NEWSLETTER

# MIC NEWS

August 2026

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

## K'DARIUS COOK

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**Tell us about yourself.**

My name is K'Darius Cook and I'm a senior cybersecurity professional from Dallas, Tx. I started my cybersecurity journey in 2023 with MIC as an apprentice.

**You joined MiC Talent Solutions in 2023 as part of its first apprentice cohort with no previous cybersecurity background. Looking back, what part of the apprenticeship experience had the biggest impact on preparing you for the workplace?**

The part that had the biggest impact on my cyber apprenticeship had to be the guidance from other cyber professionals. The zoom calls with people already in their careers served as a big piece of motivation for me and made me feel as if I could accomplish my dream of becoming a cybersecurity professional myself.

**Last month, you shared how close you came to giving up on your cybersecurity job search before ultimately landing an opportunity. Now that you're on the other side of that experience, what has surprised you most about actually working in cybersecurity?**

One of the biggest things that gave me a surprise had to be the freedom I had to make mistakes. I was always so fearful that if I didn't know certain terminologies or if I didn't quite understand a security platform then I would be ridiculed or maybe even fired. I was always allowed room to fail and learn, which served me more than pretending to know everything.

**During your apprenticeship, you received technical training along with mentorship, coaching, leadership development, and support from the MiC community. Which of those experiences or skills have you found yourself relying on most in your career today?**

Something that I learned early in the apprenticeship that I still hold onto today and actually use quite often is the skill of communication. Now that I am a senior lead and even in my previous role as a regular analyst, communication has always served me positively whenever it is exercised correctly.

**If you could go back and speak to yourself on your first day as a MiC Talent apprentice, what would you tell that version of yourself about the journey ahead?**

I would tell myself that my goals were indeed achievable and to make them even bigger.

**For someone considering an apprenticeship or trying to land their first cybersecurity opportunity, what do you wish you had understood when you were starting out?**

Never be afraid to reach out to a recruiter and to always prepare yourself on the info within a job posting. Study it as if you're readying yourself for a test.

**Any advice for the readers?**

For the love of the good God above, do not quit on yourself. I know things can be tough, but I'd rather you get through the tough times than to go through hard times and stay in the same spot.

**Any fun facts, favorite tech hobbies, or a professional 'manifestation' you're currently working toward?**

A tech hobby that I'm currently getting into is AI development into robots with a friend that I'm working with. I can't speak too much on it, but it's definitely a working experience.

# THE HEART BEHIND THE MACHINE

## BY ANTHONY BRISCOE

**Cybersecurity Begins with People, Not Technology**

*"Cybersecurity isn't just a technical problem; it's a human one."*
*— Robinson & Nobles, Human Factors in Cybersecurity*

ANTHONY BRISCOE

In the age of artificial intelligence, leading with heart in IT leadership has never been more vital. When mentoring future cybersecurity professionals, the conversation invariably turns to the human behind the keyboard. These are the individuals who keep our industry resilient against neglected budgets, sophisticated threat actors, and pervasive complacency. While my operational role supports the broader enterprise, my mission is to back the CISOs, security directors, and analysts who carry the frontline weight of defending our systems.

Advocating for a human-first approach does not mean discarding business reality. Rather, it reminds us that the people working alongside us daily are the core of what we do, whom we serve, and why we remain in this field. Realizing that vision requires rethinking our language, our leadership models, and our fundamental structures of trust.

**Stop Calling People the Weakest Link**

Entry-level security curricula often repeat the tired axiom that humans are the weakest link. That framing not only fails to motivate; it fundamentally misdiagnoses the problem. People are not an inherent flaw in the architecture, but the frontline defense network of any organization.

NIST recognized this years ago and, more recently, in developing Human-Centered Cybersecurity, by putting people's needs, abilities, and limits at the forefront of security decisions, as mentioned in SecurityOnline. Treating end users or SOC analysts as liabilities guarantees failure. When organizations attempt to solve human challenges solely through software patches, breaches and ransomware follow anyway. By adopting a human-centered design lens, we shift from policing our workforce to empowering them as our strongest defensive layer.

