

# Computer and Internet Forensics COSC2301-COSC3135 (Semester 2, 2025) Assignment 1 S4100564

#### Overview

The objective of Assignment 1 is to evaluate your knowledge of the topics covered in Lectures, Tutorials, and Workshops from 2 to 5. Topics include Static data acquisition from the suspect's computer and forensics of static and live data artifacts. Assignment 1 will focus on developing your abilities in identifying the basic digital forensic tasks. Assignment 1 contains problems related to the topics mentioned above. You are required to prepare the solutions as a single PDF or MS Word file with the description of the step-by-step processes, with screenshots whenever required. Develop the solution to this assignment in an iterative fashion (as opposed to completing it in one sitting). By completing each week's tasks starting from Week 2 to Week 5, you should be able to solve at least one question in this assignment. This is an individual assignment.

## **Learning Outcomes**

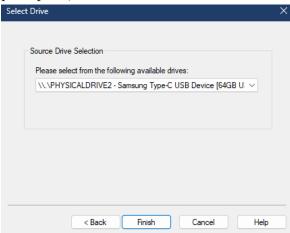
This assessment is relevant to the following course learning outcomes:

- CLO 1: Understand the principles and practices of computer and internet forensics, including the methods used to investigate and analyze digital evidence.
- CLO 2: Identify and apply appropriate forensic tools and techniques to recover, preserve, and examine data from various digital devices.
- CLO 3: Analyze digital evidence to reconstruct events, identify perpetrators, and understand the context of cyber incidents.
- CLO 4: Evaluate the legal and ethical considerations involved in digital forensic investigations, ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
- CLO 5: Communicate forensic findings effectively through clear, concise, and professional reports and presentations, suitable for both technical and non-technical audiences.
- CLO 6: Educate stakeholders about threats, possible mitigation approaches, and report actions taken in response to incidents

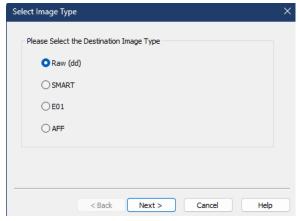
# PART-1: DATA ACQUISITION (12 Marks)

# Q1. Static Data Acquisition from a USB Disk (3 Marks)

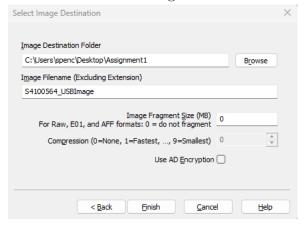
- a) To create a disk image in Raw format, we will use FTK Imager as follows:
  - i. We will start by navigating to File  $\rightarrow$  Create Disk Image in FTK Imager. When prompted, we'll select our usb drive as shown below:



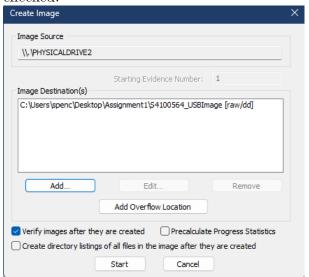
ii. To ensure that we are using the specified Raw (dd) format, we'll check this option when prompted, then hit next:



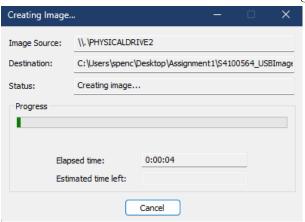
iii. Now, we choose a destination for image, as well as a name (my student ID). We also ensure that the fragment size is set to 0 mb so that we get one segment.



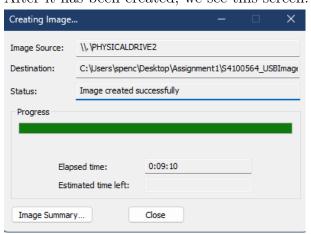
iv. Back at the Create Image screen, we click start because we are only creating one image, and we also ensure that "Verify images after they are created" is checked.



