



How to tamper the EDR?

Master of Puppets



Daniel Feichter

- Founder of **Infosec Tirol**
- Originally industrial engineer, since about 4 years passionate, wannabe red teamer
 - Endpoint security on Windows
 - Advanced Persistent Threat emulation
 - Endpoint security research, mostly antivirus & EDR
 - Favourite ATT&CK tactic, Defense Evasion TA0005
- Martial arts fan and fully convinced EDR user
- Twitter [@VirtualAllocEx](https://twitter.com/VirtualAllocEx)



Disclaimer



- It's only about my personal experience / journey
- I make no claims to completeness
- **No Zero days**, just learning about EPP/EDR mechanisms and functionality on Windows
- Shown strategy / concept applies to **multiple products** on Windows
- Speaking about EDRs, I always refer to EPP/EDR combinations
- Feel free to ask, excluded, which product was used in the demos (**vendor neutrality**) 😊

We take a look at



- ATT&CK [T1562.001](#): Impair Defenses: Disable or Modify Tools
- **Disable main functionalities** from EDR, without relying on:
 - EDR uninstall password / token
 - Using any uninstall software
 - Uninstalling EDR in general
 - Using Windows Security Center
- Similar seen in the wild, by [AvosLocker Ransomware](#)

We want to achieve



- Deep dive AV/EPP/EDR products on Windows
 - EDR components user space and kernel space
 - **Functionality** and **relationship** between user- and kernel space
- Tamper EDR key component, disable EDR and **get permanently rid of:**

Antivirus capabilities

Based on user space
DLL injection -> user
space API hooking

EDR capabilities

Active response
(detections);
Telemetry footprint

EDR capabilities

Host isolation; Real
time response;
sensor recovery

Give me a scenario



- Red team engagement
 - **Initial access:** phishing or similar
 - Achieved **privileged user** rights: exploit or misconfiguration
 - Explore process structure -> additional useful **user session** open

T1003.001

OS credential dumping:
LSASS memory

T1134.001

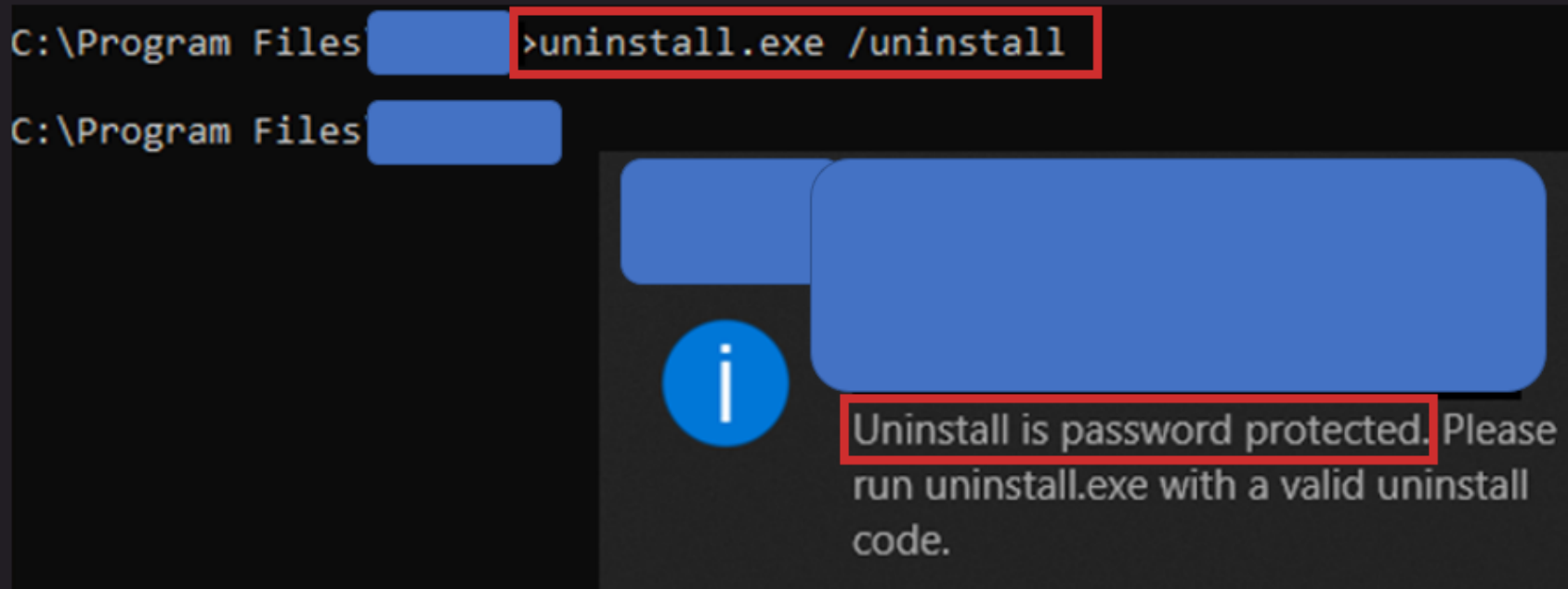
Access token
manipulation: token
impersonation/theft

- But installed **EDR is tough!** -> Beginning of my private EDR tampering journey

Come on, I am already admin



- Despite privileged user rights, most EDRs still annoying
- Why not simply uninstall the EDR?





User space

First step: EDR processes



User-space component: EDR processes

- Normally, initialized as Protected Process Light (PPL)
- Despite system integrity, process termination not allowed

```
C:\Windows\system32>whoami  
nt authority\system
```

```
C:\Windows\system32>taskkill /IM "[REDACTED]" /F  
ERROR: The process "[REDACTED]" with PID 3296 could not be terminated.  
Reason: Access is denied.
```

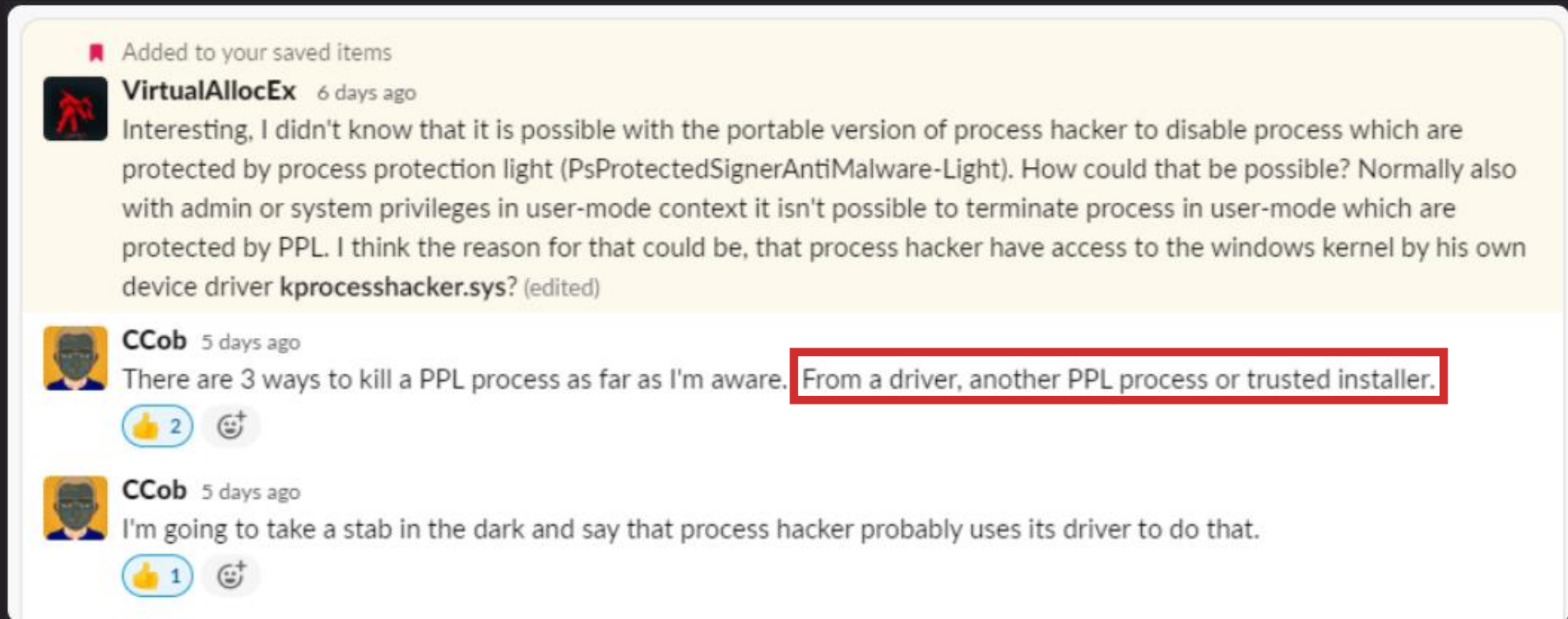
Process	Protection	User Name	PID
svchost.exe		NT AUTHORITY\NETWORK SERVICE	3260
svchost.exe		NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM	3288
[REDACTED]	PoProtectedSignerAntimalware-Light	NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM	3296
[REDACTED]	PoProtectedSignerAntimalware-Light	NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM	3876
[REDACTED]	PoProtectedSignerAntimalware-Light	NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM	5180
svchost.exe		NT AUTHORITY\LOCAL SERVICE	3340
svchost.exe		NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM	3440
svchost.exe			

