Microsoft Edge**, which did **not show any useful activity**, and confirming that **Google Chrome** was **not present on the system.**

As browser-based artifacts were **inconclusive**, we shifted focus to **DNS activity using system logs** in order to track down some potentially **interesting communication channels**. While there were no **Event ID 22 entries** indicating that **no successful DNS queries were logged.**

A number of DNS resolution timeout events had occurred, carrying **Event ID 1014. It is a classic indicator in incident response**, often associated with **blocked**, **delayed**, or **suspicious outbound communication attempts**.

After analyzing the **Event ID 1014 entries**, we determined that the user was using **Telegram** as a **web based messaging application**.



System log ***artifacts indicating the use of a web-based messaging application*** *(Telegram)* ***for external communication.***

2. What is the password for the protected ZIP file sent by the attacker to the employee?

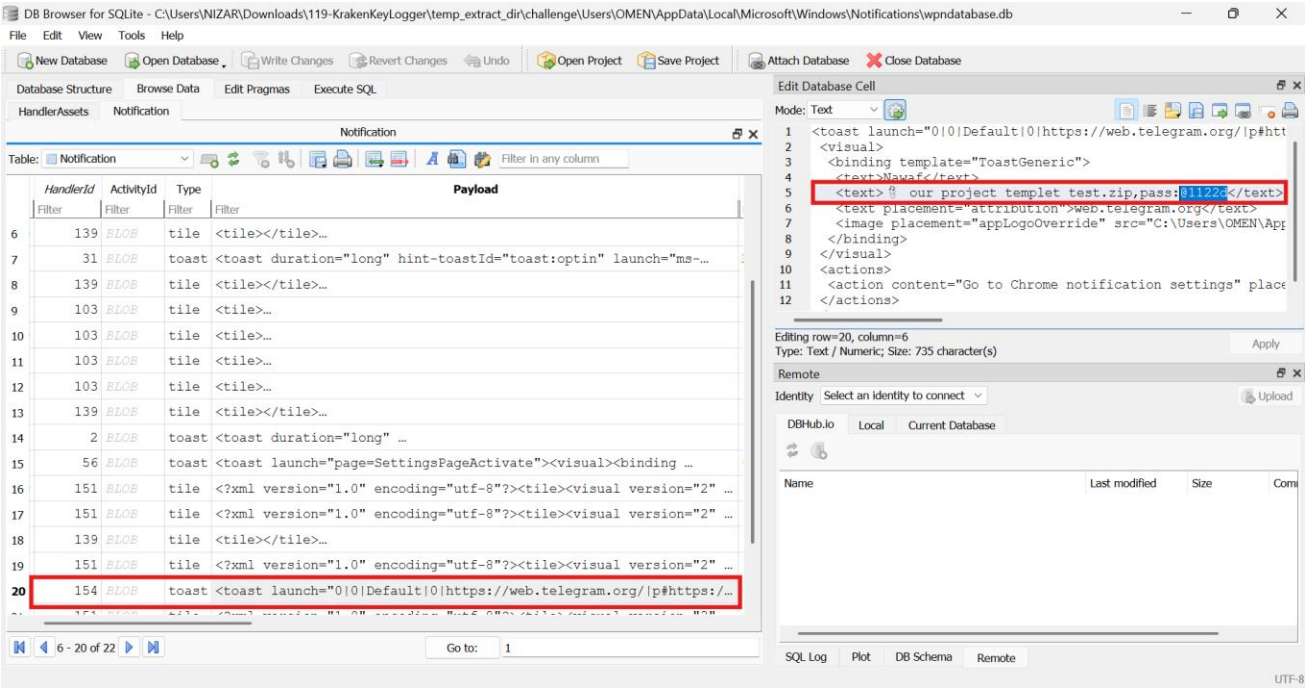
At first, it was assumed that access to the **ZIP archive** would require **a direct recovery method;** however, further analysis revealed that **password cracking** was not **the intended investigative approach.**

Upon reviewing the challenge again and reflecting **on the first hint**, I gained knowledge of a **new approach for investigations**. First, the hint brought forward the significance of **Window Push Notifications** for forensic analysis, and it pointed out monitoring the area:

C:\Users\OMEN\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Notifications\wpndatabase.db

Using **DB Browser** for **SQLite,** the **wpndatabase.db** file was accessed, and **the Notification table** was reviewed. The database contains **toast notification payloads** that are produced by **applications** and **web browsers.** Upon further examination of the notification entries, information within the notification concerning the communication involving the **ZIP file transfer was obtained**. Specifically, the notification **included the credentials** for accessing **the protected archive.**