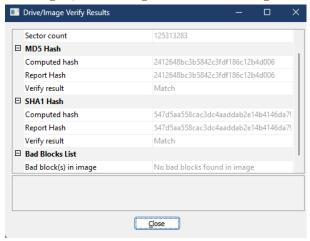
v. We will need to wait for a while for the image to be created.



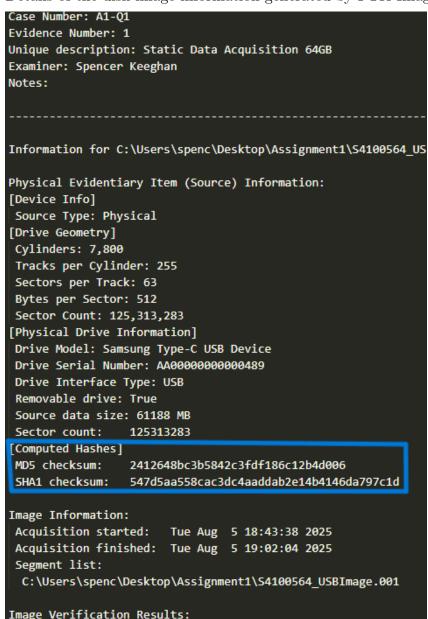
vi. After it has been created, we see this screen:



vii. We also see that the Verify result is "Match" and that "No Bad blocks found in image", indicating a successful image creation.



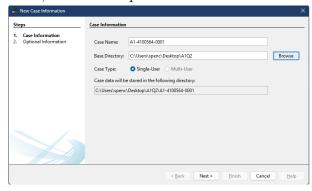
b) Details of the disk image information generated by FTK Imager



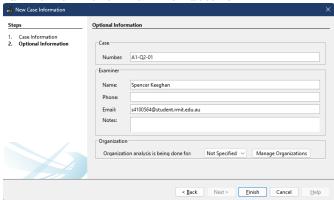
- c) i. The disk image was created on Tue Aug 5 19:02:04 2025
  - ii. MD5 checksum: 2412648bc3b5842c3fdf186c12b4d006. This is shown in the blue box in the screenshot for b).
  - iii. The checksum of the image matches the checksum of the physical disk. The SHA1 checksum of the image is 547d5aa558cac3dc4aaddab2e14b4146da797c1d. The verification was successful, as indicated by the "verified" status next to both the MD5 and SHA1 checksums in the report.

# Q2. Analyzing Disk Image using Autopsy Tool (3 Marks)

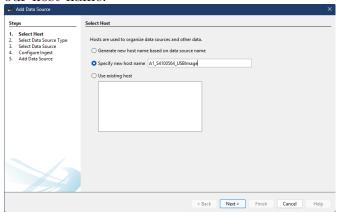
- a) We'll create a new case in Autopsy as follows:
  - i. First, we need to provide a case name and a base directory for this case:



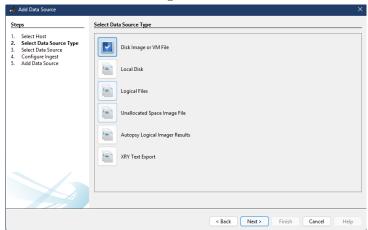
ii. Next, we will specify the case number, and I will provide my student email and full name in the Examiner details:



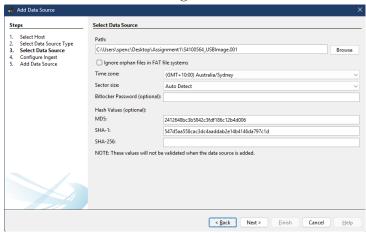
iii. Our host will be the image that we created in Q1, so we'll specify that file as our host name:



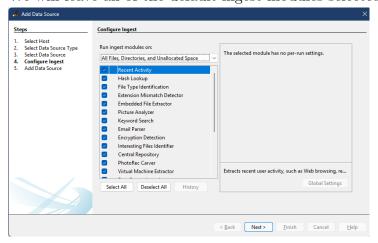
iv. We will select Disk Image or VM File as our data source:



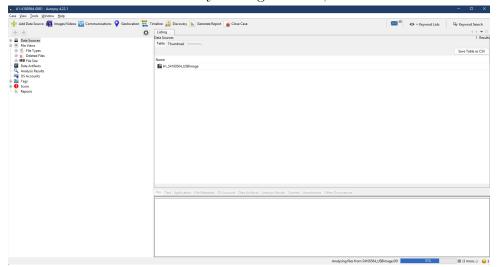
v. Now we need to provide the path to our USB image, and we will also provide the two hashes that were generated:



vi. We will leave all of the default ingest modules selected:



vii. After the case has successfully been generated, we are met with this screen:



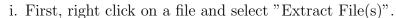
b) We can find the different types of files and their count by selecting File Views  $\rightarrow$  File Types  $\rightarrow$  By Extension in the top left navigation pane. Here we can see that the image contains 6 images, 1 archive and 3 databases:

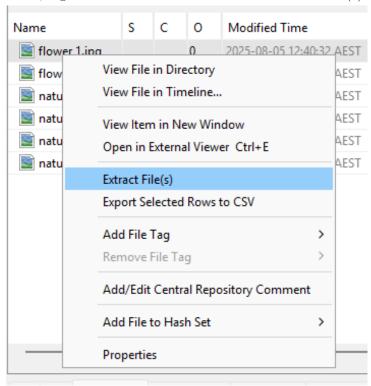


## In tabular form:

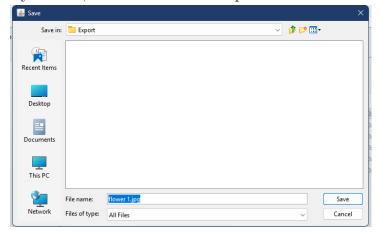
Images	Archives	Databases
.jpg	.zip	.db
.jpeg	.rar	.db3
.png	.7zip	.sqlite
.psd	.7z	.sqlite3
.nef	.arj	
.tiff	.tar	
.bmp	.gzip	
.tec	.bzip	
.tif	.bzip2	
.webp	.cab	
	.jar	
	.cpio	
	.ar	
	.gz	
	$.\mathrm{tgz}$	
	.bz2	

c) To extract a file in our image, we'll follow these steps:

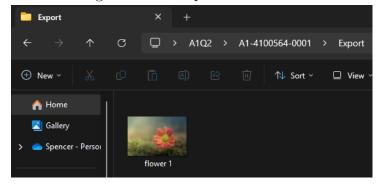




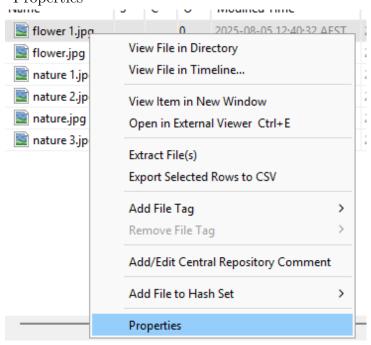
ii. By default, it will save to the Export folder in the Base case directory:



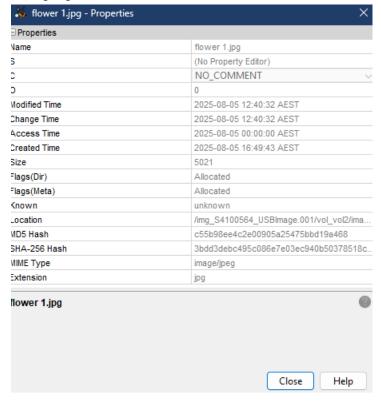
iii. We can navigate to the Export folder and see our extracted file there:



iv. We can also analyse the properties of the file by right clicking it and selecting "Properties"



v. The properties are shown below:



## Q3. Understanding of Different Digital Forensics Tools (6 Marks)

## a) Overview of Static Data Acquisition Tools

**ProDiscover Forensics (Windows):** ProDiscover Forensics is a well-established commercial tool for the Windows platform, designed to perform comprehensive digital forensic investigations. Its core function is to create a forensically sound bit-for-bit copy of a storage device, such as a hard drive or USB stick, preserving the original evidence. It can also be used to analyze a live system's data without altering it [4, 7].