CPU Usage: 3.57% Commit Charge: 28.43% Processes: 144 Physical Usage: 34.83%

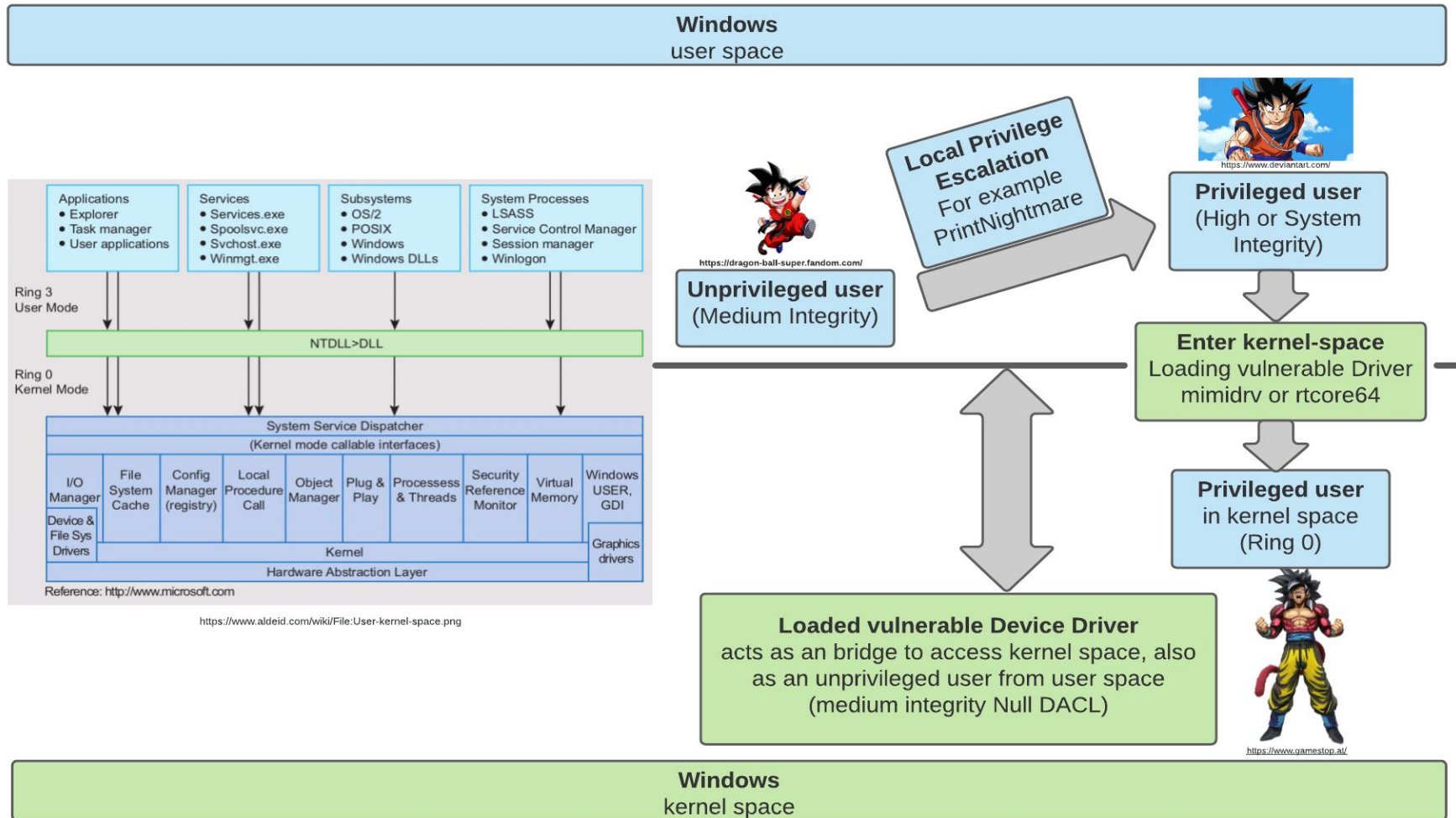
EDR processes: disable PPL



- Signed vulnerable (device) driver -> RTCore64 [CVE 2019-16098](#)
- Creds to [@EthicalChaos](#)



EDR processes: disable PPL



User-space component: EDR process tampering



- Tool Time -> PPL Killer -> driver rtcore64.sys or Mimikatz -> mimidrv.sys

```
C:\cache>echo %date% %time%  
17/01/2022 15:49:36,76
```

```
C:\cache>mimikatz.exe
```

```
.#####.  mimikatz 2.2.0 (x64) #19041 Aug 10 2021 17:19:53  
.## ^ ##.  "A La Vie, A L'Amour" - (oe.eo)  
## / \ ##  /*** Benjamin DELPY `gentilkiwi` ( benjamin@gentilkiwi.com )  
## \ / ##   > https://blog.gentilkiwi.com/mimikatz  
'## v ##'   Vincent LE TOUX ( vincent.letoux@gmail.com )  
'#####'   > https://pingcastle.com / https://mysmartlogon.com ***/
```

```
mimikatz # privilege::debug  
Privilege '20' OK
```

```
mimikatz # !+
```

```
[*] 'mimidrv' service not present  
[+] 'mimidrv' service successfully registered  
[+] 'mimidrv' service ACL to everyone  
[+] 'mimidrv' service started
```

```
mimikatz # !processprotect /remove /process:edr_process.exe
```

```
C:\cache>echo %date% %time%  
17/01/2022 15:45:12,00
```

```
C:\cache>PPLKiller.exe /installDriver
```

```
PPLKiller version 0.2 by @aceb0nd
```

```
Wrote 14024 bytes to C:\Users\local.admin\AppData\Local\Temp\RTCore64.sys successfully.
```

```
[*] 'RTCore64' service not present  
[+] 'RTCore64' service successfully registered  
[+] 'RTCore64' service ACL to everyone  
[+] 'RTCore64' service started
```

```
C:\cache>PPLKiller.exe /disablePPL PID agent.exe
```

User-space component: EDR process tampering



- Tool Time -> execute Process Hacker as privileged user

The screenshot shows a Windows command prompt window with the following output:

```
xinputhid    XINPUT HID Filter Driv Kernel
KObjExp      KObjExp                Kernel      10/12/2020 07:32:30
KProcessHack KProcessHacker3    Kernel      28/03/2016 20:20:42
```

The third line, `KProcessHack KProcessHacker3 Kernel`, is highlighted with a red rectangle. Below the command prompt, the `C:\Windows\system32>` prompt is visible.

Below the command prompt is a screenshot of the Process Hacker application running as Administrator. The application window title is "Process Hacker [redacted] + (Administrator)". The menu bar includes "Hacker", "View", "Tools", "Users", and "Help". The toolbar contains "Refresh", "Options", "Find handles or DLLs", "System information", and a search box labeled "Search Processes (Ctrl+K)". The "Processes" tab is selected, showing a table of running processes.

