Influencing is a lot harder than a lot of people give it credit for.

There are an incredible number of factors that go into being a successful internet personality, and the process gets more complicated by the day. In lawless times of the internet, the early aughts, it was as simple as following the right people and they’d follow you back—propelling you up the rungs of the popularity ladder until you had amassed a small army of tweet readers and consistent viewers. But now with more than twenty years of evolution in the social media sphere as it spreads and grows across an always expanding list of platforms, it’s not enough to be a Follower to get your face out there.

Sure, it certainly helps if you’re connected to the right people, but that’s only a small part of the larger equation. There’s being conventionally good looking (or, at least, recognizably so), marketability, being likable, and offering a unique voice for people to resonate with. But more importantly—arguably, *most* importantly—is a little thing called brand recognition.

This is just as important for the pretty people behind the touch screen peddling products as it is for the companies that pay them to do it, and not a lot of people understand how much work goes into even the most overt act of product placement. Videos are made and remade, meticulously edited and spliced, for the sometimes *seconds*-long advertisements that Influencers schedule between their regular posts—many of them focus-grouped, tested, and vetted by advertising agents days before the ad is approved.

And on top of everything else, both parties have to try and bring something *new* to the scene.

The lasting mark of an Internet Influencer is what new trends that they inspire.

And the focus testers at DropZone decided that Fiona Mills was going to be the face of their new app.

\*\*\*

At the top of her game, Fiona Mills (at the time, known cross-platform as @GeneralMillobi) had been a pretty textbook case of Gorgeous Geek Girl Streaming. Getting her start on Twitch and Youtube, Fiona was initially known for her *Star Wars*-centric content. Her Jedi Academy 2 and KOTOR/2 playthroughs were decent and filled with early meme-worthy content, but Fiona quickly gained a fanbase because she was *hot*.

Dark red hair that cascaded down over her shoulders, flawless pale skin lit aglow by the pale blue light of her monitor, and a petite physique with modest assets had endeared her to lots of horny *Star Wars* fans. She was sort of like the girl next door, all grown up—a little boyish in her looks, but undeniably attractive. Her ability to answer questions about the EU and shut down gatekeeping on her feed was fun for a laugh and, again most importantly, she was *hot*. Her first picture on Instagram (and eventually shared to her Twitter feed and Reddit page) was a Mara Jade cosplay that had caught the attention of anyone who liked hot girls with sci-fi aesthetics, *Star Wars* fans or not.

She was approached by sponsors almost immediately and quickly racked up a respectably sized following over the course of her career (never from LucasFilm, obviously, but from quite a few budding makeup brands and the like). She had made decent money, got a lot of really cool merch, and got to enjoy the life of being an internet celebrity, albeit for an all-too-brief time.

At her heart and despite all of her success, she was still just a nerdy girl who liked Star Wars, and she took the Disney buyout especially hard. Changing her handle in protest to @MillHillFille as a way of “shedding” her attachment to the (quote) “discarded husk of my fucking childhood, apparently”, Fiona abruptly stopped all gaming videos in favor of trying to become a more mainstream, marketable social media influencer. Her #NotMyStarWars and #StayAwayRey campaigns didn’t gather a lot of steam, either.

And that was a big mistake not *only* because she had abdicated her initial fanbase in favor of a more sanitized approach, she also picked a fight with the House of Mouse—her career was dead to rights as soon as she fired off her first tweet as @MillHillFille.

Over time, as she matured, she reversed her stance. But the damage had been done. Some years had passed, she got (what her parents called) “a real job” and had been well on her way to leaving her old life behind her.

And that was when DropZone slid into her DMs on Twitter—her only active social media site since “the burnout”.

**Hello there,**

**We at DropZone Food Delivery are always looking to expand our circle of influence. You have an impressive number of followers! If you’d be interested in a monetized partnership, please respond to**…

Blah, Blah, Blah. You don’t care what the letter says. Honestly, Fiona didn’t either. She had been ready to dismiss the message as soon as she’d gotten it. It was only her instinctive desire to copypasta the Tragedy of Darth Plagueis the Wise that had gotten her to actually open the damn thing. She was done with that old life, she was onto newer and… *better*(?) things.

