McAfee Labs Threat Advisory

TDSS.rootkit

April 11, 2012

Summary

TDSS rootkit appeared around 2008 and is known for its ability to survive in the machine without being detected and the challenges it presents in terms of cleanup. There have been four versions of TDSS before this latest variant, and there have been improvements with every version in terms of being stealthy.

Detailed information about the rootkit, propagation vector, characteristics and mitigation etc are explained in the following sections.

Infection and Propagation Vectors

TDSS spreads by using affiliate marketing programs. Most affiliate marketing programs spreading malicious code use a Pay Per Install model which means the amount earned by the malware author depends on the number and the location of the machines it infects.

Characteristics and Symptoms

TDSS.e!rootkit

There are multiple variants of TDSS in the wild. All these variants exhibit different behavior. These are some of the behaviors exhibited by this variant *TDSS.e!rootkit*:

Upon execution of the dropper adjusts "SE_LOAD_DRIVER_PRIVILEGE", on success copies itself as a .DLL and calls **AddPrintProcessor,** which requests the system process "SPOOLSV.EXE" to load the specified library. It then creates a random service by executing ZwLoadDriver.

The malware hooks "KiDebugRoutine" which enables the malware to hide its traces in memory from a debugging program. When a debugging program tries to access the malware traces in memory through this hook, the malware intercepts the request and points to clean memory instead of the actual malicious code.

It then infects a windows component (.SYS file) which will enable it to start during system boot. The malware injects a thread in the kernel, so whenever the infected .SYS file is requested it always returns a clean one, instead of the one infected by the malware. In addition to this, the malware redirects searches. It also connects to its command and control server and sends information and receives commands. Connections to the following domains were observed on a infected machine:

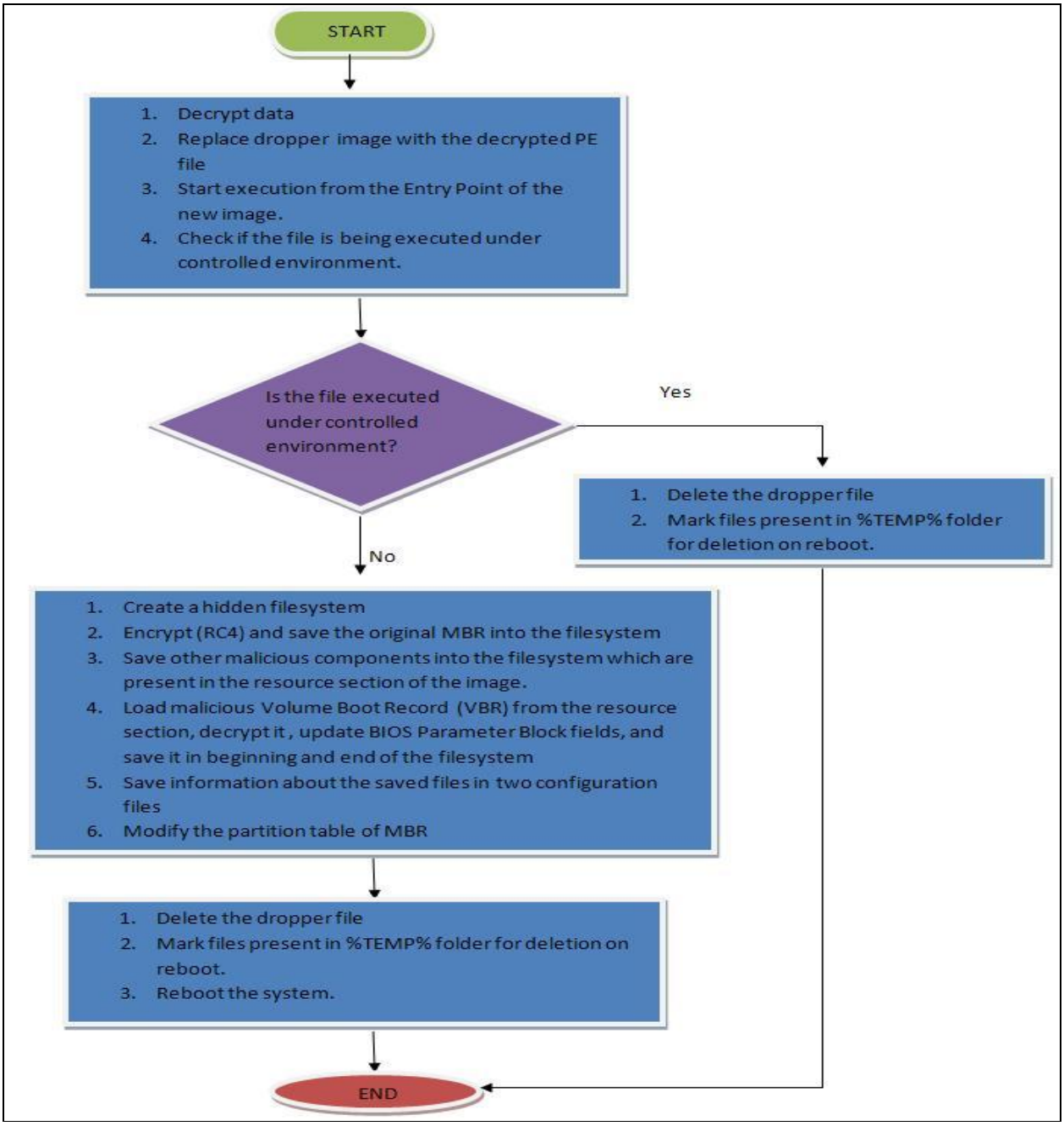
- https://nichtadden.in/
- https://91.212.226.67/
- https://li1i16b0.com/
- https://zz87jhfda88.com/
- https://n16fa53.com/
- https://01n02n4cx00.cc/
- https://lj1i16b0.com/
- http://clickpixelabn.com/
- http://thinksnotaeg.com/
- http://ijmgwarehouse.com/

- http://getbestbanner.com/
- http://pixelrotator.com/
- http://rf9akjgh716zzl.com/
- http://justgomediainc.in

TDSS.f!rootkit

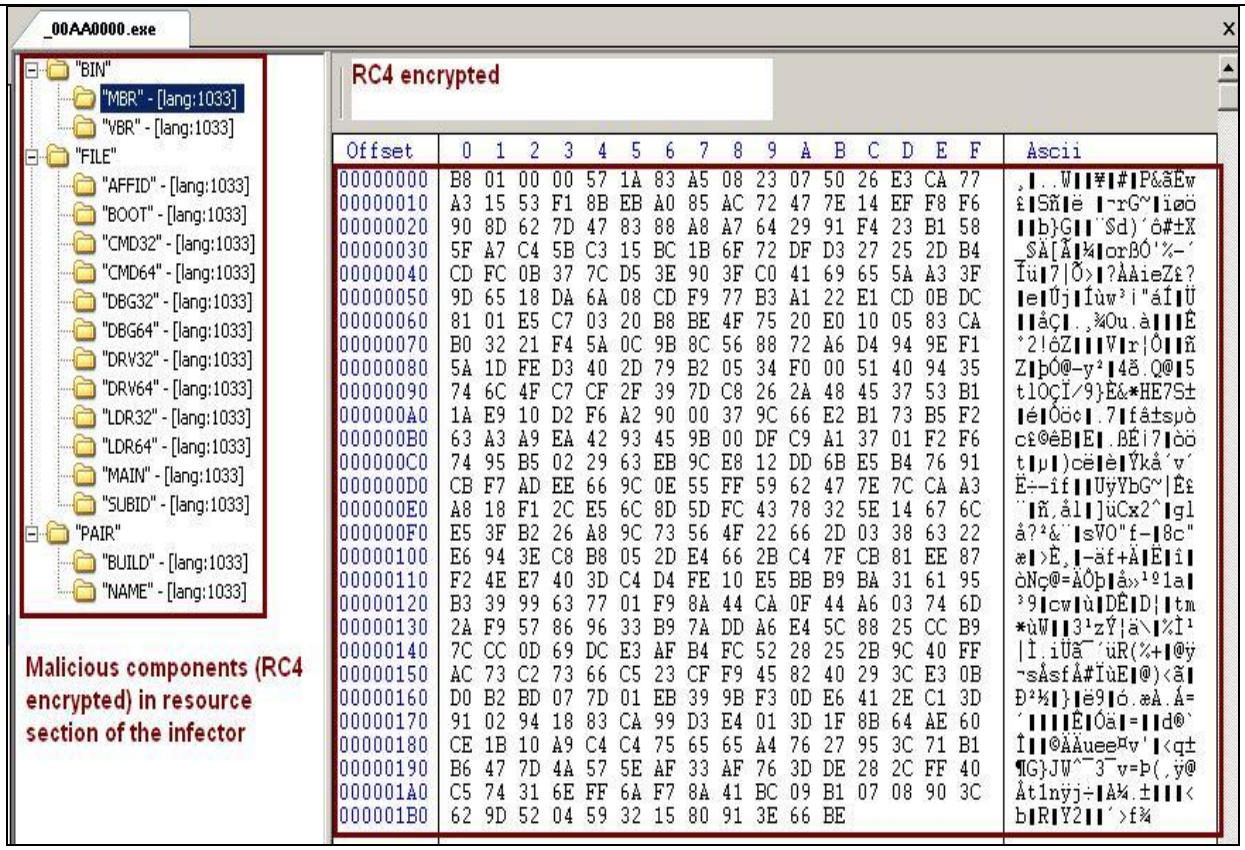
Like other droppers of TDSS, TDSS.f dropper also carries actual infector in its resource section in an encrypted form. The actual infector is first decrypted and the dropper image is replaced with the decrypted infector.

