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Ransomware

DarkSide on Linux: Virtual **Machines Targeted**

We focus on the behavior of the DarkSide variant that targets Linux. We discuss how it targets virtual machinerelated files on VMware ESXI servers, parses its embedded configuration, kills virtual machines (VMs), encrypts files on the infected machine, collects system information, and sends it to the remote server.

By: Mina Naiim May 28, 2021

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Updated June 1, 2021, 12:02 am ET: This article has been updated to remove the Command-and-Control (C&C) URI String field in Table 1. Further study showed that it does not apply consistently to a number of samples.

As we discussed in our previous blog, the DarkSide ransomware is targeting

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In this blog, we focus on the behavior of the variant that targets Linux. This entry also discusses how this variant targets virtual machine-related files on VMware ESXI servers, parses its embedded configuration, kills virtual machines (VMs), encrypts files on the infected machine, collects system information, and sends it to the remote server.

This table summarizes some of the differences between the behavior of the DarkSide ransomware on Windows and on Linux:

Table 1. Comparison of DarkSide variants on Windows and Linux

Windows Variant	Linux Variant
Salsa20 with RSA-1024	ChaCha20 with RSA-4096
Salsa20 matrix is custom and randomly generated using "RtlRandomExW"	ChaCha20 initial block is standard, built using "expand 32-byte k" as a constant string
Encrypted	Not encrypted
No	Yes
All files on the system except the files, folders, and file extensions mentioned in the configuration	VM-related files on VMware ESXI servers, with specific file extensions mentioned in the configuration
Generated by applying CRC32 several times on the HWID of the victim machine as ".4731c768"	Hard-coded in the embedded configuration as ".darkside" or passed by execution parameters
	Salsa20 with RSA-1024 Salsa20 matrix is custom and randomly generated using "RtlRandomExW" Encrypted No All files on the system except the files, folders, and file extensions mentioned in the configuration Generated by applying CRC32 several times on the HWID of the victim machine

Consists of hard-coded part in the

Hard-coded in the embedded

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As we noted earlier, DarkSide also has a Linux variant to infect more machines and cause more damage in the victim network. However, this variant is quite specific, as its main configuration targets VM-related files on VMware ESXI servers as seen in the following figure:

```
        0000000004231F1
        mov
        esi, offset aVmdkVmemVswpLo; "vmdk,vmem,vswp,log,vmsn"

        00000000004231F6
        mov
        rbx, rdi

        0000000004231F9
        sub
        rsp, 10h

        00000000004231FD
        lea
        rdx, [rsp+18h+var_9]

        000000000423202
        call
        _ZNSsc1EPKcRKSaIcE; std::string::string(char const*,std::allocator<char> const&)

        000000000423207
        add
        rsp, 10h

        000000000423208
        mov
        rax, rbx
```

Figure 1. Target file extensions

Configuration

Unlike the Windows variant, the Linux variant's strings and configuration are not obfuscated. The configuration of the Linux variant specifies features of the sample, such as the extension for encrypted files, C&C URL, number of threads, and a constraint on a minimum size of the target files to be encrypted.

Note that the root path — the starting point for encryption — in the following figure is "/vmfs/volumes/", which is the default location for the VM files on ESXI hosts.

```
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```

Figure 2. Configuration of the Linux variant

In addition to the hard-coded configuration, the ransomware executable can accept parameters to infect more files and change its default settings. Figure 3 shows where the malware parses execution parameters.

