REFERENCE FRAMEWORK · CLOUD STRATEGY

Credential Chain Security

Can You Prove Why Access Was Trusted?

A reference model for the three proof stages every credential chain passes through — and the architectural question most security reviews never ask.

THE FAILURE MODEL

The gap this framework closes.

AUTHENTICATION ≠ AUTHORIZATION EVIDENCE

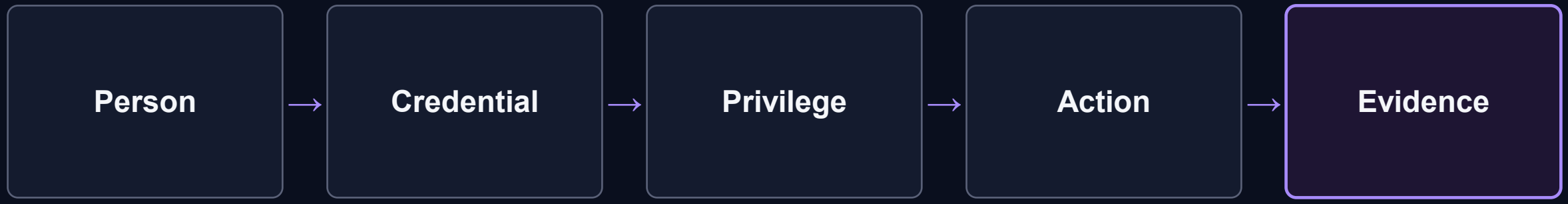
A valid credential proves a moment. It doesn't prove the chain of decisions that got it there.

Control question vs. architecture question.

Stage	Control Question	Architecture Question
Creation	Was the account created?	Was authority justified?
Elevation	Could privilege be granted?	Was elevation intentional?
Validation	Was activity logged?	Can trust be reconstructed?

THE CHAIN

Five links. Every one has to hold.



Every transition — not just every node — has to be provable, end to end.

ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Can you prove:

- [ ] who created authority?
- [ ] why privilege changed?
- [ ] who approved the transition?
- [ ] why the action was trusted?
- [ ] whether evidence survived?

REFERENCE

Framework relationship.

IDENTITY BOUNDARY INVERSION

Framework #160

Where trust lives changed.

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THIS FRAMEWORK

Credential Chain Security

How trust is proven.

Full analysis: rack2cloud.com/credential-chain-security/