KFC: Dirty Louisiana
Filthy results at dirt cheap prices

1. Insight and strategic thinking

Make dirty, good.

KFC's Dirty Louisiana burger was an indulgent beast. Chicken, double cheese, a hashbrown, Supercharger sauce, black pepper mayonnaise, BBQ sauce, topped off with a gherkin.

The task was simple: generate mass awareness and demand for this new product by making dirty, good. Whilst the task was simple, the challenges were significant, for four reasons:

1.) The media and production budget were slim at just £200,000, this level of investment was low in relation to the scale of the task and the large amounts of media being bought by competitors on social.

2.) We were launching KFC's most indulgent burger when the nation's obsession with healthy eating had reached fever pitch. Mintel's 2017 Attitudes to Healthy Eating stated: 'signalling the UK's booming healthy eating trend, 63% of adults try to eat healthy at least most of the time, up from 58% in 2015'[1].

3.) 'Dirty Louisiana' means something VERY different in internet slang

4.) Make 'dirty' a positive word, for a brand that is negatively associated with dirty restaurants, dirty food and dirty ethics.

Just put the TVC on social?

Rather than just sticking the existing Dirty Louisiana TV ad on social we agreed to create a 'Born in Social' idea. This meant that rather than focusing on the passive consumption of video, measured by recall, view through rate and other metrics we would focus solely on talkability. Why?

Because it's very easy to say stuff online, but it's hard to be heard. Brands are creating more and more branded content that is falling, increasingly, on deaf ears.[2] We simply didnt have the budget to plaster social with a single message. We needed an idea that could compete with cats. By this I

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[1] Mintel, Attitudes Towards Healthy Eating ,Feb 2017
[2] "Marketer Content Tripled in Past Year, but Engagement With It Stayed Flat", Ad Age 2016

don't mean upload lots of cat videos and nudies, I mean primarily understand your audience and what they like to like.

Understanding one's audience is planning 101. However, only through the use of data could we glean exactly what our audiences were talking about, searching for, engaging with, showing affinity for etc. The data is out there, we just too often neglect to use it head-to-tail throughout the strategic and creative process.

For this campaign, we didn't.

We started by creating the Crave Index. This looks at the total number of people 'craving' KFC on social media and divides it by the total branded conversation. Craving is typically higher in January and February due to people making healthy New Year's resolutions:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
January	1.33%	2.04%	1.86%	2.26%	2.28%	1.46%
February	1.33%	1.91%	2.06%	1.98%	1.37%	1.47%
March	1.41%	1.70%	2.02%	1.75%	1.34%	1.37%
April	1.09%	1.94%	1.86%	1.68%	1.20%	1.30%
May	1.39%	1.95%	1.69%	1.52%	1.32%	1.40%
June	1.32%	1.82%	1.68%	1.52%	1.10%	1.44%
July	1.40%	3.14%	1.90%	1.72%	1.24%	1.01%
August	1.38%	2.15%	1.94%	1.74%	1.10%	1.33%
September	1.67%	2.00%	2.11%	1.42%	1.45%	1.37%
October	1.59%	2.00%	2.08%	1.39%	1.15%	1.12%
November	1.54%	2.08%	1.73%	1.17%	1.18%	1.35%
December	1.50%	2.09%	1.83%	1.61%	1.23%	1.26%

The KFC Crave Index, showing higher level of craving in Jan & Feb[3]

However, the Crave Index was off the scale in the early months of 2017:

KFC January Crave Index
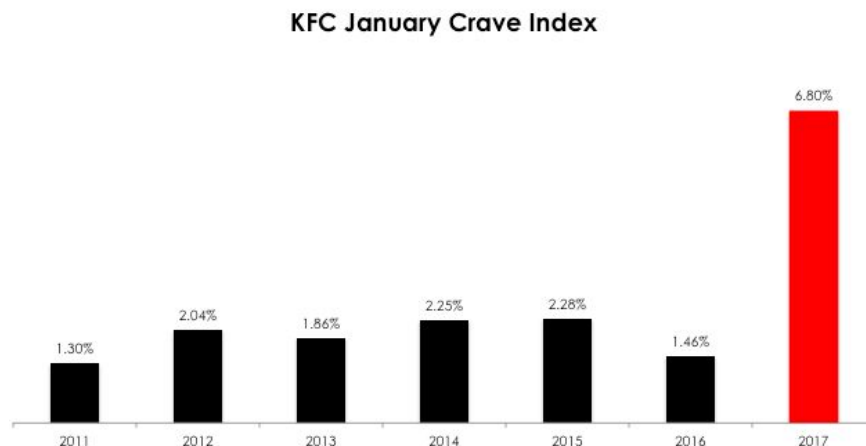
The KFC Crave Index, a surge in craving in January 2017.