Advantages: One of its key strengths is the ability to perform acquisitions remotely over a network, which is useful in corporate environments. It also integrates a suite of analysis tools, allowing an examiner to not only image a disk but also to immediately begin searching for keywords, viewing files, and generating reports within the same application.

Disadvantages: The primary drawback is its cost. As a commercial product, the license can be expensive, making it less accessible for academic use or smaller labs. Additionally, like many commercial tools, its updates may not always keep pace with the latest developments in file systems or encryption, potentially leaving gaps in its capabilities.

**Guymager (Linux):** Guymager is a free, open-source forensic imager that comes pre-installed with Kali Linux. It provides a user-friendly GUI for creating disk images in various formats, making the process straightforward even for those less comfortable with command-line tools [5].

Advantages: Its main appeal is that it is free, open-source, and reliable. It is multithreaded, meaning it can use multiple processor cores to speed up the imaging process significantly. It also supports several forensic image formats, including the standard raw 'dd' format and the more advanced E01 and AFF formats, giving the examiner flexibility.

*Disadvantages:* While excellent for imaging, it is not a full forensic suite; it does not include any analysis capabilities. An examiner must use other tools like Autopsy to analyze the images it creates. Furthermore, being open-source, it lacks official customer support, so users must rely on community forums for help [11].

Cellebrite Digital Collector (macOS): This is a specialized commercial tool, formerly known as MacQuisition, built specifically for acquiring data from Apple's macOS and iOS devices. It is renowned for its ability to handle Apple-specific hardware and software, such as Fusion Drives and the T2 security chip [3].

Advantages: Its most critical feature is its unique ability to create decrypted physical images from modern Macs equipped with the T2 security chip, something most other tools cannot do. It can also perform live acquisitions from running Macs and capture RAM, making it a versatile tool for Apple-focused investigations.

Disadvantages: The tool is very expensive, placing it out of reach for many. Its focus is also exclusively on Apple products, so it cannot be used for Windows or

standard Linux systems. The complexity of its features may also require specialized training to use effectively.

## b) Overview of Memory Acquisition Tools

Magnet RAM Capture (Windows): This is a free and widely used tool from Magnet Forensics for capturing the volatile memory (RAM) from a live Windows computer. It's designed to be a simple, no-fuss utility that quickly dumps the contents of physical memory to a file for later analysis [6].

Advantages: It is completely free to use and has a very small memory footprint, which is crucial because it minimizes the tool's impact on the live data being captured. A significant technical advantage is its ability to acquire RAM from modern Windows 10 systems even when security features like Virtual Secure Mode (VSM) are enabled [6]. This is a vital capability, as many other acquisition tools can be blocked by these advanced security measures.

*Disadvantages:* Its simplicity is also a limitation. It is purely an acquisition tool and offers no analysis features. It also provides very few configuration options, so examiners who need more control over the acquisition process might find it too basic for their needs.

**LiME** (Linux Memory Extractor): LiME is a popular open-source tool for acquiring RAM from Linux and Android devices. It operates as a loadable kernel module, which allows it to access memory directly and efficiently [2].

Advantages: As a kernel module, it provides robust, low-level access to memory. A key feature is its ability to send the memory image over the network instead of saving it to the local disk, which is essential when dealing with systems that may not have enough free disk space or when trying to minimize interaction with the storage device.

Disadvantages: The main challenge with LiME is that it requires a kernel module that matches the specific kernel version of the target system. If a pre-compiled module is not available, one must be compiled on a similar system, which can be a complex and time-consuming process, especially during a live incident response.

**OSXpmem** (macOS): OSXpmem is a command-line tool for acquiring memory from macOS systems. It is part of the pmem suite of tools, which was developed alongside the Rekall memory analysis framework [8, 12].

