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Standing Privileges Are Dead: CrowdStrike Retools Identity Security for Autonomous AI Agents

SECURITY ANALYSIS | MEDIUM | CVSS 5.0

SCC Item ID	SCC-STY-2026-0242
Type	Security Analysis
Severity	MEDIUM
CVSS Base Score	5.0
Affected Products	CrowdStrike Falcon Next-Gen Identity Security, CrowdStrike Falcon AI Detection and Response (AIDR), Falcon Zero Trust Access (ZTA), AWS cloud infrastructure
Discovery Source	Rss:T1 Threatintel

Executive Summary

CrowdStrike announced Continuous Identity for AI Agents on June 15, 2026, replacing static, persistent privilege grants for autonomous AI systems with real-time, per-action authorization built on open identity standards. The announcement reflects a structural gap in enterprise IAM architectures: frameworks designed for human users cannot govern agentic AI systems that may execute thousands of actions per session without human review, creating broad attack surface across non-human identities including service accounts, API keys, and OAuth tokens. For security and technology leaders, this signals that identity governance programs must expand to cover non-human identities as a first-order risk, not an afterthought.

Technical Analysis

The core problem CrowdStrike is addressing is architectural, not tactical. Traditional privileged access management was designed around human authentication events: a person logs in, receives a privilege set, completes a task, and logs out. Autonomous AI agents break every assumption in that model. An agentic system may authenticate once and then execute thousands of downstream actions, lateral queries, API calls, and resource modifications across a session, none of which are individually reviewed or authorized by a human. Each of those actions is governed by whatever standing privilege was granted at authentication time, meaning a single compromised or misconfigured agent identity carries the blast radius of every permission it holds for the duration of its session.

CrowdStrike's Continuous Identity for AI Agents attempts to close this gap by shifting authorization from session-level to action-level. Rather than granting a privilege set at authentication and trusting it throughout a

session, the system evaluates each action request in real time against current policy, context, and behavioral signals. The solution is built on SPIFFE (Secure Production Identity Framework for Everyone) workload identity standards, which provide cryptographically verifiable identities to workloads and services independent of network location, and the OpenID Shared Signals Framework, which enables continuous context sharing across identity providers and relying parties.

The scope of the non-human identity (NHI) problem this addresses is substantial. Enterprise environments accumulate service accounts, API keys, OAuth tokens, and machine credentials at a rate that far outpaces human identity lifecycle management. These identities are frequently over-privileged, rarely rotated, poorly inventoried, and almost never subject to the same behavioral monitoring applied to human accounts. MITRE ATT&CK techniques directly relevant to this attack surface include T1078 (Valid Accounts), T1078.004 (Cloud Accounts), T1550 (Use Alternate Authentication Material), T1550.001 (Application Access Token), T1528 (Steal Application Access Token), T1098 (Account Manipulation), T1548 (Abuse Elevation Control Mechanism), T1136 (Create Account), and T1606 (Forge Web Credentials). Each of these techniques exploits the same underlying condition: identity infrastructure that was not designed to question what an authenticated identity does after it gains access.

The extension of Falcon Identity Security to AWS cloud infrastructure and the unified visibility across NHIs is operationally significant. Cloud environments are where NHI sprawl is most acute: IAM roles, Lambda execution contexts, EC2 instance profiles, and third-party SaaS integrations each create machine identities that may persist indefinitely with permissions scoped far beyond what any single workload actually requires. CrowdStrike's framing positions AIDR (AI Detection and Response) as the detection layer for agentic AI behavior anomalies, while Falcon Zero Trust Access provides the enforcement layer. Whether the real-time authorization overhead is operationally viable at the action frequency agentic systems generate remains an open question the source material does not resolve.

