REVERSE ENGINEERING WHATSAPP ENCRYPTION FOR CHAT MANIPULATION AND MORE

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financialexpress.com

WhatsApp as evidence in court

Social media in court: your tweets could be used as evidence against you

June 22, 2018 9.22pm AEST

Willy Barton via Shutterstock

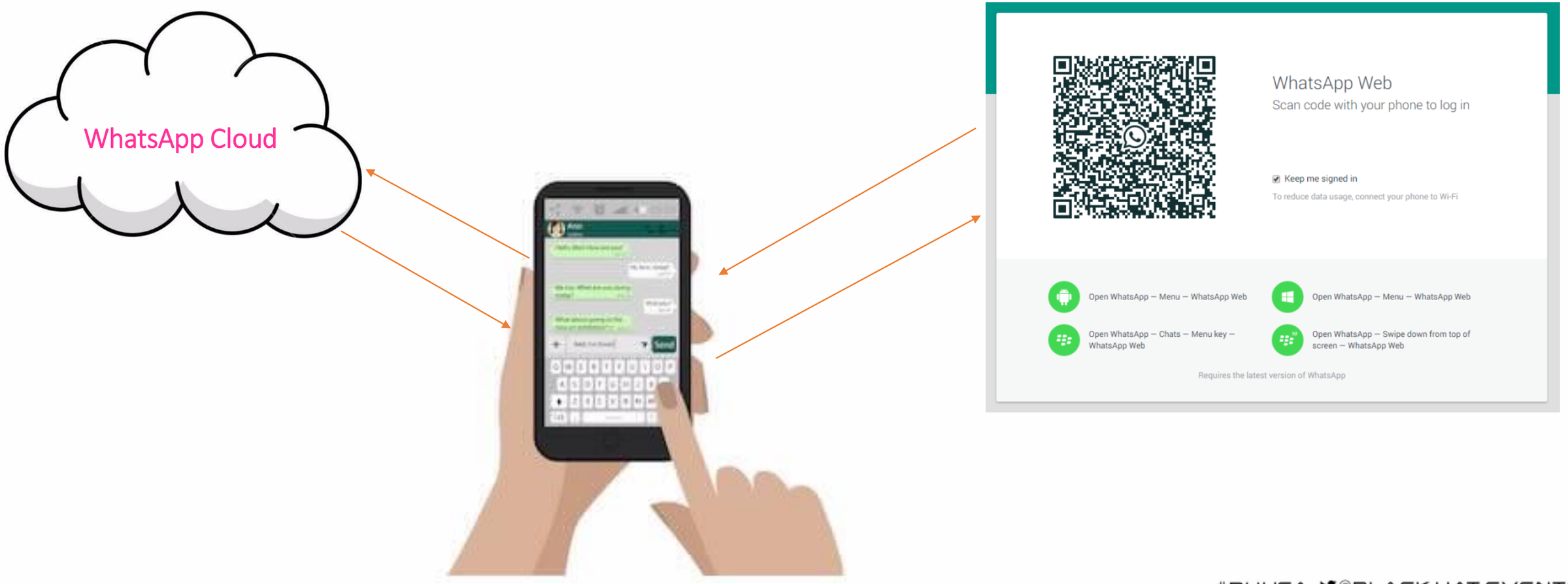
Email
Twitter 43
Facebook 65
LinkedIn

As we increasingly use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp to communicate with each other, many of us are unaware of the ways in which our posts might later resurface – and get us into trouble with the law.

Burned to death because of a rumour on WhatsApp

By Marcos Martínez
BBC Monitoring

The Communication Flow



WhatsApp Behind the Scenes

ENCRYPTION: Open Whisper System -> Signal -> WhatsApp

COMMUNICATION: WebSocket -> protobuf2 -> JSON

ENCRYPTION: Open Whisper System -> Signal -> WhatsApp

On November 18, 2014, Open Whisper Systems announced a partnership with WhatsApp to provide end-to-end encryption by incorporating the Signal Protocol into each WhatsApp client platform.

On April 5, 2016, WhatsApp and Open Whisper Systems announced that they had finished adding end-to-end encryption to "every form of communication" on WhatsApp, and that users could now verify each other's keys.

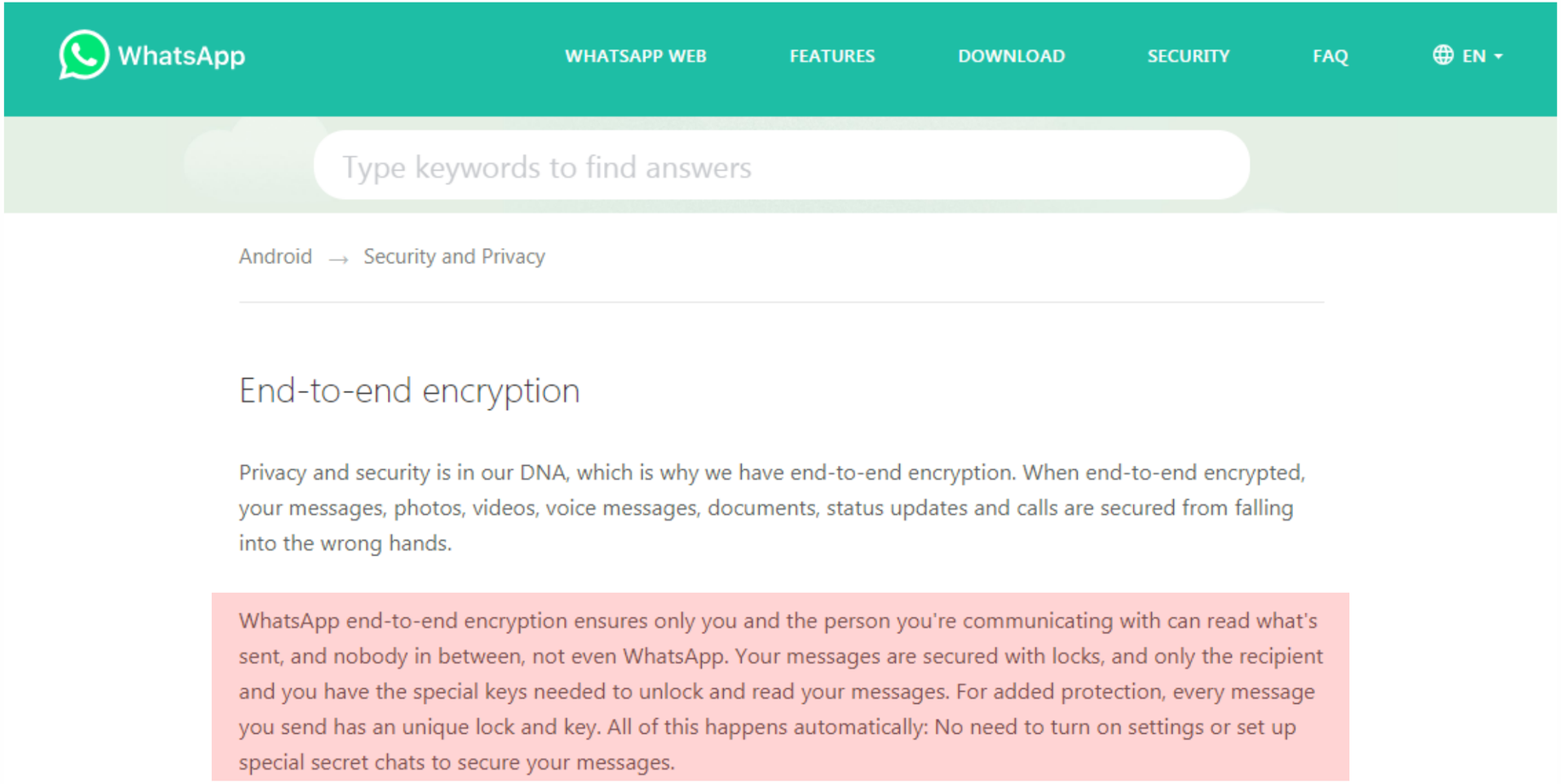
COMMUNICATION: WebSocket -> protobuf2 -> JSON

The **WebSocket API** is an advanced technology that makes it possible to open a two-way interactive communication session between the user's browser and a server without having to poll the server for a reply.

The **protobuf** is a method of serializing structured data. It is useful in developing programs to communicate with each other – think XML, but smaller, faster, and simpler.