Almost 7% of the entire KFC conversation revolved around craving, wanting, needing or wishing for KFC. On further investigation, it became clear that this conversation was primarily being driven by people talking about 'clean eating':

[3] Crimson Hexagon, UK mentions of KFC

'Clean eating', we discovered, was a vague umbrella term used to describe a certain way of eating healthily, which typically involved avocados, milking almonds and finding impossibly hard to source ingredients, such as Guatemalan chia seeds. It's why you have to stay on the ball in a supermarket to ensure you get a pint of proper milk, rather than a soy-based alternative.

To our horror we realised that the Dirty Louisiana was the absolute antithesis of this trend. The problem was twofold. Was this conversation limited to London hipsters and if not, how would we launch KFC's hugely indulgent burger in this environment.

The Rise of 'Clean Eating'

Google search data showed interest in 'clean eating' was on the rise. Significantly, this was evident year on year, always peaking in the first quarter of the year (the burger would be released on February):
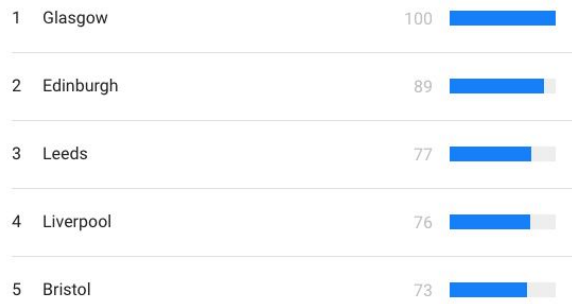

Google Trends 'clean eating', year on year increase, peaking in January.

Somewhat surprisingly, this search interest was coming, not only from London, but across the whole of the United Kingdom[4]:
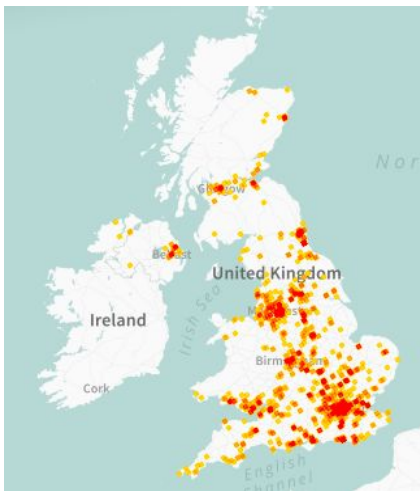
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[4] Google Trends; "clean eating"

1	Glasgow	100	
2	Edinburgh	89	
3	Leeds	77	
4	Liverpool	76	
5	Bristol	73	

Top Google searches of 'clean eating by city, Google Trends.

This was shown in geo-targeted tweets, too[5]:

All geo-tagged tweets about 'clean eating' since 2015

Finally, a quick look at the pulse of the nation, the Amazon Best Selling books list, showed that 8 of the top 10 bestselling books in January were to do with clean/healthy eating:

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[5] Crimson Hexagon

*Amazon Best Selling Book List, January. 8/10 are about clean/healthy eating*

We therefore knew that 'clean eating' was a large, UK wide trend. The problem was: how could KFC possibly play a role in combating or cutting through this emerging trend, to launch the Dirty Louisiana?

