

Root-Me: Deleted File Challenge Solution

Category: Forensics

Deleted file

5 Points

You can look all you want, but this key is empty...

Author Manah, 24 May 2023	Level ⓘ 	Validations 12130 Challengers 4%	Note ⓘ 844 Votes I like I don't like
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Statement

Your cousin found a USB drive in the library this morning. He's not very good with computers, so he's hoping you can find the owner of this stick!

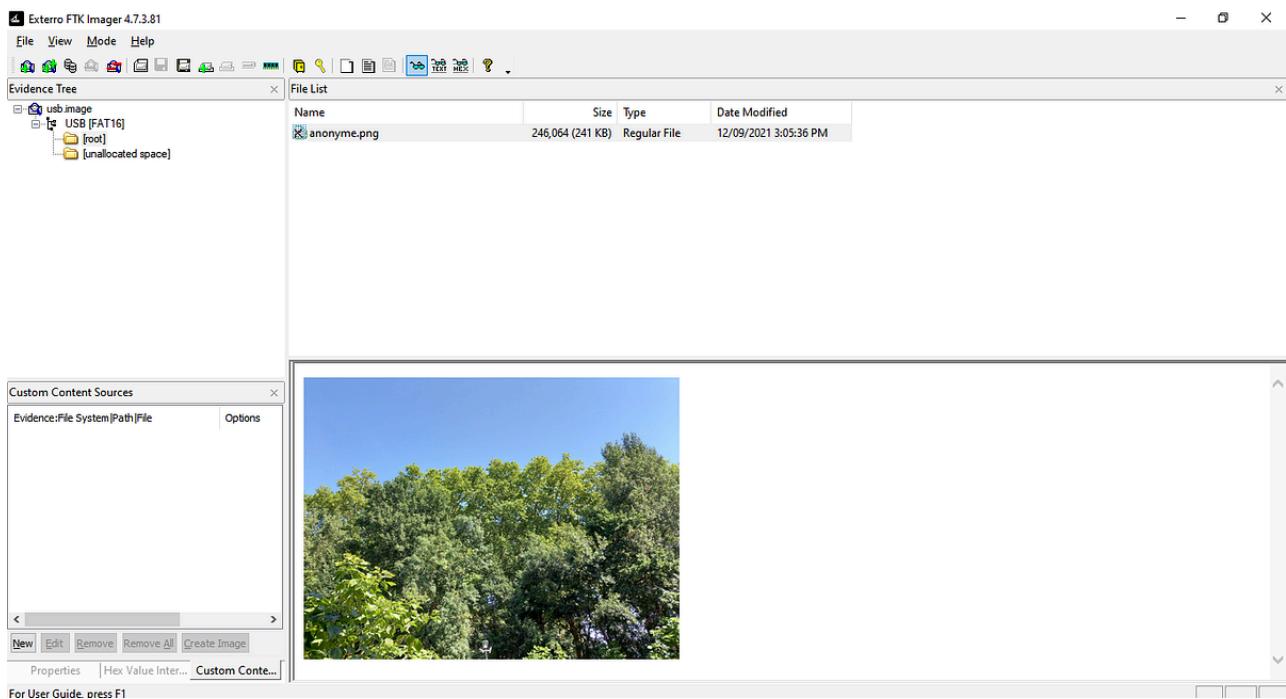
The flag is the owner's identity in the form `firstname_lastname`

sha256sum: cd9f4ada5e2a97ec6def6555476524712760e3d8ee99c26ec2f11682a1194778

[Download the challenge](#)

How I found the flag

The evidence was a .image file, so I opened it using **FTK Imager**.



Add Evidence Item → choose *Image File* → load usb.image.

FTK displayed the available partitions and file systems, including unallocated space.

Inside the root directory, there was only one file: **anonyme.png**, an image of a tree.



Since it was the only file, I figured the metadata might be the key.

ColorType	RGB
Compression	Deflate/Inflate
Creator	Javier Turcot
FileAccessDate	2025-11-14 03:45:50 +0100
FileinodeChangeDate	2025-11-14 03:45:50 +0100
FileModifyDate	2025-11-14 03:45:50 +0100
FilePermissions	prw-----
FileSize	0 bytes
FileType	PNG


[IMAGE METADATA](#) [LOCATION](#) [COPYRIGHT](#) [FULL METADATA](#)


Metadata takes **474 Bytes (0.2%)** of this image and may include sensitive info. To protect your privacy, download this image without metadata by clicking the button below.

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Image metadata

Name	anonyme.png
File size	240 KB (24604 bytes)
File type	PNG
MIME type	image/png
Image size	400 x 300 (0.12 megapixels)

Copyright

Creator	Javier Turcot
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I extracted the PNG and ran **exiftool** on it—and found the creator's name.

Then I tested different flag formats until I found the exact one the challenge required.

- Javier_Turcot
- Turcot_Javier
- Turcot Javier
- Javier Turcot
- javier turcot

I verified it using another metadata viewer, which confirmed the same information.

I also used jimpl.com to check the file's metadata.

Correct flag: `javier_turcot`

It took a few attempts since the challenge was case-sensitive and very specific.

By [Alexander Sapo](#) on [November 14, 2025](#).

[Canonical link](#)