Name	User name	PID	CPU	I/O total ...	Private b...
svchost.exe	NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM	3288			16,24 MB
[redacted] .exe	NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM	3296	0,09	220 B/s	12,22 MB
[redacted]		876			43,45 MB
[redacted]		180			43,71 MB

A context menu is open over the second process (PID 3296), showing options: "Terminate" (with a "Del" key binding), "Terminate tree" (with a "Shift+Del" key binding), and "Del".

User-space component: EDR process tampering



- EDR vendors start to blacklist / block **signed vulnerable drivers**
- Depending on product, **bypassing** is necessary



T1203

VulnerableDriverLoaded

[redacted] loaded a driver with known vulnerabilities. [redacted]
[redacted]

User-space component: EDR process tampering



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Have these **local admin credentials** but the **EDR is standing in the way?** Unhooking or direct syscalls are not working against the EDR? Well, **why not just kill it?** **Backstab is a tool capable of killing antimalware protected processes** by leveraging sysinternals' Process Explorer (ProcExp) driver, which is signed by Microsoft.

Reference: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6902622063433986048/>

Process termination

Only temporary, gets restarted again and again

Process termination

Even between gap, process terminated and gets restarted EDR works fine

EDR Killed?

Much to less to get temporary or permanently rid of an EDR!



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User space

Second step: EDR services

User-space component: EDR service



- Identify EDR service, connected to EDR PPL process
- EDR user space service + EDR user space process = EDR user space component
- Responsible to restart terminated PPL EDR process(es)

The screenshot shows the 'Recovery' tab of a Windows service configuration window. The 'actions' section is highlighted with a red border. It contains the following settings:

Failure Type	Action
First failure:	Restart the Service
Second failure:	Restart the Service
Subsequent failures:	Restart the Service
Reset fail count after:	1 days
Restart service after:	1 minutes

At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled 'Enable actions for stops with errors.' and a button labeled 'Restart Computer Options...'.

User-space component: EDR service tampering



- Initialization as protected service by ELAM driver
- Despite **system integrity**, not possible (also not temporary) to pause, stop, disable etc.

```
C:\Windows\system32>whoami
nt authority\system

C:\Windows\system32>sc stop [redacted]
[SC] ControlService FAILED 5:
Access is denied.

C:\Windows\system32>sc pause [redacted]
[SC] ControlService FAILED 5:
Access is denied.

C:\Windows\system32>sc query [redacted]

SERVICE_NAME: [redacted]
        TYPE               : 10  WIN32_OWN_PROCESS
        STATE                : 4   RUNNING
                               (STOPPABLE, NOT_PAUSABLE, IGNORES_SHUTDOWN)
        WIN32_EXIT_CODE       : 0   (0x0)
        SERVICE_EXIT_CODE   : 0   (0x0)
        CHECKPOINT           : 0x0
        WAIT_HINT            : 0x0
```



