

# Capstone Engagement

Assessment, Analysis,  
and Hardening of a Vulnerable System

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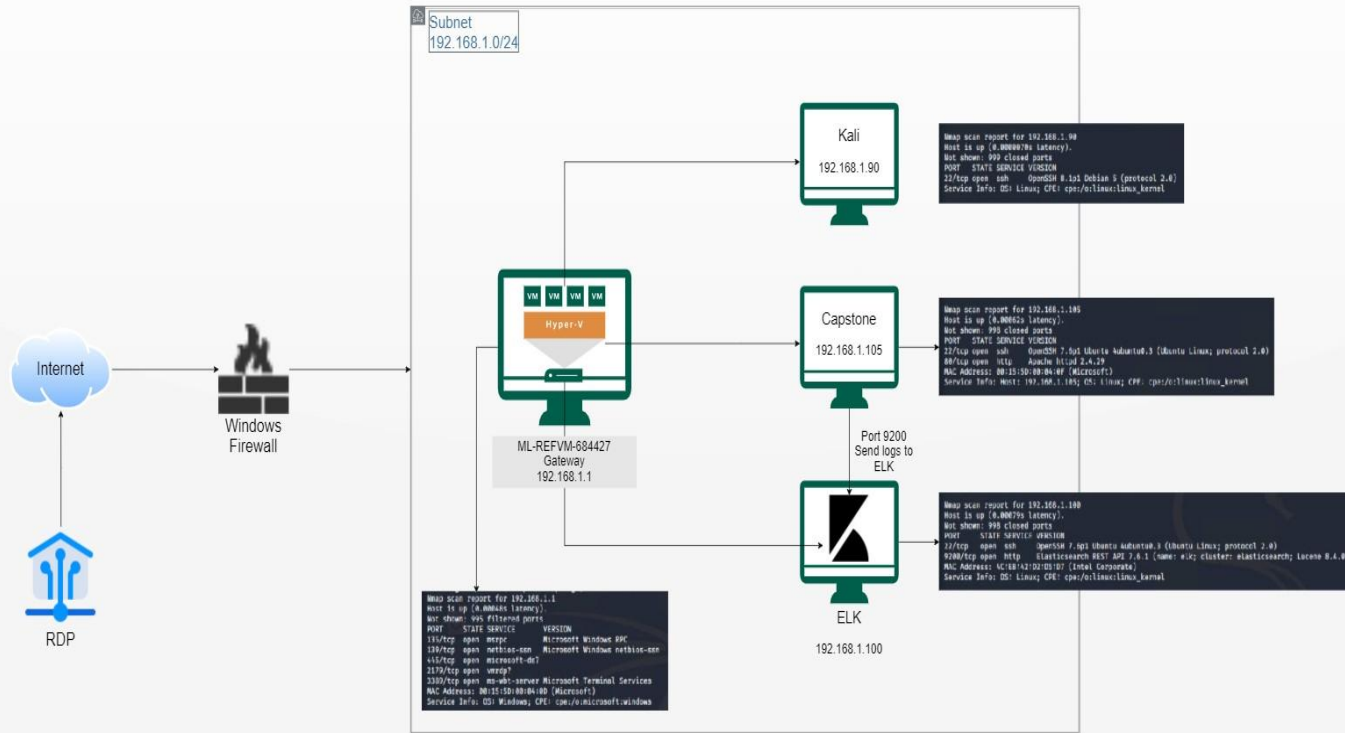
04

**Hardening:** Proposed Alarms and Mitigation Strategies

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# Network Topology

# Network Topology



## Network

IP Range: 192.168.1.0/24  
Netmask: 255.255.255.0  
Gateway: 192.168.1.1

## Machines

```
IPv4: 192.168.1.1
OS: Window
Hostname:
      ML-REFVM-684427
```

```
IPv4: 192.168.1.90
OS: Linux
Hostname: Kali
```

```
IPv4: 192.168.1.100
OS: Linux
Hostname: ELK
```

```
IPv4: 192.168.1.105
OS: Linux
Hostname: Capstone
```

The background of the slide is a dark red, almost black, field filled with a complex, repeating geometric pattern of triangles and polygons in various shades of red and maroon, creating a textured, crystalline effect.