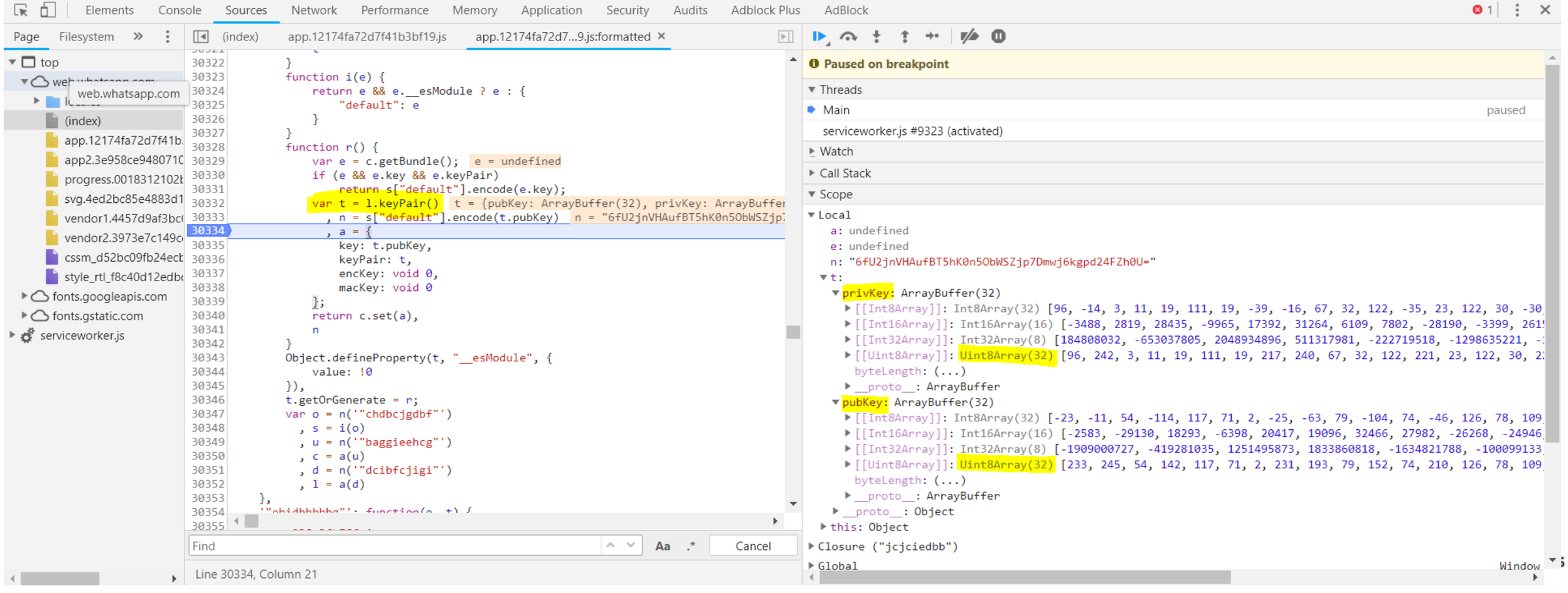
JSON is a JSON ☺

Is someone can decrypt the traffic?



WhatsApp Reversing Process

Before generating the QR code, WhatsApp Web generates a Public and Private Key that is used for encryption and decryption Process



WhatsApp Reversing Process

These keys were created by using curve25519_donna by using random 32 bytes.

In cryptography, **Curve25519** is an elliptic curve offering 128 bits of security and designed for use with the elliptic curve Diffie–Hellman (ECDH) key agreement scheme. It is one of the fastest ECC curves and is not covered by any known patents

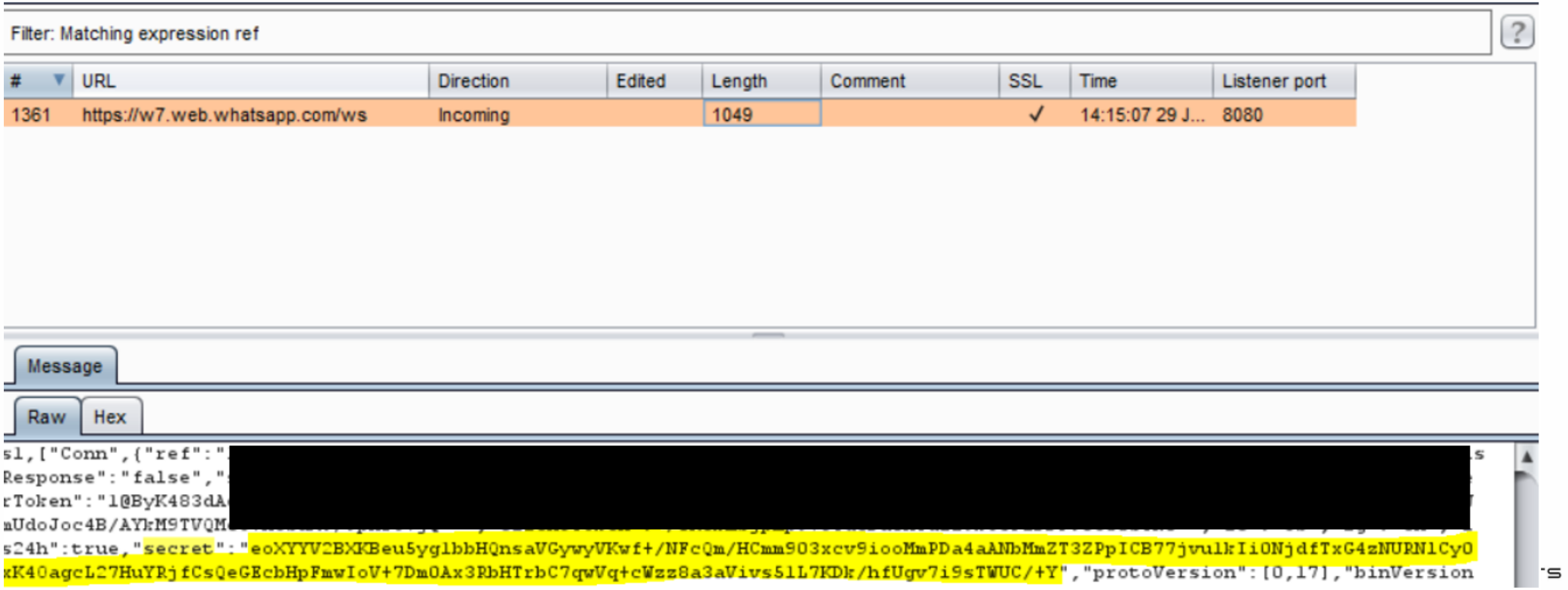
WhatsApp Reversing Process

To decrypt the data we will start to create a decryption code. This will take the private key from WhatsApp Web instead of the random bytes because we need to have the same keys in order to decrypt the data:

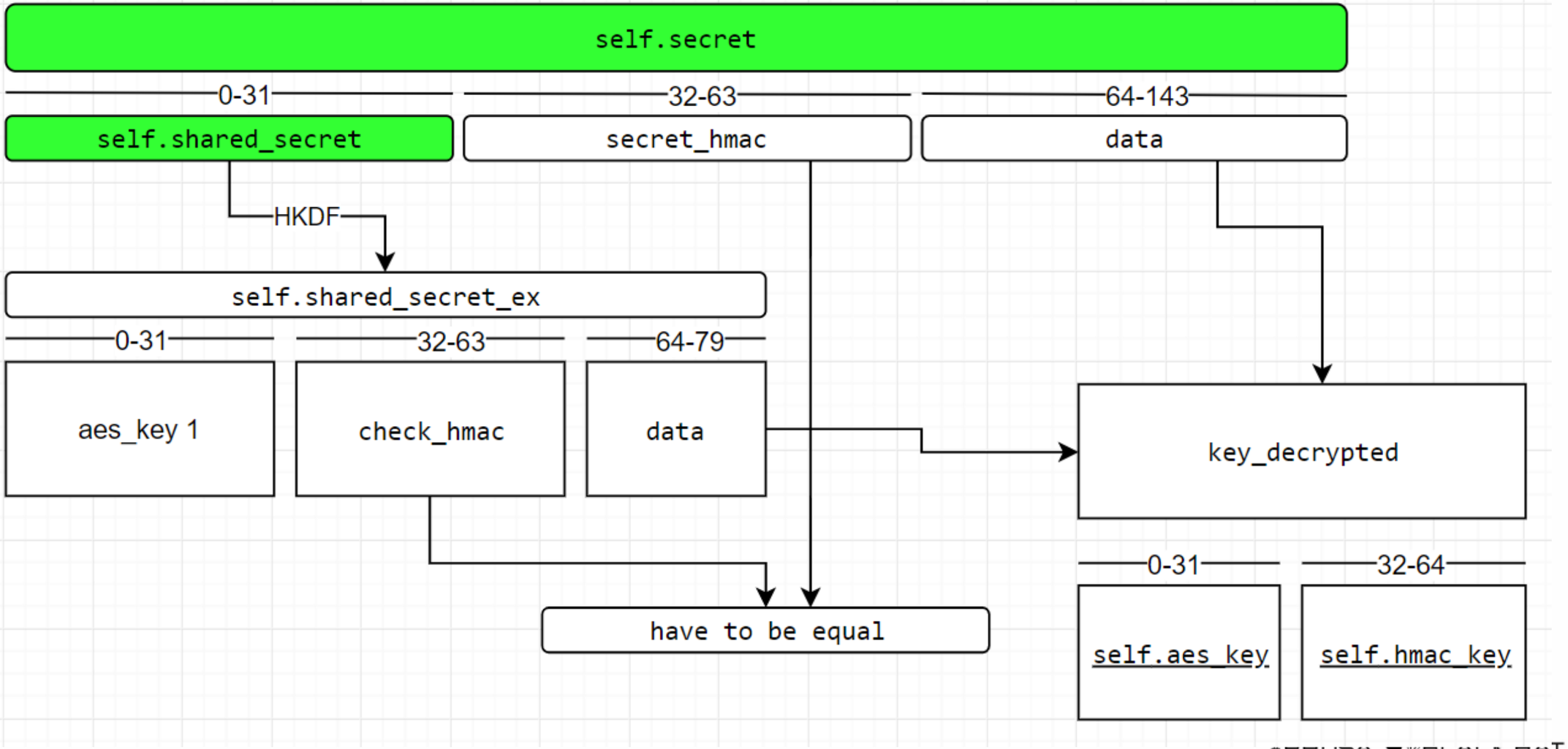
self.**private_key** = curve25519.Private(“”.join([chr(x) **for** x **in** priv_key_list]))
self.**public_key** = self.**private_key**.get_public()

WhatsApp Reversing Process

Then, after scanning the QR code with the phone we have to take the generated secret:



WhatsApp Reversing Process – Shared Secret



WhatsApp Reversing Process – Shared Secret

Then we have 2 interesting functions:

- **setSharedSecret –** This function divides the secret into slices and configure the shared secret.
- **E.SharedSecret –** This function uses two parameters which were the first 32 bytes and the private key from the QR generation:

```
10304        setSharedSecret: s["default"].wrapSync(function(e) {   e = "eoXYYV2BXKBeu5
10305            l["default"].log("Wap:saveSharedSecret start")();
10306            var t = m["default"].decodeToJsArray(e)   t = Array(144), e = "eoXY
10307              , n = t.slice(0, 32)   n = Array(32)
10308              , a = t.slice(64)   a = Array(80)
10309              , i = h.get().keyPair.privKey;   i = ArrayBuffer(32) {}
10310            return E.sharedSecret(n, i).then(function(e) {
10311                return v["default"].extractAndExpand(e, "", 80)
10312            }).then(function(e) {
```

```
Local
  a: (80) [67, 99, 117, 244, 241, 27, 140, 205,
  e: "eoXYYV2BXKBeu5yg1bbHQnsaVGywyVKwf+/NFcQm/H
  i: ArrayBuffer(32) {}
  n: (32) [122, 133, 216, 97, 93, 129, 92, 160,
  t: (144) [122, 133, 216, 97, 93, 129, 92, 160,
  this: Object
```