Workflow Diagram for TDSS:



(1.0 TDSS Workflow)

Remaining malicious components are present in infector's resource section as shown below:

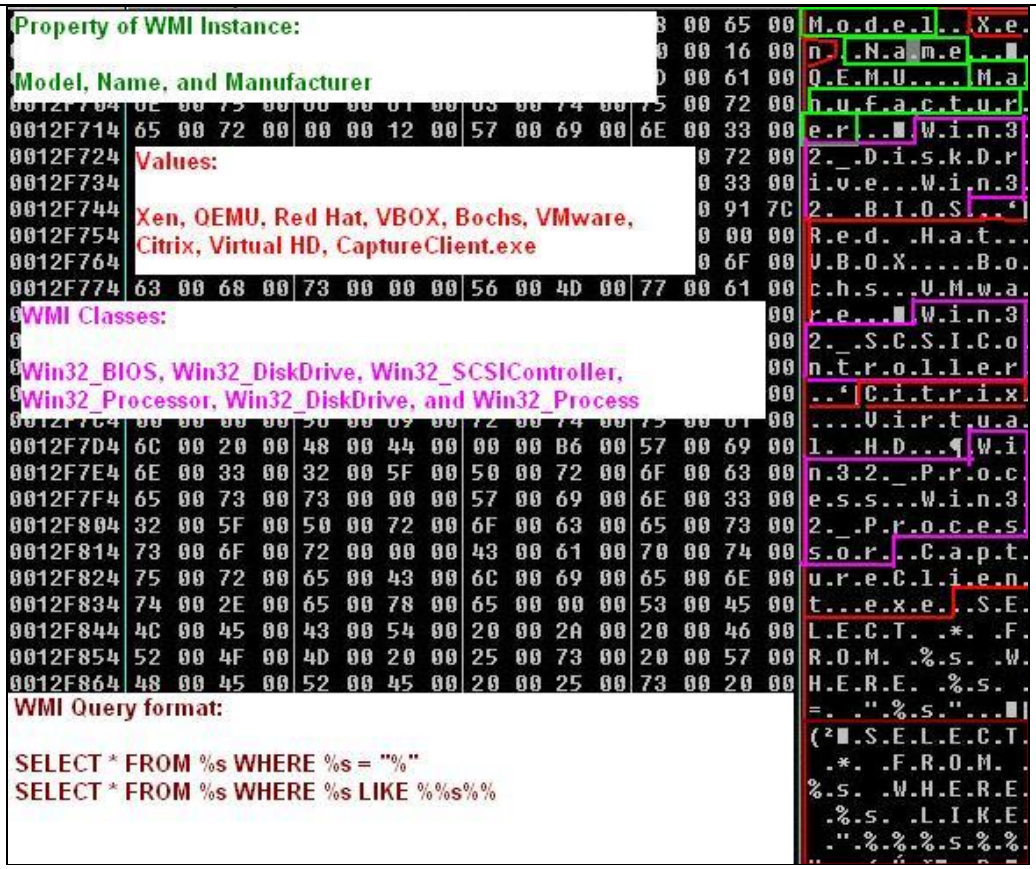


(1.1 Resource Section of infector)

These resources are loaded whenever required. Initially, it loads few resources like “BUILD”, “NAME” of “PAIR” type and “SUBID”, “MAIN” of type “FILE”.

Some variants of TDSS.f before infection checks if it is running in controlled environment.

It connects to the “Root\Cimv2” WMI interface, retrieve system resource information like instances of Win32_BIOS, Win32_DiskDrive, Win32_SCSIController, Win32_Processor, Win32_Process and check if the malware is being executed in controlled environment.

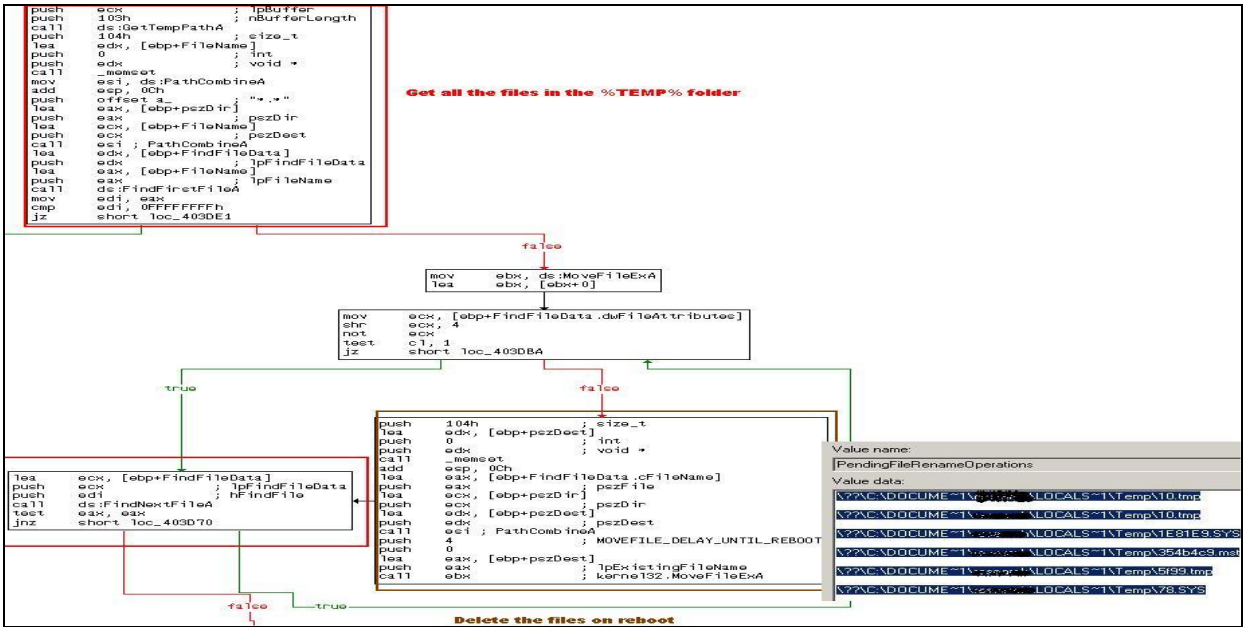


(1.2 WMI Instance)

If the malware discovers that it is running in controlled environment,

- It skips the execution path which is responsible for MBR partition table modification and creation of hidden filesystem, wherein it keeps original MBR and other malicious components in encrypted form.

