

John Cody Creger

CYSE 368

UIN 01154971

7/22/2025

Interview With Nancy Barcenas

For my third reflection I decided to conduct an interview with one of my colleagues. She sits across the cubicle from me and has helped me in various tasks and I wanted to give her an opportunity to tell her story and offer her advice. This interview was conducted at a MARMC conference room adjacent to the cybersecurity office. I voice recorded the interview and the following is a transcript of the interview.

Cody- So right out of the gate, can you give me your full name and title and position within the company?

Nancy- Yes, my name is Nancy Barcenas, working here at MARMC. I am an ISSO, but I mean sometimes we go buy a cyber security analyst as well.

Cody- And how long have you been working here?

Nancy- So I've been working in this current position for two years. So, I started June 20th, 2023.

Cody- What is your formal education or background and do you have any certifications or anything of that?

Nancy- I have a bachelor's right now, that I got online through going through UMGC, University of Maryland, and then I went ahead, and I went to Old Dominican University as well, and graduated December 2023 with them with my master's in cybersecurity and risk management. I only have one certification at the moment. Security Plus, so I'm trying to expand my certs. So hopefully I will get something else soon.

Cody- What is your next cert you want to get?

Nancy- I well, I was looking at something like, uh. CISSP. That was one of them. And then also. depends on the position that I go to next.

Cody- What would be your ideal next position?

Nancy- I think I would want to work more in IT, something more like network administrator, something that's more technical, something more hands on. I think I would want to do something like that.

Cody- How did you get into the IT/cyber field to begin with?

Nancy- The only reason I'm here right now, honestly, is because when I joined the Navy, I joined as an IT, so whenever I joined, I had absolutely no clue, I didn't know anything about computers at all. So that is the only reason that I'm here as a cybersecurity analyst at the moment. So, whenever we first started, whenever I first reported to my first command, we'd walk around and like ask people to help them out with their computers. And at that time, I had no idea what I was doing. I think it helped me, kind of like, yeah, because I've never, I never thought I would have probably ended up with this in this job field, to be honest.

Cody- What would you consider the most important knowledge skills and abilities needed for someone who works in Cyber?

Nancy- I think probably just having an understanding of how network works, having a basic understanding of how it works and how all the pieces come into it and knowing how they connect with one another, I think that's important, because we're cybersecurity and we're not as technical, but we're responsible for protecting the information system here at MARMC. So, I think as long as you have an understanding of that, you're able to provide protection to those information systems.

Cody-Okay. What are some soft skills that you have found to be most important?

Nancy- Soft skills. Probably, communication with the IT department. I think we work together side by side a lot with a lot of different things. So, a lot of people here in the command confuse us with one another and so that's why whenever I do Indoc, I try to put it out as much as I can. Like we are two different departments, we have two different functions. So, I think just communicating with them as far as like certain functions go, that's why we do, for example, the system scans, whenever you were part of that, the configuration boards. So if they want to get like any new equipment and add any upgrades to any software that they have, that's why it's important for us to be on the same page as that or, for example, if I need to do scans and they're doing maintenance on certain system, they're doing maintenance with tenable, for example, and we're trying to run scans and that won't tell us about it. That becomes an issue. That's something that's happened in the past. That's why I'm saying like, it's kind of an issue or sometimes there'll be equipment that gets purchased without our consent. And well, it's supposed to go through at least Eric first, like the Tamana system.

Cody- So that's one of them. I got you.

Nancy- Yeah, just communication between both of us, and then what else? Probably just trying to stay up to date as see what's going on in the cyber security world, because things are always changing, just keeping up with it the latest stuff.

Cody-So that whole lifelong learner kind of mentality.

Nancy- Oh yeah, Continuous learning. Yeah. That's why we're part of the Cybersecurity Workforce program. So every year we have to do so many hours of continuous learning, about 20 hours or so. So that's why it's important for us to keep learning, especially whenever you do Indoc with the new employees, you want to make sure you give them relevant information. And if they have any questions, you have those answers for them.

Cody- Would you consider this like an entry-level job? Or maybe like a mid-level, job?

Nancy -Yeah, I would consider this more like medium level, but I mean, I think entry between entry and medium level, to be honest.

Cody-Have you ever considered trying to get it into like more of an offensive red team, blue team, threat hunter type scenario?

Nancy- Yeah, I was actually looking at the certifications to go into that like the certified ethical hacker. I was looking at it and it was \$1,000, so I think that was kind of what was holding me back a little bit. The money thing. But I think I think that'd be really cool. I think you should definitely look into it. I think getting your foot in the door first, you know, however you can. I got out the Navy and I was like, I want to get into a cybersecurity position, right? But I got in here as a contractor here at MARM, so I think I just wanted to get my foot in the door. And as long as you're surrounded by people that are working within the field, I think eventually like maybe a position opens up and that's how I find this position to be honest. I think you don't, for me, I wasn't necessarily thinking like, I'm going to get that position right away. I just wanted to be around an area where the position was available.

Cody- Right. So I think that I think that helps a lot. Yeah, I'll tell you from a little trip over to NCDOD. There's definitely a lot of potential opportunities around here to.

Nancy- Yes, there's so many whenever I applied for a job, when I first got out of the Navy, there were so many contractor positions. I probably did two interviews, and they called me back. The person called me back with the second interview back right away and they're like, all right, you're hired. You start on Monday. Really? So, it was a really quick transition. So, I was like, I had a little bit of experience. I had a degree on my resume, and I had, I only had that one certification, but yeah. So, I think it helped me.

Cody-Are you concerned at all with, AI, potentially taking some of these positions away from humans?

Nancy- Yeah. I mean, I think artificial intelligence is for sure going to take some positions. It's only getting like bigger and bigger. I'm not concerned at the moment, but I mean, I guess we have to wait and see what the capabilities of AI can grow to be, you know.

Cody- Do you have any final words of wisdom, tokens of advice or anything like that you would want to tell yourself two years ago? Three years ago?

Nancy- The only advice that I have for you is pretty much get in the door, get the job, and then learn a little bit whatever you can there and then move on to a different position and get more experience. I think that's what I'm looking to do. Like growing. Yeah. I think pretty much here at MARMC, I'm topped out. I don't want to say that, but So I think pretty much done here at MARMC, I've been here for two years. I've learned what I can. I do like to learn, but 't I want to like look for other options to move forward. So here, I mean, we help out with the account process. We do we do incident response, which is not that much, but we do it from time to time incident response whenever it does occur. We do risk management, RMF for the network and we do a whole bunch of stuff in there. So, I think as far as everything that goes in the cyber department here, I think I'm pretty much, I'm good for now. I think it's time to move on and like get more experience.

Cody-Cool. Yeah. Well, thank you and I appreciate your time and will advice your advice on board when I am looking to get into the workforce.