

# Where Security Meets Story

Turning Risk into Understanding – and  
Understanding into Action

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# Quick Agenda

- Act I: Why We're Here
  - Why security and privacy decisions are getting harder – and what that means for leaders
- Act II: The Decision-Centered Story
  - How to frame risk so others can see the decision clearly
- Act III: Trust, Governance, & Reality
  - Where stories matter most: boards, regulators, and incidents



# R

## Restricted

The following workshop contains coarse language, personal perspectives, and potential speaker nudity.

Viewer discretion is advised.

# A bit about me...

- Husband, son, brother, friend, human to two dogs
- 45 years in security
- Believe in giving back and helping others grow...
- Began my storytelling journey when I was 12!
- Here to guide you today...





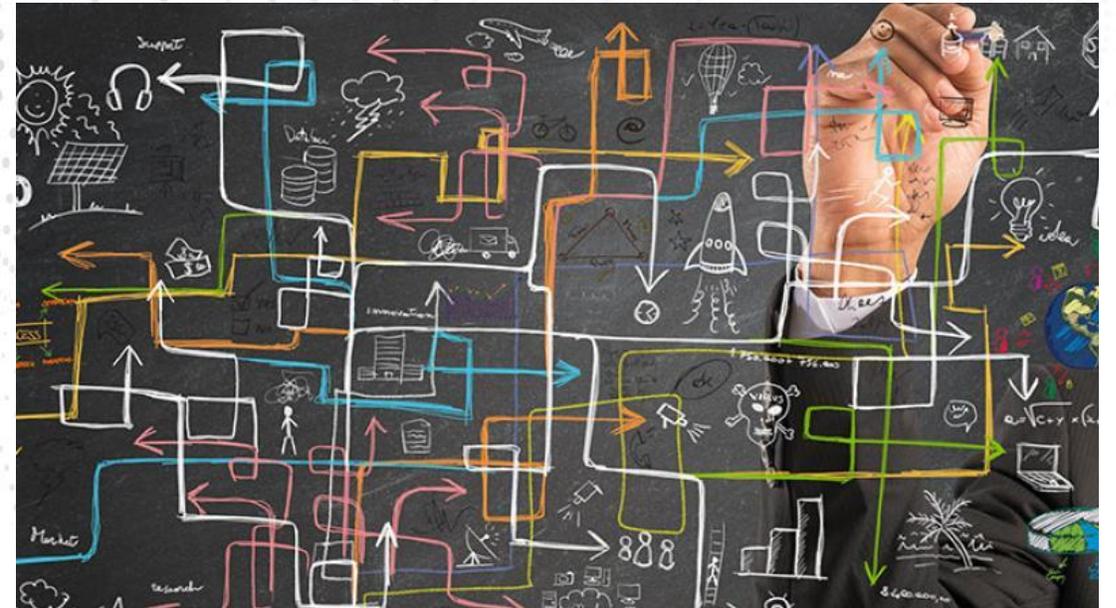
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# Act I: Why we're here

Security decisions are getting harder

# Environments more connected than before

- More complexity
- More stakeholders
- Higher consequences
- Less certainty
- Volatility in technology
- Speed of change...



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# A quick reset



- You already manage risk, either at home or at work
- You already present data
- The challenge now is influence, not explanation

*Are your stories helping people make better decisions?*

# Where security breaks down

- Controls  $\neq$  clarity
- Metrics  $\neq$  meaning
- Accuracy  $\neq$  alignment

*We're great at facts.*

*But facts without context often  
create confusion – or worse,  
false confidence*



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# Where security meets story



- We're moving now from:
  - Risk to relevance
  - Data to business decisions
  - Compliance to trust

*Story isn't decoration, it's how humans make sense of complexity.*

*It's the bridge from what we know to what others need to know.*

# Your role has changed

We've moved from “technical explainer” to “guide”:

- Not persuading
- Not selling
- We're helping others see clearly

*Our job isn't to convince executives.*

*It's to help them see the decision in front of them – clearly and honestly.*



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# Act II: The Decision-Centered Story

How decisions are really made

# Executives decide in context

- Managing competing priorities
- Limited time and increased pressure
- Incomplete information