Advantages: It is free and open-source. One of its main strengths is its support for the advanced AFF4 evidence container format, which can store memory images, metadata, and other forensic data in a single, verifiable file [8]. Being a command-line tool also makes it easy to script and use in automated workflows.

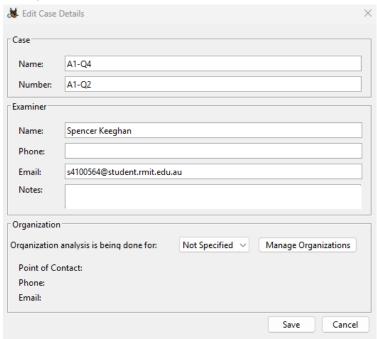
Disadvantages: Its reliance on the command line can be a hurdle for examiners who are more accustomed to GUIs. More significantly, it functions by loading a kernel extension, which can be blocked by macOS's built-in security features like System Integrity Protection (SIP), making it difficult to run on modern, fully updated Macs without first altering the security settings.

# PART-2: FORENSIC ANALYSIS (18 Marks)

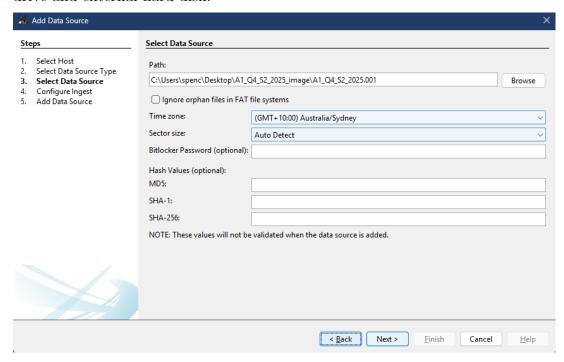
# Q4. Disk Image Artifact Analysis (13 Marks)

- a) File Listing and carving
  - i. We will begin by creating a case in Autopsy, following the steps we took in **Part 1, Question 2**:

First, we will decide on the initial case details:



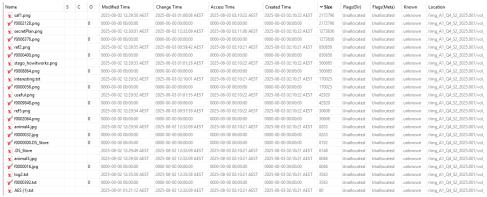
For our data source, we will choose the disk image created from *Specter's* USB drive and external hard disk:



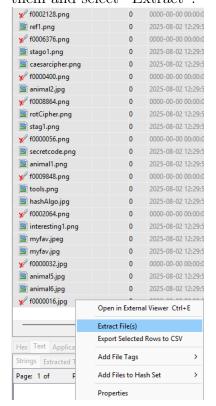
After creating the case, we can see the files on the image:



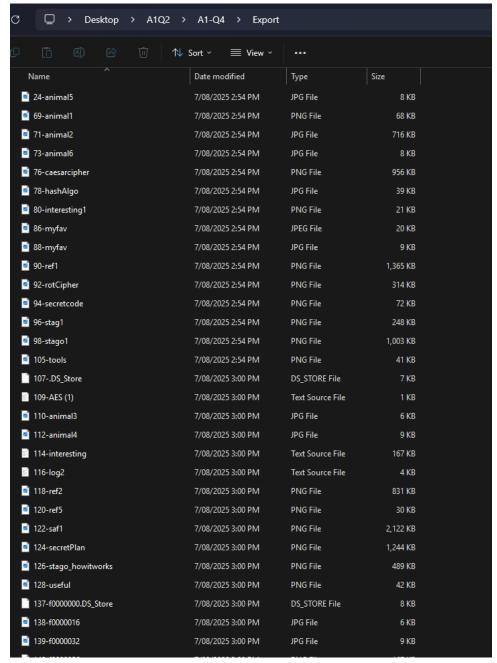
We can also view the deleted files:



ii. To recover all of the files, including hidden and deleted files, we will right click them and select "Extract":