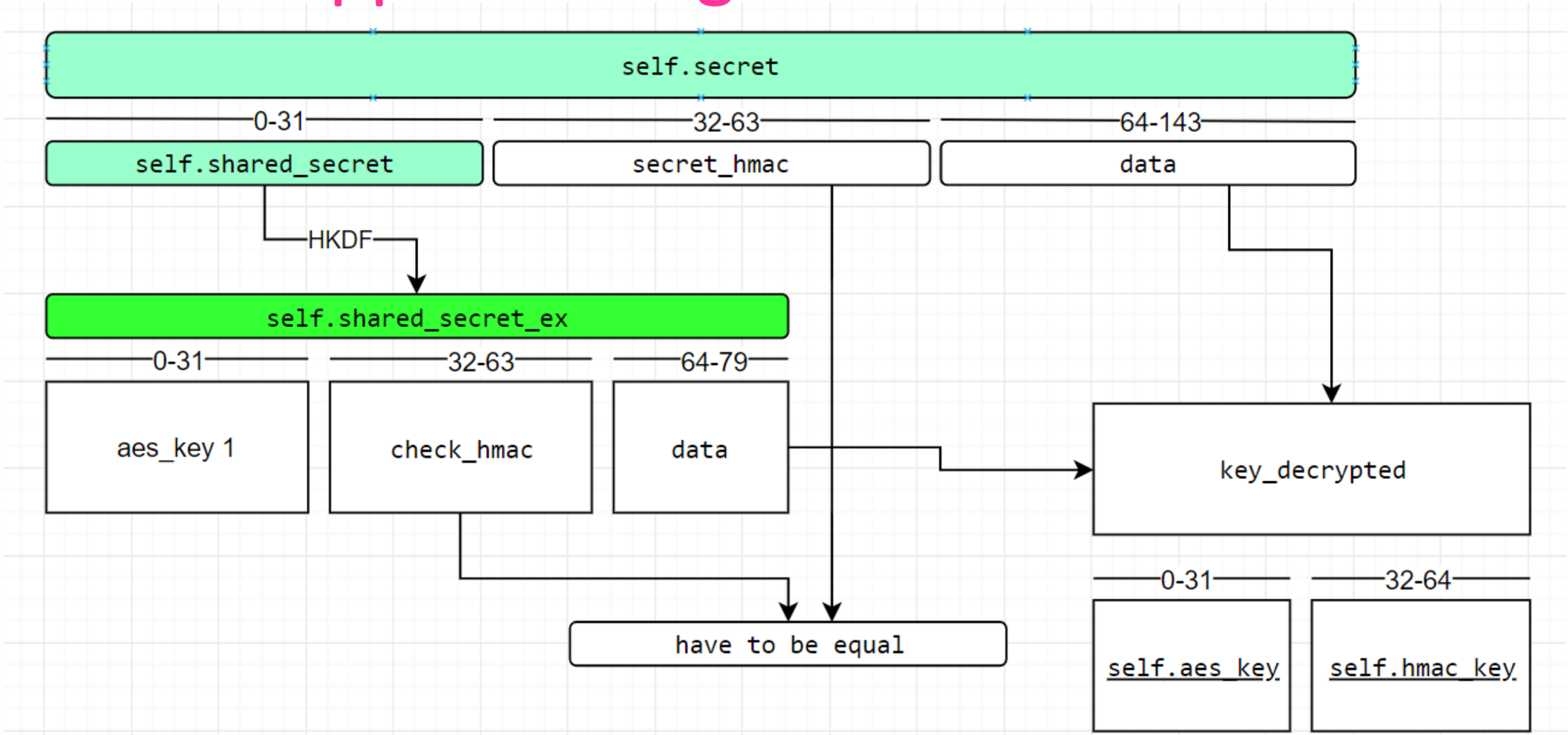
WhatsApp Reversing Process – Shared Secret

Next we have the expanded shared secret which is 80 bytes:

```
40310                return E.sharedSecret(n, i).then(function(e) {  e = ArrayBuffer(32) {}
40311                    return v["default"].extractAndExpand(e, "", 80)
40312                }).then(function(e) {
40313                    var i = new Uint8Array(e,0,32)
40314                      , r = new Uint8Array(e,32,32)
40315                      , o = new Uint8Array(e,64,16)
40316                      , s = new Uint8Array(n.concat(a));
```

By diving in we can see that the function uses the HKDF, is a simple hmac key derivation function (KDF) function.

WhatsApp Reversing Process – Shared Secret



WhatsApp Reversing Process – hmac_sha256

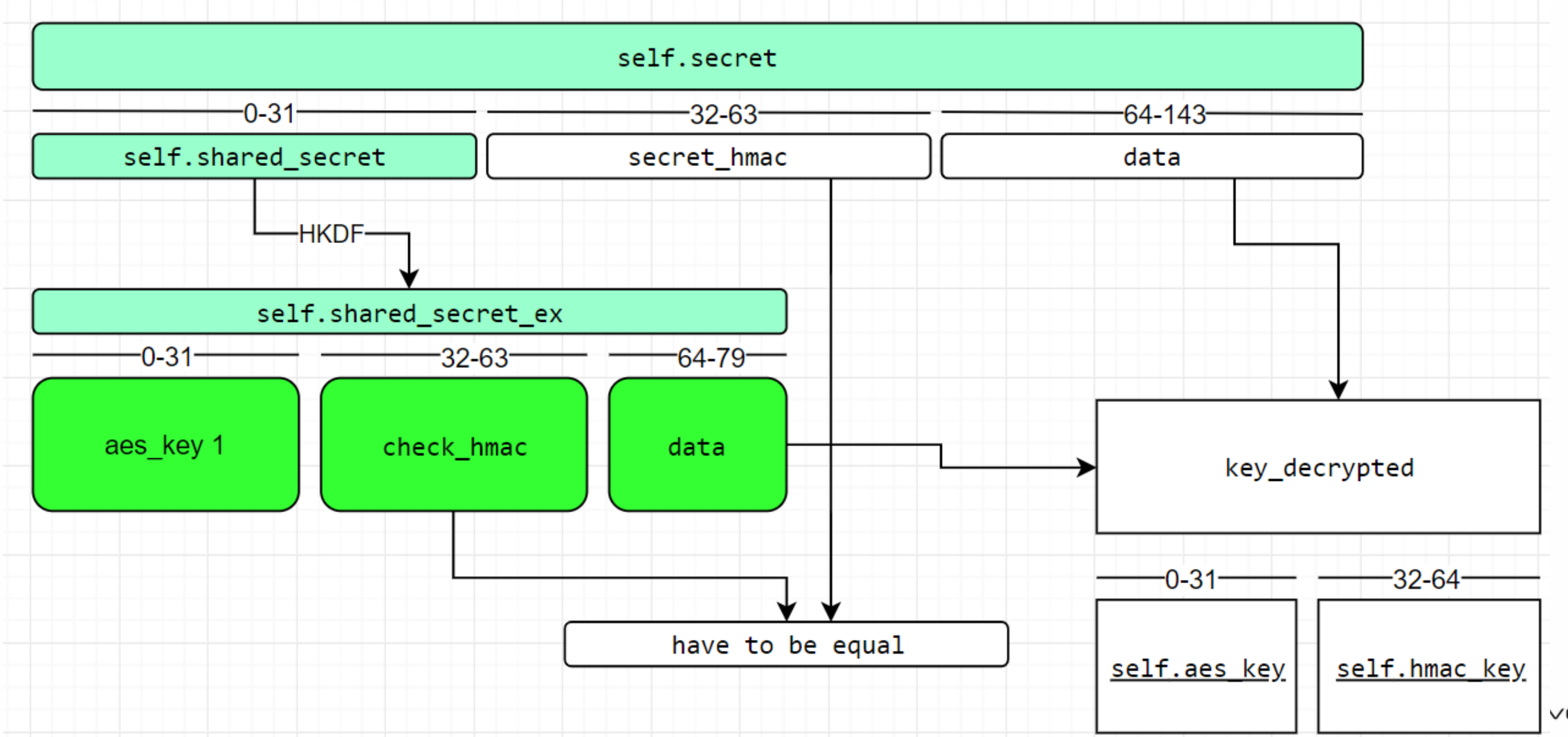
We next have the hmac validation function which takes the expanded data as parameter ‘e’ and divides it into 3 parameters:

i – The first 32 bytes of shared_expended is the **aes key**
r – The next 32 bytes is the **hmac**
o – The last 16 bytes is the **aes data part**

```
40310            return E.sharedSecret(n, i).then(function(e) {   e = ArrayBuffer(32) {}
40311                return v["default"].extractAndExpand(e, "", 80)
40312            }).then(function(e) {   e = ArrayBuffer(80) {}
40313                var i = new Uint8Array(e,0,32)   i = Uint8Array(32)
40314                  , r = new Uint8Array(e,32,32)   r = Uint8Array(32)
40315                  , o = new Uint8Array(e,64,16)   o = Uint8Array(16)
40316                  , s = new Uint8Array(n.concat(a));
40317                return new C.HmacSha256(r).sign(s).then(function(e) {
40318                    var n = m["default"].encode(e)
40319                      , r = m["default"].encode(t.slice(32, 64));
40320                    if (r !== n)
40321                        return void l["default"].error("Wap:saveSharedSecret hmac mismatch "
40322                    var s = N["default"].build(o, new Uint8Array(a)).readByteArray();
40323                    return (0,
```

