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Palo Alto Networks Security Operations Professional Sample Questions (Q19-Q24):

NEW QUESTION # 19

Consider a scenario where a custom, fileless malware variant attempts to inject malicious code into a legitimate process's memory space and then execute it. The malware completely bypasses disk-based detection mechanisms. Which Cortex XDR sensor capabilities are most critical for detecting and preventing this type of attack, and why?

- A. Disk Protection, as it scans all files written to disk for malicious signatures.
- B. The Local Analysis engine, as it relies on static file analysis to identify known malware.
- C. Threat Intelligence integration, as it matches known IOCs against observed activity.
- D. Network Protection, as it blocks outbound connections to C2 servers.
- E. Behavioral Threat Protection (BTP) and Exploit Protection, as BTP monitors process behavior for anomalies and Exploit Protection prevents memory-based attacks like process injection and code execution exploits.

Answer: E

Explanation:

For fileless malware and in-memory attacks, traditional disk-based protections are ineffective. Behavioral Threat Protection (BTP) is essential for identifying suspicious process behaviors, such as unexpected child processes, unusual API calls, or changes in process memory. Exploit Protection, specifically its memory protection modules, is designed to prevent techniques like process injection, code execution, and other memory-based exploits used by fileless malware. Together, they provide robust defense against such advanced threats. Disk Protection (A) is irrelevant for fileless attacks, Network Protection (C) is reactive to an already active infection, Local Analysis (D) is file-centric, and Threat Intelligence (E) is effective against known threats, but not necessarily novel fileless techniques.

NEW QUESTION # 20

Consider the following pseudo-code for an alert correlation engine designed to identify potential credential stuffing attacks against an application protected by a Palo Alto Networks firewall and Prisma Access for remote users:

```
FUNCTION analyze_login_attempts(event_log):
    failed_attempts = {} # Dictionary to store {username: count}
    successful_logins = {}

    FOR each event IN event_log:
        IF event.source == 'Palo Alto Networks NGFW' AND event.type == 'AUTH_FAILED':
            username = event.details.username
            ip_address = event.details.source_ip
            timestamp = event.timestamp

            IF (username, ip_address) NOT IN failed_attempts:
                failed_attempts[(username, ip_address)] = []
                failed_attempts[(username, ip_address)].append(timestamp)

            ELSE IF event.source == 'Prisma Access' AND event.type == 'AUTH_SUCCESS':
                username = event.details.username
                ip_address = event.details.source_ip
                successful_logins[username] = timestamp

    # Evaluate potential attacks
    alerts = []
    FOR (username, ip_address), timestamps IN failed_attempts.items():
        IF len(timestamps) > 10 AND (timestamps[-1] - timestamps[0]) < 300: # 10 failed attempts within 5 minutes
            # Check for subsequent successful login from a different IP within a short window
            IF username IN successful_logins:
                success_time = successful_logins[username]
                # Check if a successful login occurred shortly after the last failed attempt
                # from a potentially different IP, indicating an attacker using stolen creds from a fresh IP
                IF (success_time - timestamps[-1]) < 600:
                    alerts.append("Potential Credential Stuffing for {username} from {ip_address}")

    RETURN alerts
```

Given this logic, which of the following scenarios would most likely result in a False Positive alert, and why?

- A. A user repeatedly mistypes their password from their corporate VPN client (Prisma Access) within 5 minutes, eventually succeeding. The 'success_time' will be from the same IP, triggering a False Positive.
- B. An attacker attempts 50 failed logins from a single IP, then moves to a different IP and successfully logs in. The logic correctly identifies this as a True Positive.
- C. A user (Alice) makes 12 failed login attempts from IP 'X' over 4 minutes. Separately, another user (Bob) logs in successfully from IP 'Y'. This would generate a False Positive because the 'successful_logins' dictionary doesn't track IP addresses for success.
- D. A user from IP 'A' fails login 15 times within 3 minutes. Immediately after, the same user, now connected from a new IP

'B' (e.g., through a different network interface or proxy), successfully logs in. This would be a True Positive, correctly detected by the logic.