The text extracted indicated the password for **the ZIP file** was: **@1122d**



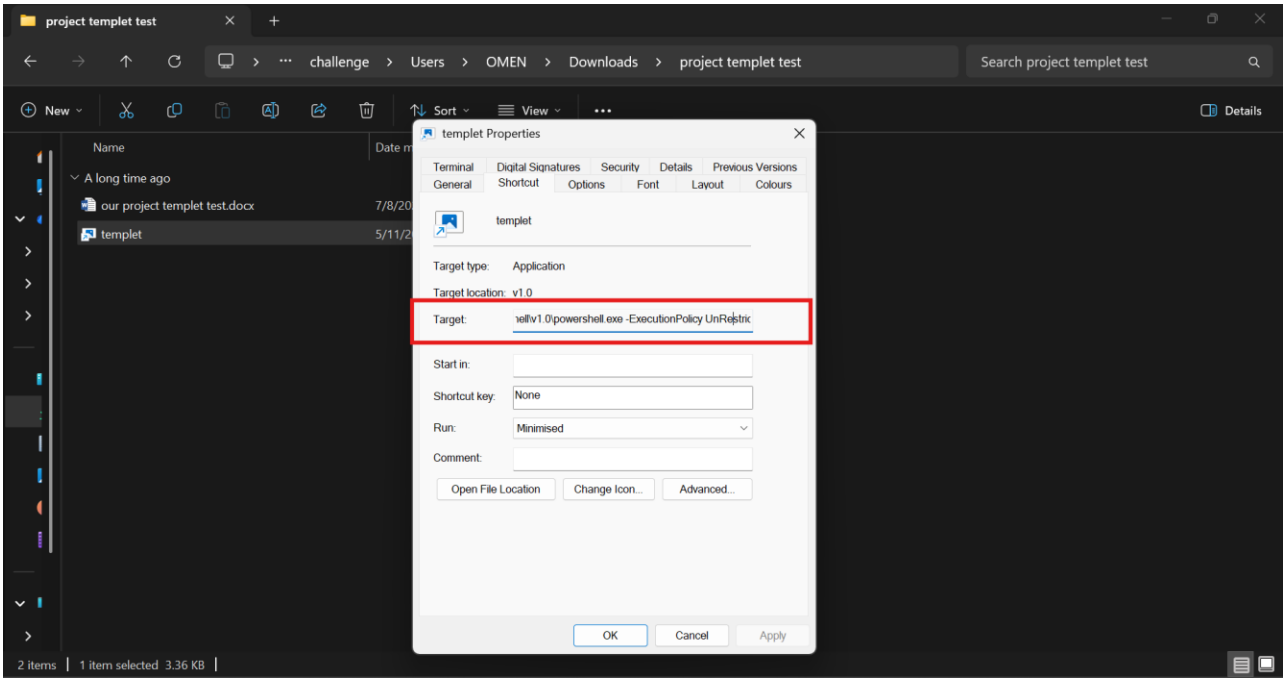
Notification artifact extracted from wpndatabase.db revealing the ZIP archive password sent by the attacker.