# **Red Team** Security Assessment

# Recon: Describing the Target

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Nmap identified the following hosts on the network:

Hostname	IP Address	Role on Network
ML-REFVM-684427	192.168.1.1	Gateway with Hyper-V (NATSwitch)
Kali	192.168.1.90	Penetration Testing System (Attacker's VM)
ELK	192.168.1.100	SIEM System (receives logs from the Capstone VM)
Capstone	192.168.1.105	Web Server (Victim's Machine)

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# Vulnerability Assessment

The assessment uncovered the following critical vulnerabilities in the target:

Vulnerability	Description	Impact
<b>Sensitive Data Exposure:</b> CWE-200: Exposure of Sensitive Information to an Unauthorized Actor	<i>The product exposes sensitive information to an actor that is not explicitly authorized to have access to that information.</i>	According to CWE the common impact of sensitive data exposure is read application data
<b>Brute Force Vulnerability:</b> CWE-307: <i>Improper Restriction of Excessive Authentication Attempts</i>	The software does not implement sufficient measures to prevent multiple failed authentication attempts within in a short time frame, making it more susceptible to brute force attacks.	According to CWE the common impact of brute force vulnerability is bypass protection mechanism.
<b>Remote Code Injection:</b> CWE-94 - Improper Control of Generation of Code ('Code Injection')	The software constructs all or part of a code segment using externally-influenced input from an upstream component, but it does not neutralize or incorrectly neutralizes special elements that could modify the syntax or behavior of the intended code segment.	According to CWE the common impacts of remote code injection include bypass protection mechanism, gain privileges or assume identity, execute unauthorized code or commands, and hide activities.

## Exploitation: Sensitive Data Exposure (CWE-200)

01

## Tools & Processes

- I. `nmap` for scanning the network.
- II. `dirb` for scanning the web.
- III. `Firefox` for browsing the mapped URLs.

02

## Achievements

- I. Exposed Server's URLs.
- II. Exposed files including the  
/company\_folders/secret\_folder
- III. Exposed **Ashton** as the user  
managing the  
secret folder.

03

## Exploit Outcome

```
rootkali:~# dirb http://192.168.1.105

START_TIME: Thu Oct 18 13:28:15 2021
URL_BASE: http://192.168.1.105/
WORDLIST_FILES: /usr/share/dirb/wordlists/common.txt





GENERATED WORDS: 4612

--- Scanning URL: http://192.168.1.105/ ---
+ http://192.168.1.105/server-status (CODE:403 [SIZE:278])
+ http://192.168.1.105/webdav (CODE:401 [SIZE:466])

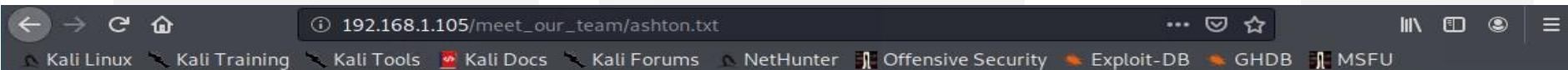
END_TIME: Thu Oct 18 13:28:25 2021
DOWNLOADED: 4612 - FOUND: 2

rootkali:~#
```

## Index of /

Name	Last modified	Size
 <a href="#">company_blog/</a>	2019-05-07 18:23	
 <a href="#">company_folders/</a>	2019-05-07 18:27	
 <a href="#">company_share/</a>	2019-05-07 18:22	
 <a href="#">meet_our_team/</a>	2019-05-07 18:34	

Apache/2.4.29 (Ubuntu) Server at 192.168



Ashton is 22 years young, with a masters degreee in aquatic jousting. "Moving over to managing everyone's credit card and security information has been terrifying. I can't believe that they have me managing the company\_folders/secret\_folder! I really shouldn't be here" We look forward to working more with Ashton in the future!