Action Checklist

1. Step 1: Assess NHI exposure, inventory all non-human identities in your environment: service accounts, API keys, OAuth tokens, cloud IAM roles, and any AI agent credentials. Prioritize AWS IAM roles and cloud-native service accounts given CrowdStrike's stated scope. Mapped to CIS 1.1 (Establish and Maintain Detailed Enterprise Asset Inventory) and CIS 5.1 (Establish and Maintain an Inventory of Accounts).
2. Step 2: Audit standing privileges on NHIs, identify every service account, API key, and OAuth token with persistent privilege grants. Flag any with permissions exceeding documented operational need. Mapped to NIST AC-6 (Least Privilege) and CIS 5.4 (Restrict Administrator Privileges to Dedicated Administrator Accounts).
3. Step 3: Review dormant and over-privileged NHI accounts, disable or rotate credentials for service accounts inactive beyond your policy threshold. For AI agent identities specifically, document what permissions were granted and whether standing access was required. Mapped to CIS 5.3 (Disable Dormant Accounts) and NIST AC-2 (Account Management).
4. Step 4: Evaluate your PAM program's coverage of non-human identities, most PAM deployments focus on human privileged users. Determine whether your current tooling provides visibility and lifecycle governance for machine and AI agent credentials, including rotation, least-privilege enforcement, and anomaly detection. Mapped to NIST AC-3 (Access Enforcement) and NIST AC-2 (Account Management).

5. Step 5: Update threat model to include agentic AI identity abuse, incorporate T1078.004 (Cloud Accounts), T1550.001 (Application Access Token), and T1528 (Steal Application Access Token) into your cloud identity threat scenarios. Model a compromised AI agent operating under standing over-privilege as a realistic attack path.

6. Step 6: Enable behavioral monitoring for NHIs, configure logging and alerting for anomalous API call patterns, unexpected permission escalations, and OAuth token usage outside baseline behavior. Mapped to NIST AU-2 (Event Logging), AU-6 (Audit Record Review, Analysis, and Reporting), and CIS 8.2 (Collect Audit Logs).

7. Step 7: Brief leadership, frame this as a structural identity governance gap, not a vendor product decision. Organizations deploying AI agents, automation, or cloud-native workloads are exposed regardless of CrowdStrike adoption.

IR / Forensic Enrichment

Triage Priority	STANDARD
Escalation Criteria	Escalate to urgent if discovery reveals any AI agent or NHI credential with standing administrative or data-exfiltration-capable permissions that has produced anomalous CloudTrail API call volumes, unexpected AssumeRole chains, or OAuth token usage from unrecognized source IPs within the retention window, indicating possible active exploitation rather than latent exposure.
Recovery Notes	After rotating or scoping down AI agent and NHI credentials, verify that all dependent automation, CI/CD pipelines, and CrowdStrike Falcon integrations continue to authenticate correctly under the new least-privilege grants — broken service accounts from over-aggressive rotation are a common recovery failure mode. Monitor AWS CloudTrail and IdP audit logs for a minimum of 30 days post-rotation for any resumed anomalous API activity that might indicate a threat actor retained a secondary credential not captured in the initial inventory. Update PAM vault records and the NHI account inventory to reflect the post-remediation privilege state as the new authorized baseline.
Forensic Artifacts	AWS CloudTrail management and data event logs filtered on the AI agent role ARN — specifically AssumeRole, GetCallerIdentity, and any data-plane API calls (S3:GetObject, Lambda:InvokeFunction) — covering the full retention window, to reconstruct what actions the agent performed under standing privilege | IdP audit log (e.g., Okta System Log, Azure AD Sign-in Logs) filtered for OAuth token grants and refresh events issued to machine/service clients, including source IP, grant scope, and last-used timestamp, to identify token replay or unexpected access patterns | AWS IAM credential report (CSV) and get-account-authorization-details output (JSON) captured at the time of discovery — these are point-in-time records of which NHI credentials existed, their privilege scope, and their last-use date before any remediation altered the state | CrowdStrike Falcon AIDR integration configuration and API key metadata (key ID, creation date, last-used timestamp, associated policy scope) exported from the Falcon console before any key rotation — documents the standing privilege grant structure that is the subject of this advisory | CI/CD pipeline secrets store audit logs (e.g., GitHub Actions audit log, HashiCorp Vault audit log) for any access to secrets associated with AI agent or NHI credentials — these logs reveal whether automation credentials were accessed outside expected pipeline execution context, a key indicator of pre-exfiltration reconnaissance