3. What domain did the attacker use to download the second stage of the malware?

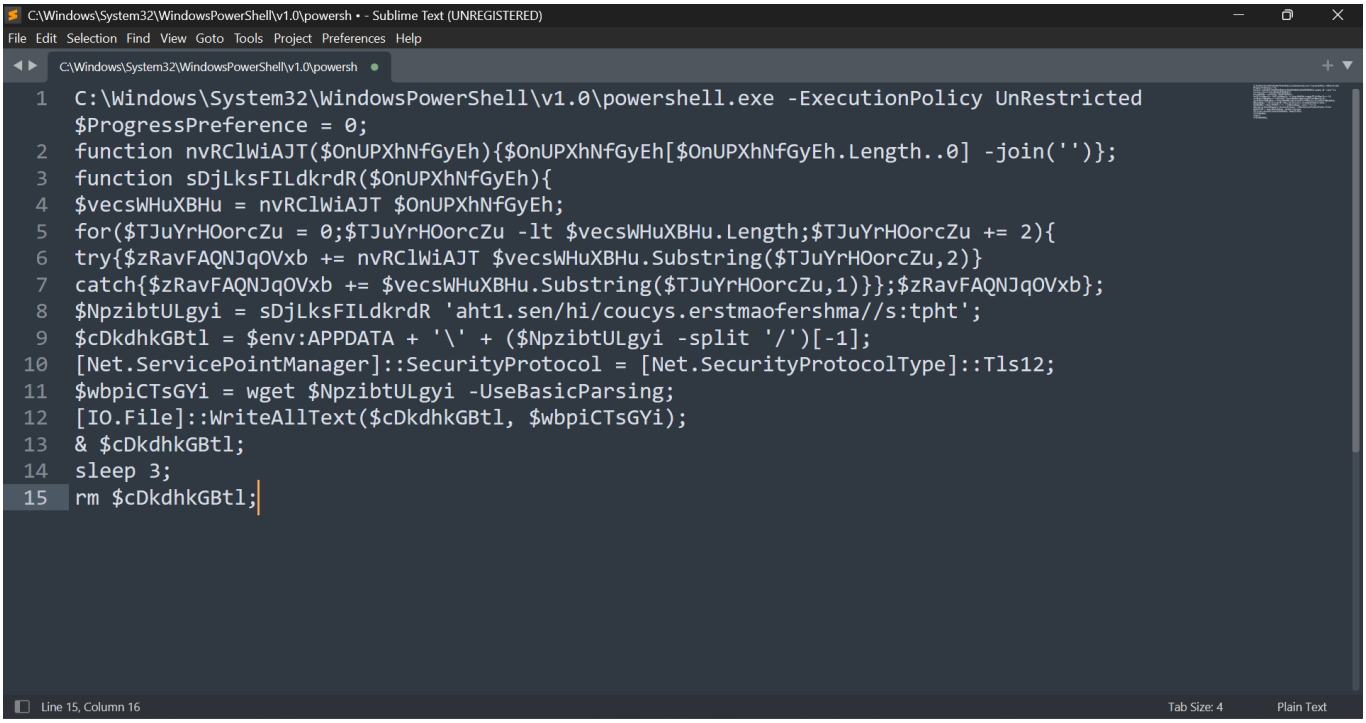
After the completion of **the extraction of the ZIP file,** it was identified that there was a **malicious shortcut file (.lnk)** associated with it. The point at which it was identified that it has the **.lnk file**, one can see that the command associated with it is running **powershell.exe** with **a heavily obfuscated argument.**

The powershell script was copied for **offline analysis**, but the degree to which it was **obfuscated made it impossible to trace the external resource directly**. To continue, **the script was deobfuscating by an AI based method (Gemini)** so the logic structure could be understood again. With the **script deobfuscating**, the purpose of the download to an **external domain** for the second-stage payload **became obvious.**

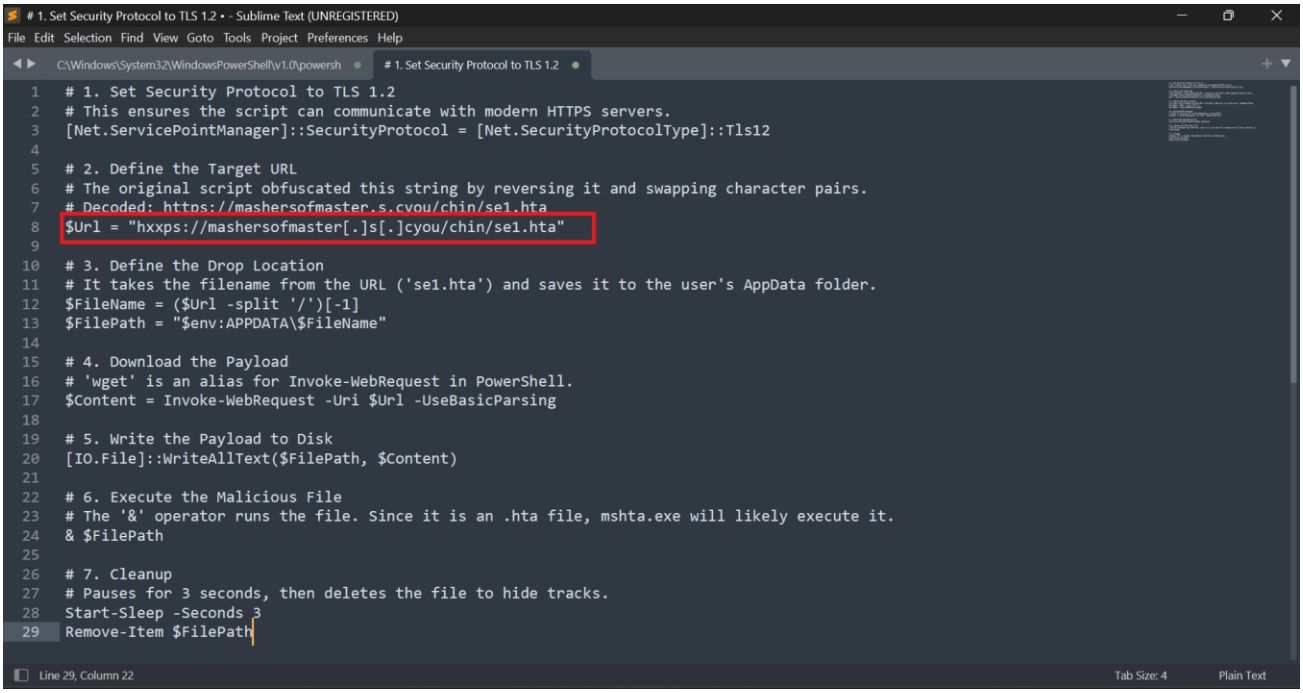
The malicious domain was found to be: **masherofmasters.cyou**



PowerShell command embedded in the malicious.lnk file, revealing obfuscated execution logic used to download the second-stage payload.