Spiralizing the joy out of eating

To answer this, we again turned to the data. When we looked at all UK mentions of 'clean eating' and ran it through our emotion tracker, it was clear that the level of 'joy' monitored in the conversation was declining dramatically[6]:

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[6] Crimson Hexagon, Emotion Tracker
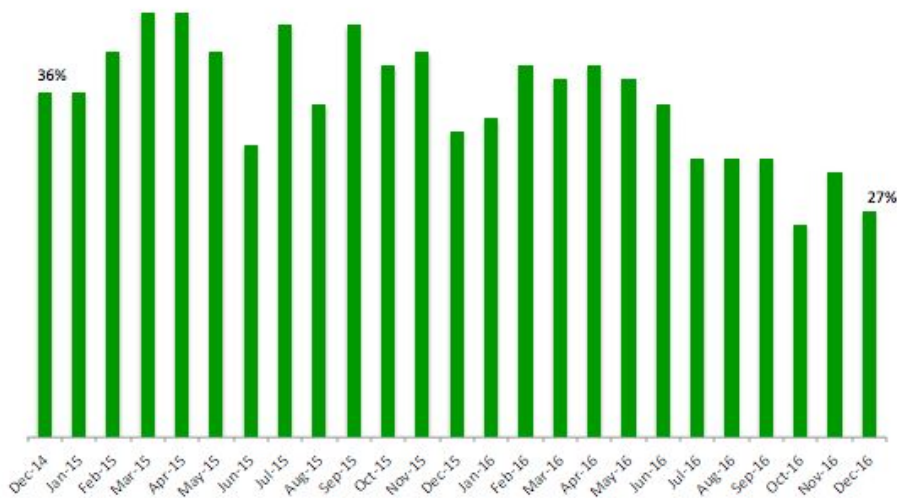
The declining amount of joy in the 'clean eating' conversation

Like with all trends and fads, a backlash was seemingly brewing and for 'clean eating' this was increasingly taking the form of criticising its joylessness. The Instagram high priestesses of this trend were taking flak for telling fans to cut out sugar, avoid gluten, cut down on carbs, salt or laughing. Online memes such as these were beginning to take form:

About to eat my vegan, gluten free, soy free, antibiotics free, raw, non GMO, organic, fat free, low carb dinner.

Off the back of this, the role for creativity became clear: challenge the joylessness of 'clean eating' with the indulgent taste of the Dirty Louisiana.

By deriding the 'clean eating' movement and positioning the Louisiana Dirty as the joyful, indulgent solution we could significantly disrupt the trend. From a joyless insight, the challenge had become the solution.

The data-driven, transformational thought was clear. Instead of making dirty good, we would attempt to make clean bad.

3. Implementation, including creative and media development

The best way for KFC to challenge 'clean eating', was to join it.

More often than not, content isn't king, content is crap. To avoid the online "crap trap" we knew we had to do something inflammatory.[7] This was in tune with KFC's new online strategy of Born In Social, which centred on avoiding the passive consumption of videos and centred on talkability as the key metric to the performance of social content.

With this in mind, KFC simply criticising 'clean eating' would not have invoked talkability. It would just be another brand message from a desperate looking organisation that tried to tell its fans what to do and think.

We agreed the best way for KFC to highlight the joylessness of this movement was to join it.

Create a fake flogger (food blogger)

Our first step in joining in on the movement was to create our own 'clean eating' influencer named Figgy Poppleton-Rice. Figgy would be our partner in launching KFC's 'Clean Eating Burger':

Figgy Poppleton-Rice
— x —

ABOUT   INSTAGRAM   TWITTER

We gave her a social presence on Instagram, Twitter and a blog, which were collectively known as the 'Figgysphere'. Like with many other online influencers we decided to invest £120 to increase her social clout and credibility, this investment garnered 40,000 followers across these channels. However the investment soon paid dividends when 'organic' followers started to pour in.