- It directly calls a routine which removes its traces by deleting the dropper and other files from the %TEMP% folder as shown below:



(1.3 code flow 1)

When the malware is executed on a physical machine, it retrieves handle of the first HDD "**\\.\PhysicalDrive0**" and uses **IOCTL_SCSI_PASS_THROUGH_DIRECT I/O** control code to read and write to the HDD.

For data transfer operations, a buffer with alignment matching the adapter device is required.

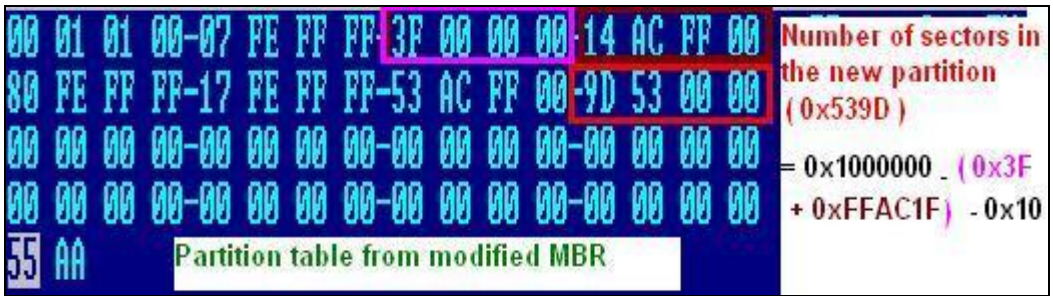
Therefore it first retrieves AlignmentMask using the **IOCTL_STORAGE_QUERY_PROPERTY** control code and then retrieves the capacity of the device using **IOCTL_SCSI_PASS_THROUGH_DIRECT** control code.

Infection Flow
It first reads MBR into memory, parses the partition table and look for the bootable partition.

After identifying the bootable partition, it computes absolute number of sectors by adding the LBA of the first absolute sector of active partition and number of sectors in the partition.

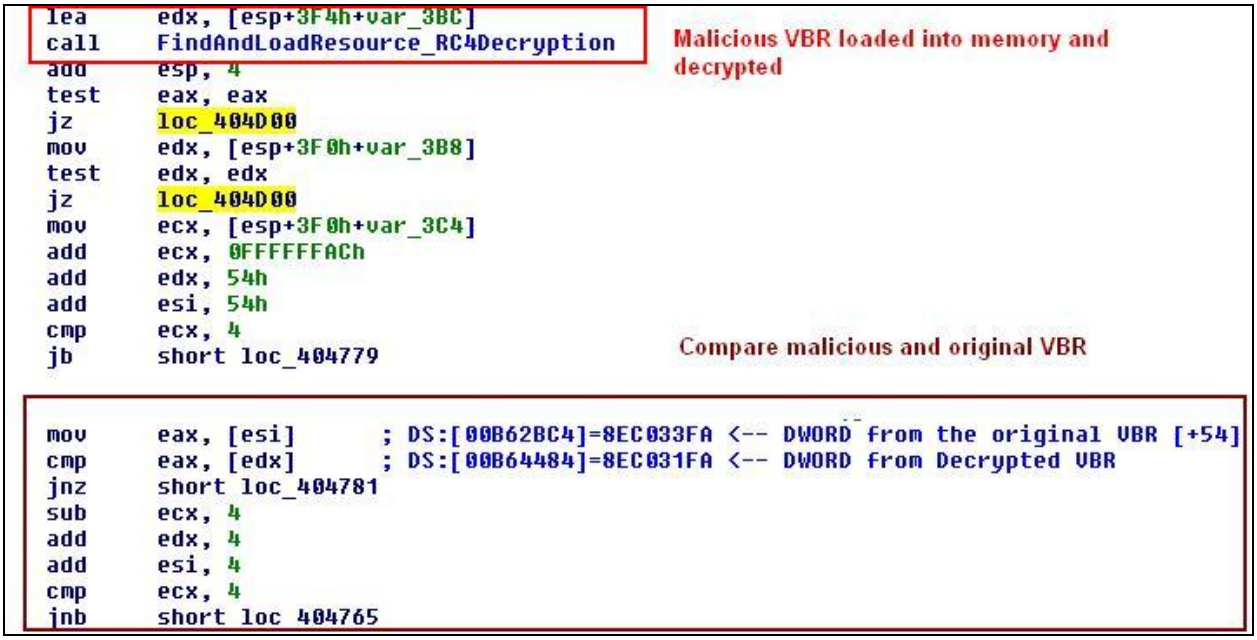
The summation of the above two is then subtracted from 0x1000000. It then calculates the number of sectors to be used in the filesystem to be created.

Number of sectors = 0x1000000 – (LBA of first absolute sector of the active partition + Number of sectors in the partition) – 0x10



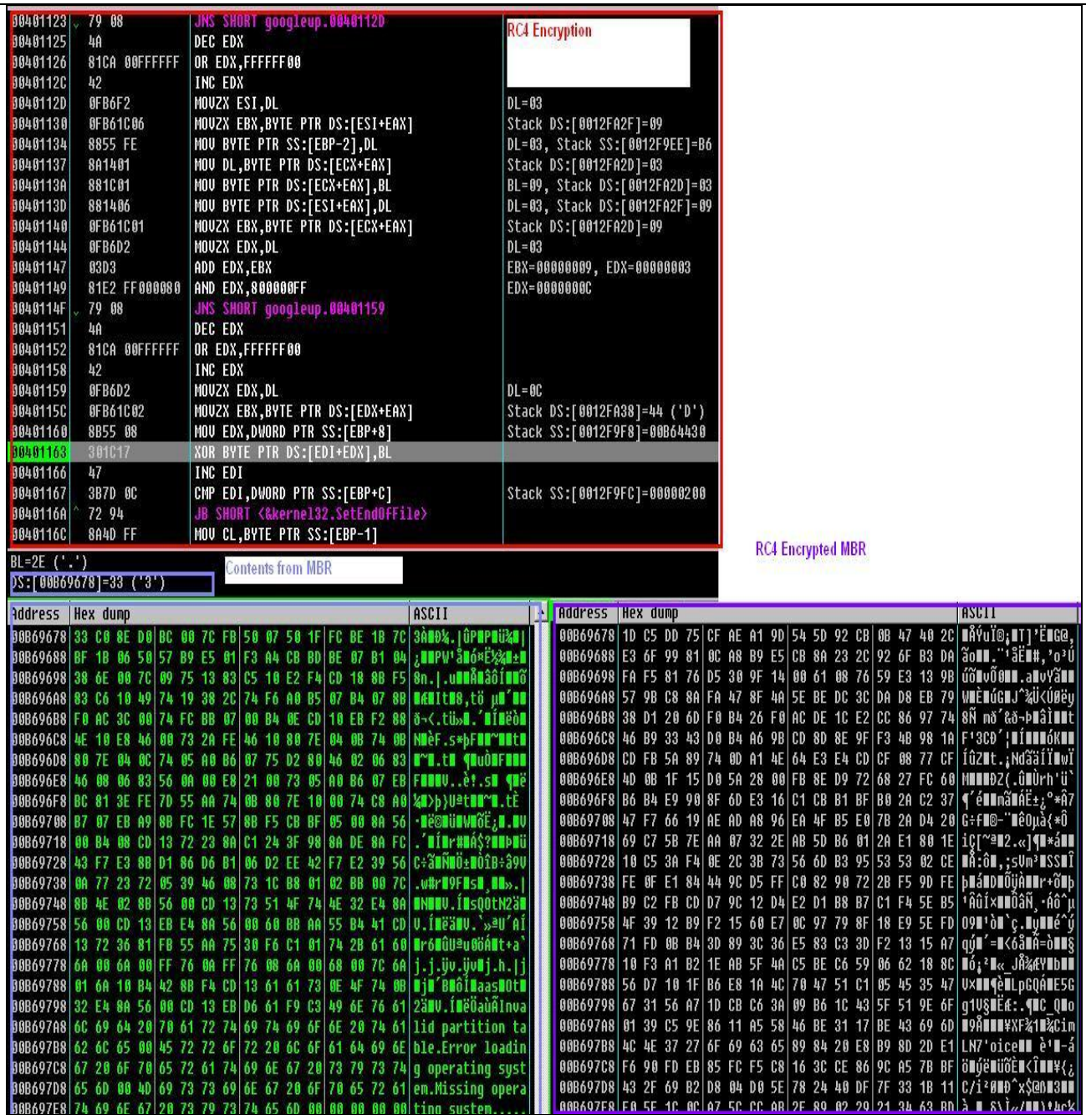
(1.4 Modified MBR)