By default, the files will save to the "Export" folder in our base case directory:



b) The image "myfav.jpeg" contains the text "Taken near my House". This was found by performing a keyword search for the string "House". We will use this to determine the possible hideout location of the suspect:



Analysing the image, we see the following geolocation data under the "Analysis results" tab in Autopsy:

Latitude: -33.804038888888888 Longitude: 149.7758555555558

Putting this into Google Maps, we see that the image was taken in Norway, New South Wales. The nearby house could be the possible hideout location of *Specter*.



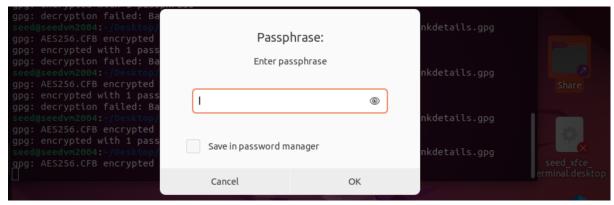
c) To begin the decryption of the bank details, we first need to find the encrypted file. A keyword search for "bank" returns this .gpg file:



Moreover, we can assume that symmetric encryption was used to encrypt this file, thanks to this hint:

gpg --symmetric --cipher-algo AES256 sample.txt

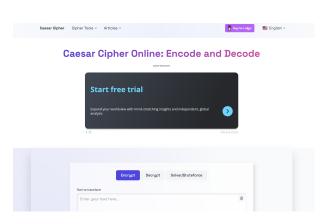
Next, we need to find the password so that we can decrypt the file:



The most obvious place for the password to be stored would be the file named "AES(1).txt", that contains 5 seemingly random strings of characters:

- Tyrkkvisfo
- Jgvccszeuvi
- Drjkvigzvtv
- kyleuvisfck
- Uivrdtrktyvi

After trying each of these passwords and learning that none of them work, I assume that the passwords themselves must be somehow encrypted. So i re-examine the files on the image and find a few that mention caesar ciphers or just ROT ciphers in general:





Using an online ROT Cipher tool [1], I discovered that the five words from the AES.txt file were encrypted using a ROT-9 cipher. Decrypting them by shifting each letter forward by 9 positions revealed the following English words:

- ullet Tyrkkvisfo o Chatterbox
- $\bullet \ \, \mathsf{Jgvccszeuvi} \to \mathbf{Spellbinder}$
- $\bullet \ \mathtt{Drjkvigzvtv} \to \mathbf{Masterpiece}$
- ullet kyleuvisfck ightarrow thunderbolt

### $\bullet \ \mathtt{Uivrdtrktyvi} \to \mathbf{Dreamcatcher}$

And after trying each of these passwords again, *thunderbolt* was the one to decrypt the bank details, giving us the following information:

1 Bank Name: Midland Overseas Trust

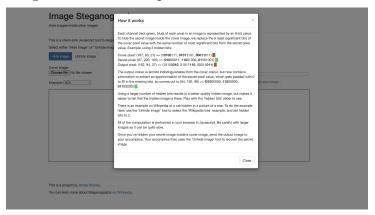
2 Account: #03994822-INT

3 Routing Code: 4827-WGHL-002

4 Beneficiary: R. Specter

5 Note: Transfer scheduled via ghost-layer routing on August 2nd.

d) Now, we need to recover the Vault PIN and Drawer Password. There are a few clues that hint towards the information being hidden via steganography, such as the image below and the question itself!