Per-Action IR Details

Step 1: Assess NHI exposure — inventory all non-human identities in your environment: service accounts, API keys, OAuth tokens, cloud IAM roles, and any AI agent credentials. Prioritize AWS IAM roles and cloud-native service accounts given CrowdStrike's stated scope. Mapped to CIS 1.1 (Establish and Maintain Detailed Enterprise Asset Inventory) and CIS 5.1 (Establish and Maintain an Inventory of Accounts).

NIST Phase: Preparation

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §2 — Preparation: Establish visibility into assets and identities before an incident occurs to enable effective detection and response

Controls: CIS 1.1 (Establish and Maintain Detailed Enterprise Asset Inventory), CIS 5.1 (Establish and Maintain an Inventory of Accounts), NIST AC-2 (Account Management)

Compensating: Run `aws iam generate-credential-report && aws iam get-credential-report` to enumerate all IAM users, roles, and access key ages. For OAuth tokens, query your IdP's audit API (e.g., Okta System Log API for `application.lifecycle` events). Use osquery with `SELECT * FROM users; SELECT * FROM keychain_items;` on endpoints. Build a CSV pivot of all service accounts from Active Directory with `Get-ADServiceAccount -Filter * | Select Name, Enabled, LastLogonDate` — flag anything with a LastLogonDate older than your policy threshold.

Evidence: Before any credential rotation or account disablement, export current AWS IAM credential report (JSON), active OAuth token grants from your IdP audit log, and AD service account last-logon data. These reflect standing privilege state at a point in time and will be overwritten once any rotation begins. This snapshot is your pre-remediation baseline — it is the evidence that demonstrates scope of NHI exposure if a later investigation requires reconstruction of what an AI agent or compromised service account could access.

Step 2: Audit standing privileges on NHIs — identify every service account, API key, and OAuth token with persistent privilege grants. Flag any with permissions exceeding documented operational need. Mapped to NIST AC-6 (Least Privilege) and CIS 5.4 (Restrict Administrator Privileges to Dedicated Administrator Accounts).

NIST Phase: Preparation

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §2 — Preparation: Reducing attack surface by enforcing least privilege on NHIs limits blast radius if an AI agent credential is compromised

Controls: NIST AC-6 (Least Privilege), CIS 5.4 (Restrict Administrator Privileges to Dedicated Administrator Accounts)

Compensating: Use `aws iam get-account-authorization-details` to pull all IAM policies attached to roles and users, then pipe to `jq` filtering for roles with `Effect: Allow` and `Action: *` or `Resource: *` — these are your standing over-privileged NHIs. For OAuth, review scopes in your IdP's application grants; anything with `admin`, `write`, or `offline_access` on a machine identity warrants a flag. Document findings in a privilege matrix spreadsheet before any changes.

Evidence: Capture the full IAM authorization details export and IdP OAuth grant list before modifying any policy. These are non-volatile but will change the moment you remediate — preserving the pre-audit snapshot is essential to demonstrate the original over-privilege state for compliance evidence or post-incident review. If an AI agent was already operating under standing over-privilege and any anomalous API calls occurred, correlate against AWS CloudTrail `userAgent` field filtered for the agent's role ARN before revoking.

Step 3: Review dormant and over-privileged NHI accounts — disable or rotate credentials for service accounts inactive beyond your policy threshold. For AI agent identities specifically, document what permissions were granted and whether standing access was required. Mapped to CIS 5.3 (Disable Dormant Accounts) and NIST AC-2 (Account Management).