It then loads, and decrypts the resource named "**vbr**" of type "**BIN**" in memory. To avoid re-infection, it compares the malicious VBR code with the original VBR code as shown below:

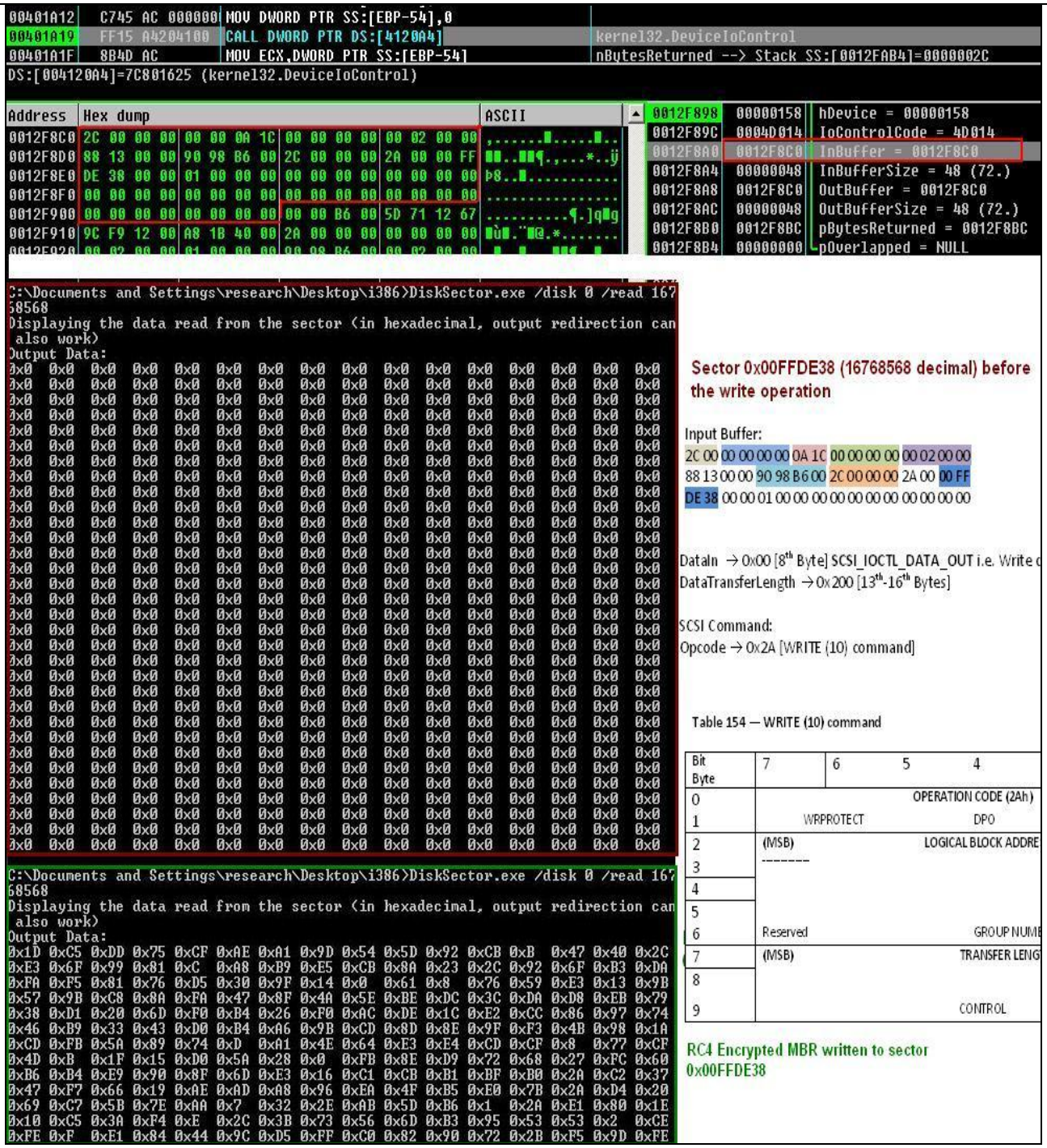


(1.5 Code flow 2)

The original MBR which was read previously into memory is encrypted, written into the hidden file system and the storage information is saved in secondary configuration as shown below:



(1.6 Original MBR is encrypted before it is saved into hidden file system)



(1.7 Sector where the original MBR is saved in encrypted form)

The BIOS Parameter Block (BPB) of the boot sector is then updated with information like:

- Number of Hidden Sectors in Partition [offset: 0x1C]
- Sector Number of the File System Information Sector [offset: 0x30]
- Total Sectors (in the Volume) [offset: 0x28]. This value is 1 sector less than the total number of sectors in the volume's partition table entry, because an NTFS "Backup Sector" is not considered part of the NTFS Volume.
- Starting Cluster Number for the $MFTMirror File in this partition [offset: 0x38].
    - This field is populated with the data which is used to identify the sector which contains primary configuration file.
- NTFS Volume Serial Number [offset: 0x48]
    - This field is populated with the decryption key.

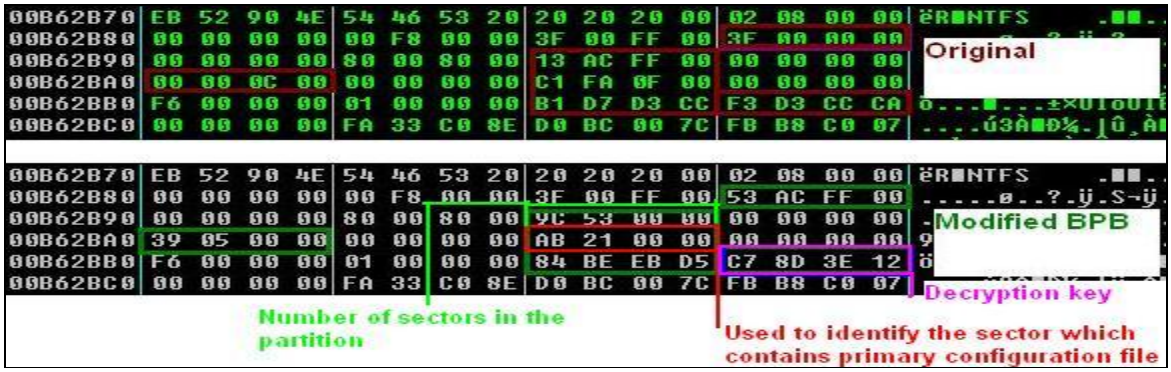
After BPB modification, VBR is encrypted, written into the hidden file system and the storage information are saved in the secondary configuration file as shown below:

```
mov     esi, [esp+3F0h+var_3B8] ; MalDecryptedVBR --> Stack SS:[0012FB78]=00B64430
mov     ecx, [esp+3F0h+var_3A8] ; (LBA + NumSectors) --> Stack SS:[0012FB88]=00FFAC53
mov     eax, [esp+3F0h+var_384] ; Stack SS:[0012FBAC]=0000539D <-- Max.Numsectors - (Numsectors + LBA)
mov     edi, [esp+3F0h+var_3C0] ; VBR --> Stack SS:[0012FB70]=00B62B70 <-- Original VBR
mov     [esi+1Ch], ecx  ; ECX=00FFAC53 <-- (LBA + NumSectors), DS:[00B6444C]=00000000 <-- Number of Hidden Sectors in Partition
xor     ecx, ecx
lea     edx, [eax-1]
shr     eax, 4          ; EAX=0000539D
mov     [esi+30h], eax  ; EAX=00000539 <-- Starting Cluster Number for the $MFT File in this partition
mov     [esi+28h], edx  ; EDX= 0000539C --> Total Sectors ( in the Volume )
mov     eax, ebx
cdq
mov     [esi+2Ch], ecx
mov     [esi+34h], ecx  ; Starting Cluster Number for the $MFT File in this partition
mov     [esi+38h], eax  ; EAX=000021AB
mov     [esi+3Ch], edx  ; Starting Cluster Number for the $MFTMirror File in this partition.
mov     eax, dword ptr [esp+3F0h+Uuid.Data4]
mov     [esi+48h], eax  ; NTFS Volume Serial Number.
mov     ecx, dword ptr [esp+3F0h+Uuid.Data4+4]
mov     [esi+4Ch], ecx  ; NTFS Volume Serial Number.
mov     ecx, 15h
rep movsd               ; replace the original VBR BPB data in memory with the modified BPB
```

```
loc_404ADD:
mov     edx, [esp+3F0h+var_3C0]
push    edx             ; int
lea     eax, [esp+3F4h+var_3D0]
push    eax             ; void *
mov     esi, 200h
call    EncryptedMBR_Written_Disk_0
add     esp, 8
test    eax, eax
jz      loc_404CE2
```