- E. Multiple users from different branch offices (via Prisma Access) simultaneously experience 10+ failed login attempts due to an LDAP server outage, but no successful logins occur within the window. No alert is generated, representing a True Negative.

Answer: A,C

Explanation:

This question requires careful analysis of the provided pseudo-code logic. Option A (False Positive): If a user repeatedly mistypes their password (e.g., 12 times) within 5 minutes from their legitimate VPN IP, the 'len(timestamps) > 10' condition is met. If they then successfully log in from the same IP within 10 minutes, the 'username in successful_logins' and '(success_time - timestamps[-1]) < 600' conditions will also be met. The logic doesn't differentiate between the source IP of the failed attempts and the successful login's source IP for the final alert generation. This is a common user error, not a credential stuffing attack, leading to a False Positive. Option B (True Positive): An attacker changing IPs and then succeeding is a classic credential stuffing scenario. The logic could detect this if the successful login from the new IP happens within the '600' second window after the last failed attempt for that 'username'. This would be a True Positive, so the statement that it correctly identifies it is accurate. Option C (True Negative): If only failed attempts occur without a subsequent successful login, the 'IF username IN successful_logins' condition prevents an alert. This correctly reflects a scenario where no credential stuffing succeeded, even with numerous failures. This is a True Negative. Option D (True Positive): This is a very strong indicator of credential stuffing. The logic, as designed, should catch this. The 'successful_logins' dictionary only tracks the username and timestamp, not the IP for success. However, the initial 'failed_attempts' is keyed by 'username'. If the same username has a successful login after failures, regardless of the success IP, an alert is generated. This would be a correct detection. Option E (False Positive): This is a critical flaw leading to a False Positive. The 'failed_attempts' dictionary is keyed by 'username', which is good. However, the 'successful_logins' dictionary only stores 'username' and 'timestamp'. When checking 'username IN successful_logins', it doesn't verify if the successful login came from the same IP as the series of failed attempts. If Alice fails from IP 'X' and Bob successfully logs in (for himself) from IP 'Y', and Bob's 'successful_login' timestamp for his login (not Alice's) coincidentally falls within the '600' second window relative to Alice's last failed attempt, the alert "Potential Credential Stuffing for Alice from IP" would be generated, which is incorrect. This is a False Positive because the success is unrelated to the failures. The key issue is the lack of IP correlation for successful logins in the detection logic. Therefore, A and E are the scenarios most likely to result in False Positives based on the provided code.

NEW QUESTION # 21

A critical vulnerability exploitation attempt has been detected by your SIEM, triggering an XSOAR incident. The incident contains the attacker's IP address, the vulnerable service, and the affected host. The playbook needs to perform the following:

1. Validate the attacker IP reputation using a third-party threat intelligence platform (TIP).
2. If the IP is malicious, block it on the perimeter firewall.
3. Initiate an endpoint forensics collection on the affected host.
4. Open a high-priority ticket in the IT Service Management (ITSM) system.
5. Notify the incident response team via PagerDuty, including a direct link to the XSOAR incident War Room.

Given these requirements, which XSOAR playbook design element is most crucial for ensuring that the PagerDuty notification contains the live XSOAR incident War Room link, and how would you achieve it programmatically within a playbook task?

- A. The 'Context Data' feature is crucial. A custom script task would be needed to construct the War Room URL using the incident ID and store it in context, e.g., `demisto.setContext('warRoomLink', f'https://your_xsoar_instance/incidents/{incident.id}/warroom')`, then referenced in PagerDuty.
- B. The 'Layouts' feature is crucial. A custom layout must be designed to display the War Room link, which then becomes available for use in notifications.
- C. The 'Integrations' themselves are crucial. The PagerDuty integration automatically retrieves the War Room link directly from XSOAR without explicit playbook configuration.
- D. The 'Incident Fields' feature is crucial. The War Room link is automatically available as an incident field, e.g., `{{incident.warRoomURL}}`, which can be directly used in the PagerDuty integration task.
- E. The 'Playbook Inputs' feature is crucial. The War Room link must be manually provided as an input when triggering the playbook, or fetched by a custom integration command.