**The People Protecting the Enterprise Need Protection Too**

InfoSec leadership carries an unfortunate industry moniker: the Chief Information Scapegoat Officer. With average CISO tenures hovering between 18 and 26 months, building a sustainable security posture becomes impossible when leadership operates in perpetual survival mode. The 24/7 on-call for the C-Suite is not as prevalent across industries as it is for the CISO.

When a CISO requires independent legal counsel just to navigate corporate fallout, the board has chosen self-preservation over genuine accountability. Shifting personal liability onto security heads without providing matching resources or authority is an unsustainable strategy. CISOs require a genuine voice, adequate funding, and a direct reporting line to executive leadership rather than a perfunctory slide in a quarterly board deck with two bullet points.

**Leadership Must Build Trust Before the Crisis**

Culture eats strategy for breakfast. Security professionals lean heavily on peer communities, including specialized discussion groups and community forums, because collective defense relies on transparent collaboration. From Signal to Clubhouse, we show up to support one another through the mental health impact on security professionals.

That dynamic must mirror internal enterprise culture. Trust cannot flow upward on the expectation of total compliance. It must start at the board and executive level. Teams need to know their warnings, technical proposals, and daily vigilance are recognized and valued as essential components of the organizational mission. They already understand it doesn't mean execution or implementation.

**The Heart Behind the Machine**

Education sparks exposure, exposure drives empowerment, and empowerment leads to systemic transformation. That is the core philosophy I instill in my mentees. We have the technical tools, infrastructure, and computing capabilities required for modern defense. However, without the heart behind the machine, which is the dedicated community of people defending and building every day, technology alone will never keep us safe. We, the people, must be protected while keeping us safe.

*Sources*:

*https://securityonline.info/nist-human-centered-cybersecurity-concept-paper/*

*https://csrc.nist.gov/Projects/human-centered-cybersecurity/human-centered-cybersecurity-concept-paper*

*https://www.ciso.inc/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/CISO-Report-2023-.pdf*

*Robinson, N., & Nobles, C. (2026). Human factors in cybersecurity: A field-tested framework for designing resilient, human-centered cybersecurity systems. Packt Publishing*

# MIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

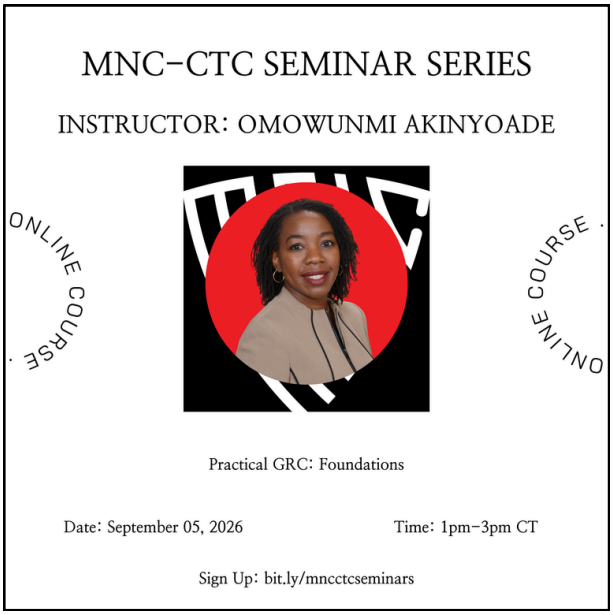
## CYBERSECURITY WORKFORCE INFRASTRUCTURE SUMMIT

Don't forget to join us at the Cybersecurity Workforce Infrastructure Summit on September 19th. We're gathering employers, educators, and workforce partners to tackle how we build stronger, employer-aligned cyber pipelines.

Come join us as we share a fresh approach to workforce development—we'd love to see you there!

*bit.ly/MNCHubSummit*


## UP NEXT: THE MNC-CTC SEMINAR SERIES




The 7th installment of MNC-CTC Seminar Series kicks off on September 05, 2026.

Join us for our next session, **"Practical GRC: Foundations,"** featuring guest speaker Omie Akinyoade.

*bit.ly/mncctcseminars*

## CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Congratulations to our Cohort 1 pre-apprentices in the MNC-CTC Cybersecurity Residency Program on advancing to Year 1! We're also excited to welcome Cohort 2 as they kick off their journey on September 1st.