NIST Phase: Containment

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §3.3 — Containment Strategy: Disabling dormant NHI credentials and rotating over-privileged AI agent tokens limits ongoing exposure from standing access grants

Controls: CIS 5.3 (Disable Dormant Accounts), NIST AC-2 (Account Management)

Compensating: Before disabling, run `aws cloudtrail lookup-events --lookup-attributes AttributeKey=Username,AttributeValue=` filtered to the last 90 days to confirm dormancy. For OAuth tokens, check

your IdP's last-used timestamp on each grant. Disable AWS access keys with `aws iam update-access-key --access-key-id --status Inactive` rather than deleting, preserving the key ID for forensic traceability. Document AI agent identity ARNs, associated OAuth scopes, and last-use timestamps in a remediation log before any credential rotation.

Evidence: Before rotating or disabling any NHI credential, capture AWS CloudTrail logs for the target role/key covering the maximum lookback period available — specifically filtering `eventName` for `AssumeRole`, `GetCallerIdentity`, `InvokeAPI`, and any data-plane events. For OAuth tokens being revoked, export the IdP's token usage history (Okta: `GET /api/v1/logs?filter=target.id eq ""`). Rotating an AI agent credential without this capture destroys evidence of what actions that identity may have already performed under standing privilege.

Step 4: Evaluate your PAM program's coverage of non-human identities — most PAM deployments focus on human privileged users. Determine whether your current tooling provides visibility and lifecycle governance for machine and AI agent credentials, including rotation, least-privilege enforcement, and anomaly detection. Mapped to NIST AC-3 (Access Enforcement) and D3-UAP (User Account Permissions).

NIST Phase: Preparation

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §2 — Preparation: Evaluating tooling gaps in PAM coverage for NHIs is a preparedness activity that determines detection and response capability before an agentic identity incident occurs

Controls: NIST AC-3 (Access Enforcement), NIST AC-6 (Least Privilege)

Compensating: Map your existing PAM vaulted accounts against the NHI inventory built in Step 1 — any service account, API key, or AI agent credential not in the vault is a coverage gap. Use osquery scheduled queries (`SELECT * FROM listening_ports; SELECT * FROM processes WHERE name LIKE '%agent%';`) to identify machine processes making outbound API calls that have no corresponding vaulted credential. Document gaps in a PAM coverage matrix and assign owners. Free tooling: HashiCorp Vault Community Edition provides secrets lifecycle management for NHIs at no cost.

Evidence: This step does not alter live credential state, so no volatile capture is required before execution. However, document the current PAM coverage state (screenshot or export of vaulted accounts) before any PAM scope expansion begins, to establish a before/after record for audit purposes. If PAM logs exist, export the access history for machine accounts from the PAM vault console — gaps in rotation frequency for AI agent credentials are a finding in themselves.

Step 5: Update threat model to include agentic AI identity abuse — incorporate T1078.004 (Cloud Accounts), T1550.001 (Application Access Token), and T1528 (Steal Application Access Token) into your cloud identity threat scenarios. Model a compromised AI agent operating under standing over-privilege as a realistic attack path.

NIST Phase: Preparation

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §2 — Preparation: Threat modeling agentic AI identity abuse scenarios informs detection rule development and playbook scoping before an incident involving NHI compromise

Compensating: Draft a one-page attack scenario: attacker extracts a CrowdStrike Falcon AIDR integration's OAuth token (stored as an environment variable or in a CI/CD secrets store), replays it against the Falcon API or AWS service it authenticates to, and issues thousands of API calls under the agent's standing privilege without triggering human review. Walk this path against your current detection stack — identify whether AWS CloudTrail, your IdP audit log, or any alerting rule would fire on token replay at scale. Use MITRE ATT&CK Navigator to visualize coverage gaps for T1078.004 and T1528 against your NHI attack surface.

Evidence: This is a planning step that does not alter live system state. No volatile capture is required. Preserve the threat model document and ATT&CK Navigator layer file as artifacts — these serve as the analytical baseline against which post-incident findings will be compared and will support post-incident review documentation under NIST 800-61r3 §4.