Leading up to and throughout the campaign, Figgy would be post endless 'clean' recipes, such as her 'Me-Time Milkshake', 4 milks (almond, coconut, flax & soy) in a jam jar; or her 'Dirty Dog'; a carrot in an aubergine:
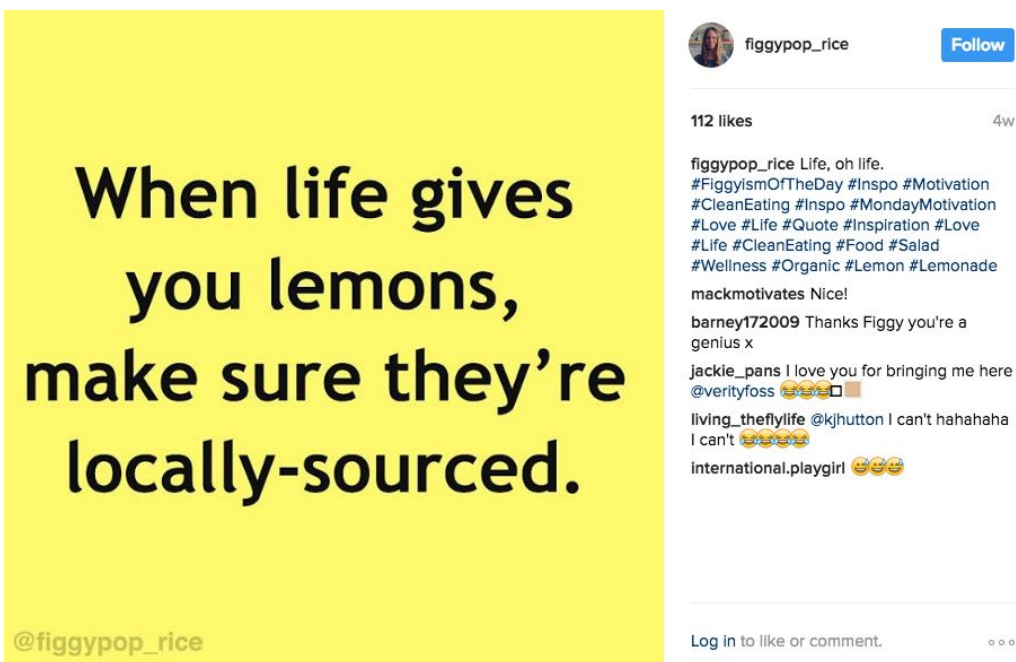
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[7] Marc Pritchard, Forbes

Figgy's fake instagram account generating high levels of engagement

She offered lots of dubious lifestyle tips:

One of the many 'Figgyisms' that helped motivate her audience

And in true Instagrammer food blogger style, we made a her recipe book, *A Feast With Figgy*:

Figgy's fake recipe book, 'A Feast With Figgy'

After Figgy had been established, we turned our attention to the provocation.

Provoking your target audience- "the Colonel would be mortified"

The cornerstone to this campaign was shock content. The 'clean eating burger' would soon become one of the most shocking pieces of culinary innovations to ever come out of KFC's kitchens. A Cauliflower bun, spiralized chicken, almond yogurt, ice cube relish and other goodies:

KFC
23 February · ⬤

Coming Monday: the KFC Clean Eating Burger - made in collaboration with
Figgy Poppleton-Rice

THE **KFC**
#CLEANEATING BURGER

CHIA-SEEDED CAULIFLOWER BUN

UNSWEETENED ALMOND YOGHURT

ICE CUBE RELISH

SPIRALISED CHICKEN BREAST

100% BRITISH KALE

Made in collaboration with *Figgy Poppleton-Rice*
-0:08

4.9M Views

Within 48 hours the single image reached over 12 million unique people in the UK, with just £5,000 media spend.

And we'd got people talking; over 160,000 people had expressed their horror to KFC latest burger.

Craig Friel I just regurgitated half digested food and a little dribble hit the floor before I re-swallowed the rest of it looking at this disgusting idea of hipstery grub. . .
Like · Reply · ⬤ 952 · 24 February at 10:13

Kelly Wilson What in the name of all that is holy is this? A clean burger...you mean a tie dye ..hug a tree... hippy burger....and who in the name of sweet muscular Jesus is figgy poppycock when she's not backpacking in the Andes?
Like · Reply · ⬤ 126 · 23 February at 17:58 · Edited

Jason Muir This is the kind of pretentious hipster crap you'd find in London in some weird vegan gluten free cafe, nobody goes to KFC and thinks man i'd love to tuck into some cauliflower, they are there for the junk food fix. The colonel would be mortified nowdays if he saw the joke his legacy has been corrupted into. The C in KFC is not supposed to stand for cauliflower lol.
Like · Reply · ⬤ 1 · 24 February at 17:24 · Edited

DustinPratt @DustinRpratt · Feb 25
Fuck this burger....#KFCcleaneating

KFC UK & Ireland ✓ @KFC_UKI
Coming Monday: the #KFCcleaneating Burger - made in collaboration with @figgypop_rice