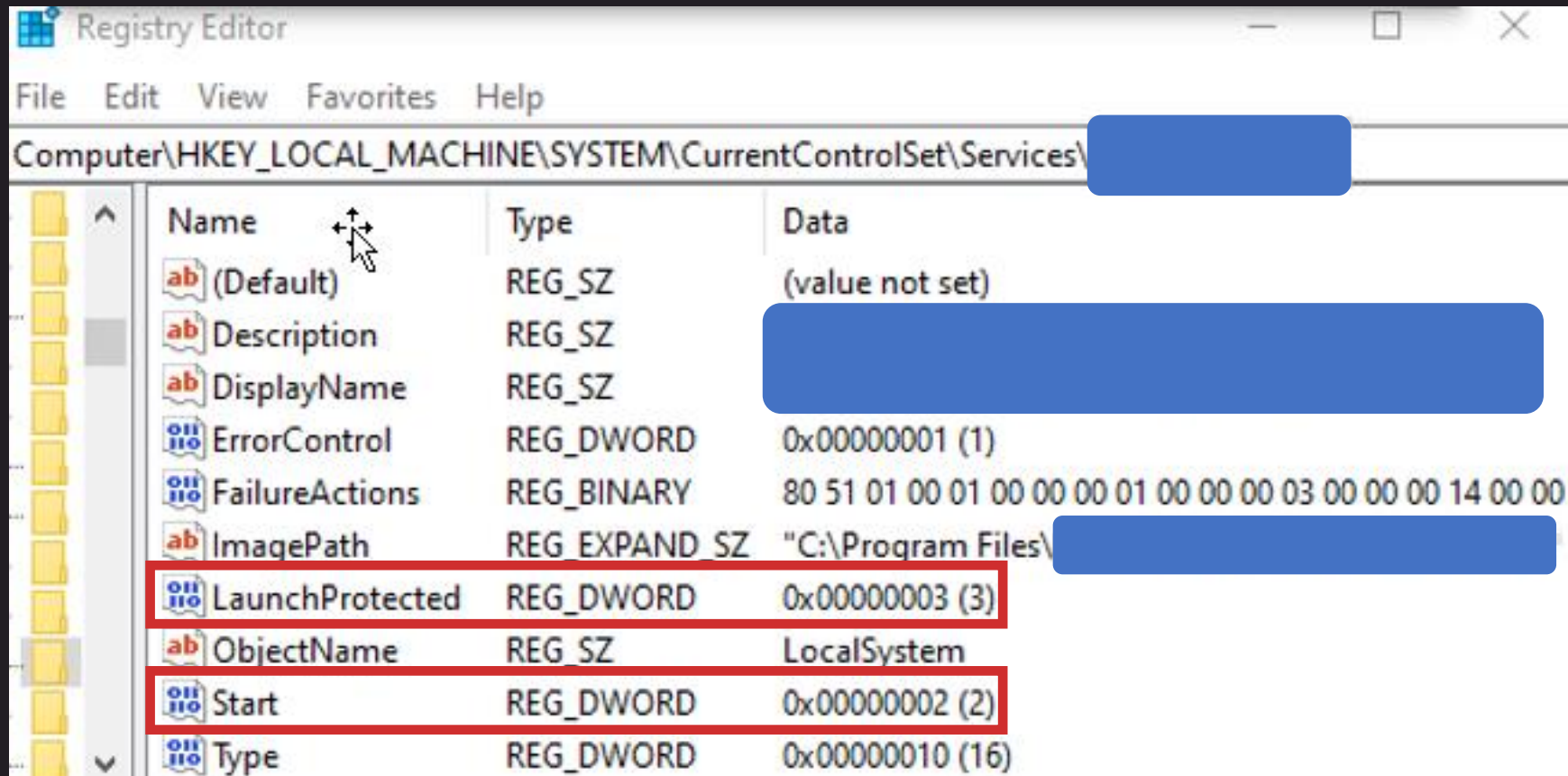
User space

Third step: EDR registry keys

User-space component: EDR registry keys



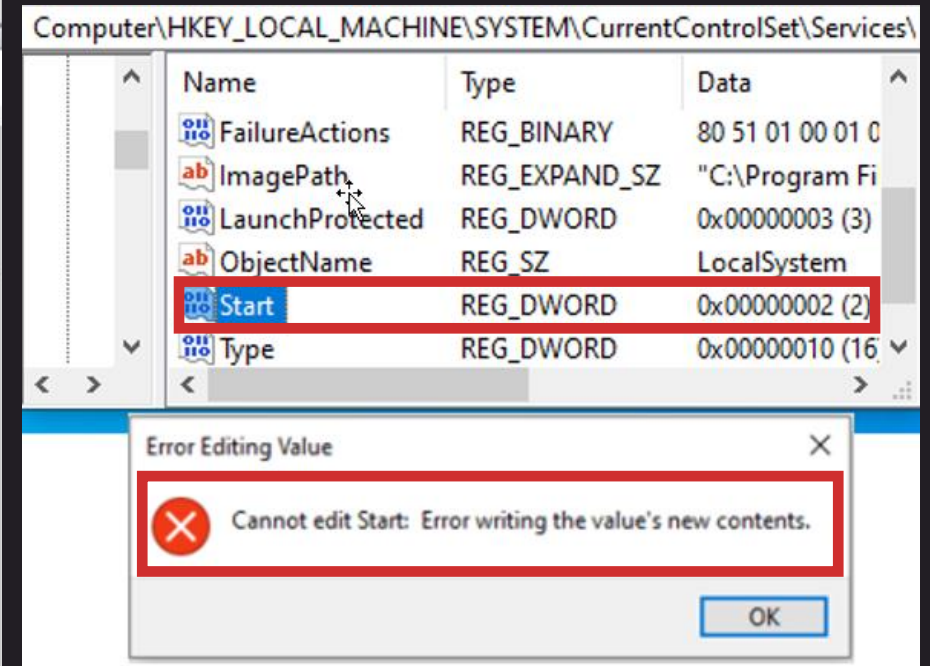
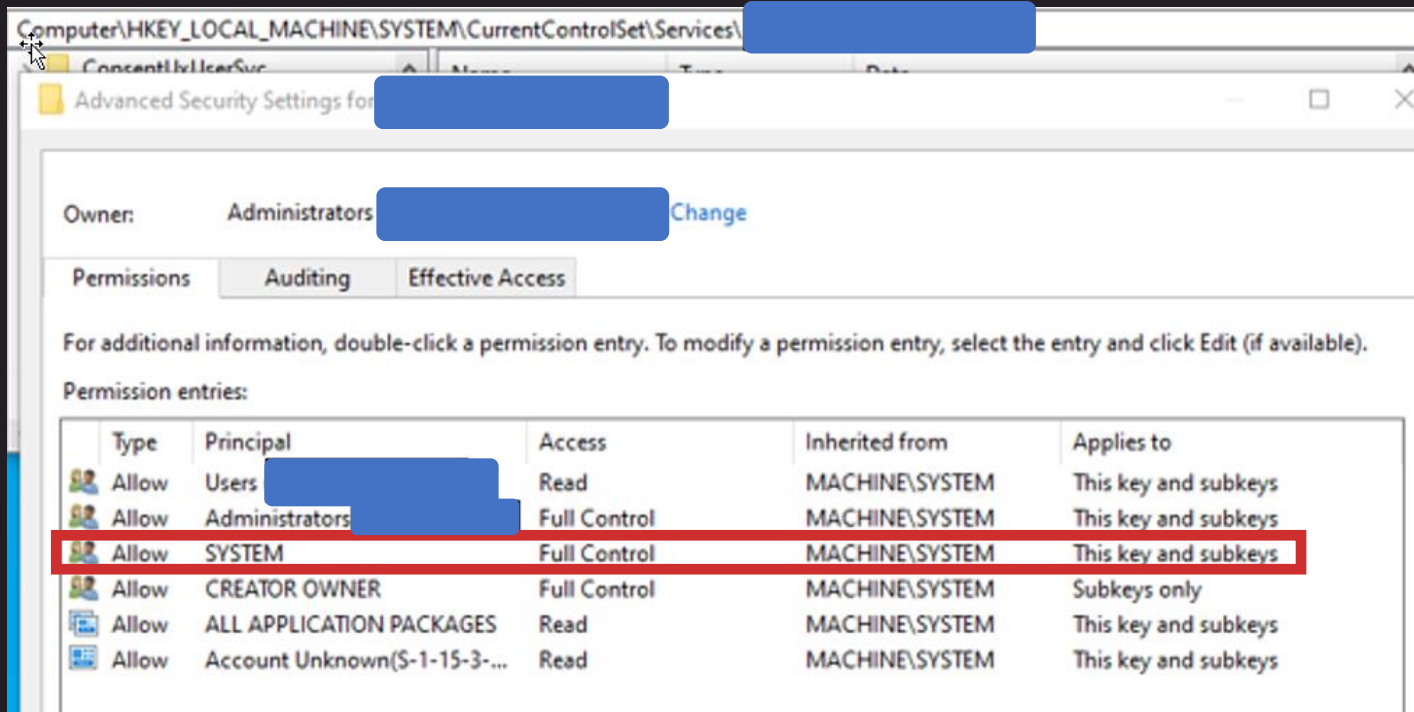
- Identify reg keys / sub keys / entries from EDR user space component (service)



User-space component: EDR registry tampering



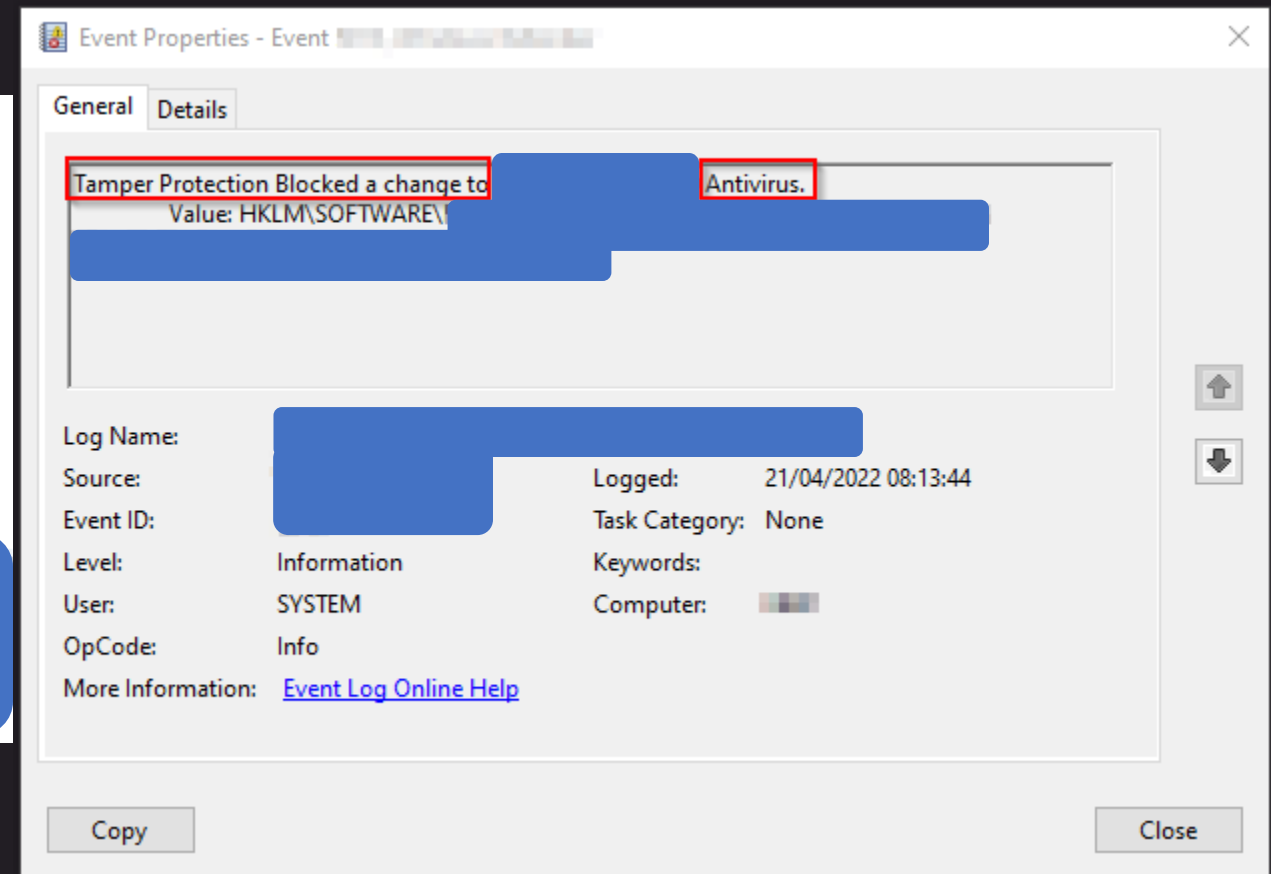
- Start entry: value 2 = autoload and value 4 = disabled
- Tamper reg key -> disable EDR user space component
- Like EDR services and processes, despite system integrity...