Original VBR BPB is replaced with the modified BPB.
Modified VBR is RC4 encrypted and written into disk

(1.8 Boot Sector BIOS Parameter Block updated)



(1.9 code flow 3)

Now, all the resources of type "FILE" are searched in the module, transfers control to a callback function which writes them into the hidden filesystem and update information about each file or data which is saved into the hidden file system into the secondary configuration file as shown below:

```
push    0                   ; lParam
push    offset EnumFunc     ; lpEnumFunc
lea     edx, [esp+3F8h+var_360]
push    edx                 ; lpType
push    0                   ; hModule
call    ds:EnumResourceNamesA
```

Load resources of type "File" and the callback function writes them into the hidden filesystem

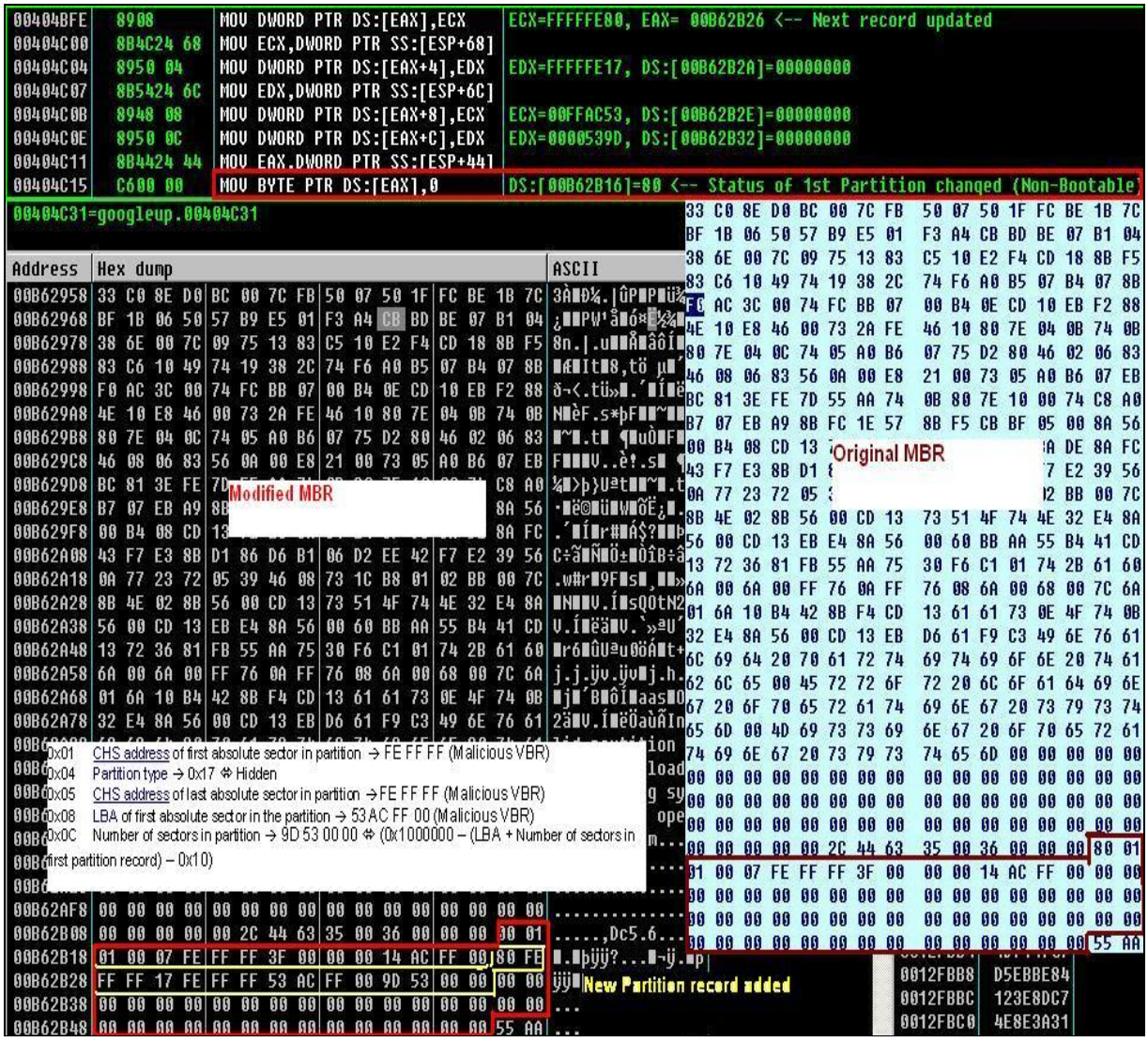
(1.10 code flow 4)

The configuration file consists of a set of blocks. Each block is 0x20 bytes long. Primary configuration file has four blocks whereas the secondary file has fifteen blocks. Each block begins with 0x10 bytes long name which indicates type of data which is saved in the disk. It is followed by 4 bytes long element which helps in identifying the sector wherein data has been saved. This is followed by "Number of Sectors" and "Data Size" elements as shown below:

The secondary configuration file is encrypted and saved into the hidden filesystem. Information about the sector where the secondary configuration file is saved with the number of sectors and data size is stored in the primary configuration file as shown in the above picture. Later the primary configuration file is encrypted, written to the disk and storage information is saved in the malicious VBR.

The malicious VBR is written into the first (0xFFAC53) and the last sectors (0xFFFFFE) of the partition.

