Joshua Smoak: I am Joshua Smoak. I am the information security auditor here at Orbis. Right now we are going through a process which every government contractor should also be preparing for. It's called CMMC. So we are preparing our entire operation for the audit that has to be passed. You can't fail. [00:00:30] So that involves going through every single system that we have, every computer, making sure they all meet certain requirements, corporate policies, IT specific policies, HR policies, reviewing those day-to-day stuff. We're preventing any information from leaking, whether it's by our own people, which does tend to be some of the major issue we ever encounter. [00:01:00] And then we've got systems in place, security systems to prevent any unauthorized access. So we're monitoring those daily. We've got alerts set up, but that is more like a team effort than just one person.

It is funny, in this IT world, you get kind of on these different paths of certifications. So there's a lot of certifications for cybersecurity. So I'm specifically looking at the CISSP, [00:01:30] which is very high, high, high. And in terms of certifications, go for cybersecurity professionals, that would be a good place to end up. And then beyond that, I love information security. So everything we're doing, everything I'm doing now, plus what I learned from the road of getting that certification. So I would be the information security chief, information security officer. [00:02:00] We've got a great CIO. So just to have a security person at that level as the company grows, as the threats get larger.

I got to my current job in a very interesting way. I studied music and I went to college for music. And while doing that, we were working with a lot of bands. So I got into website [00:02:30] development. I started developing websites, learning different coding related to website development. And that turned into, what else can I do with this? I think everyone's seen hacker movies. They're fun to watch. It's not at all like that. And then there's like Facebook and all these startups back in the day, and they're all doing so well. So creating software ideas like that. [00:03:00] And then I just really fell in with cybersecurity. Until you get pinged, you do feel like you're guarding something. It feels good to protect the company's interest, protect our people. We're very also advocating for our people. Don't send your social security number to the random person that emailed you from the Social Security Administration [00:03:30] or things like that. So I enjoy helping our people and then also protecting our company.

Some skills I had from my previous life, as I call it, as a musician, problem solving. I was writing music for a living. And then the website development that I started doing, I didn't take any formal classes for website development. I just [00:04:00] dove in, problem solving everything. And I love it. When you figure it out, the feeling of figuring out the issue and you did it in a non-standard way, that's been the biggest part for me, is the gratification of solving a problem. My boss, Dave, he dropped me into the world of IT. So formal training, I didn't have that in the past. And he saw [00:04:30] that when we first spoke. And he said, "Okay, you're going to set up the new firewall for the South Carolina office." I said, "Okay, great. I don't know how to do that." He said, "Well, figure it out."

And I did. Being able to figure things out with good support from the brilliant people around us, it's been amazing. But formal experience, I had not.

[00:05:00] If you want to get into this field, you should go to school for it. You're going to get a job. And that's what's important. Secure yourself, secure your future. And then as you progress through the IT fields, you can choose what you want versus just learning. You can actually experience it and figure out if security's right for you, or if you want to build databases or manage databases or work at [00:05:30] help desk for any giant technology company. Like do you want to work at Apple? Then you should learn a lot about Apple computers and then you'll fix them.

Day in the life for me, right now, specifically, it's a lot different than it was a year ago, but we're preparing for CMMC certification. So every aspect of what I'm doing is [00:06:00] making sure that our evidence is in place for how we adhere to these different requirements. So whether it's a policy requirement or an actual IT systems requirement, we've got to put together a book of evidence and prove that we can do it to the standards that are required by the government. And if we don't specifically adhere to their rule, how do we comply in a non-traditional [00:06:30] way or the non-specified way? So it's a lot of discussion on how we meet certain requirements and what we can do to make them better or easier so that it's just an A plus for the entire situation.

I thought it was going to be just eight hours a day of stressful. I've got to help you fix your problem, but I don't know how. [00:07:00] It turns out that it's not necessarily that way, and it wasn't for me here, but it was a lot of team building, asking each other questions and saying, "Oh, yes, we've had that issue before. Easy fix. Done."