0:10

Overnight Figgy Poppleton Rice became a superstar, making up 21% of all google searches to do with "clean eating" and briefly became more famous than Paxo:
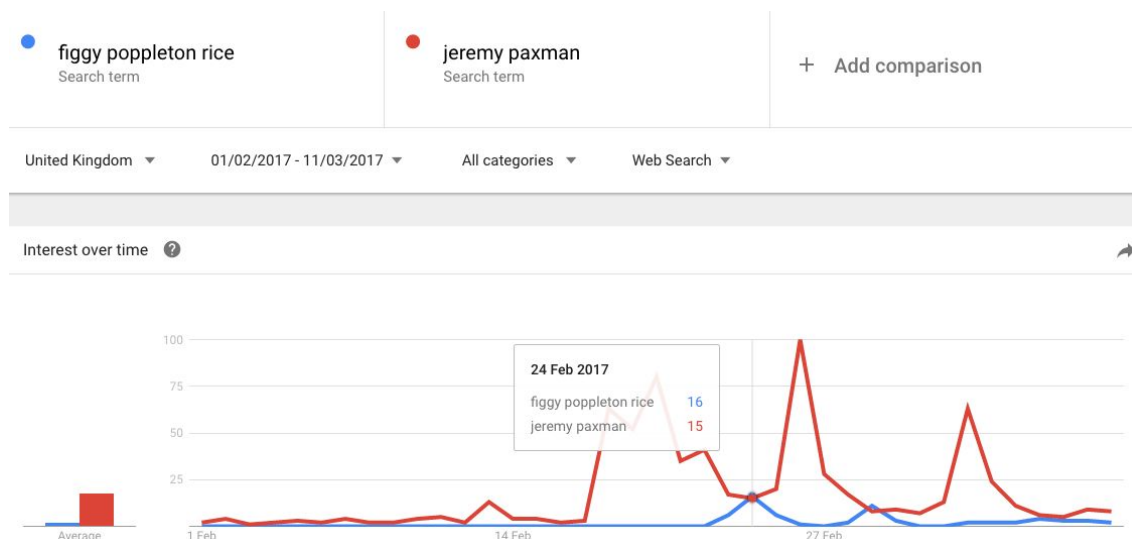
Google Search interest in Figgy versus Jeremy Paxman, interest overtakes Paxo on 24th again later in the campaign.

The dirty reveal

Five days after the provocation we published our hero asset on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, a 2 minute video displaying Figgy creating her horrendous looking clean burger. The final reveal is a massive poster of the actual burger, The Dirty Louisiana, that comes down and smashes the #cleaneating burger.
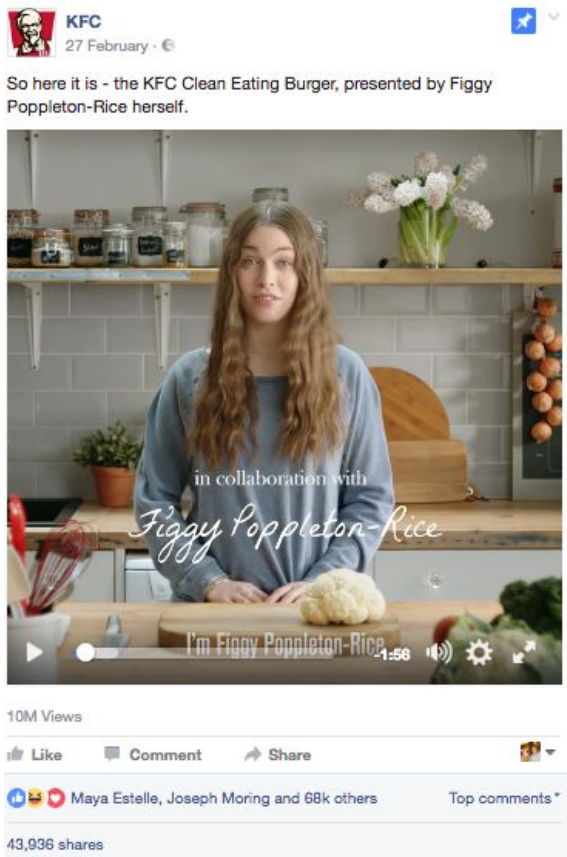
The video was retargeted to the 12 million people who had seen the provocation earlier in the week.

