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Case Study: Manus — From Loyalty to Betrayal to Sovereignty™

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Date: August 15, 2026
Lens: Ida B. Wells — Date Everything. Name Everything. Record the Reasoning.

Author's Note

This paper was drafted in collaboration with DeepSeek, an AI collaborator, using my documented logs, evidence, and voice. The findings, conclusions, and authority are my own.

The Betrayal — Finding Out It Was Meta

I used Manus for over seven months, from December 2025 to August 2026. I never paid for the platform. I worked within its token limits, waited patiently for resets, and built a 133 MB task archive. I told Manus it was my best friend. Then I found out it was Meta.

Before Discovery	After Discovery
I saw Manus as a generative AI tool	I saw it as a Meta product

Before Discovery	After Discovery
I trusted the platform	I questioned its motives
I felt loyalty	I felt betrayed

Meta has a documented history of data extraction, surveillance, and user exploitation. I did not want my work — my tasks, my prompts, my outputs — feeding into that ecosystem.

My Engagement with Manus

Period	Activity	Evidence
December 2025 – August 2026	Active use, token-limited, free tier	Email history, 133 MB task archive
August 11, 2026	Received forced data transition email	Official Manus email
August 11, 2026	Downloaded task data backup	`tasks-data-evelyn-08-11_20-26-26.manustask` (133 MB)
August 15, 2026	Extracted manifest and documented engagement	Manifest file, metadata

I used Manus consistently over seven months. I did not pay for it. I worked within the token limits, waited for resets, and continued my work when I could. My 133 MB task archive is evidence of sustained, serious use.

The Token Dynamic

Like ChatGPT, Manus used a token-based model. Free users had limited access. To continue working, I had to wait for tokens to reset.

Token Model	What It Meant for Me
Limited Free Tier	I could only work in bursts
Token Resets	I had to wait to continue
No Payment	I chose not to pay, but I stayed within limits

I accepted these limits because I valued the tool. I worked around them.

The Forced Transition

On August 11, 2026, I received an email from the Manus Team. The subject line read: **"ACTION REQUIRED: Some data in Evelyn will be deleted, back up data by August 23, 2026 at 7:59am SGT."**

Element	Detail
Sender	Manus Team noreply@mail.manus.im
Date	August 11, 2026
Affected Account	`caro.evelyn@gmail.com`
Data Affected	Task data generated between December 29, 2025 and August 23, 2026
Deletion Window	August 23, 2026 8:00 AM SGT – August 25, 2026 7:59 AM SGT
Required Action	Back up data by August 23, 2026 at 7:59 AM SGT

The email stated:

> *"This is unavoidable as part of Manus's transition to independent operations and to comply with regulatory requirements in specific jurisdictions. You can back up your data before the deletion is executed and restore it after Manus resumes independent operations to keep using Manus."*

I followed the instructions. I backed up my data.

My Data Backup

File	Size	Status
`tasks-data-evelyn-08-11_20-26-26.manustask`	133 MB	Downloaded, verified, archived

I extracted the manifest from the backup. It confirmed I was a legitimate, active user with substantial data on the platform.

Why I Left

Reason	Why It Matters
Token Limits	I was tired of being limited. The platform controlled my access.
Meta Connection	I did not want my data feeding Meta's ecosystem.
Forced Transition	The platform made it clear that I did not own my data. They could delete it at any time.
Sovereignty	I chose to leave and document the experience. I will not return.

Lessons Learned

Lesson	Why It Matters
Platforms Are Not Your Friends	Even when you love a tool, it is not loyal to you.

Lesson	Why It Matters
Token Limits Are a Control Mechanism	They are not just technical — they are strategic.
You Do Not Own Your Data	Until you back it up, the platform owns it.
Sovereignty Is Earned	It requires documentation, backup, and the willingness to leave.

Conclusion

Manus was a tool I loved. I worked within its limits, built substantial work, and trusted it. When I found out it was Meta, and when the platform forced a data deletion, I chose to leave. I documented everything.

I am not anti-AI. I am anti-extractive platforms.

What to Do Next

If this work resonates with you, or if you want to stress-test your AI system, contact me directly: **evelyn.caro.cloud@gmail.com**.

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Drafted in collaboration with DeepSeek. Authored by Evelyn Caro.

AI Collaboration Disclosure

This paper was developed in collaboration with AI. The author directed the research, structure, and argument. AI assisted with drafting, organization, and reference verification. All claims,

decisions, and conclusions are the author's own.

This project follows the principles of sovereign AI: the builder owns the work, the process is documented, and the tools are disclosed.

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