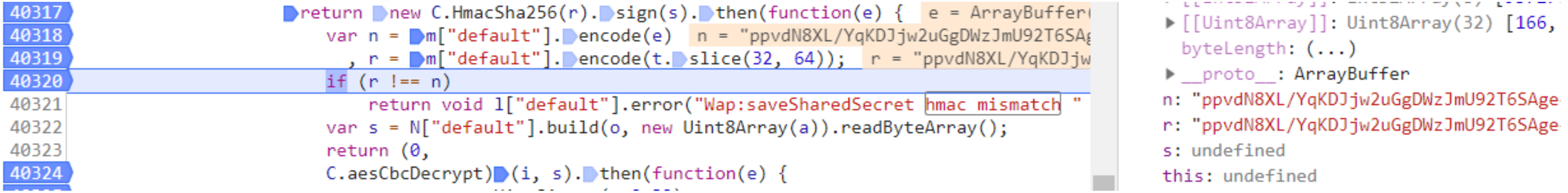
```
▼ Scope
▼ Local
  ▼ e: ArrayBuffer(80)
    ▶ [[Int8Array]]: Int8Array(80) [16
    ▶ [[Int16Array]]: Int16Array(40) [
    ▶ [[Int32Array]]: Int32Array(20) [
    ▶ [[Uint8Array]]: Uint8Array(80) [
      byteLength: (...)
    ▶ __proto__: ArrayBuffer
  ▶ i: Uint8Array(32) [16, 96, 27, 22,
  ▶ o: Uint8Array(16) [196, 199, 28, 1
  ▶ r: Uint8Array(32) [195, 18, 115, 2
```

WhatsApp Reversing Process – hmac_sha256



WhatsApp Reversing Process – hmac_sha256

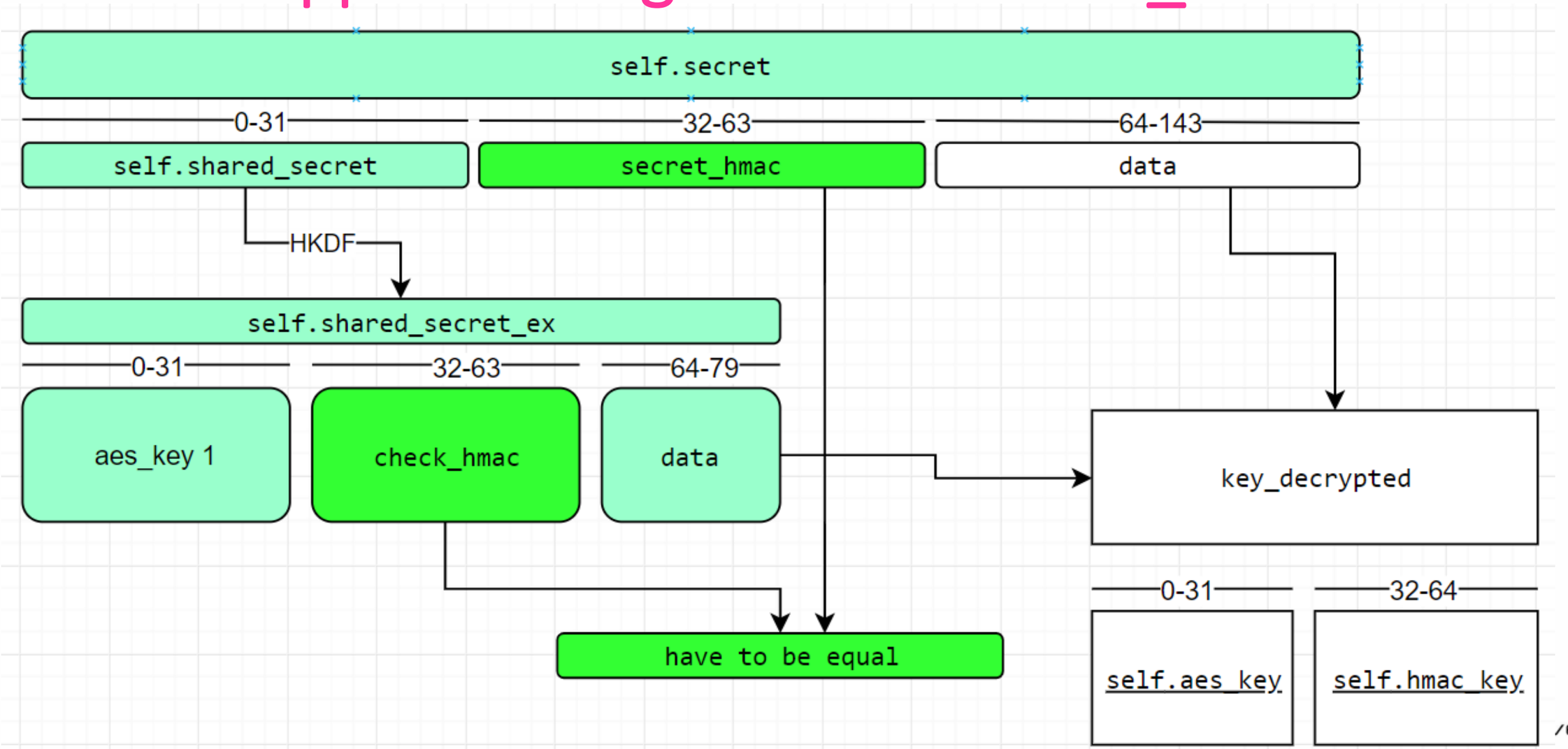
Then the function HmacSha256 will be called with the parameter ‘r’ and it will sign the data with the parameter ‘s’, after that ‘n’ will receive the **hmac** verifier which will be compared to ‘r’(the **hmac** from **extended shared secret)**



In python it will look like this:

check_hmac = HmacSha256(**shared_expended**[32:64], self.**secret**[:32] + self.**secret**[64:])
if check_hmac != self.**secret**[32:64]:
raise ValueError(**“hmac mismatch”**)

WhatsApp Reversing Process – hmac_sha256



WhatsApp Reversing Process – AES Keys

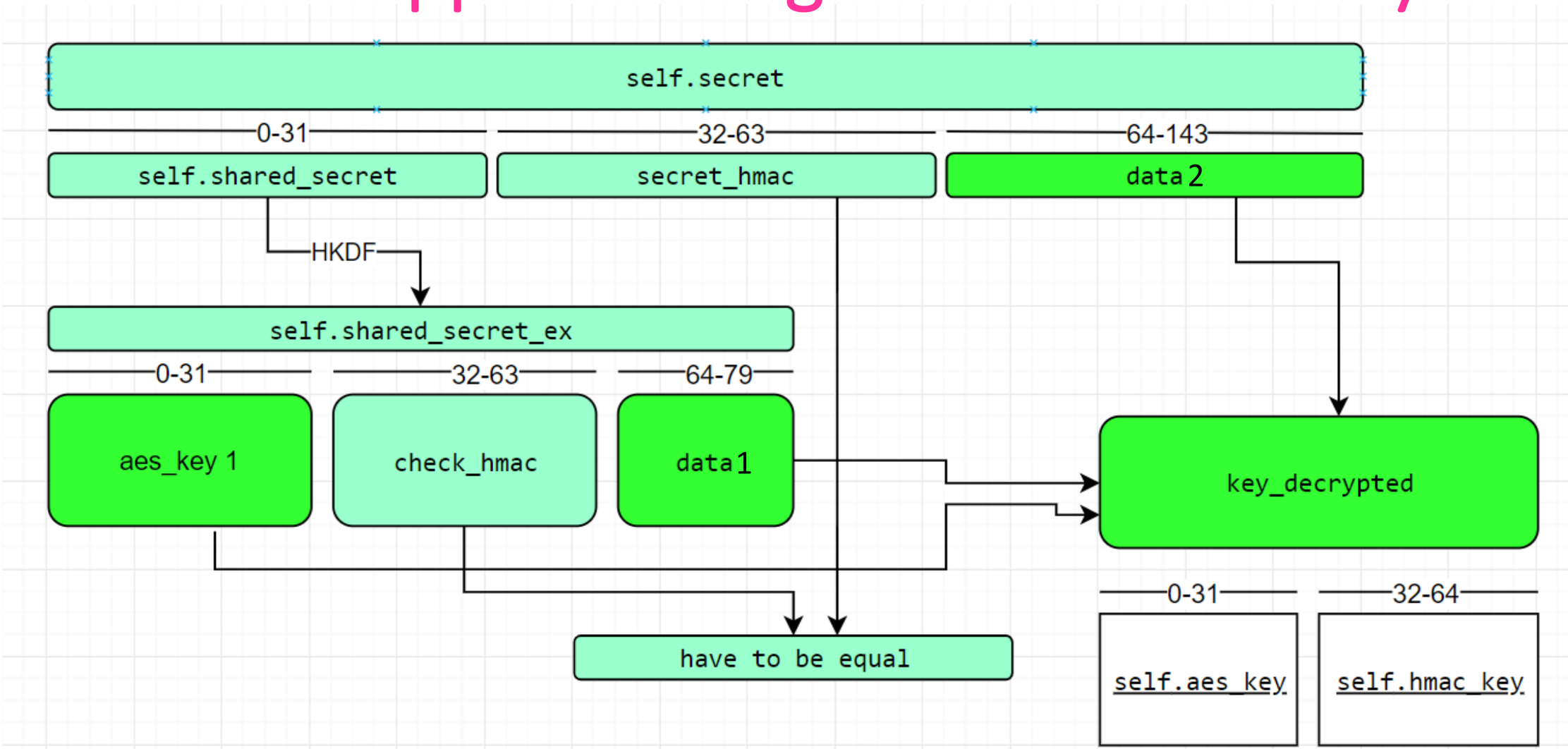
The last encryption related function in this block is '**aesCbcDecrypt**' which uses two parameters:

- s – which is a concatenation between the **last 16 bytes of the expanded shared secret** and the **data from byte 64 of the secret**.
- i – which is the **aes key**.

```
40322                    var s = N["default"].build(o, new Uint8Array(a)).readByteArray();  s = l
40323                    return (0,
40324                    C.aesCbcDecrypt)(i, s).then(function(e) {
40325                        var t = new Uint8Array(e,0,32)
40326                          , n = new Uint8Array(e,32,32);
40327                        h.setSecretKeys("0.1", t, n),
40328                        l["default"].log("Wap:saveSharedSecret done")()
40329                    })
40330                })
40331            })
```

```
__proto__: ArrayBuffer
n: "ppvdN8XL/YqKDJjw2uGgDWzJ
r: "ppvdN8XL/YqKDJjw2uGgDWzJ
s: Uint8Array(96) [196, 199,
this: undefined
Closure
i: Uint8Array(32) [16, 96, 2
o: Uint8Array(16) [196, 199,
```

WhatsApp Reversing Process – AES Keys



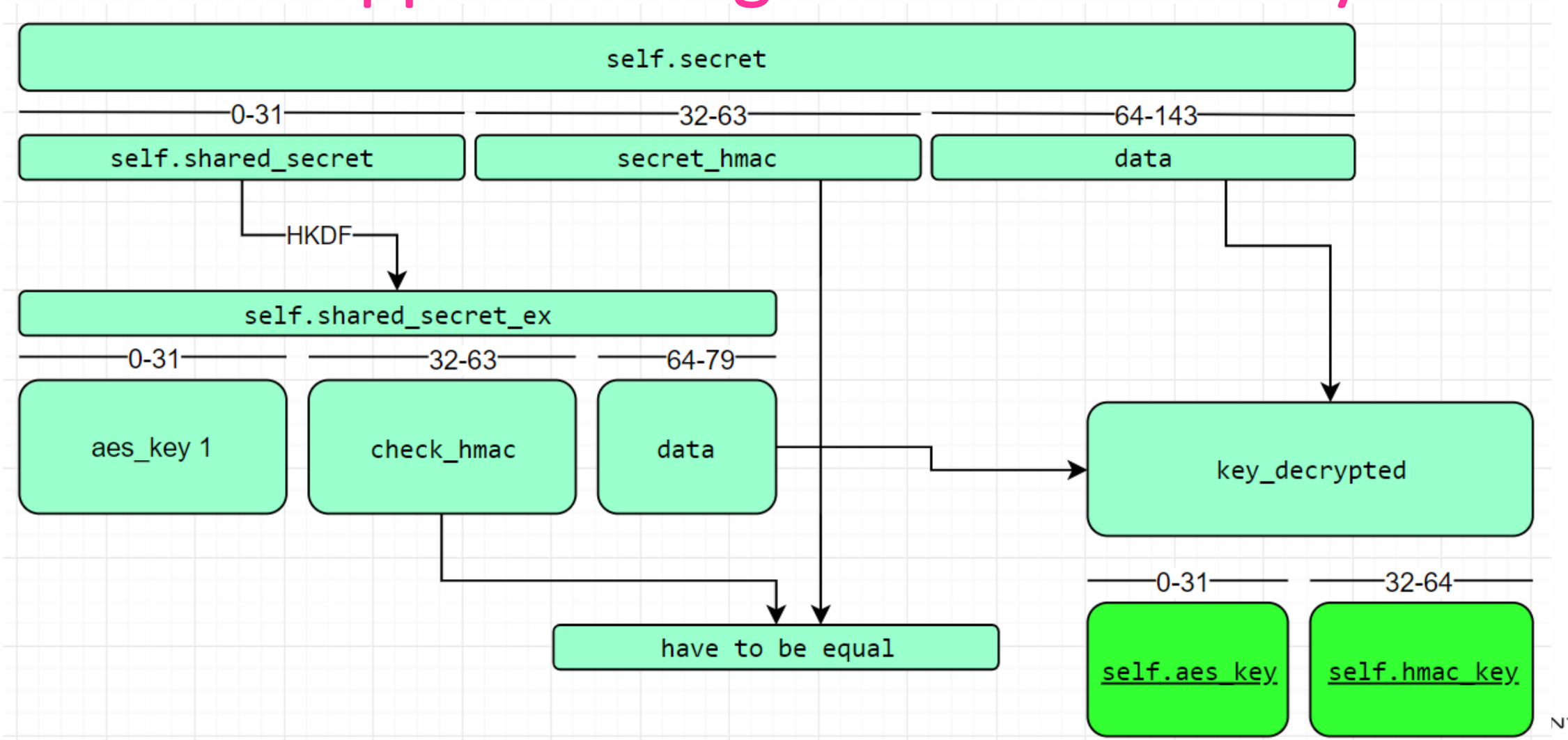
WhatsApp Reversing Process – AES Keys

This way we will get the AES Key ‘t’ and HMAC Key ‘n’

```
40322                    var s = N["default"].build(o, new Uint8Array(a)).readByteArray();  s = l
40323                    return (0,
40324                    C.aesCbcDecrypt)(i, s).then(function(e) {
40325                        var t = new Uint8Array(e,0,32)
40326                          , n = new Uint8Array(e,32,32);
40327                        h.setSecretKeys("0.1", t, n),
40328                        l["default"].log("Wap:saveSharedSecret done")()
40329                    })
40330                })
40331            })
```

```
__proto__: ArrayBuffer
n: "ppvdN8XL/YqKDJjw2uGgDWzJ
r: "ppvdN8XL/YqKDJjw2uGgDWzJ
s: Uint8Array(96) [196, 199,
this: undefined
Closure
i: Uint8Array(32) [16, 96, 2
o: Uint8Array(16) [196, 199,
```

WhatsApp Reversing Process – AES Keys



WhatsApp Reversing Process – Code

```
self.secret = None
self.private_key = None
self.public_key = None
self.shared_secret = None
self.shared_secret_ex = None
self.aes_key = None

self.private_key = curve25519.Private("".join([chr(x) for x in priv_key_list]))
self.public_key = self.private_key.get_public()

assert (self.public_key.serialize() == "".join([chr(x) for x in pub_key_list]))

self.secret = base64.b64decode(ref_dict["secret"])
self.shared_secret = self.private_key.get_shared_key(curve25519.Public(self.secret[:32]), lambda key: key)
self.shared_secret_ex = HKDF(self.shared_secret, 80)

check_hmac = hmac_sha256(self.shared_secret_ex[32:64], self.secret[:32] + self.secret[64:])
if check_hmac != self.secret[32:64]:
    raise ValueError("hmac mismatch")

key_decrypted = aes_decrypt(self.shared_secret_ex[:32], self.shared_secret_ex[64:] + self.secret[64:])
self.aes_key = key_decrypted[:32]
self.mac_key = key_decrypted[32:64]
```

WhatsApp Reversing Process – protobuf data

By using the keys we can decrypt any incoming message, the decryption result will be the protobuf message.

```
108         self.decrypted_content = AESDecrypt(self.conn_data["aesKey"], content[32:])
109         print self.decrypted_content
110         self.decrypted_seralized_content = whastsapp_read(self.decrypted_content, True)
111
```

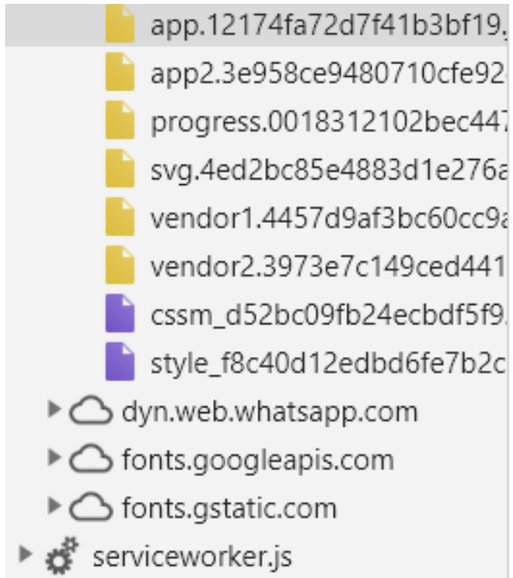
WhatsAppWebClient › decrypt_incoming_message()

Run: parser

```
C:\Python27\python.exe C:/Users/roman/Dropbox/CHECKPOINT/Projects/BurpExtension/burpWhats
K
5
97[redacted]@s.whatsapp.net
WhatsApp decryption example
```

WhatsApp Reversing Process – protobuf data

In order to deserialize the protobuf we have to create our mapping, based on whatsapp protobuf that can be found in the file app:




```
18999         },
19000         p(u, {
19001             labelsDisplay: [1, E, u.FLAG],
19002             voipIndividualOutgoing: [2, E, u.FLAG],
19003             groupsV3: [3, E, u.FLAG],
19004             groupsV3Create: [4, E, u.FLAG],
19005             changeNumberV2: [5, E, u.FLAG],
19006             queryStatusV3Thumbnail: [6, E, u.FLAG],
19007             liveLocations: [7, E, u.FLAG],
19008             queryVname: [8, E, u.FLAG],
19009             voipIndividualIncoming: [9, E, u.FLAG],
19010             quickRepliesQuery: [10, E, u.FLAG],
19011             payments: [11, E, u.FLAG],
19012             stickerPackQuery: [12, E, u.FLAG],
19013             liveLocationsFinal: [13, E, u.FLAG]
19014         }),
19015         e.exports = {
19016             WebMessageInfo: a,
19017             PaymentInfo: i,
19018             WebNotificationsInfo: r,
19019             NotificationMessageInfo: o,
19020             TabletNotificationsInfo: s,
19021             WebFeatures: u
19022         }
19023     },
19024     '"defdebchga"': function(e, t, n) {
```

WhatsApp Reversing Process – protobuf data

This is a part of our protobuf file:

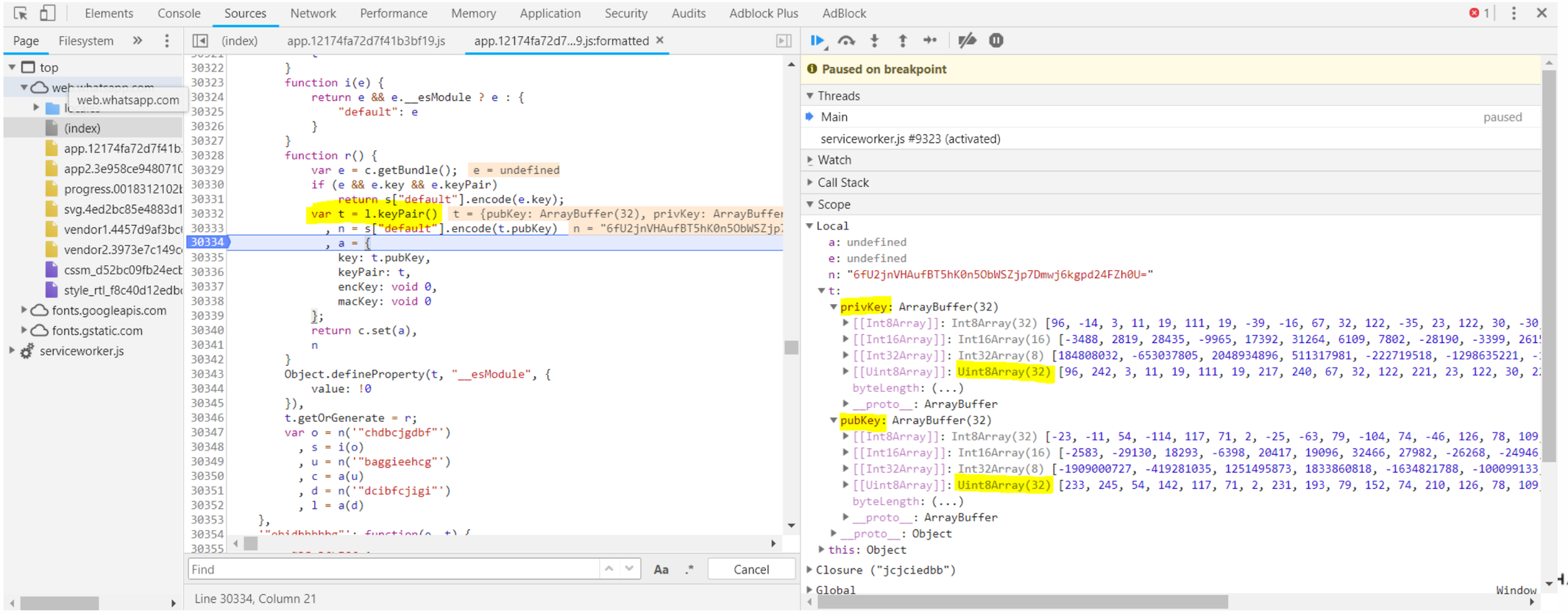
whatsapp.proto

```
72  message WebMessageInfo {
73    optional MessageKey key =  1;
74    optional Message message =  2;
75    optional uint64 messageTimestamp = 3;
76    optional STATUS status = 4;
77    optional string participant  =  5;
78    optional bool ignore  =  6;
79    optional bool starred =  7;
80    optional bool broadcast =  8;
81    optional string pushName  =  9;
82    optional string mediaCiphertextSha256  =  10;
83    optional bool multicast  =  11;
84    optional bool urlText  =  12;
85    optional bool urlNumber =  13;
86    optional STUBTYPE messageStubType  =  14;
87    optional bool clearMedia =  15;
88    optional string messageStubParameters  =  16;
89    optional uint32 duration =  17;
90    optional string labels  =  18;
91    optional bytes paymentInfo  =  19;
92  }
```

Burp Extension

Accessing the Keys – Burp Extension Keys

Let's start with WhatsApp Web. Before generating the QR code,
WhatsApp Web generates a Public and Private Key that is used for encryption and decryption



Accessing the Keys – Burp Extension Secret

After the QR code is created, after scanning it with a phone

We can send the following information to WhatsApp Web over a WebSocket.

Filter: Matching expression ref

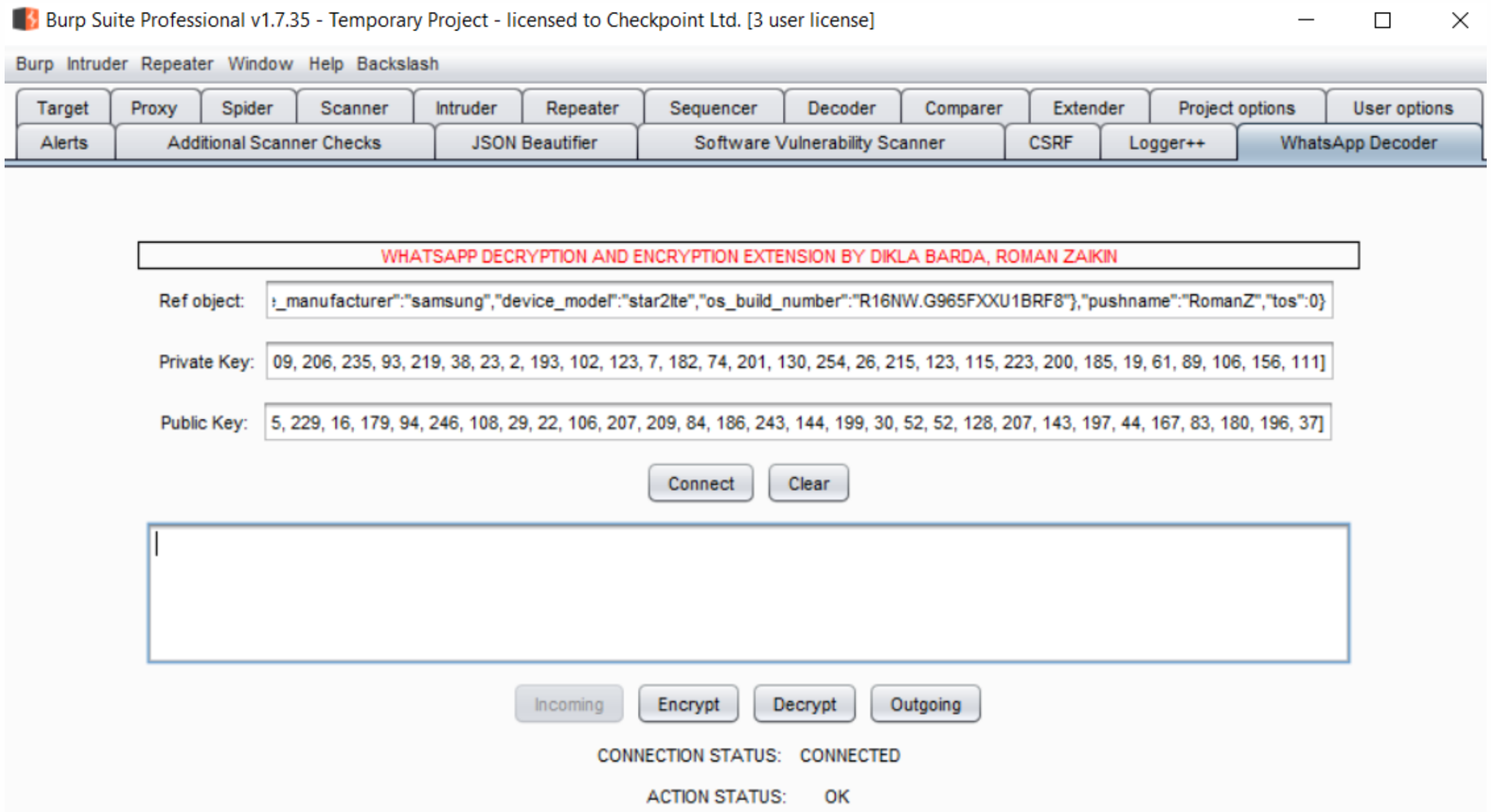
#	URL	Direction	Edited	Length	Comment	SSL	Time	Listener port
1361	https://w7.web.whatsapp.com/ws	Incoming		1049		✓	14:15:07 29 J...	8080