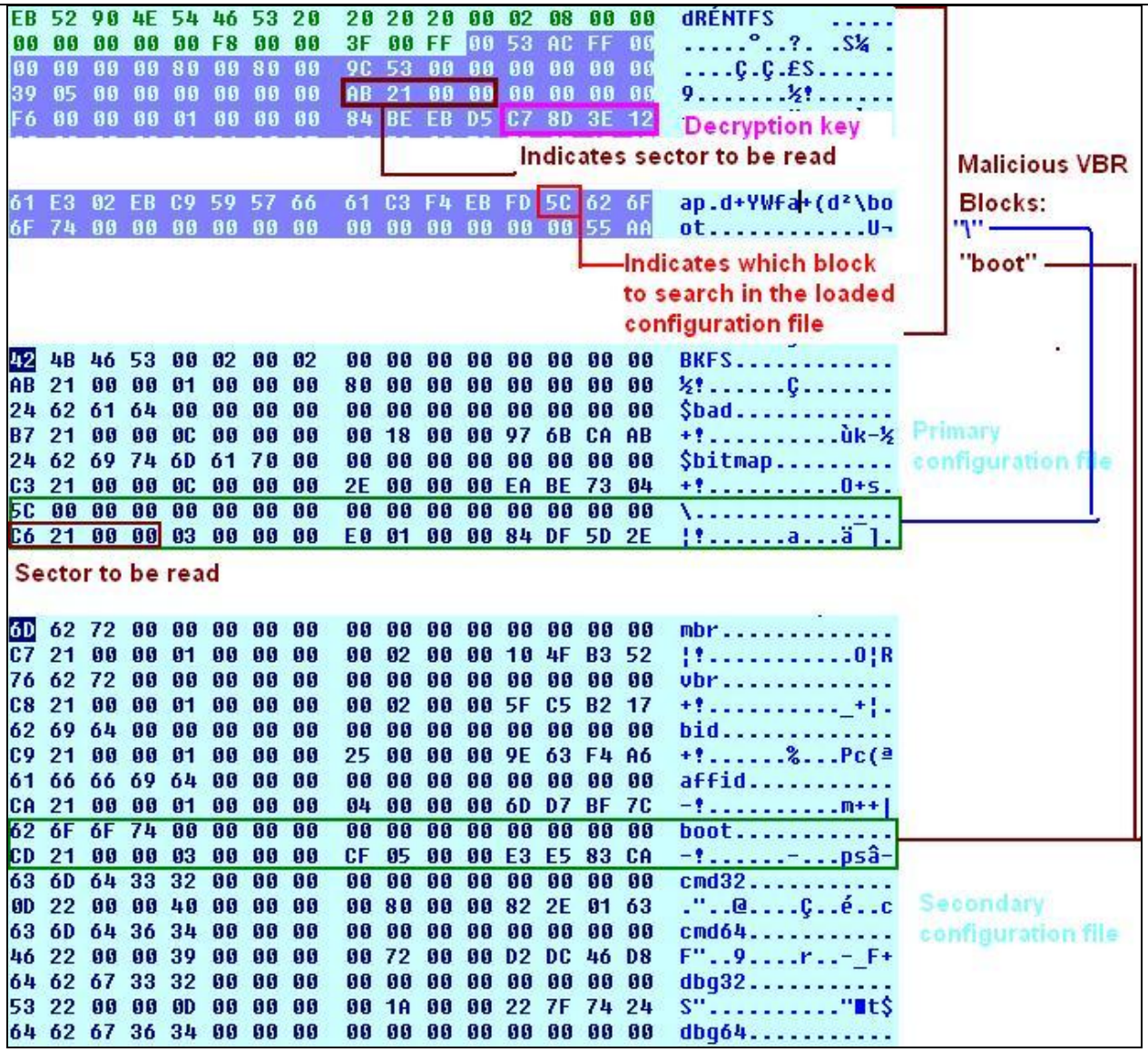
Then the partition table in memory is updated to reflect the newly created partition and the new volume is made the bootable in order to transfer control to the malicious code as soon as possible as shown below:



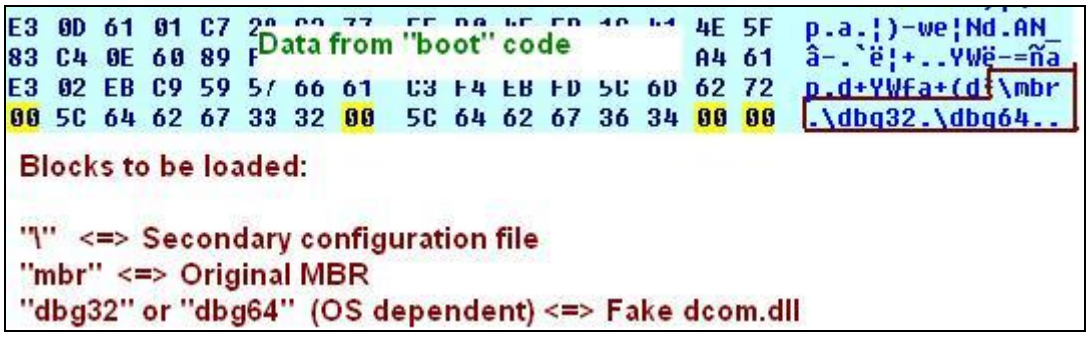
(1.12 Partition table modified)

Finally, the malicious dropper file is deleted from the infected system to remove traces of infection. It also mark files in the %TEMP% folder for deletion on reboot and the system is rebooted.

On reboot, malicious VBR residing in the hidden file system is loaded by the MBR and control is transferred to the VBR code. It first reads the sector containing primary configuration file which is later parsed to retrieve information about the secondary configuration file. The secondary configuration file is then parsed to load sectors (block named "boot" in the secondary configuration file) containing code which is responsible for hooking Interrupt Vector Table as shown below:

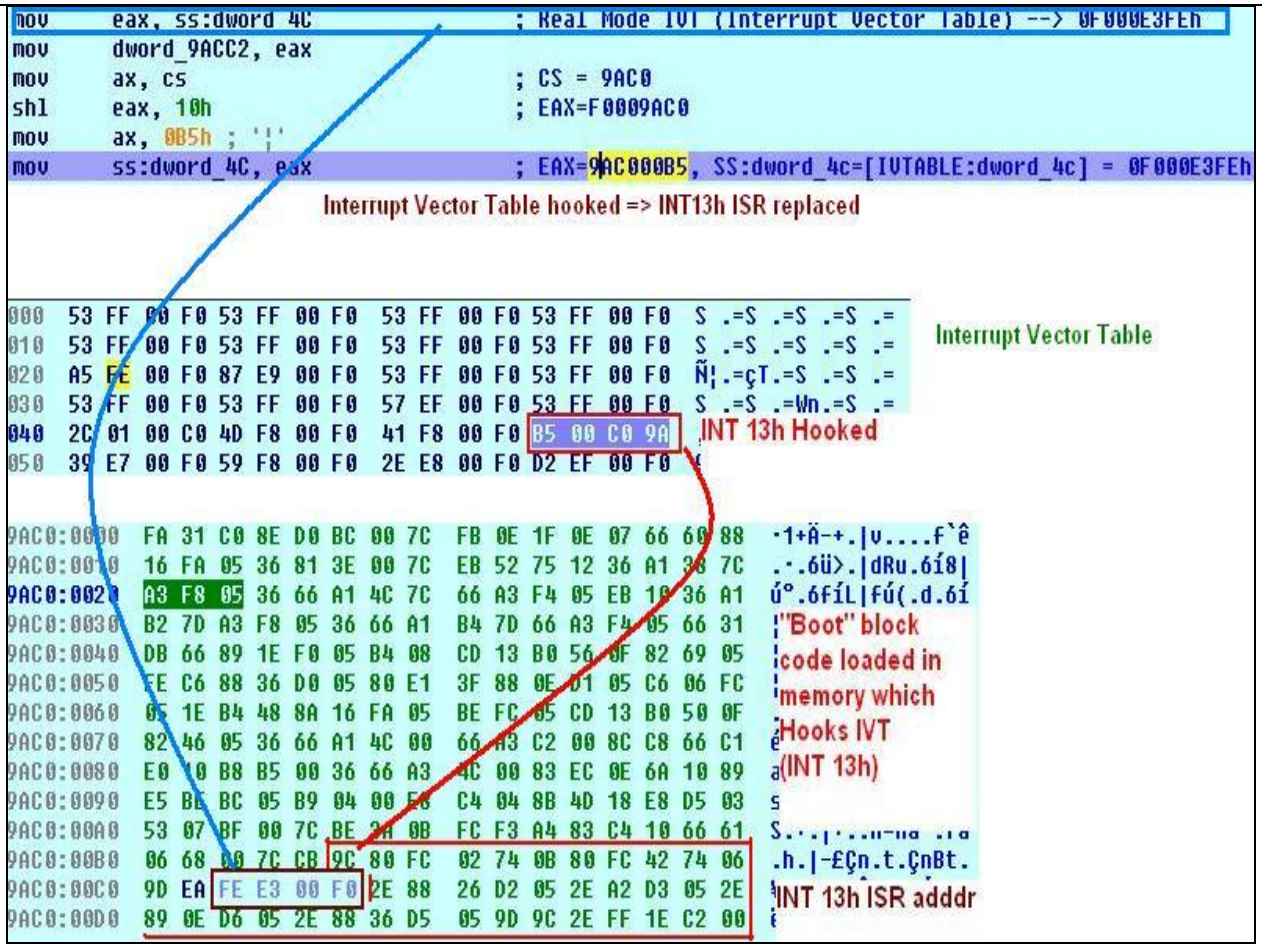


(1.13 Picture shows how VBR decides what to load)