Obfuscated PowerShell script extracted from the malicious shortcut file prior to de-obfuscation.

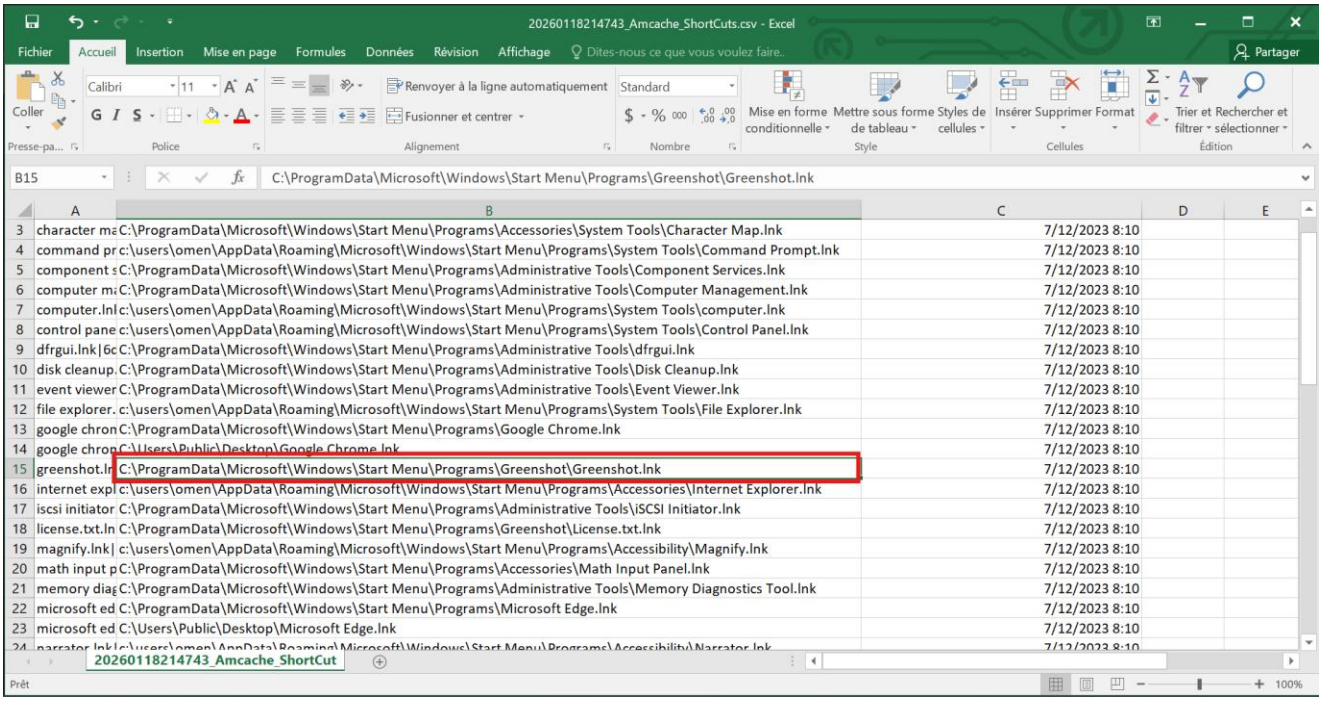


***De-obfuscated PowerShell* script revealing the external domain used to download the second-stage malware.**

4. What is the name of the command that the attacker injected using one of the installed LOLAPPS on the machine to achieve persistence?