# Exploitation: Brute Force Vulnerability (CWE-307)

01

## Tools & Processes

- I. Hydra tool (parallelized login cracker).
- II. Firefox to login into the secret\_folder.
- III. Cracking Station to decrypt Ryan's password hash.

02

## Achievements

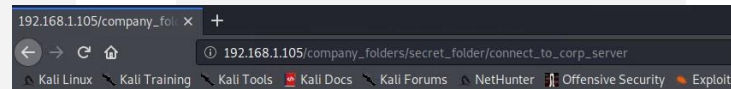
- I. Ashton's login credentials revealed.
- II. Access to the /company\_folders/secret\_folder gained.
- III. Instructions to access the WebDAV server revealed.
- IV. Exposure of Ryan's hashed credentials.

03

## Exploit Outcome

```
192.168.1.105:80 [http-get] host: 192.168.1.105 login: ashton password: leopoldo [STATUS] attack finished for 192.168.1.105 (valid pair found)
```

```
[80][http-get] host: 192.168.1.105 login: ashton password: leopoldo [STATUS] attack finished for 192.168.1.105 (valid pair found)
```



Personal Note

In order to connect to our companies webdav server I need to use ryan's account (Hash:d7dad0a5cd7c8376eeb50d69b3ccd352)

1. I need to open the folder on the left hand bar
2. I need to click "Other Locations"
3. I need to type "dav://172.16.84.205/webdav/"
4. I will be prompted for my user (but I'll use ryans account) and password
5. I can click and drag files into the share and reload my browser

Hash

d7dad0a5cd7c8376eeb50d69b3ccd352

Type

md5

Result

linux4u

Color Codes: **Green** Exact match, **Yellow** Partial match, **Red** Not found.

# Exploitation: Remote Code Injection (CWE-94)

01

## Tools & Processes

- I. msfvenom to create the reverse shell .php file.
- II. msfconsole exploit/multi/handler to exploit php/meterpreter/reverse\_tcp payload.
- III. File manager to upload the access\_shell.php malicious file to the server.
- IV. meterpreter session to explore the Capsone server.

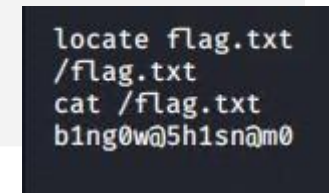
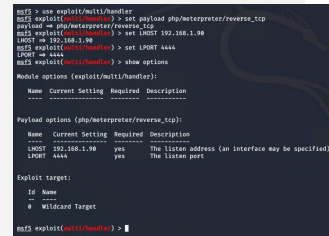
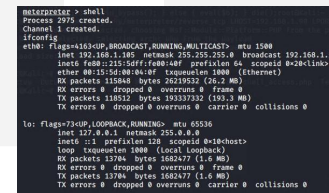
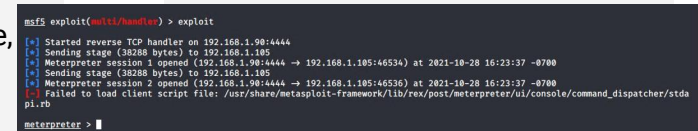
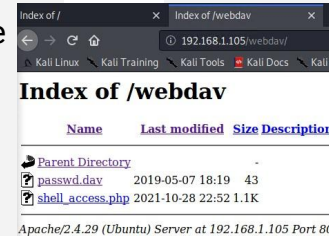
02

## Achievements

- I. Successfully uploaded the access\_shell.php payload to the WebDav server.
- II. Successfully established connection with the reverse shell on the victim's machine, Capstone Server.
- III. Found the target file, Flag.txt in the Capstone Server.