User-space component: EDR registry tampering



- Depending on product -> we (possibly) create **tamper protection alerts**



Interim status: EDR user space component tampering



EDR processes

Protected by PPL and gets restarted by protected EDR user space service



Current tamper status

- Patch PPL from EDR user space process
 - Temporary termination possible

EDR service

Protected by initialization as protected service by EDR ELAM driver



Current tamper status

Compared to EDR processes, also not temporary stoppable or pausable

EDR registry keys

Could be a **first key element**, but tamper protection until now unknown



Current tamper status

Like EDR services, despite system integrity until now, no tampering possible



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Kernel space

Fourth step: EDR kernel callback routines

Kernel-space: EDR callback routines



- Kernel Patch Protection aka PatchGuard
 - (Officially) hooks in kernel space no longer allowed
 - Forced to user space -> user space API hooking
 - Despite Patchguard, different kernel callbacks can be registered:

PsProcessNotifyRoutine

User space DLL injection
-> user space API-
hooking;
Telemetry processes

PsThreadNotifyRoutine

Process Injections

PsLoadImageNotify Routine

DLL mapping, suspicious
image loading

Telemetry collection in general -> attackers footprint based on EDR sensor telemetry

Kernel-space: EDR callback routines



- Besides, used by EDRs to **protect their own registry keys** against tampering!

On Windows XP, a registry filtering driver can call **CmRegisterCallback** to register a *RegistryCallback* routine and **CmUnRegisterCallback** to unregister the callback routine. The *RegistryCallback* routine receives notifications of each registry operation before the configuration manager processes the operation. A set of **REG_XXX_KEY_INFORMATION** data structures contain information about each registry operation. **The *RegistryCallback* routine can block a registry operation.** The callback routine also receives notifications when the configuration manager has finished creating or opening a registry key.

```
u_Due_to_Tamper_Protection, blocke 1c000dl30 XREF[11]: FUN_1c0030bf4:1c0030f8d(*)
1c000dl30 44 00 75      unicode      u"Due to Tamper Protection, blocked registry d...
          00 65 00
          20 00 74 ...
1c000dlce 00          ??          00h
1c000dlcf 00          ??          00h

u_Due_to_Tamper_Protection, blocke 1c000dlld0 XREF[11]: FUN_1c003154c:1c00318c9(*)
1c000dlld0 44 00 75      unicode      u"Due to Tamper Protection, blocked registry v...
          00 65 00
          20 00 74 ...
```

First demo: disable EDR user space component



- Using gained knowledge to:
 - Only disable permanently the [EDR user space component](#) and what's the impact on:

Antivirus capabilities

Based on user space
DLL injection -> user
space API hooking

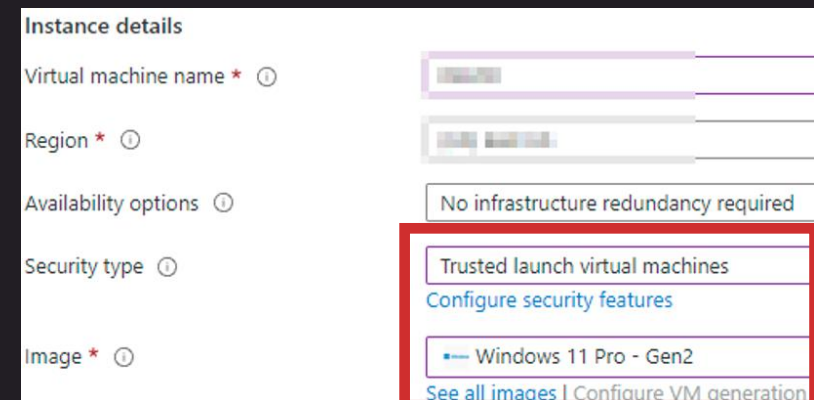
EDR capabilities

Active response
(detections);
Telemetry footprint

EDR capabilities

Host isolation; Real
time response;
sensor recovery

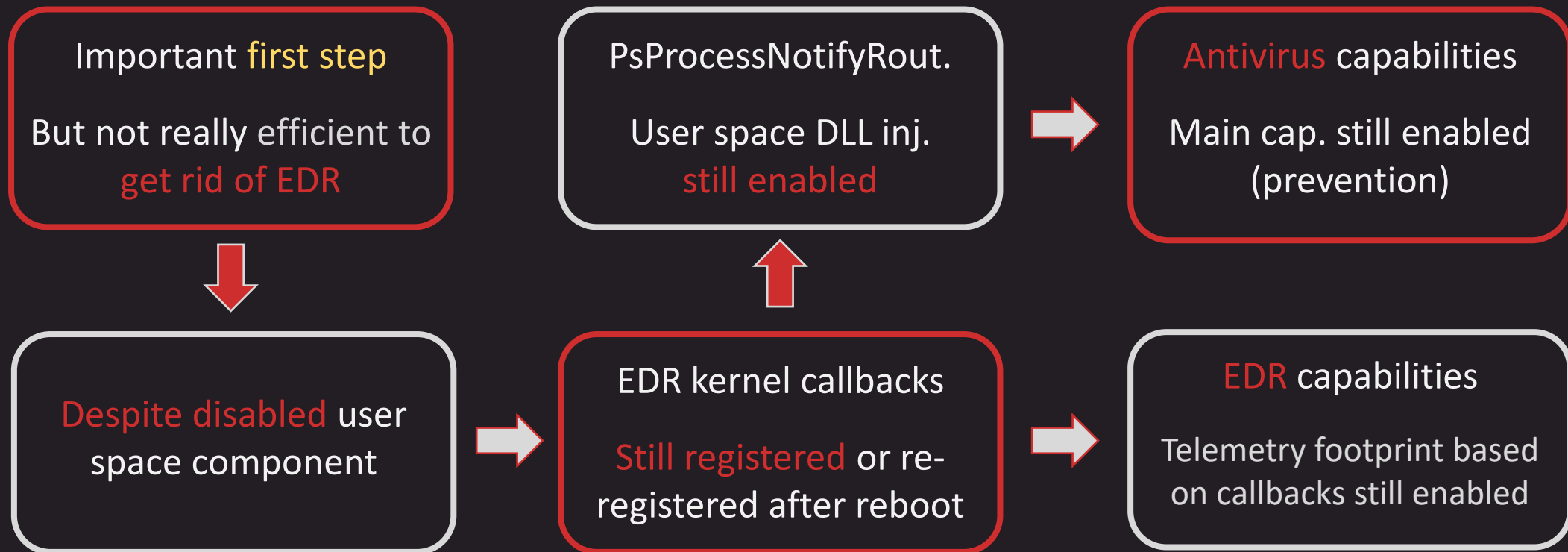
- All creds for the POC [CheekyBlinder](#) to [@brsn76945860](#)
- Have a look at his amazing blog <https://br-sn.github.io/>