```
v27 = sub_4309E0(0LL);
v28 = sub_42F370(v27, &v156);
v153 = sub_455A20(&v158);
v29 = sub_456CD0(&v153, "help,h", "Help Screen");
v30 = sub_4571D0(v29, "size,s", v28, "Part Size to Process");
v31 = sub_4571D0(v30, "space,S", v26, &unk_58C761);
v32 = sub_4571D0(v31, "dir,d", v24, "Root Directory Path to Process");
v33 = sub_4571D0(v32, "ext,x", v22, "Extension To Apply For Renaming");
v34 = sub_4571D0(v33, "new,n", v20, "Extension To Apply For Encrypted files");
v35 = sub_4571D0(v34, "log,l", v18, "Log File Path");
v36 = sub_4571D0(v35, "thread,t", v16, "Worker Threads Count, 0 - dynamic");
v37 = sub_4571D0(v36, "key,k", v14, "RSA Public Key File Paths");
v38 = sub_4571D0(v37, "rc2,e", v12, "RC2 Key as HEX string");
v39 = sub_4571D0(v38, "content,c", v10, "ReadMe File Path");
sub_4571D0(v39, "readme,r", v8, "ReadMe File name");
```

Figure 3. Linux variant parameter parsing

ESXCLI Commands

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framework in vSphere) in order to collect information about the infected ESXI host,

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Table 2 shows a list of ESXCLI commands run by DarkSide on the victim machine.

Table 2. ESXCLI Commands

Commands	Desription	
esxcliformatter=csvformat- param=fields=="Device,DevfsPath" storage core device list	List the Devfs Path of the devices currently registered with the storage	
esxcliformatter=csv storage filesystem list	List the logical sections of storage currently connected to the ESXI host	
esxcliformat-param=fields=="WorldID,DisplayName" vm process list	List the running VMs on the ESXI host	
esxcli vsan debug vmdk list	List the status of VMDKs in vSAN	
esxcliformat-param=fields=="Type,ObjectUUID,Configuration" vsan debug object list	List the UUID of the vSAN objects	

Figure 4 shows how the DarkSide ransomware lists the running virtual machines on the ESXI.

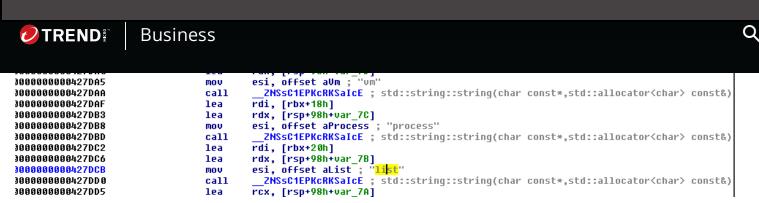


Figure 4. Listing running VMs

Killing Virtual Machines

Before encryption, the Linux variant of the DarkSide ransomware can power off running VMs on the ESXI server using the following ESXI command:

```
"esxcli vm process kill --type= force --world-id= <WorldNumber>"
```

```
00000000000426FA9
                                                    esi, offset aWorldId ; "--world-id="
00000000000426FAE
                                         push
00000000000424FR0
                                          push
                                                    rbp
                                                    rbp, rdi
00000000000426FB1
                                          nov
00000000000426FB4
                                         push
                                                    rbx
00000000000426FB5
00000000000426FBC
                                         1ea
                                                    r15, [rsp+128h+var_58]
00000000000426FC4
                                                   rdi, [rsp+128h+var_108]
rdx, r15
                                         lea
00000000000426FC9
                                         nov
00000000000426FCC
                                          call
                                                      _ZMSsC1EPKcRKSalcE ; std::string::string(char const*,std::allocator<char> const&;
                                                   rax, [rsp+128h+var_E8]
rdi, [rsp+128h+var_108]; this
rsi, r13; std::string *
00000000000426FD1
                                         lea
00000000000426FD6
                                         1ea
00000000000426FDB
                                         nov
00000000000426FDE
                                          nov
                                                   [rsp+128h+var_120], rax
                                                   _ZNSSdappendERKSS; st
rax, [rsp+128h+var_E8]
rdx, [rsp+128h+var_109]
esi, offset aUm; "vm"
rdi, r15
                                          call
00000000000426FE3
                                                                              std::string::append(std::string const&)
00000000000426FE8
                                         lea
00000000000426FED
00000000000124FF2
                                          nov
00000000000426FF7
                                         nov
                                                   [rsp+128h+var_120], rax
_ZNSsC1EPKcRKSaIcE ; st
000000000000426FFA
                                         nov
00000000000426FFF
                                          call
                                                                                std::string::string(char const*,std::allocator<char> const&
                                                   rax, [rsp+128h+var_E8]
rdi, [r15+8]
rdx, [rsp+128h+var_F8]
00000000000427004
                                         1ea
00000000000427009
                                          1ea
000000000000427000
                                          lea
000000000000427012
                                         nov
                                                    esi, offset aProcess
                                                                                "process"
                                                    [rsp+128h+var_120], rax
ZNSsC1EPKcRKSalcE ; std::string::string(char const*,std::allocator<char> const&;
00000000000427017
                                         nov
0000000000042701C
                                         call
                                                    rax, [rsp+128h+var_E8]
rdi, [r15+18h]
00000000000427021
                                          1ea
00000000000427026
```

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Figure 5. Terminating running VMs

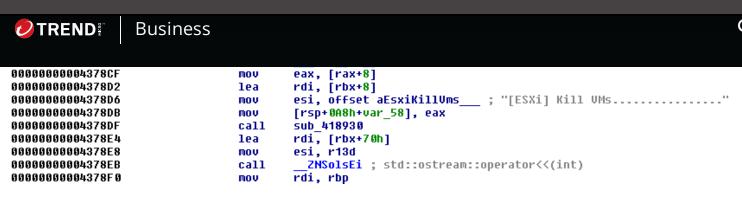


Figure 6. Reporting on VM killing status

Encryption

The Linux variant of the DarkSide ransomware uses a ChaCha20 stream cipher with RSA-4096 to encrypt targeted files on the victim machine.

It loops across the files on the root path mentioned in the embedded configuration or in the given parameter, as shown in Figure 7.

```
v4 = opendir(*a2);
     05 = 04;
16
     if ( 04 )
17
 18
 19 LABEL 2:
20
        while (1)
 21
          v6 = readdir(v5);
22
23
          if ( !v6 )
            break;
24
25
          while (1)
 26
             v7 = v6->d_name;
27
             if ( !memcmp(v\delta->d name, ".", 2uLL) || !memcmp(v\delta->d name, "..", 3uLL) )
 28
29
              break;
30
             v8 = v6-\lambda d_type;
             if ( U8 == 4 )
31
 32
33
               v11 = byte 8A2478;
               std::string::assign((std::string *)&v11, (const std::string *)v3);
std::string::append((std::string *)&v11, "/");
34
35
36
               std::string::append((std::string *)&v11, v7);
37
               sub_435B80(v2, (const char **)&v11);
```

Figure 7. Linux variant looping across files/directories



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parameters.

```
125
         v33 = std::operator<<<std::char_traits<char>>(v2 + 296, "[INFO] ");
v34 = (std::ostream *)std::operator<<<std::char_traits<char>>(v38, "File Size....");
126
127
         v35 = sub_5B0CB0(v34);
128
         v36 = (std::ostream *)std::operator<<<std::char_traits<char>>(v35, "mb (");
         v37 = sub_5B0CB0(v36);
129
130
         u38 = std::operator<<<std::char traits<char>>(u37, " Butes)");
         std::endl<char,std::char_traits<char>>(v38, "Bytes)", v39);
131
         040 = *(_QWORD *)(02 + 120);
132
         v41 = *(_QWORD *)(v2 + 128);
133
134
         *(_{QWORD} *)(_{U2} + 152) = 0x100000LL;
         v42 = v40 >> 20;
135
136
         if ( 042 < 041 >> 20 )
137
           if ( U42 < *(_QWORD *)(U2 + 160) )
138
 139
             LODWORD(v52) = 2;
140
141
             v57 = &v52;
             v47 = (const char *)sub_418430(v38, " Bytes)");
142
143
             U48 = (__int64 **)&U53;
             sub_4178B0(&v53, v47, &v57);
144
145
             while ( v53 )
146
               049 = sub_418430(048, 047);
147
               sub_418610(&v57, v49, &v53);
v47 = "File Too Small, Ignored";
148
149
```

Figure 8. Linux variant performing a file size check

The malware then opens the target file, reads the content based on the part and space size given in the configuration or in the parameters, encrypts them, and writes to the file as shown in the following code:

```
184
             do
185
186
                std::istream::read((std::istream *)&v107, v68, v11);// Read_file
187
                if ( v109 )
188
                  v54 = (std::runtime_error *)__cxa_allocate_exception(32LL);
std::string::string(&v59, "File Reading Failed", &v84);
189
190
                  sub_5B4100(&v59, "File Reading Failed");
191
192
                  u55 = *__errno_location();
193
                  sub 416B60(v54);
                  std::string::_Rep::_M_dispose(v59 - 24, &v85);
194
195
                    cxa_throw(v54, &off_899100, sub_5B4050);
196
197
                Encryption_routine_sub_510EE0(&v88, v71, v68, v69 - (_QWORD)v68);// Encryption_Routine
```

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calling "RtlRandomExW" several times, the malware uses the standard constant "expand 32-byte k" in the Chacha20 cipher used to encrypt files on the victim machine, as shown in the next figure.

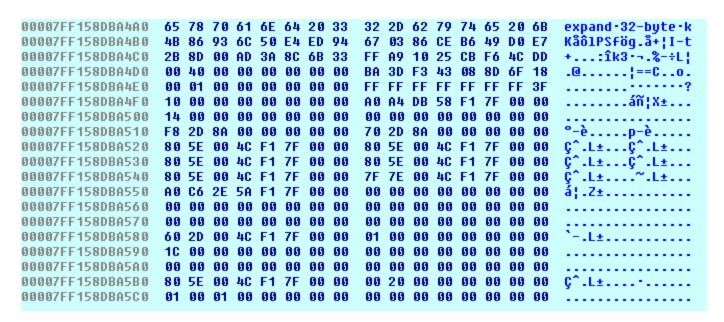


Figure 10. Using "expand 32-byte k" as a constant in the Chacha20 cipher

After encryption, the malware then adds a header and a cipher at the end of the encrypted files as shown in Figure 11.

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```
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```

```
91
       std::ostream::write((std::ostream *)&v41, v27, 12LL);
  92
       if ( U42 )
  93
         v17 = (std::runtime_error *)__cxa_allocate_exception(32LL);
std::string::string(&v24, "Writing Header Failed", &v26);
sub_584100(&v24, "Writing Header Failed");
  94
  95
  96
  97
          v18 = * errno location();
  98
          sub 416860(v17);
  99
          std::string::_Rep::_M_dispose(v24 - 24, &v34);
100
            _cxa_throw(v17, &off_8991C0, sub_5B4050);
 101
102
       std::ostream::write((std::ostream *)&v41, v32, v33 - (_QWORD)v32);
103
       if ( U42 )
 104
105
          v15 = (std::runtime_error *)__cxa_allocate_exception(32LL);
          std::string::string(&v25, "Cipher Writing Failed", &v26);
106
          sub_5B4100(&v25, "Cipher Writing Failed");
107
```

Figure 11. Adding code to header

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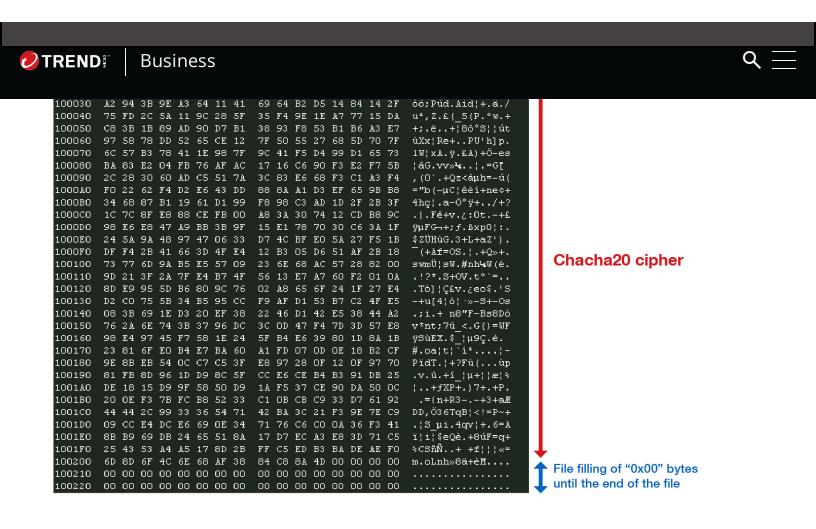


Figure 12. Hex view of the encrypted file

The ransomware output console shows the results of the encryption, the encrypted filenames, the discarded files after size check, the time of encryption, and more.