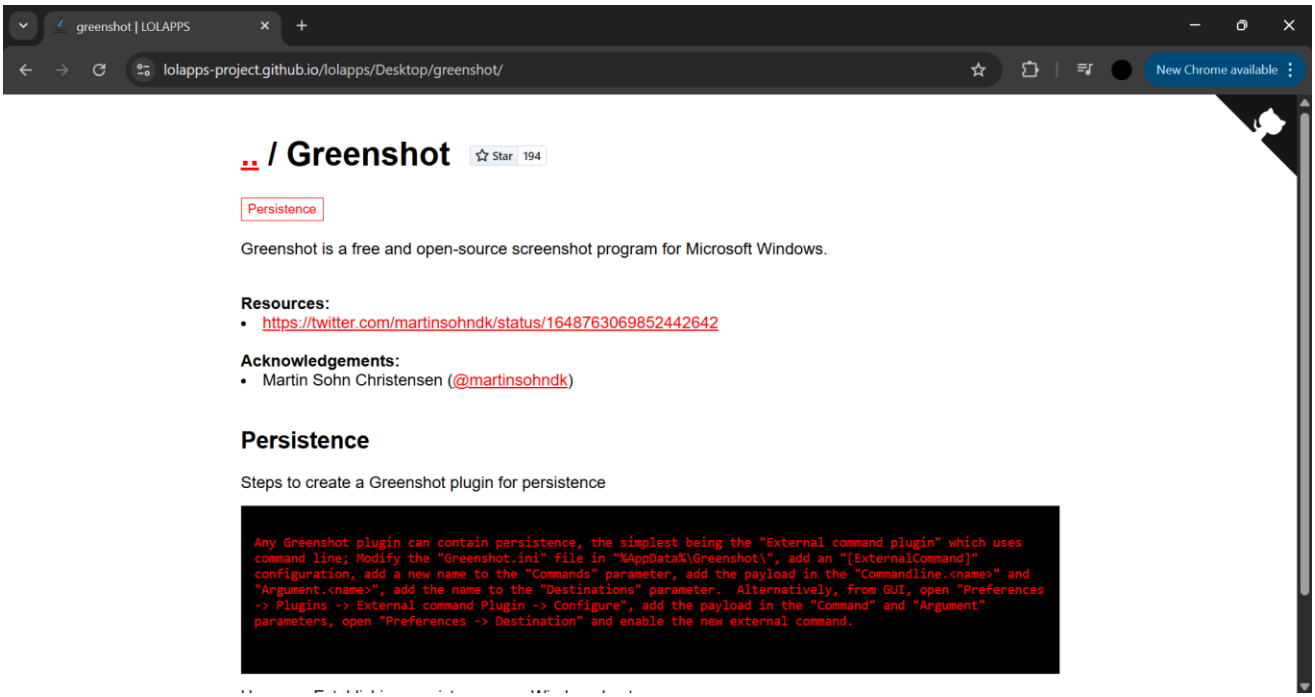
To look for potential persistence methods, I performed an **Amcache (AMCACHE.hve) analysis**, which allowed for the identification of executed processes and related artifacts. Upon examining the data, areas of interest were checked for **malverted shortcuts** and **installed applications**. This resulted in the identification of an application called **Greenshot.**

Further investigation on **LOLApps (Living Off the Land Applications)** was done to confirm that the legitimate application **Greenshot** can be leveraged **for persistence**. **The configuration files of the Greenshot application** demonstrated that the setting for the **External Command plugin** had been **altered by the attacker**. **This altered setting executed a malicious command** automatically **whenever a screenshot was generated.** Therefore, **there was a persistence mechanism in the system.**