But after sitting on it for a day, Fiona decided that she could have certainly used the extra money—and what DropZone was offering sounded pretty sweet, if it was true…

\*\*\*

“What’s up guys, General Millobi here, *back* after way too long for a playthrough of this old old *old* fucking game *Star Wars: TIE Fighter*, originally released in 1994—”

Fiona had been drafted as a part of the GamerFuel initiative of the DropZone app’s launch, and they had discussed with her (over Zoom) the best way that they could combine her love of gaming with their love of capitalizing on people chowing down.

“—my triumphant return is brought to you by the DropZone App, who literally deliver food to your doorstep via *drone*. Yes it’s just as badass as its sounds, but *no* they don’t make the same badass screeching noise that my TIE does.”

Part of what had drawn Fiona to DropZone is that it sounded like something right out of science fiction already. The idea that food could be delivered right to your doorstep without any human involvement beyond the people making it was an introvert’s dream come true. The delivery fee was a little steep, but that wasn’t something that she’d in particular have to worry about. Not with the waived discount fee that DropZone offered her as part of their partnership.

“Or the same screeching sound that I’ll be making once I finish up all this food.” Fiona snort-laughed, “Jesus, I forgot how big these burritos were…”

\*\*\*

“Do you see this, *do you fucking see this*?”

Fiona’s feed had ventured from behind her gaming rig once more as she started streaming from laptop to record this particular plug—an ad that would be shown before a few Youtube videos and every now and then on Instagram. The image on everyone’s screen was of her open front door, the DropZone Drone carrying a two dozen Krispy Kreme Donuts in a plastic bag by its tiny “feet” hooks. The small puttering of its propellers was drowned out by Fiona’s squealing and excited stomping.

“This is *sooooo* fucking cool!” she eeked, her arm coming into view so that she could grab the bag from her delivery drone, “This is *literally* the best way to get your food delivered. You don’t have to worry about tipping, nobody taking a bite out of your burger—”

Fiona’s softer shape came into view as she set the laptop down on her kitchen table, settling into her chair with a little ‘oof’. Unboxing the bag of donuts, Fiona’s softened stomach, plush hips and thighs were hidden behind the wooden surface, but there was no denying even with half of her body and then some hidden by furniture that she had begun putting on weight. The thickness of her arms, beset with a slight jiggle, had been evidence enough of that as she’d reached into the bag of donuts.

“Look I know plugs are dumb, but seriously, if you don’t want to face the judgement that comes with ordering two dozen donuts from Krispy Kreme directly to your house, go digital.” Fiona said into the webcam, her budding softness shifting noticeably with her exaggerated shoulder shrugs, “DropZone is drone operated, and their models can carry up to *fifty pounds* of food.”

In the original cut, Fiona had leaned back and pat her stomach, musing about how there would be no way that they’d be able to carry *her* anywhere. But that had been edited out by the marketing guys. After all, the last thing that they needed as a budding food delivery system was to be linked with their influencers putting on weight. After an innocuous comment made on her Instagram account (brought back to life as per her contract agreement) about “the Fiona Cut” though, an unedited version began in circulation.

In a hail mary from the universe itself, the cut proved popular—and things escalated from there.

\*\*\*

As promised, an increase in traffic and downloads to their app meant an increase in revenue for Fiona.

She was releasing coupon codes on a weekly basis now, practically handing out deals that went hand in hand with the “gamer” lifestyle. Waived delivery fees for the first, first three, and first five orders. A trial period of one month, flat sign-up fee with no contract. Due to the wide success of the platform, restaurant chains were even partnering with DropZone to provide discounts in certain locations—and most of it was due to the success of Fiona’s campaign.

“URRRAP” Fiona’s surprisingly deep burp actually shook the webcam placed above her monitor, “’scuse me.”

She had been urged to move onto more modern, less copywritten titles by her corporate sponsors, and that had taken her to trying out plenty of new titles. She still did “Star Wars Saturday thru Sunday” (she’d even buckled and bought *Star Wars: Jedi: Fallen Order*) but her reignited passion for gaming and the fat paycheck she was raking in from DropZone meant that she could explore sci-fi titles to her heart’s content—literally every day of the week.