03

## Exploit Outcome





# **Blue Team**

## Log Analysis and Attack Characterization

# Analysis: Identifying the Port Scan

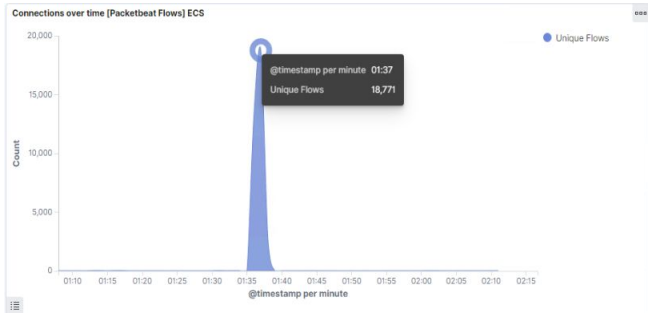


The port scan occurred on **October 28th, 2021 @ 01:37 am**.

There were **18,771** packets sent from **192.168.1.90** during the attack.

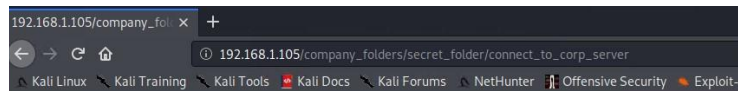
The high volume of traffic during such a short time resulting in **401** and **404** error codes indicates that there is a port scanning occurring during that period of time.

# Analysis: Finding the Request for the Hidden Directory



Top 10 HTTP requests [Packetbeat] ECS

url.full: Descending	Count
http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder	15,851
http://192.168.1.105/webdav	12
http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder/connect_to_corp_server	2
http://192.168.1.105/meet_our_team/ashton.txt	2
http://192.168.1.105/webdav/passwd.dav	2



Personal Note

In order to connect to our companies webdav server I need to use ryan's account (Hash:d7dad8a5cd7c8376eeb50d69b3ccd352)

open the folder on the left hand bar  
:lick "Other Locations"  
:type "dav://172.16.84.205/webdav/"  
:prompted for my user (but i'll use ryans account) and password  
& drag files into the share and reload my browser

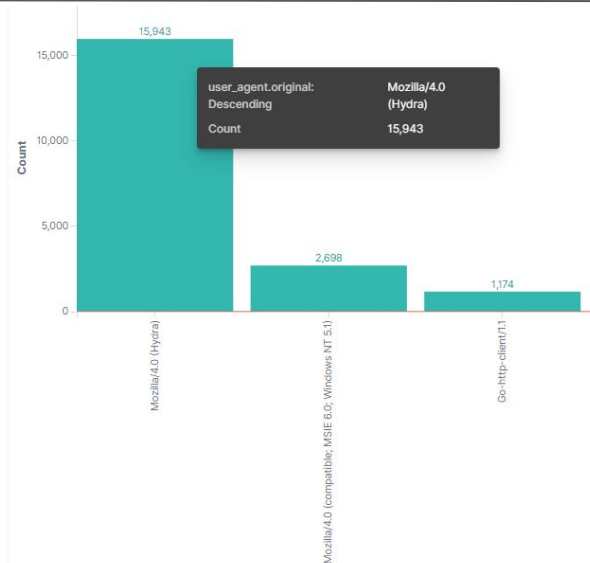
Starting with the attack on October 28th, 2021 @ 01:37 hrs, **18,771** file requests were made, from which **15,851** were made to the hidden `/company_folders/secret_folder` directory.

After successfully acquiring login credentials to the hidden folder, it is visible that the hidden file: `http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder/connect_to_corp_server` was accessed @ 01:44 hrs. The file contained sensitive information such as instructions to connect to the web server and the exposure of the hash for Ryan's password.