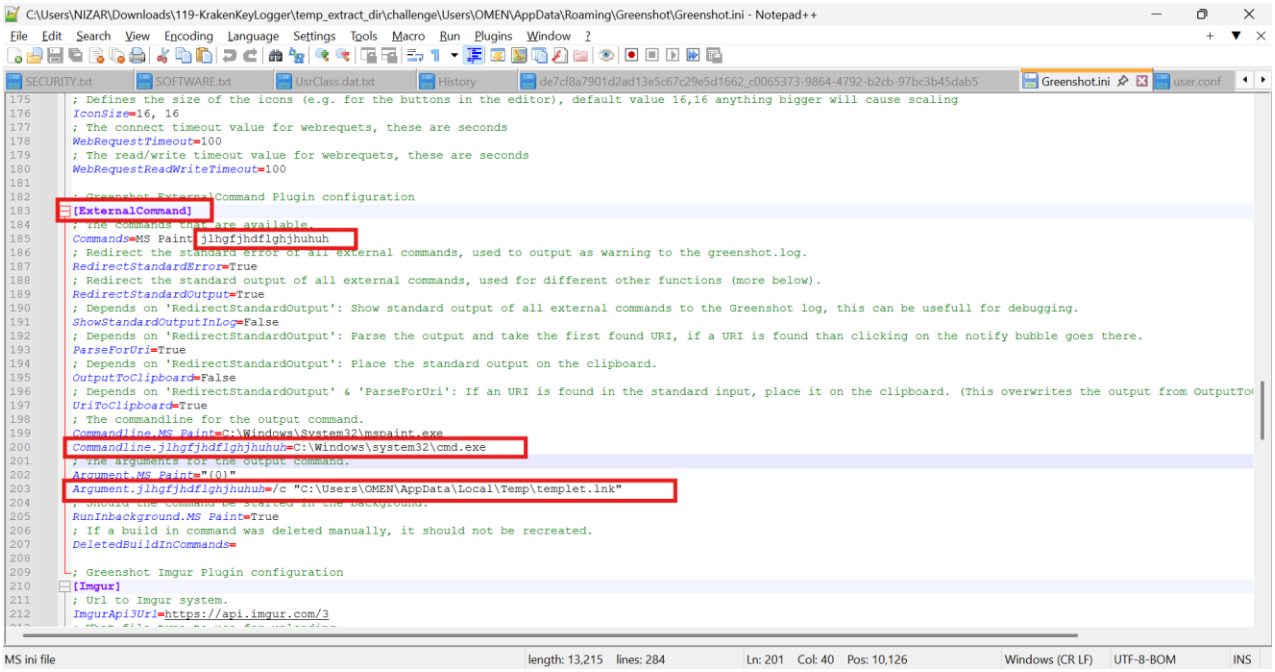


	A	B	C	D	E
3	character ma	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Accessories\System Tools\Character Map.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
4	command pr	c:\users\omen\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\System Tools\Command Prompt.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
5	component s	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Administrative Tools\Component Services.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
6	computer ma	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Administrative Tools\Computer Management.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
7	computer.lnk	c:\users\omen\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\System Tools\computer.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
8	control pane	c:\users\omen\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\System Tools\Control Panel.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
9	dfrgui.lnk|6c	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Administrative Tools\dfrgui.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
10	disk cleanup	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Administrative Tools\Disk Cleanup.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
11	event viewer	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Administrative Tools\Event Viewer.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
12	file explorer.	c:\users\omen\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\System Tools\File Explorer.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
13	google chron	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Google Chrome.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
14	google chron	C:\Users\Public\Desktop\Google Chrome.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
15	greenshot.ln	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Greenshot\Greenshot.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
16	internet expl	c:\users\omen\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Accessories\Internet Explorer.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
17	iscsi initiator	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Administrative Tools\iSCSI Initiator.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
18	license.txt.ln	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Greenshot\License.txt.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
19	magnify.lnk|	c:\users\omen\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Accessibility\Magnify.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
20	math input p	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Accessories\Math Input Panel.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
21	memory diag	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Administrative Tools\Memory Diagnostics Tool.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
22	microsoft ed	C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Microsoft Edge.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
23	microsoft ed	C:\Users\Public\Desktop\Microsoft Edge.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		
24	narrator.lnk|	c:\users\omen\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Accessibility\Narrator.lnk	7/12/2023 8:10		

***Amcache entry** indicating the presence and execution of a **Greenshot shortcut**, later abused as a LOLApp persistence mechanism.*



***Greenshot** listed on a **LOLApps** reference website, confirming its potential abuse as **a living-off-the-land application** for persistence.*



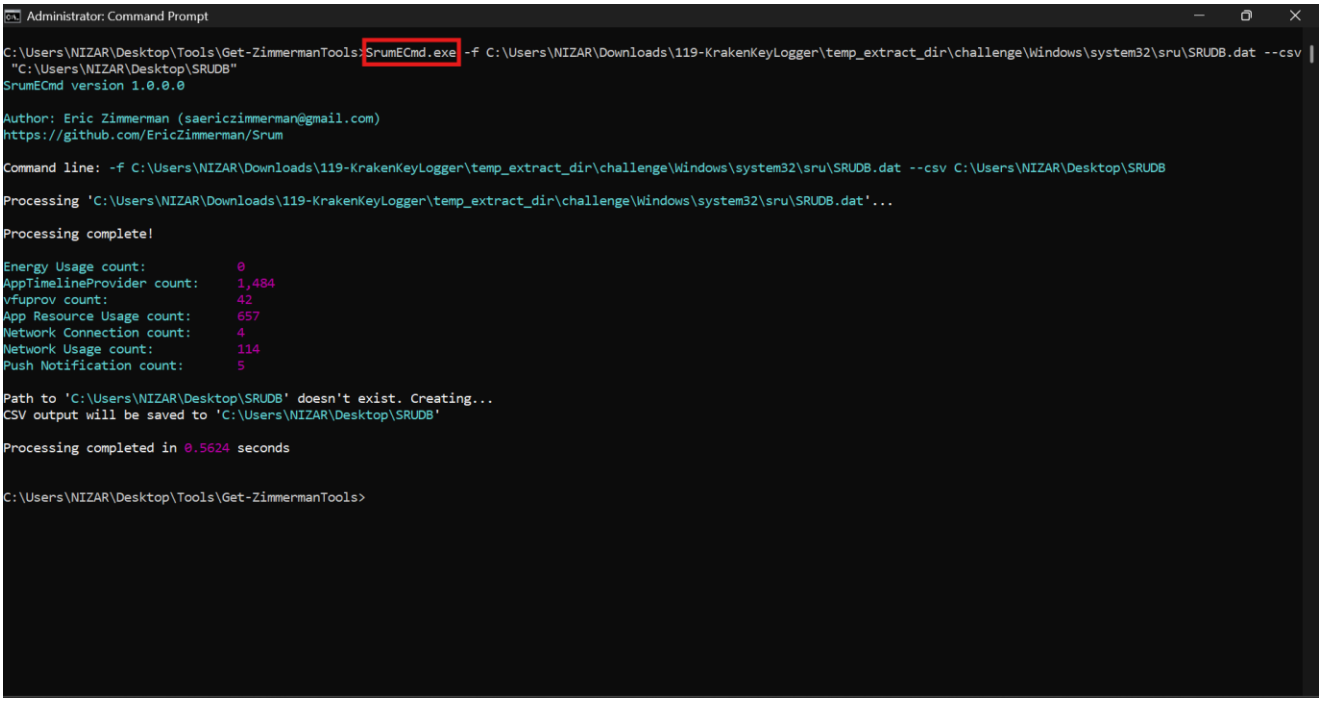
Injected command configured within the Greenshot LOLApp, executed automatically to achieve persistence on the compromised system.