Conclusion: first demo



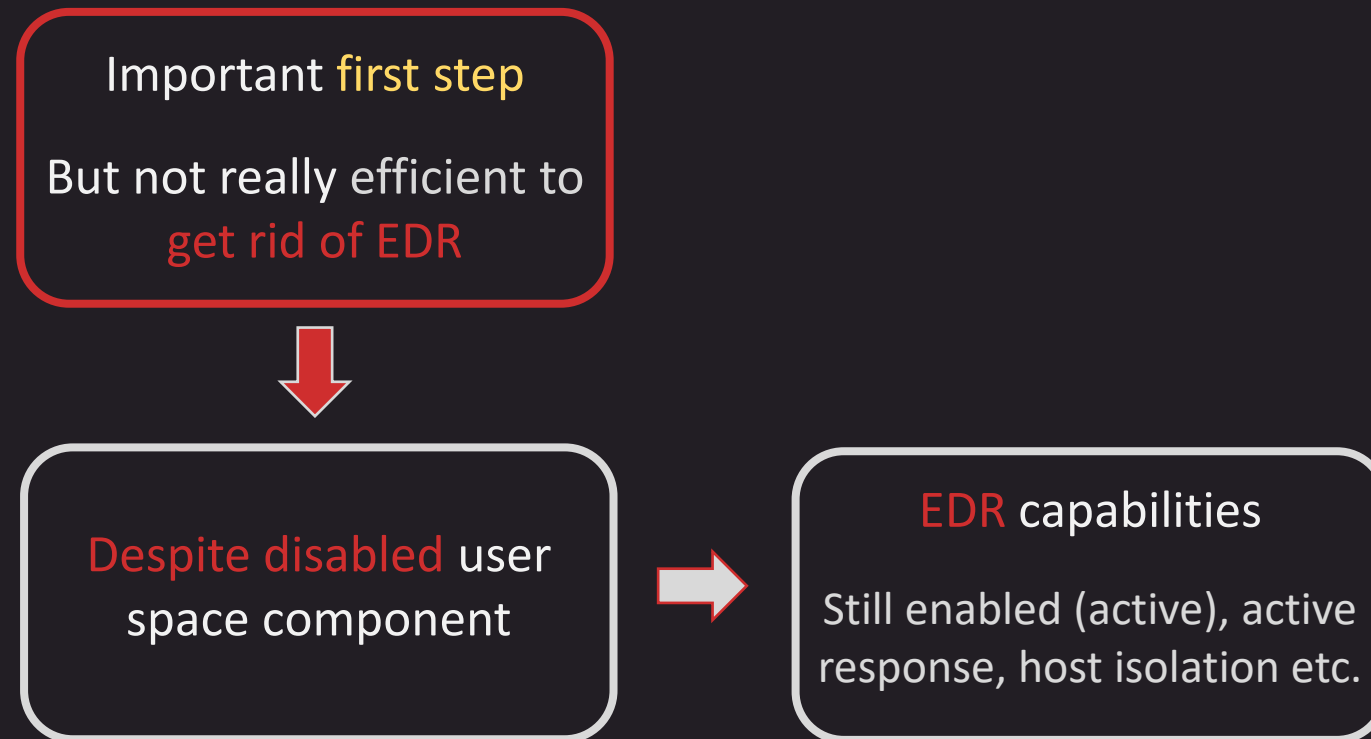
- If **read/write** access kernel space:
 - EDR callbacks can be patched -> registry key **tamper protection disabled** -> Start entry value 4
 - Disable permanently EDR user space component:



Conclusion: first demo



- If **read/write** access kernel space:
 - EDR callbacks can be patched -> registry key **tamper protection disabled** -> Start entry value 4
 - Disable permanently EDR user space component:





Kernel space

Final step: minifilter driver, knockout the EDR!

Kernel-space: EDR minifilter driver



- **Independent** from EDR user space component
 - Still active, even if EDR user space component is disabled
 - Depending on product, could be responsible for:

Based on the respective callback -> prevention (hooking), detection capabilities (active response and telemetry)

Kernel callback registration in general

EDR web console capabilities

Host isolation, real time response, sensor recovery

Tampering **key element**

Permanently get rid of antivirus and EDR capabilities

EDR-minifilter driver (Windows kernel space)

Kernel-space: EDR minifilter driver



- How to disable the EDR minifilter driver?
 - EDR minifilter -> independent registry key
 - Similar structure to EDR user space component reg key -> remember, Start entry value 4

ab (Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
ab CNFG	REG_SZ	Config.sys
ab DependOnService	REG_MULTI_SZ	FltMgr
ab DisplayName	REG_SZ	
on ErrorControl	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
ab Group	REG_SZ	FSFilter Activity Monitor
ab ImagePath	REG_EXPAND_SZ	\\??\C:\Windows\system32\drivers\
on Start	REG_DWORD	0x00000004 (4)
on SupportedFeatures	REG_DWORD	0x00000003 (3)
on Type	REG_DWORD	0x00000002 (2)

Second demo: disable EDR minifilter driver



- Using gained knowledge to:
 - **Only** permanently **disable** initialization of EDR minifilter driver (kernel component)
 - EDR User space component **stays enabled**
- What's the impact on:

Antivirus capabilities

Based on user space
DLL injection -> user
space API hooking

EDR capabilities

Active response
(detections);
Telemetry footprint

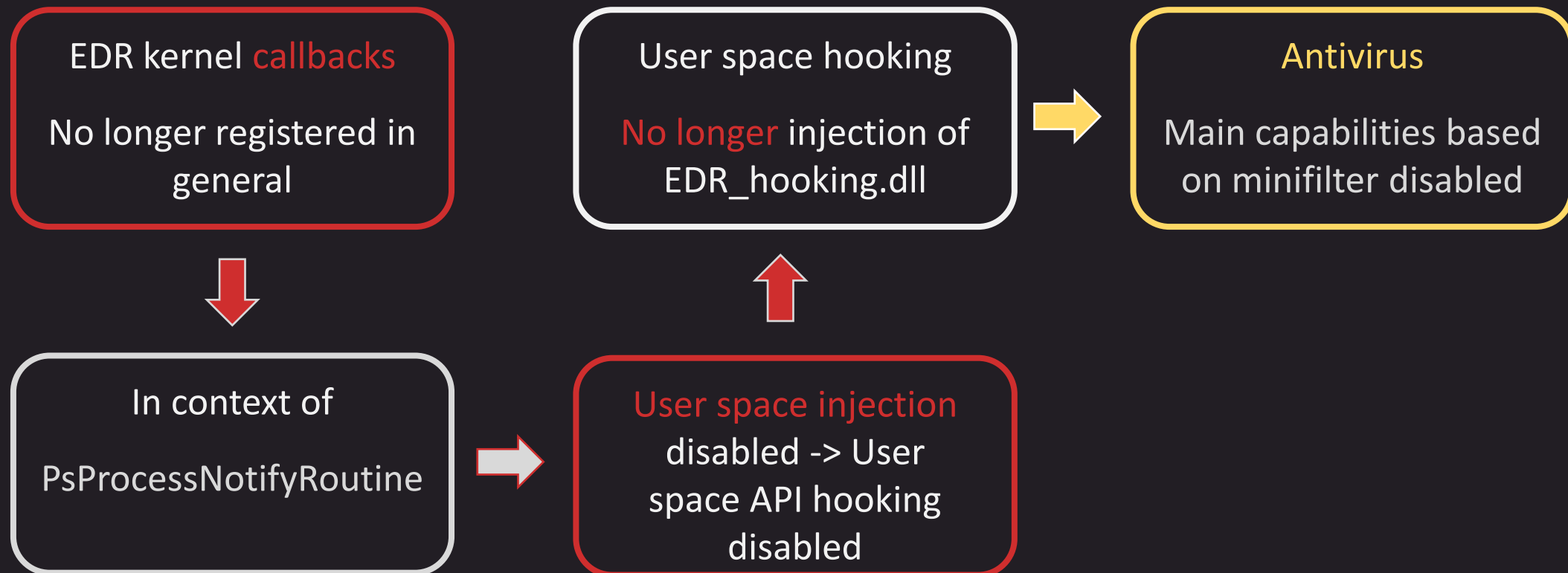
EDR capabilities

Host isolation; Real
time response;
sensor recovery

Conclusion: second demo



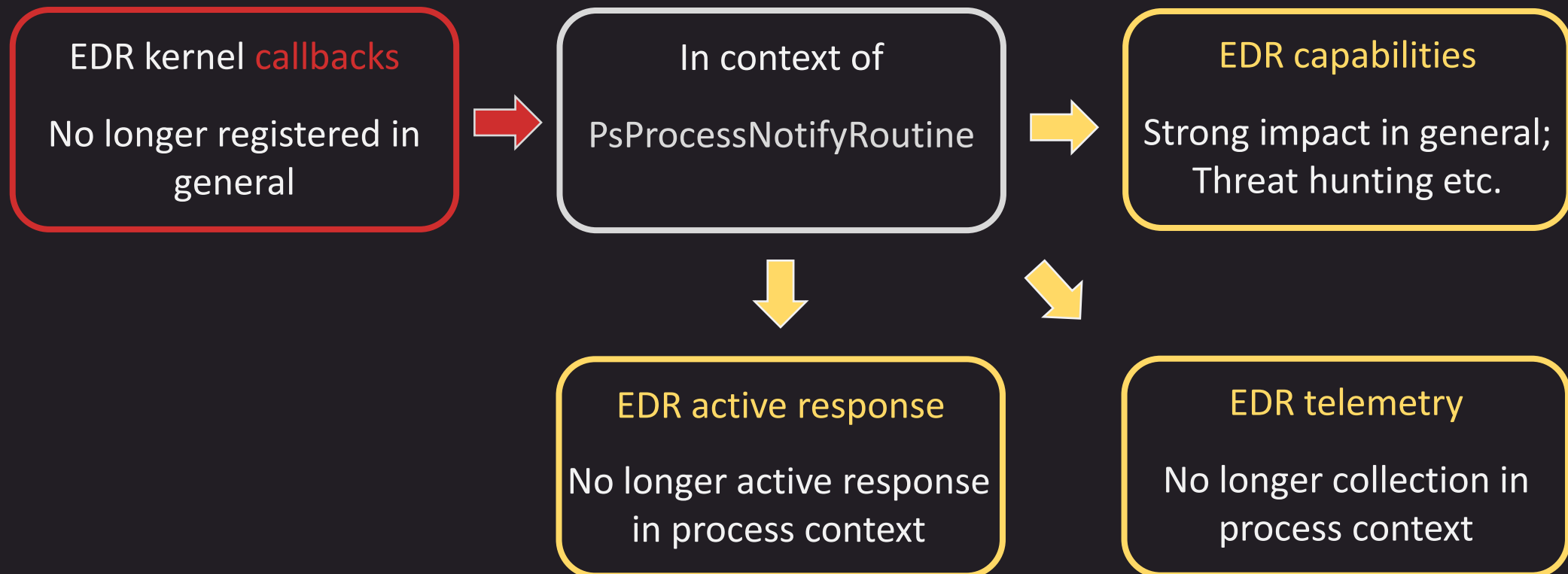
- Permanently disabling **EDR minifilter**, much **stronger impact**:
- Permanently impact on:



Conclusion: second demo



- Permanently disabling **EDR minifilter**, much **stronger impact**:
- Permanently impact on:



Conclusion: second demo



- Permanently disabling EDR minifilter driver, much stronger impact!
- Disabling the EDR minifilter driver itself:
 - Permanently impact (depending on product) on Blue team EDR web console features

Host isolation

Based on EDR sensor,
host isolation no
longer possible

Real time response

Based on EDR sensor,
EDR (reverse) shell
no longer possible

EDR sensor recovery

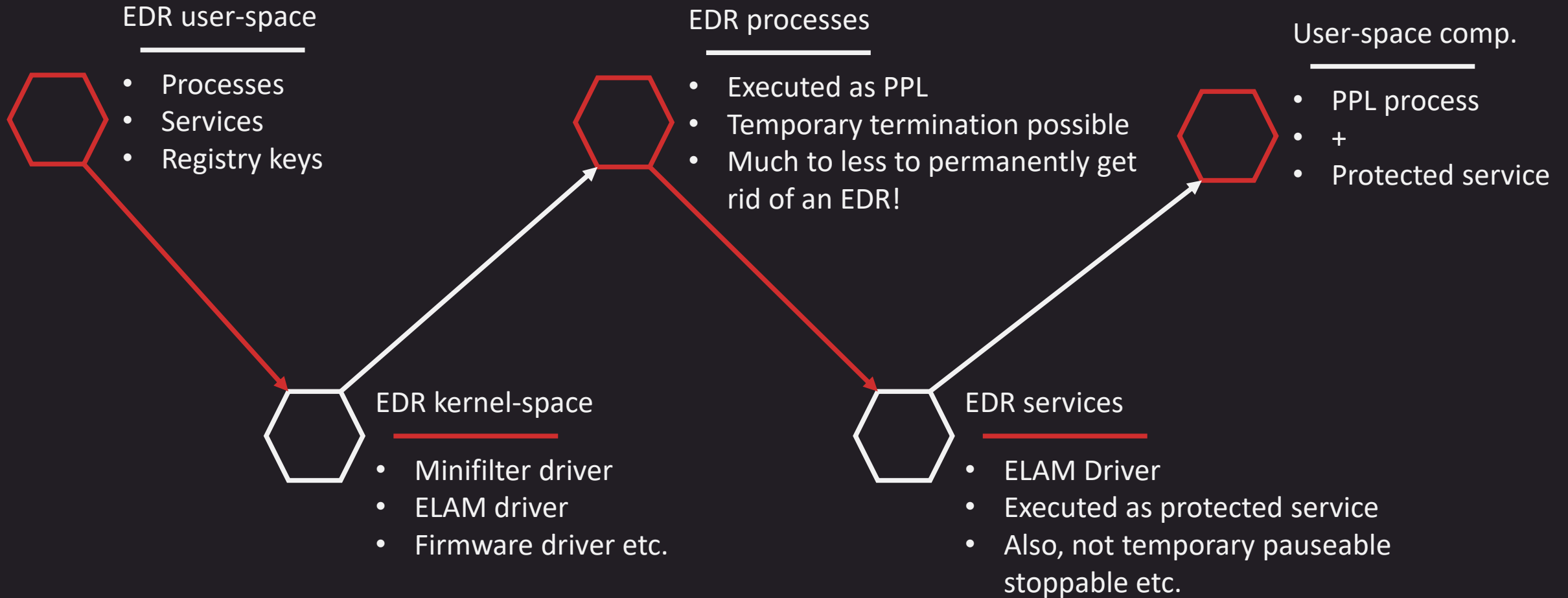
Based on EDR sensor,
recovery of an EDR
sensor no longer
possible