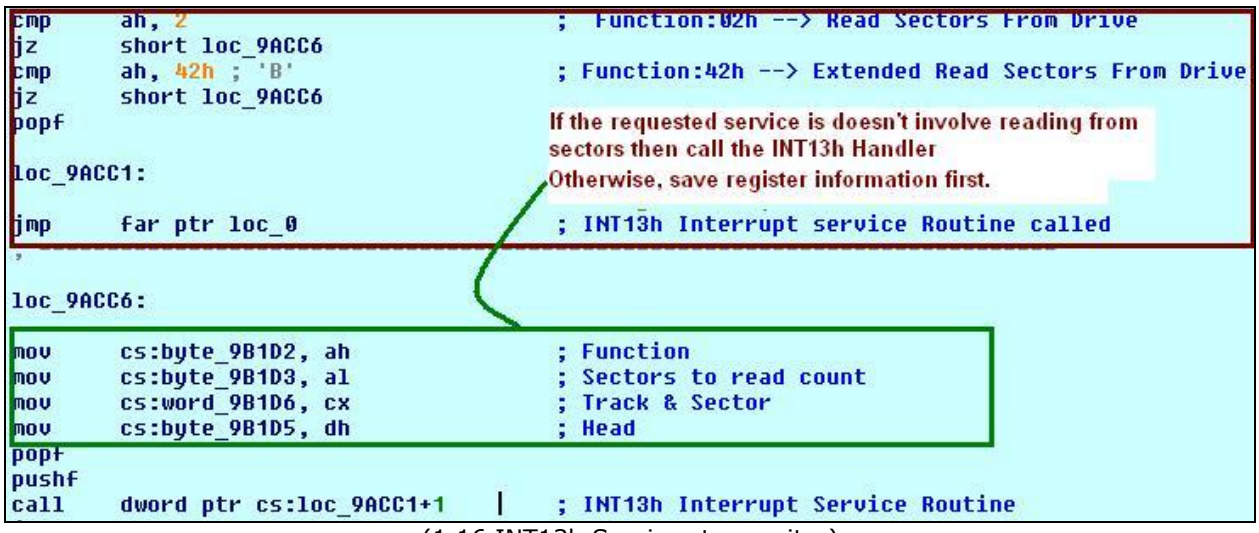
(1.14 Picture shows how boot code decides what to load)

Interrupt Vector Table (IVT) Hook
Pointer to the Interrupt Service Routine (ISR) INT13h is replaced with an address which points to the malware's code.



(1.15 Interrupt vector table hook installed)

INT13h hook checks which service is being requested. If the service doesn't involve sector read operation (function code: 02h and 42h), it calls the original INT13h handler and transfers the control back to the caller as shown below:



(1.16 INT13h Services to monitor)

If the requested service involves sector read operation, it saves information like the number of sectors to read; sector number etc before calling the original INT13h handler. After reading the sector into memory, it checks if it matches either of the following conditions:

- PE Image with IMAGE_DIRECTORY_ENTRY_EXPORT.Size == 0xFA or 0x110
    - If it finds any module matching the above condition, it loads dbg32 or dbg64 (fake kdcom.dll) depending on the OS environment

- Check Boot Configuration Data (BCD) store for BcdLibraryBoolean_EmsEnabled [16000020]. If it is found, replace it with BcdOsLoaderBoolean_WinPEMode [26000022].

```
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx], 4957534Dh    ; "MSWI"
jz      short loc_9AE2D
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx], 4643534Dh    ; "MSCF"
jnz     short PEFile
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx+3Ch], 6F63646Bh ; "kdco"
jz      short loc_9AE2D

public PEFile
PEFile:
cmp     word ptr es:[bx], 5A4Dh         ; DOS MZ Header
jnz     short loc_9AEAC
mov     di, es:[bx+3Ch]
cmp     word ptr es:[bx+di], 4550h      ; PE Signature
jnz     short loc_9AEAC
cmp     word ptr es:[bx+di+18h], 10Bh   ; Magic
jnz     short Check_Export_DataDirectory_Size
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx+di+7Ch], 0FAh ; '-' ; EXPORT_DATA_DIRECTORY.Size
jnz     short loc_9AEAC
mov     byte_9B1D4, cl
mov     si, 5C1h
mov     cx, 6
jmp     short loc_9AEB5
; ---------------------------------------

public Check_Export_DataDirectory_Size
Check_Export_DataDirectory_Size:
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx+di+8Ch], 0FAh ; '-' ; EXPORT_DATA_DIRECTORY.Size
jz      short loc_9AEA0
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx+di+8Ch], 110h  ; EXPORT_DATA_DIRECTORY.Size
jnz     short loc_9AEAC
```

Loaded module with Export_DATA_DIRECTORY size = 0xFA or 0x110 is checked.

(1.17 Check module with IMAGE_DIRECTORY_ENTRY_ EXPORT size = 0xFA or 0x110)

```
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx], 30303631h    ; 1600
jnz     short loc_9AFB9
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx+4], 30323030h  ; 0020 => BcdLibraryBoolean_EmsEnabled = 0x16000020
jnz     short loc_9AFB9
mov     dword ptr es:[bx], 30303632h    ; 2600
mov     dword ptr es:[bx+4], 32323030h  ; 0022 => BcdOSLoaderBoolean_WinPEMode  = 0x26000022

loc_9AFB9:

cmp     dword ptr es:[bx], 1666Ch
jnz     short loc_9AFD7
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx+8], 30303631h  ; 1600
jnz     short loc_9AFD7
mov     dword ptr es:[bx+8], 30303632h  ; 2600

loc_9AFD7:

cmp     dword ptr es:[bx], 4E494D2Fh    ; "/MIN"
jnz     short loc_9AFE9
mov     dword ptr es:[bx], 4D2F4E49h    ; "IN/M"

loc_9AFE9:
cmp     dword_9B1F0, 0
jnz     short loc_9B00B
cmp     byte ptr es:[bx], 0BFh
jnz     short loc_9B00B
cmp     dword ptr es:[bx+1], 0C0000428h
jnz     short loc_9B00B
mov     dword ptr es:[bx+1], 0C428h
```

Windows Preinstallation Environment

(1.18 Windows Pre-installation Environment)

After installing Interrupt Vector Table hook, it again reads sectors containing primary and secondary configuration file. Then it looks for a block named "**mbr**" in the secondary configuration file which contains original MBR.

Now the original MBR gets control, it loads the VBR and transfers control to it. VBR boot code loads the bootstrap code (0xF Sectors following the VBR). It first loads itself at address 0D00:0000, then following 0xF sectors are loaded in the successive memory addresses. Once all the sectors have been loaded, it transfers control to the bootstrap code as shown below:

```
BOOT_SECTOR:7C74 ; ----------------
BOOT_SECTOR:7C74 push    0D00h
BOOT_SECTOR:7C77 push    26Ah
BOOT_SECTOR:7C7A retf
```

(1.19 Control transferred to bootstrap code)

Bootstrap code read contents from the root drive, loads NTLDR at address 2000:0000h and transfers control to the NTLDR.

```
debug004:0485 push    2000h
debug004:0488 push    ax
debug004:0489 retf
```

(1.20 Control transferred to NTLDR)

NTLDR contains an embedded PE file (osloader.exe) which loads the Windows system files (starting with the ntoskrnl.exe, its dependencies (HAL.dll, bootvid.dll, and kdcom.dll), SYSTEM hive, and the boot drivers) into memory.