Other files accessed include:

- `http://192.168.1.105/webdav`
- `http://192.168.1.105/webdav/passwd.dav`
- `http://192.168.1.105/meet_our_team/ashton.txt`

# Analysis: Uncovering the Brute Force Attack



Top 10 HTTP requests [Packetbeat] ECS

url.full: Descending	Count
http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder	15,847
http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder	96

```
# network.direction: inbound
# network.protocol: http
# network.transport: tcp
# network.type: ipv4
# query: GET /company_folders/secret_folder
# server.bytes: 5898
# server.ip: 192.168.1.105
# server.port: 80
# source.bytes: 163B
# source.ip: 192.168.1.90
# source.port: 40414
# status: 404
# type: http
# url.domain: 192.168.1.105
# url.full: http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder
# url.path: /company_folders/secret_folder
# url.scheme: http
# user_agent.original: Mozilla/4.0 (Hydra)
```

HTTP status codes for the top queries [Packetbeat] ECS



During the brute force attack, hydra made a total of **15,943 requests**.

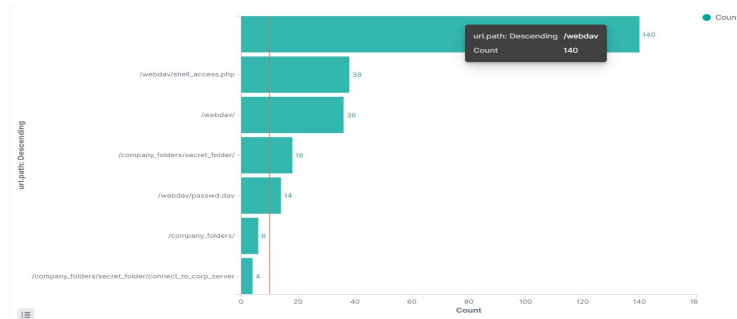
In this screen it is evident that numerous requests were made to the password protected `/company_folders/secret_folder` directory returning several **401 (15,845 requests)** and **404 (96 requests)** errors for a total of **15,941 failed requests**.

In addition, out of a total of **15,943 requests**, only **2 successful requests** were made to the file inside the directory. This behavior is an indication of a brute force attack.

# Analysis: Finding the WebDAV Connection

## Top 10 HTTP requests [Packetbeat] ECS

url.full: Descending	Count
http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder	31,806
http://192.168.1.105/webdav	140
http://192.168.1.105/webdav/shell_access.php	38
http://192.168.1.105/webdav/passwd.dav	14
http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder/connect_to_corp_server	4



>	Oct 28, 2021 @ 22:52:48.004	192.168.1.90	192.168.1.105	/webdav/shell_access.php	outbound	Kali	80	1.3KB	OK	http
>	Oct 28, 2021 @ 22:52:48.002	192.168.1.90	192.168.1.105	/webdav/shell_access.php	outbound	Kali	80	429B	Error	http



After the attack, the `/company_folders/secret_folder` directory was requested several more times. Also, the confidential file, `/company_folders/secret_folder/connect_to_corp_server`, within this directory was requested **4 times**.



The WebDAV server was requested **140 times** and the `shell_access.php`, the payload file, was requested **38 times**. The first successful request to the file was made @22:52 hrs.



Here is visible that the WebDAV server was accessed and that the breach took place successfully.



# **Blue Team**

## Proposed Alarms and Mitigation Strategies



# Mitigation: Blocking the Port Scan

---

## Alarm

➤ Alarm to detect future port scans:

- Alert when excessive requests for numerous ports per second are made from the same IP address within a set timeframe.

➤ Threshold to activate this alarm:

- The alarm will flag a behavior as a port scan attack and activate when more than 10 different ports are requested from the same IP address within 0.005 seconds or 5000 microseconds.

## System Hardening

➤ Future port scans can be mitigated by taking several precautions, including:

- Configure local firewall to block incoming requests from unknown hosts.
- Disable port forwarding on the routers.
- Employ TCP wrappers to allow/deny access based on IP addresses and domain names.
- Close unnecessary ports and services.

# Mitigation: Finding the Request for the Hidden Directory

---

## Alarm

➤ Alarm to detect future unauthorized access:

- Alert when a non-whitelisted IP address attempts to connect to the server and access restricted files.