“It’s so fucking hard to do this one-handed.” Fiona laughed as she fought the urge to pause her game, “These are so good though.”

Fiona stuffed most of a Burrito Supreme into her mouth, moreso out of a desire to get back to her game than any inborn appetite. Her stomach rose into the camera’s view, betrayed by her reclined position as she leaned back into her Nitro gaming chair. Her chubby wrists sunk slightly into the soft white surface of her stomach as she furrowed her auburn brow in frustration of her fight against Taron Malicos in *Jedi: Fallen Order* on Grandmaster difficulty.

The suspension of her worn and torn “battle station” creaked beneath her bountiful heft as she leaned forward, back into the game. Her snack breaks had become more and more frequent as her sponsorship continued to propel her feed forward into the limelight. It was thanks to the public attention gathered by her frequent ads and the money that changed hands between Twitch and the DropZone people that she had been put back into the “Hot” category on Twitch—even if there were plenty of people who disagreed with that title being applied to @MillHillFille herself.

“*rurrrp*”

Settling back into her seat, wrists resting on the crest of her fleshy white tum as it peeked out from underneath her t-shirt, Fiona resumed her seventh consecutive hour of gaming.

\*\*\*

“Holy shiiiiiiit!!”

Fiona squealed as a modified drone in the shape of the Death Star entered her War Room, carrying thousands of calories in pudge-inducing payload. Filming from her phone, Fiona followed the little drone’s trajectory from the window as it flew within reach, and setting down its delivery on the “landing zone” that she had designated on her desk.

“This is literally the coolest thing everrrrrr~”

It had been a special promotion—a little “thank you” from the DropZone people who had benefited greatly from their partnership with influencers like Fiona. It wasn‘t a *real* Death Star drone (at least not one approved by the Disney Corporation) but the gesture in and of itself was a big one to Fiona and her fandom of geeks and sci-fi enthusiasts.

Fiona’s chubby thumb swapped angles, the feed switching to forward facing suddenly enough that Fiona was caught visibly correcting her double chin. Straightening slightly, she reduced the unflattering angle by a hair, but it did little to fool anyone into thinking that she was any skinnier.

Her chubby cheeks dimpled with excitement as she gushed into the Live Feed, double chin quivering with her more excited movements as she shifted and wriggled in her overpacked gaming chair. Anyone who followed her feed regularly knew that Fiona was built like a fridge—boxy, with a fat belly and squishy arms that both frequently bulged out of her too-tight vintage tees. Her bemoaning of not having “fat girl tits” was memetic within her fandom, so much so that she had been able to monetize it on a few shirts and stickers from RedBubble.

“DropZone is literally the introvert’s dream—I didn’t even have to put on *pants* and I get the friggin’ *Death Star* to come deliver my Doritos Locos tailgate box.”

Fiona’s fleshy white arm plunged deep into the foldable cardboard box and emerged with the first (of many, assuredly) bite of her taco binge. Calling it Taco Tuesday would have been lame and inaccurate, seeing as how regularly she ordered them in conjunction with a slew of other fast food meals that had quickly become a staple in her diet. Given her discount for DropZone and her newly remonetized Influencer lifestyle… why *wouldn’t* she want to live like this?

“Oh yeah, don’t forget—GoFundMe is still up for a new chair.” She added as an afterthought, “Preferably ones that doesn’t fucking scream all the time.”

Cutting the feed from her phone, Fiona fired up another streaming session on Twitch. Influencing was a means to an end, but the best part of her job was that *this* was her job—sitting around, playing video games and busting nerd balls on the internet.

Grunting heavily as she leaned back into her seat, party pack resituated comfortably within arm’s reach, the General resumed her playthrough of *Outer Worlds* as her shirt started to ride up slowly on her belly. With every few seconds, she’d reach into her box and emerge with something new to snack on. The more immersed she became, the more frequently she snacked…

“Ughhhhh m’out.” Fiona groaned, whipping out her cell phone and pausing the stream (“Jesus Christ, already?” a fan commented) “Y’all know what *that meanssss~*”