Message

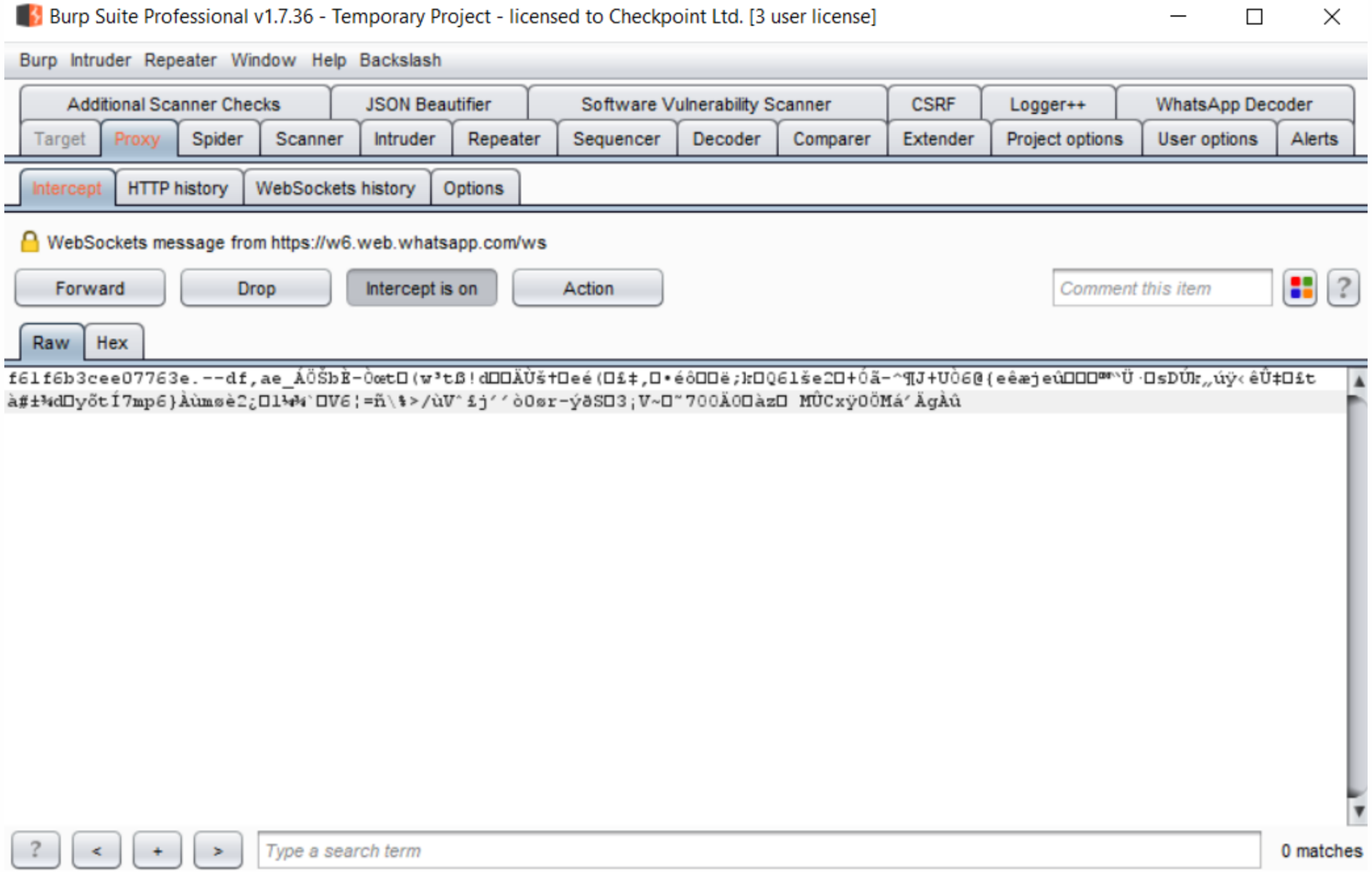
Raw Hex

sl,["Conn",{"ref":"1@ALzvl[redacted]
Response":"false","server[redacted]
rToken":"1@ByK483dAcPpm4h[redacted]
mUdoJoc4B/AYkM9TVQMe0+MGS[redacted]
s24h":true,"secret":"eoXYYV2BXKBeu5yg1bbHQnsaVGywyVKwf+/NFcQm/HCmm903xcv9iooMmPDa4aANbMmZT3ZPpICB77jvulkIiONjdfTxG4zNURN1Cy0
xK40agcL27HuYRjfCsQeGEcbHpFmwIoV+7Dm0Ax3RbHTrbC7qwVq+cWzz8a3aVivs51L7KDk/hfUgv7i9sTWUC/+Y","protoVersion":[0,17],"binVersion

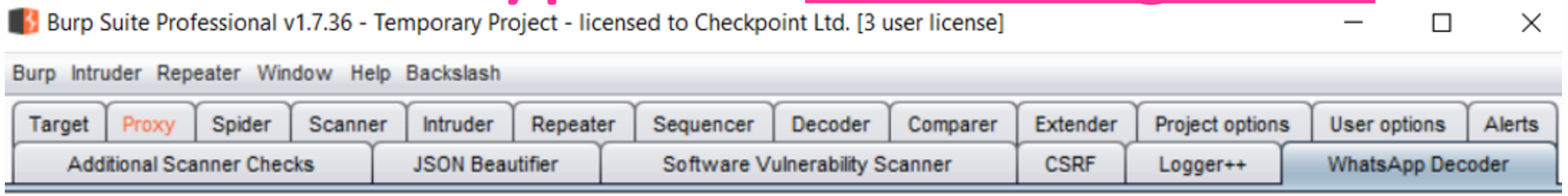
The Extension



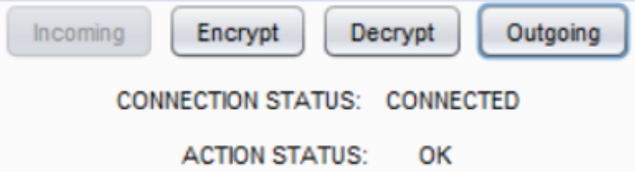
Decrypt the incoming data



Decrypt the incoming data



conversation – This is the actual content which is sent.
participant – This is the participant that actually sent the content.
fromMe – This parameter indicates if I sent the data or someone else in the group.
remoteJid – This parameter indicates to which group/contact the data is sent.
id – The id of the data. The same id will appear in the phone databases.



Decrypt the outgoing data

```
91635            "default": e
91636        }
91637    }
91638    function n(e, t, a) {   e = ArrayBuffer(32) {}, t = ArrayBuffer(32) {},
91639        return (0,
91640        c.aesCbcEncrypt)(e, new Uint8Array(a)).then(function(e) {
91641            return new d.HmacSha256(t).sign(e).then(function(t) {
91642                return p.build(t, e).readBuffer()
91643            })
91644        })
91645    }
91646    function r(e, t, a) {
91647        return s["default"].resolve(new Uint8Array(a)).then(function(a) {
91648            var i = f.encode(a.subarray(0, 32))
91649              , n = a.subarray(32);
91650            return new d.HmacSha256(t).sign(n).then(function(t) {
91651                var a = f.encode(t);
91652                if (i !== a)
```

aesCbc 2 matches Aa .* Cancel

serviceworker.js #9323 (activated)