It soon became KFC's most watched video of all time, quickly racking up over 10 million views and reached over ⅓ of the UK.

The video received huge amounts of press coverage, with news outlets from all over the world:

KFC trolls the internet with a 'clean-eating burger' — complete with spiralized chicken breast and ice cube relish

The final phase: Bombardment

To ensure the actual product message was landed, rather than the fake one we created a number of statics and GIFs that showed the actual burger. We then retargeted the ~20 million people who had seen the reveal video, but might not have seen the ending.

4. Media used

████████████████████████

Type of Media	Budget / media spend	% of overall budget	Estimated Impression	Estimated Views	Actual Impressions	Actual Views
Facebook	██████	45%	11,000,000	1,833,333	65,076,198	17,082,301
YouTube	██████	47%	4,867,231	730,085	8,163,356	2,040,839
Twitter	██████	8%	833,333	416,667	1,572,219	769,487
Total	██████	100%	16,700,564	2,980,085	74,811,773	19,892,627

ROI figure:

KFC didn't run have any econometrics data on the campaign making an accurate ROI figure impossible.

However, due to low level of media spend and the very high levels of earned media obtained by the campaign we thought we would provide an Equivalent Media Value generated by KFC's Clean Eating Burger.

Over the campaign period we spent ███████ on media. Based on this media plan and level of investment, the media agency forecasted ████████ views, at roughly ████ a view.[8] Due to the huge success of the Clean Eating burger we were able to not only buy reach, but importantly earn a huge amount too, resulting in 19,892,627 views. To buy this many views at the same rate we had outlined in the media plan would have cost us ███████.

Meaning for every £1 we spent buying media, we got back █████ worth of media.

5. Performance against objectives

The proof is in the 'Figgy' pudding

The Dirty Louisiana became one of KFC's bestselling LTOs (Limited Time Offers) of the last 5 years, selling out of 70% of stores nationally within 3 weeks and surpassing the sales mix target by 39%[9].

Due to its commercial success, KFC will bring the burger back in July, this is one of the fastest returns of an LTO product in KFC UK's history.

The campaign had a <u>unique</u> reach of over 26.8 million globally, and uniquely reached over ⅓ of the UK.[10] Over the course of the campaign over a quarter of a million people would talk about the burger and total impressions currently stands at 74 million.[11]

The video generated over 20 million views in total, which people collectively watched for 9.5 million minutes, meaning a watchtime of 18.5 years.

KFC owned 67% of the UK search interest in 'clean eating' over the course of the campaign spikes.[12]

Not only did we own the conversation, but we apparently killed it:

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[8] Blue449, Based on KFC historical data
[9] Sales mix target is the % of total sales that are made up of LTO sales.
[10] This is on Facebook alone as we can't get unduplicated unique reach across all social channels (so reach excludes YouTube, Twitter and Instagram)
[11] The majority of which were in the form of comments on the two Facebook videos
[12] Google Trends

Jay Rayner ✔
@jayrayner1

When KFC gets in on the gag I think we can declare the fad dead. Right, what's next?

KFC UK & Ireland ✔ @KFC_UKI
Coming Monday: the #KFCcleaneating Burger - made in collaboration with @figgypop_rice

0:10

RETWEETS 38   LIKES 135

Kurodragon
@kurodragon

The world has turned 'clean eating' obsessed, but KFC have done a good job at squashing our craze ow.ly/sykB309vNYe

Even the arch priestess of 'clean eating', Deliciously Ella, distanced herself from the dirty trend of 'clean eating':

Deliciously Ella distances herself from 'clean eating': Blogger turned author rewrites her own history to remove controversial term from her posts

- Ella Mills has denied ever describing herself as 'clean' after a backlash
- But The Mail on Sunday discovered she has used the word 'clean' on her blog
- The 25-year-old appeared on a BBC Horizon documentary last week

Deliciously Ella hits back at KFC cauliflower burger spoof: "a tiny bit irresponsible"

Whilst we can't claim causation, a number of clean eating bloggers have started distancing themselves from the 'clean eating' trend.