Step 6: Enable behavioral monitoring for NHIs — configure logging and alerting for anomalous API call patterns, unexpected permission escalations, and OAuth token usage outside baseline behavior. Mapped to NIST AU-2 (Event Logging), AU-6 (Audit Record Review, Analysis, and Reporting), and CIS 8.2 (Collect Audit

Logs).

NIST Phase: Detection Analysis

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §3.2 — Detection and Analysis: Configuring behavioral baselines and anomaly alerting for NHI API activity enables detection of AI agent credential abuse operating under standing privilege

Controls: NIST AU-2 (Event Logging), NIST AU-6 (Audit Record Review, Analysis, And Reporting), CIS 8.2 (Collect Audit Logs)

Compensating: Enable AWS CloudTrail data events for S3 and Lambda in addition to management events — AI agent actions frequently touch data-plane APIs that management-only CloudTrail misses. Write a Sigma rule detecting `AssumeRole` events where the assumed role ARN matches a known AI agent identity and the `eventCount` within a 5-minute window exceeds your documented baseline (e.g., >50 API calls/min for a batch agent is anomalous for an interactive agent). For OAuth, configure your IdP to alert on token grants to machine clients outside business hours or from unexpected source IPs. Ship logs to a free SIEM (Wazuh or OpenSearch) for correlation.

Evidence: Before enabling new logging or modifying CloudTrail configuration, export the current CloudTrail trail configuration (`aws cloudtrail describe-trails --include-shadow-trails`) and any existing log filters. This preserves evidence of the pre-monitoring state and ensures that any AI agent activity that occurred before monitoring was enabled is not retroactively obscured. Review the existing CloudTrail S3 bucket for historical NHI API activity going back to your log retention window before making configuration changes.

Step 7: Brief leadership — frame this as a structural identity governance gap, not a vendor product decision. Organizations deploying AI agents, automation, or cloud-native workloads are exposed regardless of CrowdStrike adoption.

NIST Phase: Post Incident

Reference: NIST 800-61r3 §4 — Post-Incident Activity: Leadership communication following identification of a structural IAM gap drives policy and investment decisions that prevent recurrence

Controls: NIST AC-1 (Policy And Procedures)

Compensating: Prepare a one-page executive brief quantifying NHI exposure: number of unvaulted service accounts, count of API keys older than 90 days, number of AI agent or automation identities with standing over-privilege, and estimated blast radius if any single NHI credential were exfiltrated and replayed. Tie to business risk (data exfiltration, unauthorized cloud spend, supply chain pivot) rather than technical detail. Reference the CrowdStrike announcement as external validation of the structural gap, not as a product recommendation.

Evidence: Attach the NHI inventory snapshot, privilege audit findings, and PAM coverage gap matrix from Steps 1–4 as supporting evidence for the leadership brief. These documents establish the factual basis for the governance gap and should be retained as pre-remediation baseline records. No volatile capture is required for this step, but all prior evidence artifacts should be stored in a write-protected, access-controlled location before the brief to prevent inadvertent modification.

Detection Guidance

There are no IOCs associated with this story; it is a vendor capability announcement, not an active campaign. However, the NHI threat surface it addresses produces specific detectable patterns that security teams should be hunting now, independent of any vendor tool adoption.

In cloud environments (particularly AWS), hunt for IAM roles and service accounts with AdministratorAccess or wildcard resource policies that have not been accessed in 30+ days, these represent standing over-privilege with no operational justification. Review CloudTrail logs for API calls from service account or automated pipeline identities outside business hours or from unexpected source IPs. Flag any single identity making high-volume, diverse API calls across services in a short window, a pattern consistent with an agentic system operating under over-broad standing privilege.

For OAuth tokens and application access tokens (T1550.001, T1528), monitor for token reuse from unexpected geographic locations, tokens persisting beyond their documented expiry, and tokens granted scopes that exceed the documented function of the issuing application. Identity providers and SaaS audit logs are the primary source for this data; SIEM ingestion of these logs is a prerequisite.

