

Clementine Kovaks had dropped out of Cornell University to make a series of viral videos critiquing American politics. From there she'd been invited to speak on numerous talkshows and last year she had Published her first book: The Altruism of Avarice. Clementine wasn't a politician, but somehow she had managed to cement herself as a voice in American politics and she couldn't be happier.

Her responses to current events were discussed on news networks, and her twitter had millions of followers. Of course, with that kind of attention came controversy.

[@ClementineK](#): The left insists that doctors should treat patients who can't afford to compensate them. Isn't there a word for forced labor with no compensation?

She popped her grape flavored gum in her mouth as she submitted the tweet. That should be enough bait to trigger some soy-boy, too emotional to see their own hypocrisy.

[@WilliamDahl](#): Are you really comparing universal healthcare to slavery.

Bingo. Sometimes, teasing twitter was just too easy. She clicked on Willy's profile to do some snooping before responding. He listed his pronouns in his bio: He/Him/His (as if she couldn't have guessed). He also had a podcast with a few thousand subscribers (respectable for someone of his political affiliation). Responding to this guy might actually be worth her time.

[@ClementineK](#): You made the comparison, but I'm glad you have the faculties for basic logic.

At this point, replies were flooding in, but Clementine ignored them. Better to focus on a single opponent. Keeping things focused meant that she could hold the attention of a wider audience and hopefully reach more people.

[@WilliamDahl](#): People die every year from not being able to afford care.

She rolled her eyes. Typical. He'd ignore the slavery angle and appeal to her sense of ethics. Think of the poor sick people. It made her want to gag.

[@ClementineK](#): Not once has anyone ever been turned away from an emergency room. Non-essential services cost money because they are non-essential.

The conversation had only lasted fifteen minutes, but she was already tired of waiting for his responses. She could see the conversation playing out even before his grubby little cheeto fingers could type a response.

He would mention the cost of insulin. She would point out that people in need could contact the manufacturer. He would change the subject to chemotherapy and she would emphasize the importance of personal responsibility and getting regular cancer screenings. She

was sure that she could stay one step ahead and that nothing that he could say could be more clever than her.

The media would get all up in a tizzy. They'd call her callous or selfish but it didn't change the fact that she was right. The system wasn't perfect, but capitalism ensured that the United States was on the cutting edge of medical science, and it saved far more people than it let down. Besides, the vast majority of people negatively impacted by the current system weren't contributors anyway.

She popped her gum again and was disappointed by the lack of flavor. She reached for the pack on her desks and found it empty. She tossed it into the waste bin and reluctantly got up from her chair.

Chewing gum was the only vice she allowed herself. Alcohol and other drugs were dangerous and junk food was unhealthy. Gum was harmless and, during a debate, she liked being able to snap it in her mouth in response to any particularly stupid or cliché questions.

She hadn't needed to buy her own gum in months. After a clip of her blowing a bubble in the face of a shrill land-whale on the local college campus had gone viral, fans started sending packages of chewing gum to her PO box by the carton full.

She stepped into her kitchen where a pile of parcels sat on the bar. She grabbed one at random and popped it open. The package wasn't large, but she was surprised to find only a single pack of gum inside surrounded by packing peanuts.

The gum itself came in orange paper packaging with Japanese kanji branding and a cartoon picture of an orange. She took a moment to appreciate the wonders of the free market. Never before in history were products from a foreign land so accessible to the average American. It frustrated her to no end that some people couldn't appreciate that.

She peeled open the wrapper, careful not to damage it and flooded it into her pocket. The gum itself came in a canary yellow strip and smelled like an orchard. She popped it into her mouth without a second thought and headed back to her computer. It was flavorful! Almost too flavorful and tasted like real fruit, rather than artificial flavoring.

Clementine was so impressed that she took the wrapper back out and flattened it on her desk with her free hand and grabbed her phone. She snapped a picture of the package and pulled up her twitter app.

[@ClementineK](#): Best gum I've tried in a while! Thank you to whoever sent it!

She attached the photo and hit send, only to notice something odd about the picture. Was she wearing nail polish? Her fingernails were a bright glossy orange. She zoomed in on the

picture only to notice that the orange hue seemed to be spreading down her fingers. With a start she dropped her phone onto the floor and stepped back.

Quickly she ran to the bathroom and shoved her hands under hot water. She scrubbed with soap and at first it looked like it was smearing away, but once the soap had been washed off, she realized that it was spreading up her arms. She was hyperventilating now and looked up at herself in the mirror, only to notice her nose and cheeks taking on a distinctly citrus hue.

She wasn't sure what to think. Was this some kind of allergic reaction? Would it go away on its own? Clementine didn't want to take that chance. She was distinctly aware of how much liberals seemed to dislike orange people.

She staggered back to her office and picked up her cellphone, dialing the emergency number without hesitation.

"Anthem Pochie department. What is your emergency?"

"Hello? I think I'm having an allergic reaction. My skin is... changing color." By now the orange had moved up to her shoulders and she was sure that it was spreading under her clothes.

"We can send an ambulance right away. Do you have any other symptoms? Irritation? Swelling?"

"No... I don't think..." she looked at the back of her hand and trailed off. Her fingers did look puffier and her normally convex knuckles were now little dimples in the back of her hand.

"Paramedics are on their way, but it'll be easier if they know the source of the problem. Could it have been something you ate?"