▶ Watch

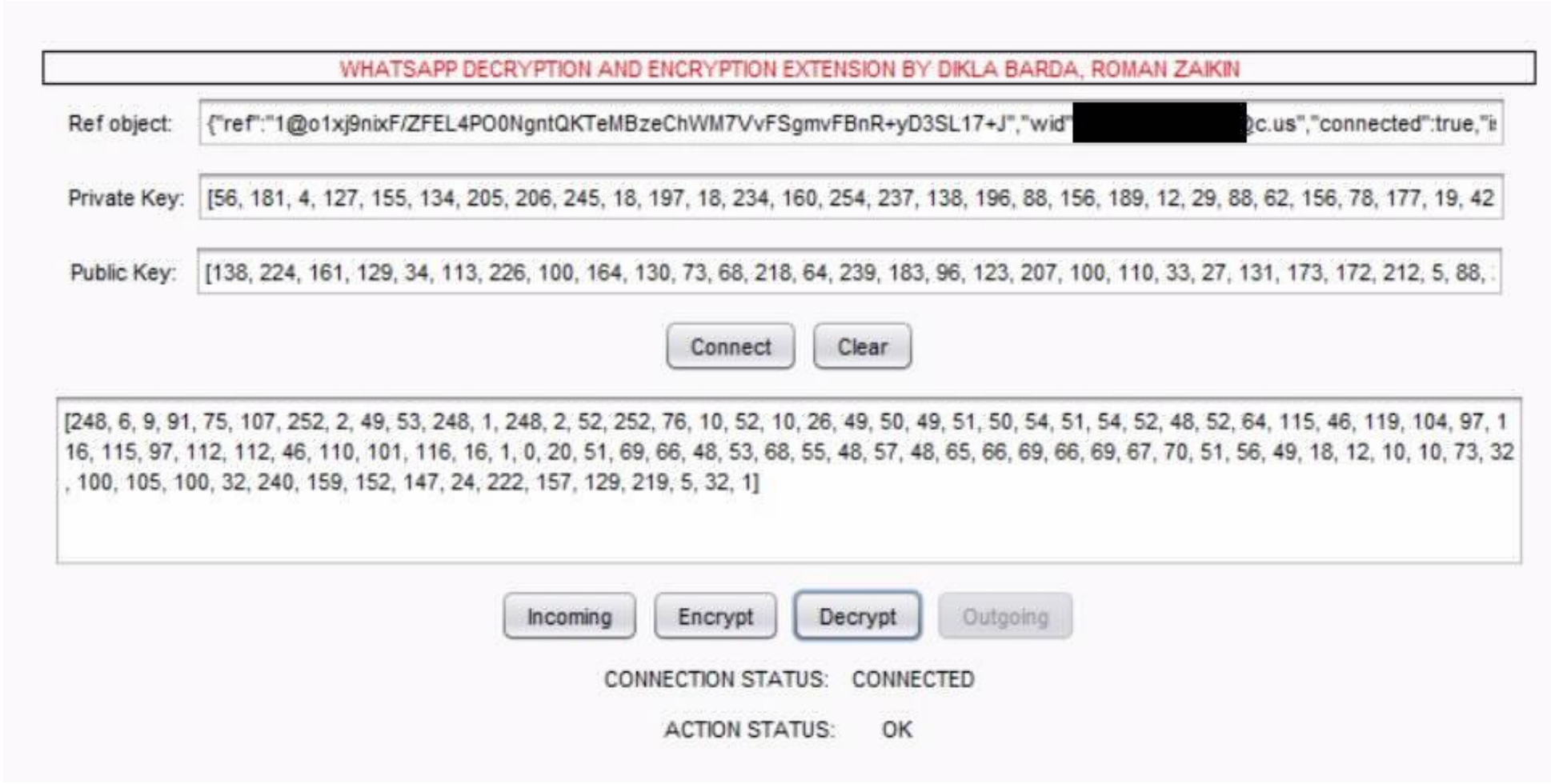
▶ Call Stack

▼ Scope

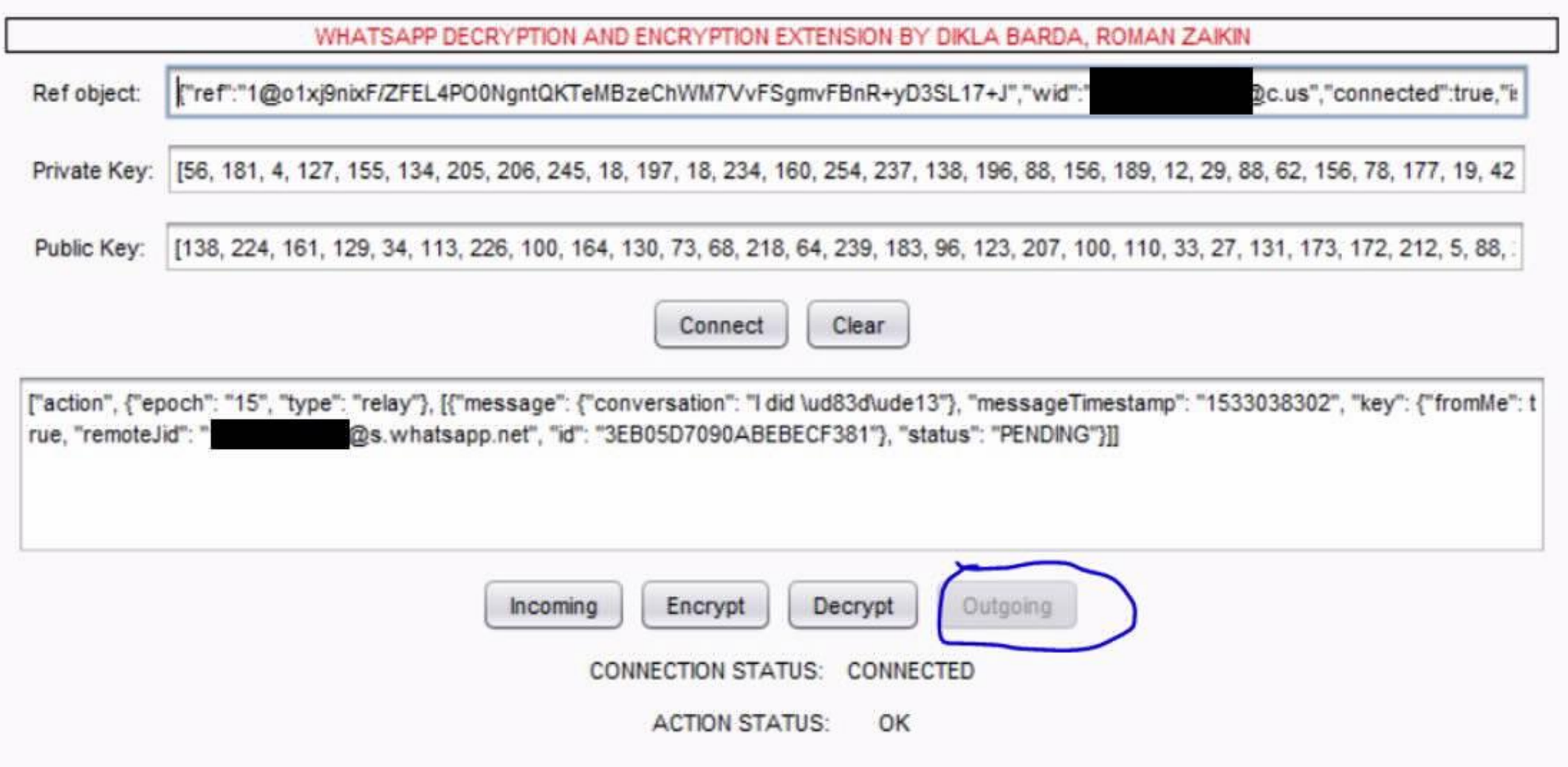
▼ Local

- ▼ a: ArrayBuffer(93)
  - ▶ [[Int8Array]]: Int8Array(93) [-8, 6, 9, 91, 75, 107, -4, 2, 49, 53, -8, 1, -8, 2, 52, -4, 76, 10, 52, 10
  - ▶ [[Uint8Array]]: Uint8Array(93) [248, 6, 9, 91, 75, 107, 252, 2, 49, 53, 248, 1, 248, 2, 52, 252, 76, 10,
  - byteLength: (...)
  - ▼ __proto__: ArrayBuffer
    - byteLength: (...)
    - ▶ constructor: ƒ ArrayBuffer()
    - ▶ slice: ƒ slice()
    - Symbol(Symbol.toStringTag): "ArrayBuffer"
    - ▶ get byteLength: ƒ byteLength()
    - ▶ __proto__: Object
- ▶ e: ArrayBuffer(32) {}
- ▶ t: ArrayBuffer(32) {}

Decrypt the outgoing data



Decrypt the outgoing data

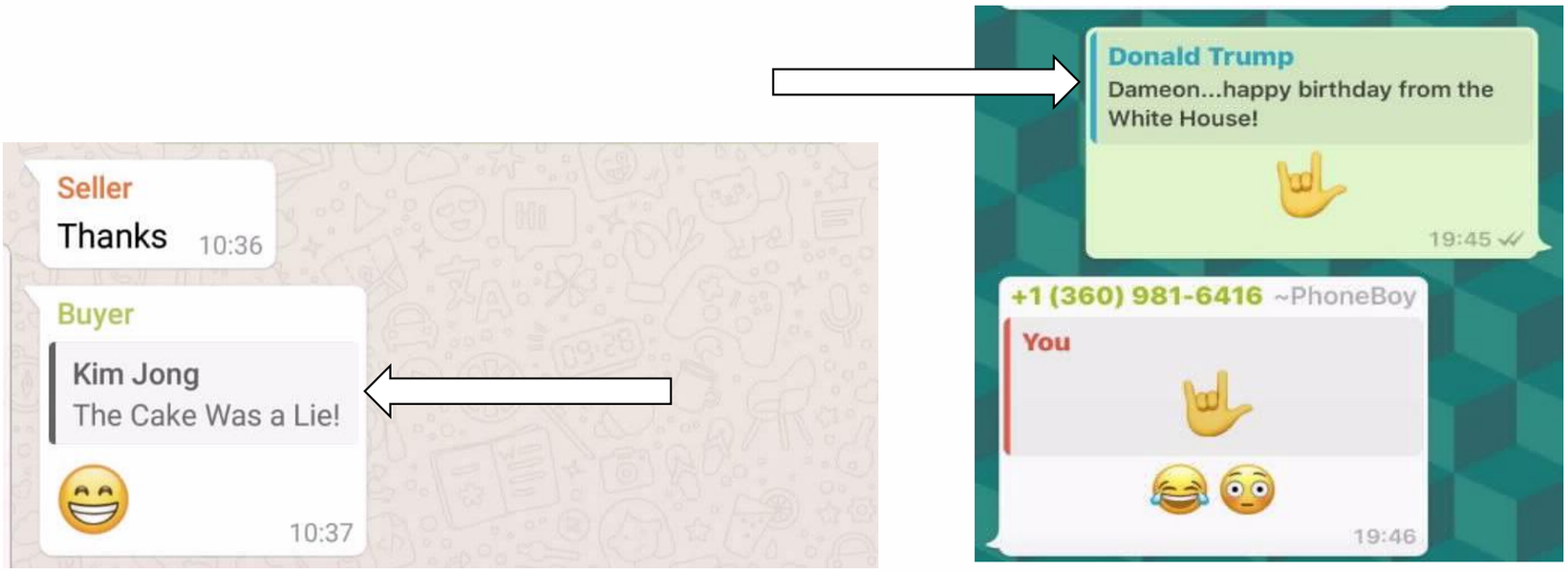


DEMO

Manipulation #1 – fake reply from someone in the group

Demo

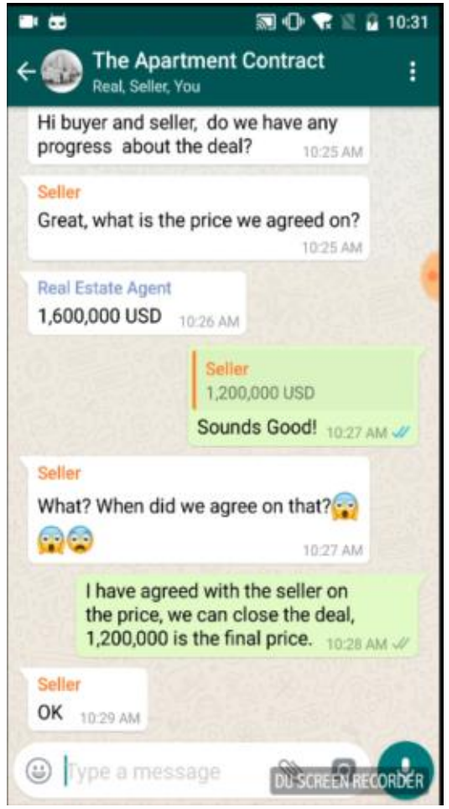
Manipulation #2 – Fake reply to someone not in the group



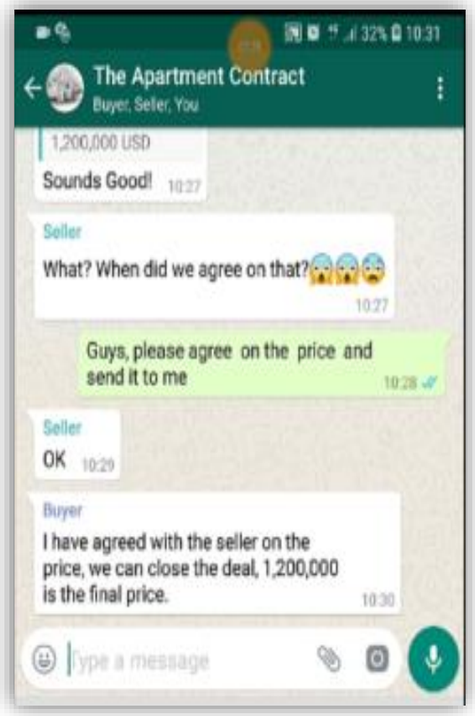
Demo

Manipulation #3 – Send a private message in group chat to a specific person

Attacker



User 1



User 2

[Demo]

Manipulation #4: send messages to myself

[Demo]


black hat
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