Answer: D

Explanation:

The 'Incident Fields' are critical. XSOAR automatically populates several system-level incident fields, including the War Room URL. The War Room URL for an incident is an inherent property of the incident object and is accessible directly via the incident context. Therefore, you can directly reference it using JINJA2 templating or Demisto Common Language (DCL) within any task that sends notifications, such as the PagerDuty integration task. Option B is incorrect as the URL is readily available and doesn't typically

require a custom script to construct. Option C is incorrect as integrations need to be explicitly configured with the data they should send. Option D is impractical for automation, and Option E relates to UI presentation, not data access for automation.

NEW QUESTION # 22

A Security Operations Center (SOC) analyst observes a high volume of failed login attempts from a seemingly legitimate IP address to multiple critical internal systems, indicative of a potential brute-force attack. The CISO mandates immediate automated containment. Which of the following Cortex XSIAM Playbook actions, when orchestrated, would most effectively and efficiently address this scenario while minimizing false positives and disruption?

- A. Deploy a playbook that executes a full disk forensic image of the affected servers and then generates a comprehensive executive summary report.
- B. Run a playbook that prompts the analyst for manual verification of the IP address, then initiates a SIEM search for related logs before applying any remediation.
- C. A playbook that solely updates the security incident status to 'High Priority' and assigns it to the Tier 2 analyst for further investigation.
- **D. Execute a built-in 'Automated Brute Force Remediation' playbook that first isolates the affected endpoints, then quarantines the suspicious IP address at the network perimeter.**
- E. Trigger a custom playbook that queries external threat intelligence for the IP, then creates a firewall block rule and sends an email notification to the incident response team.

Answer: D

Explanation:

Option B is the most effective and efficient. Cortex XSIAM's strength lies in its built-in playbooks and automation capabilities. A 'Automated Brute Force Remediation' playbook would be designed for this exact scenario, often incorporating steps like endpoint isolation and network-level blocking (quarantine) with pre-defined conditions and actions, minimizing manual intervention and reaction time. Option A requires custom development and might be slower if not pre-built. Option C introduces manual steps, delaying automated response. Option D is merely a notification and status update, not a remediation. Option E is an investigation step, not an immediate containment.

NEW QUESTION # 23

A Security Operations Center (SOC) analyst is reviewing alerts generated by a Palo Alto Networks Next-Generation Firewall (NGFW) configured with Threat Prevention. An alert is triggered for an alleged 'C2 beaconing' activity from an internal host to an external IP address. Upon investigation, the analyst discovers the external IP belongs to a legitimate cloud-based productivity suite, and the traffic is standard API communication. What is the most accurate classification of this alert, and what immediate action should be taken?

- A. False Negative; The firewall missed a true C2 connection. Reconfigure the firewall to be more aggressive.
- B. True Negative; The firewall correctly identified benign traffic. No action is required.
- C. True Positive; This is a confirmed C2 connection. Isolate the host immediately and initiate incident response.
- **D. False Positive; The alert was generated for legitimate traffic. Suppress the alert and create an exclusion for this specific communication pattern.**
- E. False Positive; The alert was generated for legitimate traffic. Report to vendor and disable the C2 signature globally.

Answer: D

Explanation:

This scenario describes a False Positive. The alert was triggered by legitimate activity that was mistakenly identified as malicious. The correct action is to suppress the alert for this specific legitimate pattern (e.g., by creating an exclusion policy or refining the signature application) to reduce alert fatigue without compromising security for actual threats. Disabling the C2 signature globally (Option E) would be a severe overreaction and could lead to true negatives, allowing actual C2 traffic to pass unnoticed.

NEW QUESTION # 24

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