For service accounts (T1078, T1078.004), monitor for password or key changes outside your provisioning pipeline, new role assignments to existing service accounts, and interactive logon attempts using service account credentials. Mapped to NIST AU-6 (Audit Record Review, Analysis, and Reporting) and NIST AU-2 (Event Logging).

For AI agent-specific behavior, if your organization is currently deploying agentic AI systems, establish a behavioral baseline for each agent identity: expected API endpoints, call volumes per session, resource types accessed, and time-of-day patterns. Deviations from that baseline, especially lateral movement to resources outside the agent's documented function, should trigger investigation. Mapped to NIST AU-6 (Audit Record Review, Analysis, and Reporting) and NIST SI-4 (System Monitoring).

Framework Mappings

MITRE-ATTACK

- **T1078.004** — Cloud Accounts
- **T1550** — Use Alternate Authentication Material
- **T1098** — Account Manipulation
- **T1528** — Steal Application Access Token
- **T1550.001** — Application Access Token
- **T1078** — Valid Accounts
- **T1548** — Abuse Elevation Control Mechanism
- **T1136** — Create Account
- **T1606** — Forge Web Credentials

NIST-800-53R5

- **AC-2** — Account Management
- **AC-6** — Least Privilege
- **IA-2** — Identification and Authentication (Organizational Users)
- **IA-5** — Authenticator Management
- **CM-6** — Configuration Settings
- **AC-3** — Access Enforcement
- **IA-8** — Identification and Authentication (Non-Organizational Users)

OWASP-TOP10-2021

- **A01:2021** — Broken Access Control
- **A07:2021** — Identification and Authentication Failures

CIS-V8

- **6.1** — Establish an Access Granting Process

- **6.2** — Establish an Access Revoking Process
- **3.3** — Configure Data Access Control Lists
- **6.3** — Require MFA for Externally-Exposed Applications
- **6.4** — Require MFA for Remote Network Access
- **6.5** — Require MFA for Administrative Access
- **5.4** — Restrict Administrator Privileges to Dedicated Administrator Accounts
- **6.8** — Define and Maintain Role-Based Access Control

SOC2-TSC

- **CC6.1** — The entity implements logical access security software, infrastructure, and architectures over protected information assets
- **CC9.2** — Manages risks associated with vendors and business partners

HIPAA-SECURITY

- **164.312(a)(1)** — Access Control
- **164.312(d)** — Person or Entity Authentication

ISO-27001-2022

- **A.8.8** — Management of technical vulnerabilities
- **A.5.21** — Managing information security in the ICT supply chain
- **A.5.23** — Information security for use of cloud services

MITRE ATT&CK Mapping

Technique ID	Technique Name	Tactic
T1078.004	Cloud Accounts	Defense-Evasion
T1550	Use Alternate Authentication Material	Defense-Evasion
T1098	Account Manipulation	Persistence
T1528	Steal Application Access Token	Credential-Access
T1550.001	Application Access Token	Defense-Evasion
T1078	Valid Accounts	Defense-Evasion
T1548	Abuse Elevation Control Mechanism	Privilege-Escalation
T1136	Create Account	Persistence
T1606	Forge Web Credentials	Credential-Access

Sources

Source	URL	Tier
Blog	https://www.crowdstrike.com/en-us/blog/crowdstrike-announces-contin...	T3
	https://www.crowdstrike.com/en-us/blog/crowdstrike-announces-contin...	T3
	https://cybermagazine.com/news/ai-cyber-attacks-risk-tech-this-week...	T3
	https://www.pymnts.com/cybersecurity/2026/crowdstrike-launches-cont...	T3
CrowdStrike Falcon AIDR: AI Detection & Response	https://www.crowdstrike.com/en-us/platform/falcon-aidr-ai-detection...	T3

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