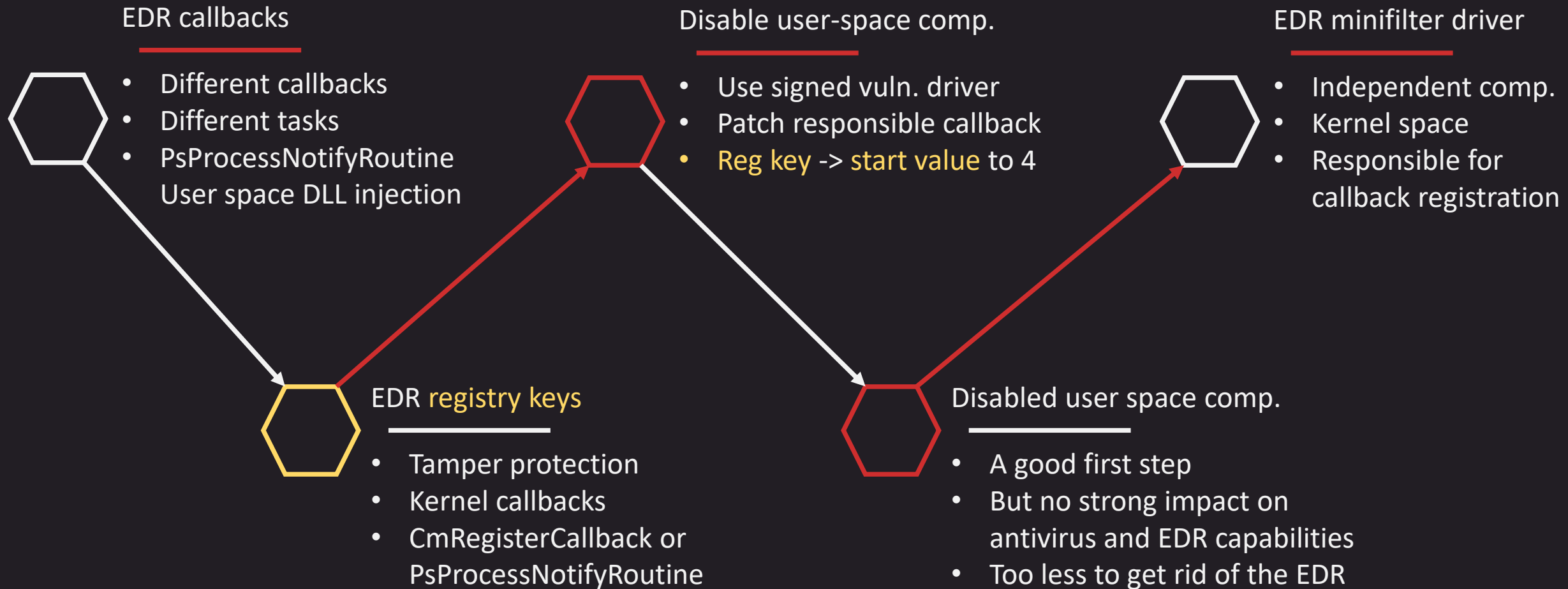


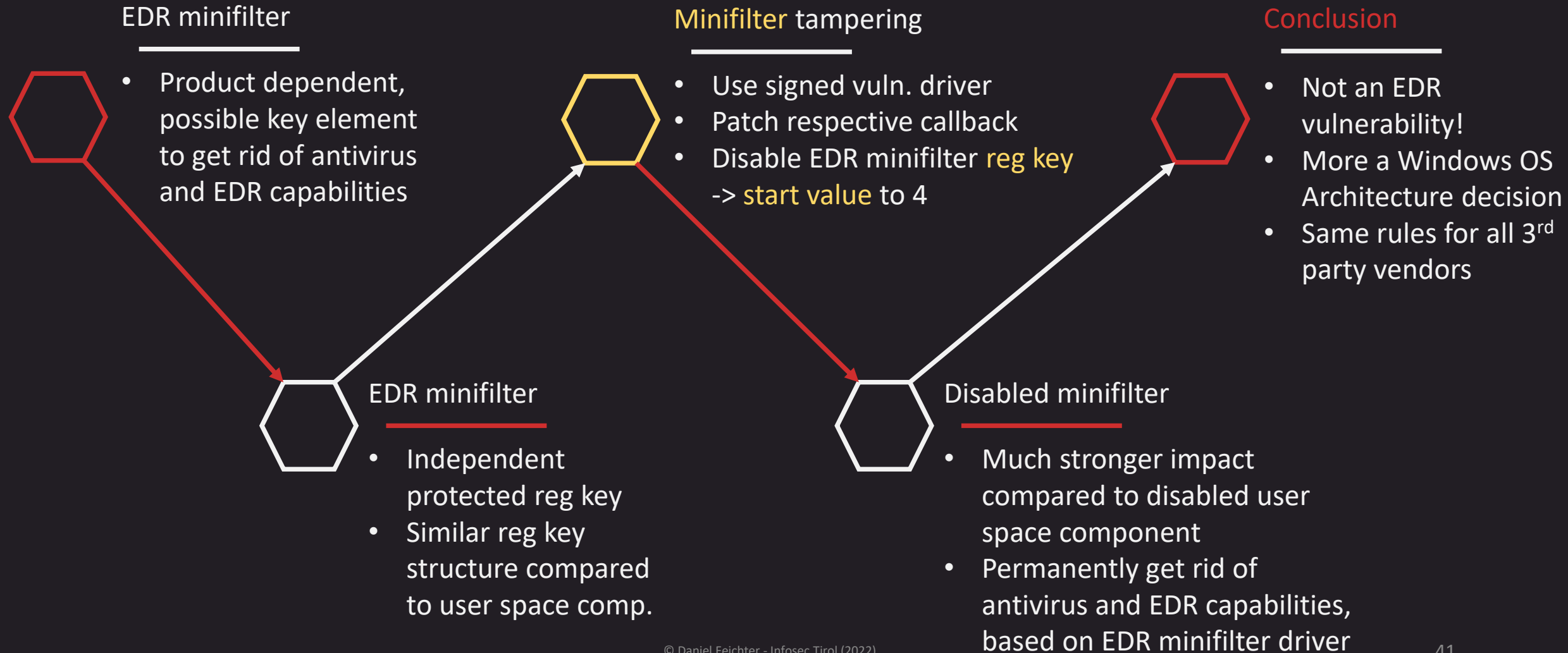
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Summary

End: summary of the talk







Blue Team: Mitigation



- **Key element** is that the attacker get access to kernel space, in case of **vulnerable drivers** we should try to **mitigate** this:
- In case of Windows Defender:
 - ASR Rule: Block abuse of exploited vulnerable signed drivers

Block abuse of exploited vulnerable signed drivers

This rule prevents an application from writing a vulnerable signed driver to disk. In-the-wild, vulnerable signed drivers can be exploited by local applications - *that have sufficient privileges* - to gain access to the kernel. Vulnerable signed drivers enable attackers to disable or circumvent security solutions, eventually leading to system compromise.

The **Block abuse of exploited vulnerable signed drivers** rule doesn't block a driver already existing on the system from being loaded.

Quelle: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/security/defender-endpoint/attack-surface-reduction-rules-reference?view=o365-worldwide>

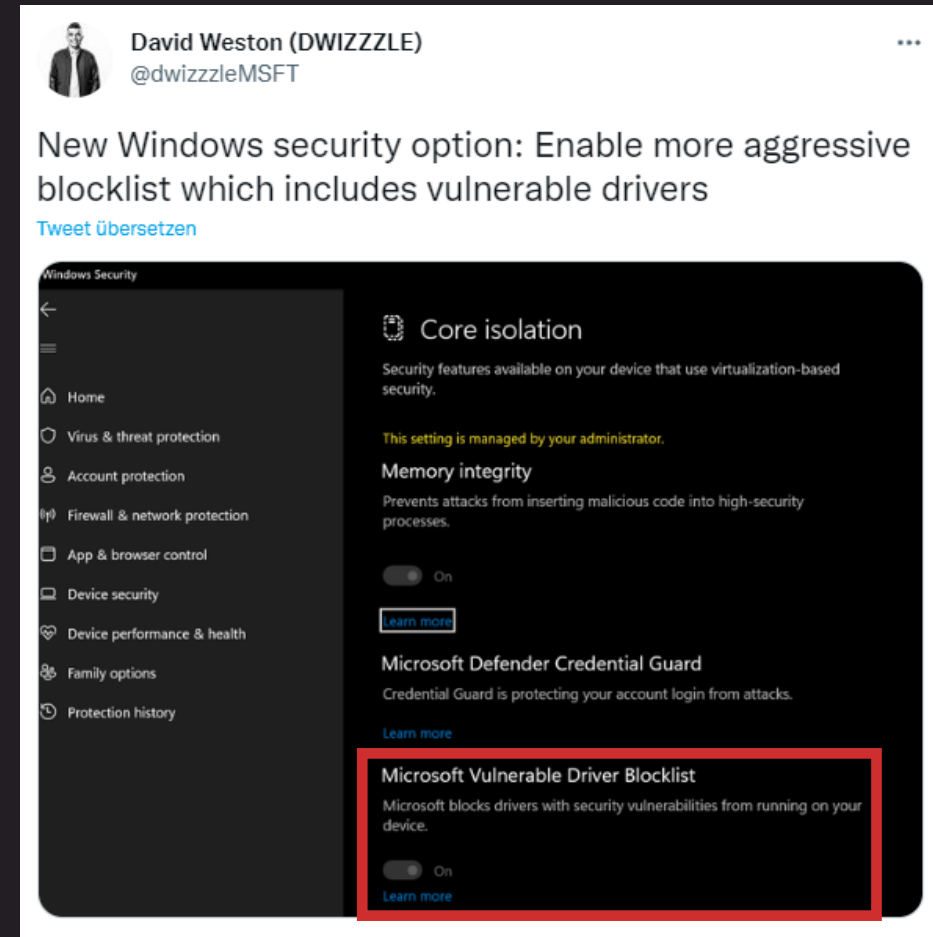
Blue Team: Mitigation



- Windows Device Guard VBS/HVCI:
 - Microsoft Vulnerable Driver Blocklist
 - More aggressive additional hardening with [WDAC](#)

Organizations that want a more aggressive block list than Microsoft's measured approach can add their own drivers to the list using the [WDAC Policy Wizard](#).

Resource: <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-microsoft-blocks-vulnerable-malicious-drivers-defender-third-party-security-tools-windows-11/>



Resource: <https://twitter.com/dwizzleMSFT/status/1508217367259611142>



Thank you
Las Vegas!

- **Thanks** for the amazing opportunity to be a part of **Defcon 30 / Adversary Village** and thanks to the **greatest community!**
- Thanks to my girlfriend **Brigitte** and my sister **Stefanie** for the **unique support!**
- Check out the blog post <https://www.infosec.tirol/how-to-tamper-the-edr/>



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