- 1. <a href="https://www.edchart.com/free-online-converters/steganographic-decoder.php">https://www.edchart.com/free-online-converters/steganographic-decoder.php</a>
- 2. https://incoherency.co.uk/image-steganography/#

ı

Due to these hints, I assume that I need to use online tools [9, 10] to recover the PIN and password. So I ran each .pdf or .jpg file through these tools until I found a deleted image of a squirrel named "f0000056", and when putting this into the online steganography tool, we see this message appear:



Because the text seemed random, I ran it through the same caesar cipher tool used earlier and got this:

NAME: SPECTER PASS: PHANTOM PIN:

However, its clear that the password and pin are encrypted using another strategy. There were various images relating to text encryption methods, such as a polybius square, braille and morse code. As the first two methods don't work with numbers, I focused on the image that contained morse code:

a 🕫	i 00	<b>q</b> ∞∞	y ∾∞	] -,	7 ∞₀₀₀
<b>b</b> -000	j	r 👵	<b>Z</b> ∞₀₀	;	8
C -0-0	k 🐭	S 000	" -000-	1	9 ∞∞₀
d ⊸₀	I 。。。	t -	( <sub>∞,∞</sub>	2	0
e。	<b>m</b> ∞	u 👓	00000	3 ‱≖	
fo₀⊸	n ⊸	<b>V</b> 0000	{ -,	4 0000	
g	o	<b>w</b> "==	} 。~~	5 000000	
h 。。。	<b>p</b> 0==0	X -00-	[	6 =0000	

From this, the password and pin become:

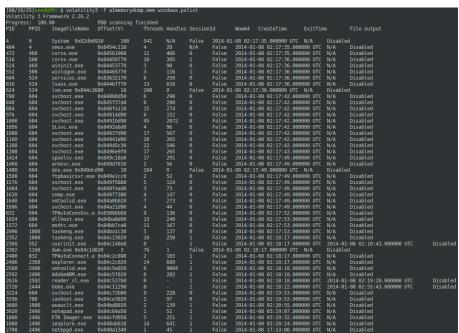
PASS: PHANTOM75 PIN: 9910

Therefore, we have finally found Specter's Vault Pin (9910) and Drawer Password (PHANTOM75). A combination of image steganography, caesar ciphers and morse code was used to hide these details.

## Q5. Memory Data Analysis from Computer Memory (5 Marks)

a) To get some basic information about the memory dump, like its OS and version, we use the command volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.info. This information is shown below:

b) To see the list of processes that were running when the memory was captured, we use the command volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.pslist. The active processes are shown here:



c) To dig deeper into a specific process, we can run the command volatility3 -f a1memorydump.mem windows.psscan --pid cprocessID>. We'll check the details for two processes that look suspicious, PID 1800 for FTK Imager.exe and PID 2496 for explorer.exe:

```
[08/19/25]seed@VM:-$ volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.pslist --pid 1800
Volatility 3 Framework 2.26.2
PDB scanning finished
PID PPID ImageFileName Offset(V) Threads Handles SessionId Wow64 CreateTime ExitTime File output

1800 2496 FTK Imager.exe 0x84cfd958 5 251 1 False 2014-01-08 03:19:32.000000 UTC N/A Disabled
[08/19/25]seed@VM:-$ volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.pslist --pid 2496
Volatility 3 Framework 2.26.2
Progress: 100.00 PDB scanning finished
PID PPID ImageFileName Offset(V) Threads Handles SessionId Wow64 CreateTime ExitTime File output

2496 2368 explorer.exe 0x84c2c020 24 689 1 False 2014-01-08 02:18:17.000000 UTC N/A Disabled
```

d) To view the handles for all processes, which show things like open files and registry keys, we use the command volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.handles. The output is quite long, so just a portion of it is shown below:

```
| 1800 FTK | Imager.exe | 0x84861280 | 0x276 | Event | 0x16903 | 1 | 1 | 2216 Ptd | 1800 | 1 | 1 | 2216 Ptd | 1800 | 1 | 1 | 2216 Ptd | 1800 | 1 | 1 | 2216 Ptd | 1800 | 1 | 221
```

e) To see the handles for just one process, we can filter by its ID. For process 1056, the command is volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.handles --pid 1056. These handles are shown below:

f) To find processes that might be hidden, we use the command volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.psscan. The list of any found hidden processes is shown below:

g) To find the list of registry hives loaded in memory, we can use the command volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.registry.hivelist. The output of this command is shown below:

```
[08/19/25]smedigwR:-$ volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.registry.hivelist
//olatility 3 Framework 2.26.2
//orgress: 100.00
//orgress
```

h) To find the list of Dynamic Link Libraries (DLLs) being used by the running processes, we use the command volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.dlllist. The full output is quite lengthy, so only a small part is shown in the screenshot below:

i) To get a list of DLLs used by just process 2708 and save it to a file, we can redirect the output to a CSV. The command is volatility3 -f almemorydump.mem windows.dlllist --pid 2708 > dll\_pid2708.csv. We can then view this file's contents with cat dll\_pid2708.csv. The screenshot below shows these commands and their output:

```
[08/19/25] seedsWi:-$ cat dll_pid2708.csv

Volatility 3 Framework 2.26.2

PID Process Base Size Name Path LoadTime File output

2708 notepad.exe 0xb90000 0x25000 ntdll.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x70400000 0x25000 ntdll.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x70400000 0x25000 ntdll.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x70400000 0x25000 ntdll.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x7040000 0x25000 RPCRT4.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x77120000 0x25000 RPCRT4.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x70500000 0x50000 RPCRT4.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x75650000 0x5000 GDI32.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x76500000 0x5000 GDI32.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe N/A Disabled
2708 notepad.exe 0x76500000 0x5000 GOMDIG32.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe 0x7650000 0x5000 0x5000 GOMDIG32.dll c:\Windows\system32\notepad.exe 0x7650000 0x5000 0x50
```

#### References

- [1] CacheSleuth. ROT (Caesar) Cipher. Accessed: August 7, 2025. 2024. URL: https://www.cachesleuth.com/rot.html.
- [2] David Conger. Perform Linux memory forensics with this open source tool. Accessed: August 7, 2025. Apr. 2021. URL: https://opensource.com/article/21/4/linux-memory-forensics.
- [3] H-11 Digital Forensics. Cellebrite Digital Collector. Accessed: August 7, 2025. 2024. URL: https://h11dfs.com/macquisition\_cellebrite/.
- [4] Info-Savvy. Data Acquisition and Duplication Tools: Software. Accessed: August 7, 2025. 2024. URL: https://info-savvy.com/data-acquisition-and-duplication-tools-software/.
- [5] Infosec Institute. Kali Linux: Top 5 tools for digital forensics. Accessed: August 7, 2025. Jan. 2025. URL: https://www.infosecinstitute.com/resources/digital-forensics/kali-linux-top-5-tools-for-digital-forensics/.
- [6] Magnet Forensics. Magnet RAM Capture. Accessed: August 7, 2025. 2024. URL: https://www.magnetforensics.com/resources/magnet-ram-capture/.
- [7] Bill Nelson, Amelia Phillips, and Christopher Steuart. Guide to Computer Forensics and Investigations. Fourth. Referenced via UTC document server. Cengage Learning, 2009.
- [8] Ponder The Bits. OSX (Mac) Memory Acquisition and Analysis Using OSXpmem and Volatility. Accessed: August 7, 2025. Feb. 2017. URL: https://ponderthebits.com/2017/02/osx-mac-memory-acquisition-and-analysis-using-osxpmem-and-volatility/.
- [9] James Stanley. *Image Steganography*. Accessed: August 7, 2025. 2016. URL: https://incoherency.co.uk/image-steganography/.
- [10] stylesuxx. Steganography Online. Accessed: August 7, 2025. 2014. URL: https://stylesuxx.github.io/steganography/.
- [11] SUMURI. Open Source Tools & Mac Forensics. Accessed: August 7, 2025. Aug. 2023. URL: https://sumuri.com/open-source-tools-mac-forensics/.
- [12] The Rekall Team. The Pmem Acquisition Tools. Accessed: August 7, 2025. 2016. URL: http://www.rekall-forensic.com/docs/Tools/pmem.html.