➤ Threshold to activate this alarm:

- The alert will trigger only if it detects incoming traffic of an unauthorized (not whitelisted) IP address.

## System Hardening

➤ To block unwanted access to restricted files, numerous steps can be taken:

- Create an IP address whitelist.
  - Restrict access to confidential files to a specific user.
  - Remove confidential files from the server.
  - Encrypt data at rest.
  - Employ a stronger password policy.
-

# Mitigation: Preventing Brute Force Attacks

## Alarm



Alarm to detect future brute force attacks:

- Set up an alert that detects a sharp increase in login attempts over a certain period of time.
- In addition, an alert needs to be set up that triggers when there is an increase in 401 errors in a specific period of time.
- Alert when `user_agent.original` value includes `Hydra`



Threshold to activate this alarm:

- The alert will trigger when it detects more than 15 requests per second.
- The alert will fire when it detects more than fifteen 401 errors per second.
- The alert will notify when `user_agent.original` value includes `Hydra` in the name.

## System Hardening



To prevent future brute force attacks several mitigation techniques can be implemented:

- Monitor systems for vulnerabilities.
- Strengthen the human firewall.
- Unique/complex password/passphrases requirements.
- Make the root user inaccessible via SSH by editing the `sshd_config` file.
- Store only SOLTED password hashes on servers.
- CAPTCHA tool
- Adopt passwordless authentication.

# Mitigation: Detecting the WebDAV Connection

---

## Alarm

➤ Alarm to detect future connections to WebDav:

- Alert when requests are made to access the WebDav from a non-whitelisted IP address.

➤ Threshold to activate this alarm:

- All requests to access files within WebDav from a non-whitelisted IP address will set off the alert.

## System Hardening

➤ To prevent unwanted access to WebDav:

- Whitelist IP addresses.
  - Set strict permissions and privileges.
  - Diligently monitor server logs.
  - Turn off unneeded functions.
  - Change defaults.
  - Do not keep sensitive information stored in WebDav.
  - Encrypt data at rest and in transit.
  - Implement separation of Privilege.
-

# Mitigation: Identifying Reverse Shell Uploads

---

## Alarm

- Alarm to identify reverse shell uploads:
  - Alarm that fires when it detects POST requests of unauthorized files, i.e., .php, to the server.
- Threshold to activate this alarm:
  - Notify when any user attempts to upload prohibited files.

## System Hardening

- To defend against reverse shell uploads:
  - Define valid file types allowed to upload.
  - Do not allow .php files to be hosted on WebDav.
  - Restrict writing permissions.
  - Input validation.
  - Require authentication to upload files.

# References

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Christopher, R. (2001, October 5). *Port scanning techniques and the defense against them*. SANS. <https://sansorg.egnyte.com/dl/hEbx2UI5Hu>

CWE - CWE-200: *Exposure of sensitive information to an unauthorized actor (4.6)*. (2021, October 26). CWE - Common Weakness Enumeration. <https://cwe.mitre.org/data/definitions/200.html>

CWE - CWE-307: *Improper restriction of excessive authentication attempts (4.4)*. (2021, March 15). CWE - Common Weakness Enumeration. <https://cwe.mitre.org/data/definitions/307.html>

CWE - CWE-434: *Unrestricted upload of file with dangerous type (4.5)*. (2021, July 20). CWE - Common Weakness Enumeration. <https://cwe.mitre.org/data/definitions/434.html>

CWE - CWE-94: *Improper control of generation of code ('code injection') (4.6)*. (2021, October 26). CWE - Common Weakness Enumeration. <https://cwe.mitre.org/data/definitions/94.html>

Port-scan. (n.d.). Juniper Networks – Global Leader in AI Networking, Cloud, and Connected Security Solutions. <https://www.juniper.net/documentation/us/en/software/junos/denial-of-service/topics/ref/statement/security-edit-port-scan.html>

*The  
End*