```
[START #01] File Path....../vmfs/volumes//here.log
[INFO] File Size.......0mb (10492 Bytes)
[ERROR] File Too Small, Ignored

[START #01] File Path...../vmfs/volumes//test4.vmsn
[INFO] File Size......7mb (8082169 Bytes)
[STOR] Flacked Time 5644 2086505 wall & 0100005 uses + 0 0600005
```

Figure 13. Ransomware output console

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The Linux variant drops a ransom note on the victim machine and adds a new file extension to the encrypted files.

Unlike the Windows variant, the ransom note file name and the new extension for encrypted files are hard-coded in the malware configuration file or given in a parameter, and the malware does not add any ID at the end of it.

For the analyzed samples, the new extension was ".darkside" and the hard-coded ransom note file name was "darkside_readme.txt".

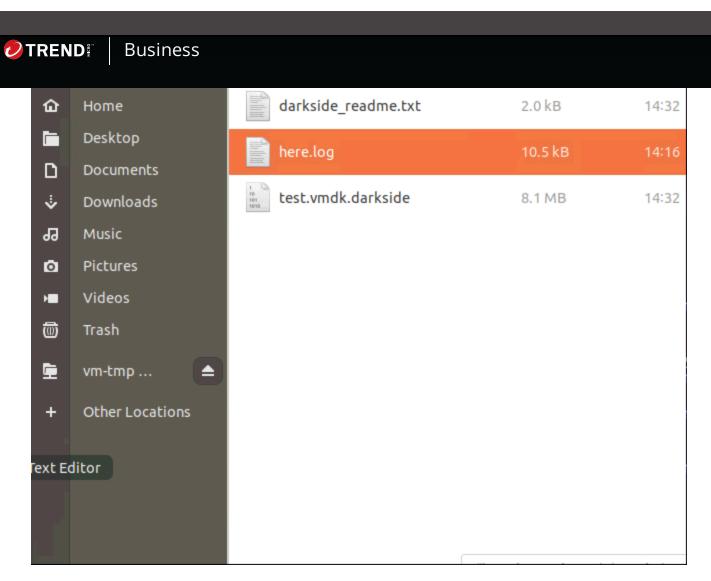


Figure 14. Encrypted folder with ransom note

C&C Beaconing

The DarkSide ransomware can send a C&C beaconing message with the collected system information to a remote server hardcoded in the configuration. It collects system information on the victim machine, such as host name, domain, and disk information, as evidenced in Figure 15.

```
TREND
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        sub 417930(&v90);
181
 182
 183
      LODWORD(v117) = 0;
      *(_QWORD *)&name.sysname[0] = &v117;
 184
      v9 = sub_418430(v6, v7);
 185
      v10 = &v125;
 186
      v11 = (char *)v9;
 187
 188
      sub_4178B0(&v125, v9, &name);
      while ( v125 )
 189
 190
 191
        v93 = sub_418430(v10, v11);
        v12 = sub_498940(&v125);
 192
        094 = 012
 193
 194
        v12 += 8LL;
        u95 = *(_DWORD *)(__cxa_get_globals() + 8);
 195
        sub_418930(v12, "group: ");
 196
 197
 198
        sub_418630(v12, v122, *((_QWORD *)v122 - 3));
        v10 = (__int64 **)&v93;
199
```

Figure 15. System information collection

The ransomware then puts the collected system information of the victim machine with a hard-coded UID value in the following format:

```
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 aIdAa21bbc2aa21abacab2cUid46017379a796803 db '{',0Ah
                                    "id": "aa21bbc2aa21abacab2c",',0Ah
debuq006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "uid": "46017379a796803",',0Ah
debuq006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "hostname": "ComputerNameUbuntu",',0Ah
"domain": "-",',0Ah
"version": "1.0",',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "username": "username",',OAh
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "group": "1000",',0Ah
debuq006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "os type": "Linux",',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "os version": "Linux #42-Ubuntu SMP Tue Oct 23 15:48:01 UTC 2'
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                   ",',<mark>0</mark>Ah
debuq006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "os_build": "4.15.0-39-generic",',0Ah
debuq006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "os_arch": "x86_64",',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    "disks": [',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                        {',0Ah
                                            "MountPoint": "\/",',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                            "Type": "ext4",',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
debuq006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                            "Device": "\/dev\/sda1",',0Ah
                                            "Size": "50138",',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                            "Available": "38679",',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                            "Free": "41255"',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                        }',0Ah
debug006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                                    ]',0Ah
debua006:00007F5C200076C8 db
                               '}',0Ah,0
debug006:00007F5C2000790F db
```

Figure 16 System information format

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IPS/IDS devices on the victim network. The request body has the following format:

Figure 17 shows the HTTP POST request sent by the malware to the remote server with the collected information.

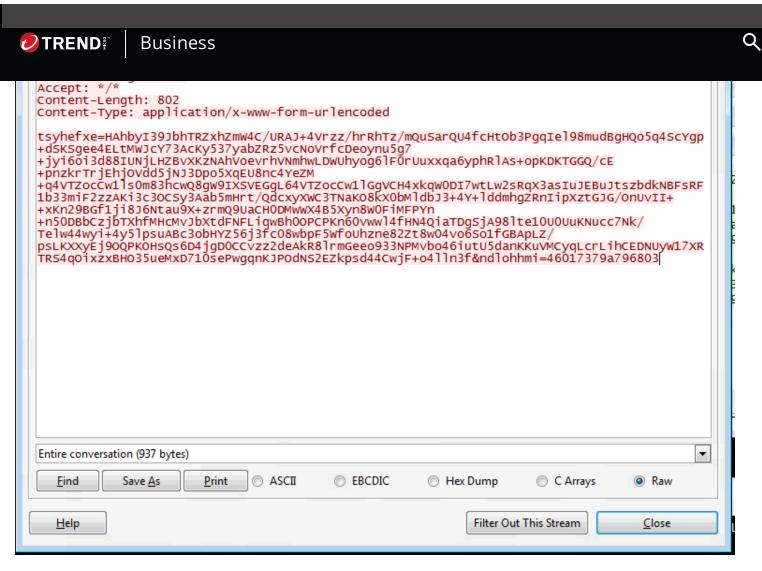


Figure 17. C2 beaconing HTTP traffic

Conclusion

The DarkSide ransomware family targets both Windows and Linux platforms. There are similarities between the Linux and Windows variants, but they are different with regard to some features, such as encryption mechanism, target files, ransom note name, extension, C&C URL, and more.

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directories on the victim machine.

Indicators of Compromise

C&C servers:

- catsdegree[.]com
- securebestapp20[.]com
- temisleyes[.]com

SHA256	Trend Micro Detection Nam
984ce69083f2865ce90b48569291982e786980aeef83345953276adfcbbeece8	Ransom.Linux.DARKSIDE.THDI
9cc3c217e3790f3247a0c0d3d18d6917701571a8526159e942d0fffb848acffb	
c93e6237abf041bc2530ccb510dd016ef1cc6847d43bf023351dce2a96fdc33b	
da3bb9669fb983ad8d2ffc01aab9d56198bd9cedf2cc4387f19f4604a070a9b5	

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