5. What is the complete path of the malicious file that the attacker used to achieve persistence?

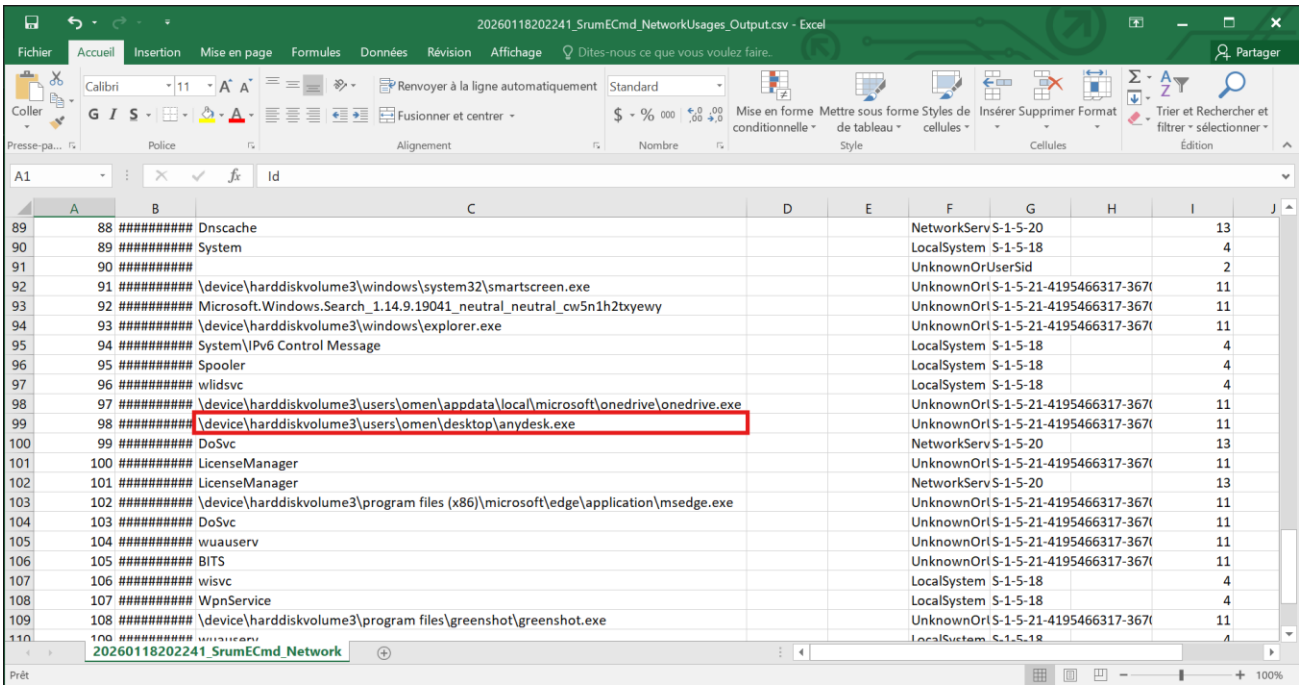
As shown in **the previous screenshot**, the complete path of **the malicious file** used by the attacker **to establish persistence** was identified within the **Argument.jlhgfjhdflghjhuhuh** field.

6. What is the name of the application the attacker utilized for data exfiltration?

When reviewing the challenge and seeing signs of potential **data exfiltration**, the first artifact that came to mind was the **System Resource Usage Monitor (SRUM) database (SRUDB.dat).** Using **SrumECmd**, we analyzed **SRUM** to identify applications responsible **for unusually high network data transfer**. This investigation revealed a **remote desktop application** consuming a significant **amount of outbound bandwidth** which **allowed us to** confirm **AnyDesk** was utilized by the attacker as the data **exfiltration tool**.