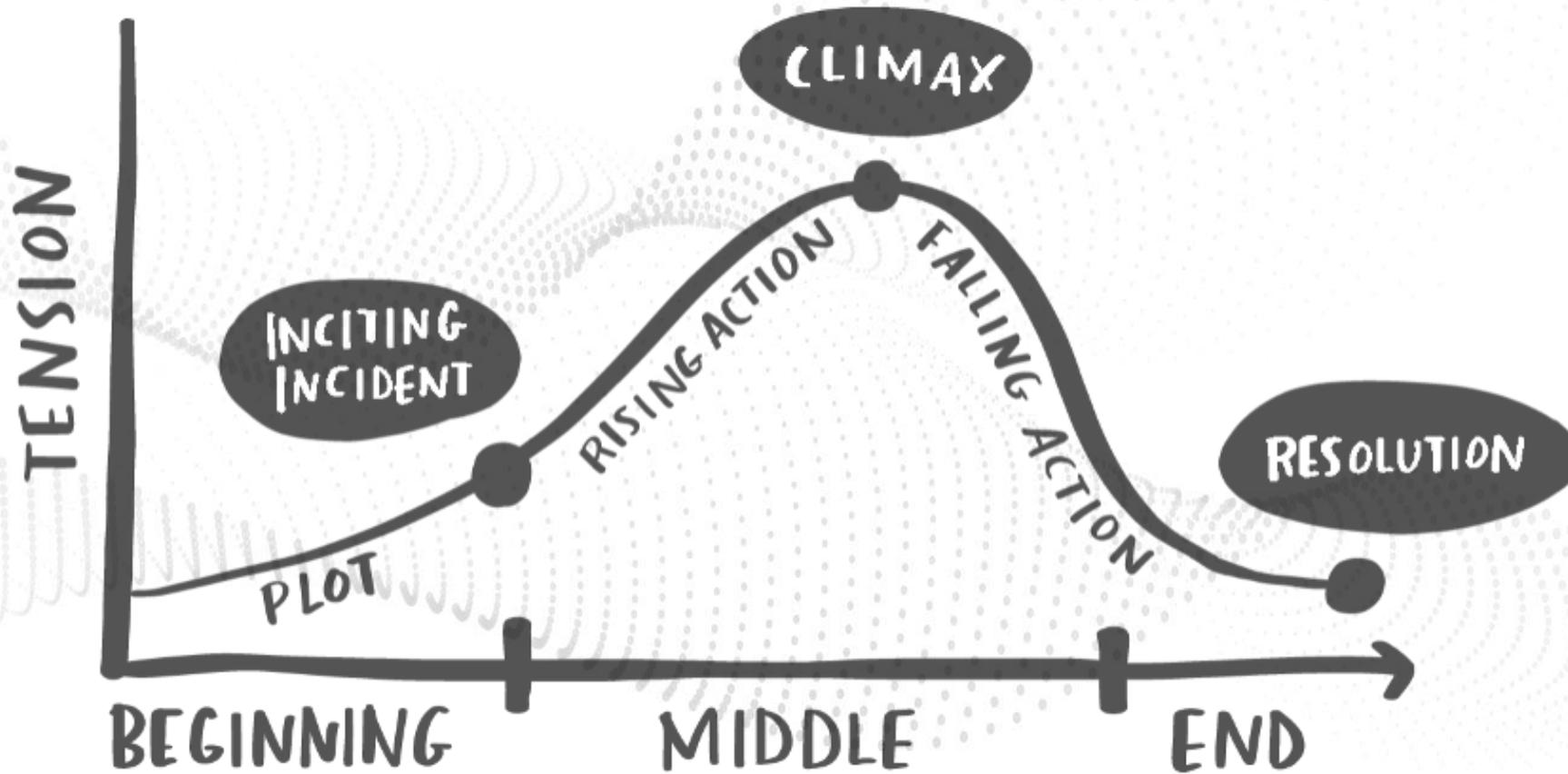
*Executives don't decide in perfect conditions.*

*They decide with partial information – and they rely on us to frame what matters.*



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# The Story Arc



# Security Story Arc



# Introducing the security story arc

A structure for decisions:

- Context
- Tension/Risk
- Decision

*This isn't a storytelling trick.  
It's a structure for helping  
people understand risk and  
make choices.*



# The beginning: context



- Business reality
- Operating constraints
- What is assumed to be true:
  - **Validate!!**

*If you skip context, people fill in the gaps themselves, and usually incorrectly!*

# The middle: tension/risk

- What is at risk?
- What trade-offs already exist?
- Who and what is impacted?

*Tension isn't fear.*

*It's clarity about consequences  
– including the cost of inaction.*



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# The end: the decision



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What business choice is being made?

- Avoid risk
- Reduce risk
- Transfer/Share risk
- Accept risk

*This is the part many stories avoid – the moment of choice. But leadership lives here.*

# Risk acceptance is not failure!

Not every risk must be eliminated:

- All risk decisions are trade-offs
- Avoiding decisions is still a decision
- Clarity protects credibility
- Conscious acceptance is leadership

*Our job is not to eliminate risk, but to ensure that when risk is accepted, it's understood.*



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# Stories don't remove risk!