It wasn't until that moment that Clementine realized that she was still vigorously chewing the gum. Her mouth tasted so strongly of citrus that she almost couldn't believe that the gum was responsible. She spat it in the wastebasket, and the little wad landed on a piece of paper. It was completely bleach white. She scraped her tongue against her teeth hoping to get the taste out of her mouth, but the flavor didn't fade.

The operator was still talking, but Clementine ignored her, heading to the bathroom and turning on the sink again. She set down her phone, cupped her hands and filled her mouth with water. She sloshed it in between her teeth and over her tongue before spitting it out into the sink. It looked like she was spitting out pure orange juice.

She looked up at herself in the mirror and staggered backward. Her skin was now completely orange, and her brown eyes had turned a bright kelly green. She had never heard of an allergic reaction like this before.

She noticed that her face had softened, losing some of the definition of her jaw and the sharpness of her cheek-bones. She was growing right before her eyes. Her slim arms expanded to fill the sleeves of her T-shirt, and her stomach bulged under the fabric. She'd always viewed women with potbellies as undisciplined, but now she was growing one right before her eyes.

She lifted her shirt and exposed her orange navel as her stomach pushed down her shorts. She pressed a finger against her flesh and found it soft, but resistant. It was more like a balloon or a drum than a beer gut. She tried to pull her shirt back down only to realize that it didn't reach past her belly button. It occurred to her that she likely didn't have long before the shirt would have to be cut off.

She pulled it up over her chest, but found some difficulty with her sleeves. After several minutes of struggling she finally thought to grab it by the back of her collar and pull it off over her head. She popped out from the shirt, wobbling, jiggling and panting as she did.

She was topless now, not bothering to wear a bra while she was home alone. She was surprised to see that her breasts had also expanded and had the same inflated look as her belly, sticking out from her chest with little regard for gravity.

She watched herself grow in the mirror, unable to look away. She'd seen bodies that looked like hers on body positivity blogs that tried to glorify obesity. The fact that her body matched the fantasies of those degenerates made her feel sick. She stumbled back and leaned on her hamper for support, only for it to collapse under her weight.

She fell to the floor in the pile of laundry and tried to get back up, but her growth was limiting her mobility. Her limbs felt tight and taut, and her belly was a weight in the center of her stomach that didn't shift or roll with her movements. She finally managed to use a towel rack as a hand hold and staggered to her feet.

The woman in the mirror was huge and orange and impossibly round. Her shorts hugged her monstrous thighs so tightly that they actually constricted her legs. She tried to pull them off, but between her muffin top and her bubbling thighs, she couldn't even work her pudgy fingers underneath the fabric.

After several minutes of grunting and tugging, she heard a loud rip as the problem fixed itself. Her shorts ripped down the back and along her crotch and she was finally able to tear them off completely. Her hips and butt billowed out into their full glory.

She was surprised by how dimpled her butt cheeks were despite the gravity defying nature of her expansion. They were round and firm and covered in cellulite which made her cheeks look like two giant... oranges.

Her self reflection was interrupted by a knock at the door.

Slowly, she waddled her way over, legs barely able to bend and thighs rubbing together. She felt like a living pool-toy, or worse, a sex doll. She finally reached the door and pulled it open, revealing two EMTs. Both of them seemed terribly confused by the Orange, naked, fat woman standing in front of them

The medics were compassionate and friendly but unconcerned. One of them took her blood pressure while the other took down her story.

“So, you’re saying that this all happened after you ate a piece of gum?” He’d wrapped her up in a blanket and thankfully she seemed to have stopped expanding.

“A biological weapon.” Clementine corrected. “Some sort of attack on me by one of my detractors.”

“Right... and this was the package?” He held up the gum wrapper in gloved fingers. She nodded enthusiastically, though the inflated nature of her condition necessitated the use of her shoulders.

“Got it, well then it’s time to go.” He tapped his partner on the back and the two men moved to leave.

“Wait, what? You can’t just leave me like this!”

The paramedics were already nearly to the door. “Ma’am, the gum that was sent to you is a Japanese novelty designed to fill whoever chews it with juice. You’re lucky that you spit it out when you did or else you’d risk popping. It’s actually a common enough problem that they installed a ‘juicing room’ in the hospital in the city.”

“Juicing room? So they can fix me?”

“Sure, as long as you get it taken care of within 24 hours.”

“Well what are you waiting for, take me there!”

“Ma’am, we’re emergency services. If you were going to pop, that’d be one thing, but this clearly isn’t an emergency. I’d recommend checking into urgent care and getting yourself juiced, but I should warn you, it’s a pretty expensive treatment.”

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Clementine had taken a hiatus from social media for the past week. She hadn’t been able to afford a juicing, and her condition had become permanent. At first she’d tried to hide it,

but she had already posted a picture of the packaging and it hadn't taken long for people to figure out what had happened.

She'd finally decided to face the music, and now sat at her computer chair, sans armrests to accommodate her expanded behind. She'd already changed her profile picture, and she just had to make the official tweet.

[@ClementineK](#): Hey everyone! It's been a while. Obviously, a side effect of that gum has significantly changed my appearance. I appreciate your maturity and compassion in this difficult time and only ask that you don't let this change how you think of me.

She sat back in her new chair. One without armrests to accommodate her sloshy, soft body. She was satisfied that her post would avoid the majority of the blowback. Her computer dinged when she received a reply.

[@WilliamDahl](#): You hear that everyone? Be nice to Anne Rind.

Damn... that was actually pretty clever.