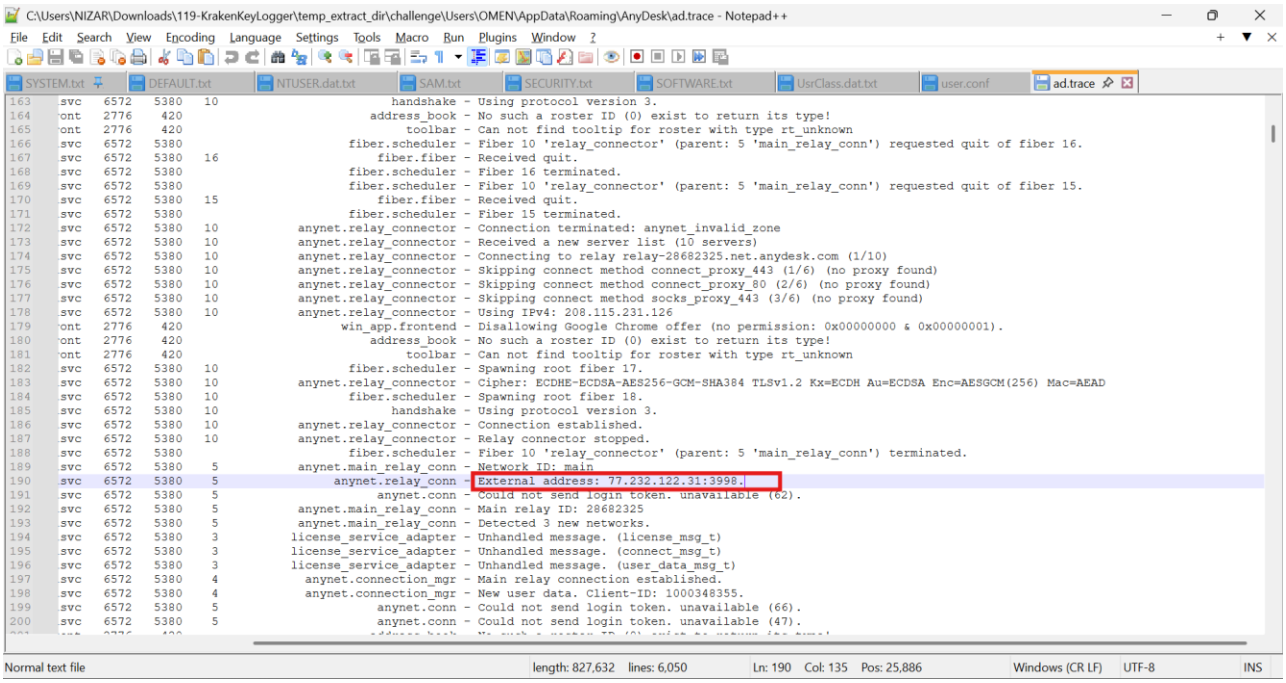
Parsing the SRUM (SRUDB.dat) database using SrumECmd to identify applications with unusually high network data usage.



Evidence of AnyDesk.exe execution found in SRUM, confirming its use as the data exfiltration tool.

7. What is the IP address of the attacker?

To hunt for **the attacker's IP address**, we focused on **AnyDesk service logs**, specifically the **ad.trace file.** This log records **details of remote AnyDesk sessions**, including **connection metadata.** By examining **the External Address entries** within **ad.trace**, we were able **to trace the remote connection established during the incident window**. The analysis revealed that the attacker connected from **the external IP address 77.232.122.31**



AnyDesk log (ad.trace) showing the external IP address of the attacker connected to the compromised system.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of the **KrakenKeylogger** incident confirms a successful compromise initiated via **social engineering** on **Telegram.** The attacker demonstrated sophistication by:

- **Evasion:** Using password-protected archives to bypass email and web filters.
- **Persistence:** Abusing legitimate software **(Greenshot)** to maintain access without dropping **typical startup items.**
- **Exfiltration:** Leveraging legitimate remote administration tools **(AnyDesk)** to blend in with **normal network traffic.**

5. Recommendations

Block the identified malicious domain **(masherofmasters.cyou**) and attacker IP **(77.232.122.31).**

Restrict the installation of remote access tools **(RATs)** like **AnyDesk** and monitor for **unauthorized usage.**

Implement stricter application allow-listing **to prevent the modification of configuration files** for apps like **Greenshot.**

Conduct user awareness training regarding the risks of accepting files **from unknown sources** on **messaging platforms.**