Stories make risk visible:

- No guarantees
- No certainty
- Honest trade-offs

*A good story doesn't reassure – it illuminates.*



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# Where data “fits”



Evidence, not the message!

- Data **supports** the story
- Context gives it **meaning**
- Too much data hides decisions
- Data without narrative creates false precision

*If your data needs explanation, it's not ready. If it distracts from the decision – it's too much.*

# Act III: Trust, Governance & Reality

When stories face scrutiny

# Storytelling builds trust

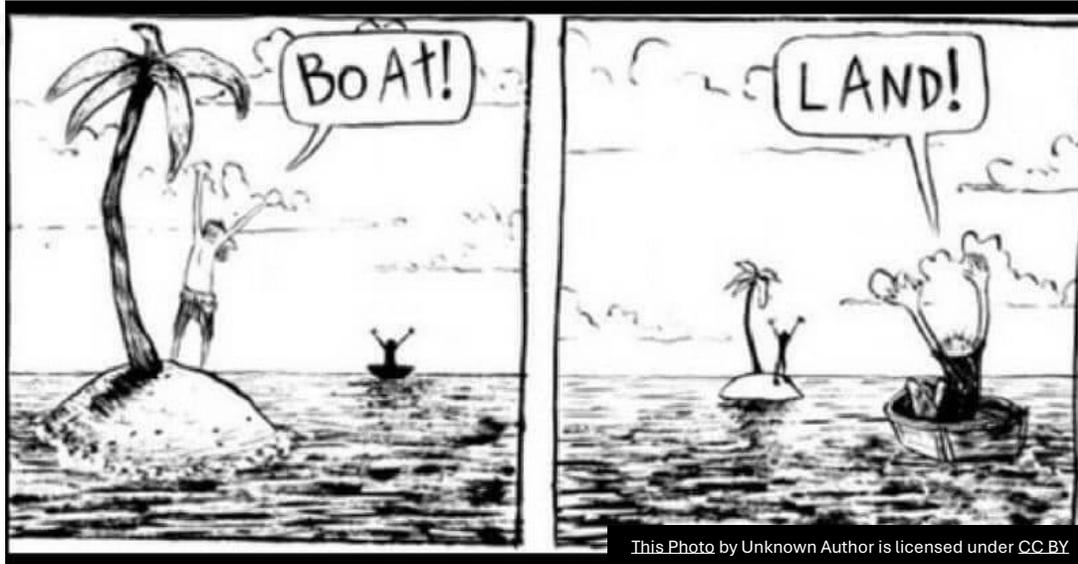
Especially in uncertain times:

- Transparency
- Consistency
- Credibility

*Trust isn't built when things go well. It's built when leaders are honest about what they don't know.*



# One risk, many stories



Your audience matters:

- Boards
- Executives/senior leaders
- Regulators
- Team members & peers

*The risk doesn't change – but the story has to.*

*Stories reflect what the organization values, not just what it fears.*

# When incidents happen

The story becomes the outcome:

- What happened?
- What was known?
- What changed?

*After an incident, your story is your reputation.*



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# The cost of a bad story



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Silence is a story too:

- Confusion
- Mistrust
- Lost credibility

*If we don't tell our story,  
someone else will.*

# Examples

Framing the decision

# Group Exercise

Let's take some time to practice what we've learned!

# From risk to decision

- We'll break up into small groups
- Let's focus on one (1) real issue
- Let's achieve one (1) decision

*This is where theory becomes real!*



# Your task

Define:

- Context
- Tension/Risk
- Decision

*Think like an executive – not a technician.*



# The rules

- No jargon
- No slides
- One story
- One decision/Call to Action

*This exercise isn't about polish – it's about seeking clarity.*



# Let's Go!

20 minutes to complete this exercise, then time to share!

# Framing the Choice

Let's share what we created!

# Applying This Tomorrow

Wrapping up today's session

# What just happened?

You framed decisions, not just stories:

- Moved beyond recording risk
- Focused on the security story arc
- Thought like an executive

*This is the difference between informing – and leading.*



# Where this shows up

- Executive updates
- Budget discussions and revisions
- Privacy reviews and assessments
- Incident briefings
- Training/awareness sessions

*You'll use this more than you realize, starting tomorrow!*



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# Your takeaway



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Clarity is a leadership skill

Storytelling isn't soft

It's responsible leadership

# Where security meets story

This is where trust, risk, and decisions meet



# Thank you!

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