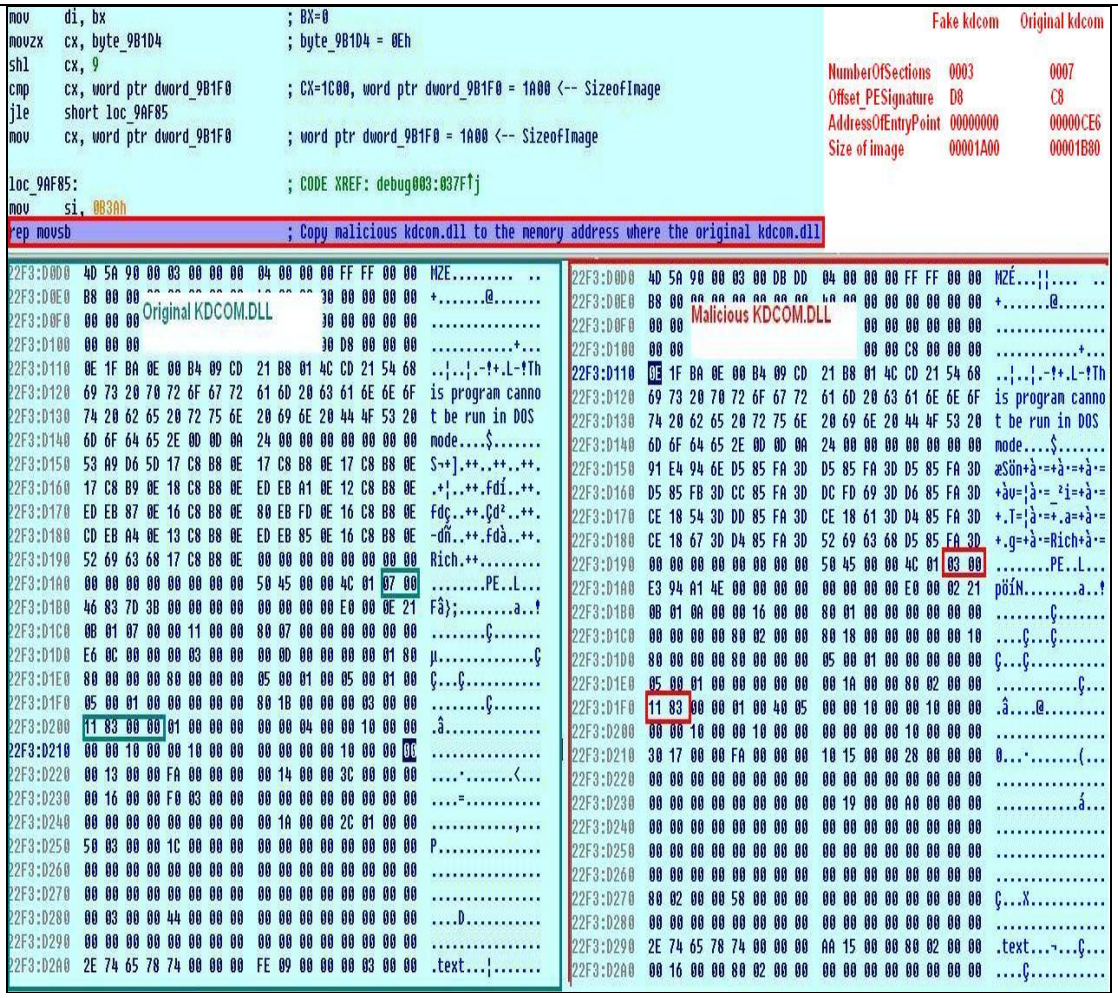
osloader.exe mostly executes in protected mode, but for input/output operation it depends on the BIOS services. So it keeps switching between real and protected mode.

Since the size of kdocm.dll's EXPORT_DATA_DIRECTORY is 0xFA. As soon as kdcom.dll is loaded, INT13h hook loads fake kdcom.dll (dbg32 or dbg64) into memory, updates checksum and replaces the original kdcom.dll with the fake kdcom.dll as shown below. Control is then transferred back to the osloader.exe

kdcom.dll

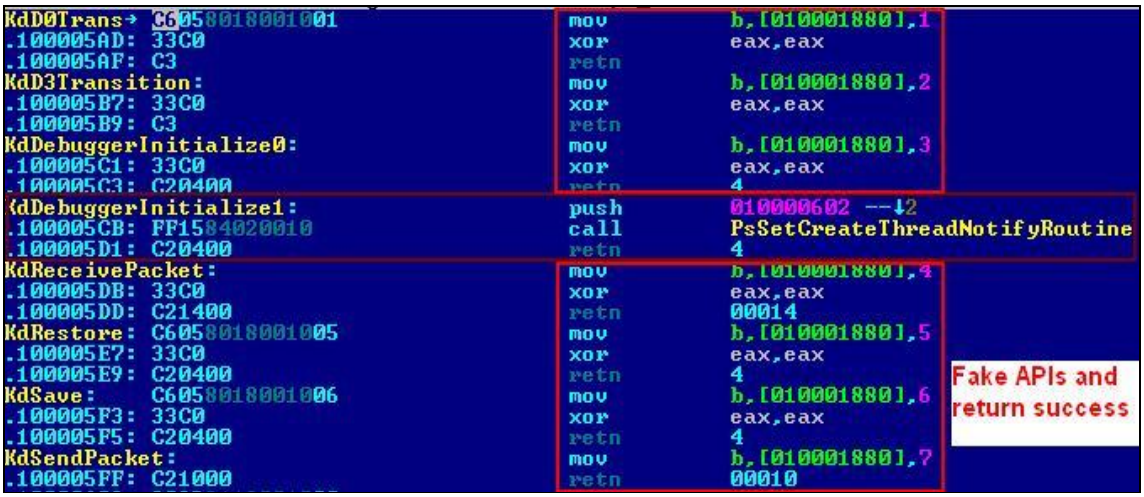
Member	Offset	Size	Value	Section
Export Directory RVA	00000150	Dword	00001300	.edata
Export Directory Size	00000154	Dword	000000FA	

(1.21 kdcom.dll IMAGE_DIRECTORY_ENTRY_EXPORT.Size = 0xFA)



(1.22 Original kdcom.dll is replaced in memory with dbg32 – fake kdcom.dll)

KDCOM.DLL is COM-based debugging plug-in, so by faking the exported APIs it is actually disabling kernel debugging option via COM port.



(1.23 APIs faked by malicious kdcom.dll)

Mitigation

- Block access to the unused ports and block the access to the above mentioned URLs.
- Users who are identified to be infected are requested to change their passwords.

- Reboot the system in safe mode and log in as the Administrator user.

  Execute the CSSCAN command line tool using the Beta DATs to remove any Trojan or infected file from the system:

  - **VSE 8.7**
    "C:\Program Files\McAfee\VirusScan Enterprise\csscan.exe" -All -Unzip -Program -Analyze -Sub -Clean -Log c:\scan-rpt.txt C:\

  - **VSE 8.8**
    "C:\Program Files\Common Files\McAfee\SystemCore\csscan.exe" -All -Unzip -Program -Analyze -Sub -Clean -Log c:\scan-rpt.txt C:\

  - **Other McAfee product users**
    Please use the following Stinger standalone tool.

    To use the Stinger tool, please make sure the targets "Processes" and "Registry" are disabled and the interface "List of all files scanned" is enabled in the stinger before scanning the infected machine.

- Read more about using the Stinger tool here.
- Reboot the system normally.
- Run GMER again to confirm that no malicious threads of patched files exist anymore.

Restart Mechanism

The malware restarts by randomly infecting a system driver (usually located in %windir%/system32/drivers). This particular variant mostly infects the file VOLSNAP.SYS

Getting Help from the McAfee Foundstone Services team

This document is intended to provide a summary of current intelligence and best practices to ensure the highest level of protection from your McAfee security solution. The McAfee Foundstone Services team offers a full range of strategic and technical consulting services that can further help to ensure you identify security risk and build effective solutions to remediate security vulnerabilities.

You can reach them here: https://secure.mcafee.com/apps/services/services-contact.aspx