**Episode 3: Mining for Information**

VIGNETTE: Frances Gerety changes the landscape of the diamond business, forever.

Late one night, in 1947, Frances Gerety was burning the midnight oil. She was one of three women working for Philadelphia advertising agency N.W. Ayer, and naturally, it was her job to write copy for all the ads that were marketed to women. She was a longtime procrastinator and the fact that she was a night owl meant she often worked into the wee hours. By 3am she was done. She changed into her nightdress and tidied what she could of her desk, before getting into bed. “Damn.” A memory of a tagline that she’d been tasked to write forced its way into her mind. Tired and a little frustrated, she climbed out of bed, and stood over her desk, pencil in hand. “Please God, send me a line,” she said. A flash of something came to her. She scribbled a few words down on a scrap of paper, and, without a second thought, went to sleep.

By the morning light, she gathered up her notes and copy that she’d written the night before. She needed to take them into the office and have the assistants type her scrawl into a presentable format. She saw the scribbled line from 3am, and thought to herself, “that’ll do.”

That morning, there was to be a meeting about the De Beers account, and she was late. Armed with pages of her freshly typed copy, she waited until she was called upon to deliver the tagline. Its reception was lukewarm, at best, by the room full of men. One of them wondered aloud whether the line was grammatically correct, and another agreed that he was right to question it. There was zero tolerance for errors in copy at the agency.

She would later reflect that the fact that the line had been so underwhelming probably worked in its favour. If everyone in the office had been tasked to write a line for the Diamond account, hers would have almost definitely been overlooked. After some back-and-forth, the line was adopted and was used in every De Beers advertisement from 1948 onward.

It’s now one of the most recognisable and familiar collections of words in history. Something about it feels like it has been around forever, and most of us don’t even remember how we know about it. The line, which came to Frances Gerety after a late-night prayer for inspiration is, “A diamond is Forever.”

Years later, in 1999, two weeks before Frances Gerety died, her line was named “The Slogan of the Century.”

CHAPTER 1: BAD DEBT

Z: There’s this strange loophole with travel agents in Hong Kong, and it might happen in other places too. You can call a travel agent and request to book a flight, say, a business class flight to vancouver. The travel agent will provisionally book you a seat on that flight, and will then email you an itinerary for you to look over. If you pay for the flight within the next day or two, your flight is booked. And either way, you’ve got the itinerary.

Tiffany had told Sally that there was a limit to international transfers and that while she was in Canada, she couldn’t pay the full amount back. But she was paying Sally back in daily increments. She had given Sally an itinerary showing a business class return flight to Vancouver, to show when she could be expected back in the country.

Following a hunch, Sally had one of her assistants pose as Tiffany’s assistant, and call the number of the travel agent that had issued the itinerary. The travel agent was, according to Sally, pretty annoyed, and said that no, Tiffany had not booked any flight. She was getting sick of Tiffany changing her bookings so often and not confirming anything. Tiffany had never been in Canada.

Sally: So I got back from my trip. I think we're on the 31st of October. And it's now the first or second of November. And then that can be right. So I know we flew on my birthday. It was the 20th of October. So that's when we flew back to Hong Kong. And then a week later, I'm in this position where she's given me this check for 31,000. At this point in time, I've also got about $350,000 from her. And I'm thinking why would she pay me like if she was planning on scamming me? Why would she pay me $350,000? It's no small amount of money. I didn't get it and why is she being so friendly and nice and saying, don't worry, don't worry, you'll get your money. It was so confusing.

Anyway, I told her I'm going to the place and I'm reporting it. And I went to the place I sat in front of this inspector Chan and told him what had happened. And I said so what are you gonna do about it? And he was basically saying well, we don't have any information on this woman. I mean, but you’re the police! Look her up. Use her ID card. Okay, the numbers are not on it. But all the rest of the information. I said my staff can verify the photo on it. It's her and also I googled her name and I found a record that she was on a bankruptcy list, which was another oh my god moment for me. Oh shit, this woman is a con artist. And so I had this information for the place. I said, look, I think this is her. Here's the first three numbers of her Hong Kong ID card number which was listed on this bankruptcy list. I say please check if it's the same woman.

And they said oh, no, because of whatever, whatever. We don't have enough information on her. It could be anyone. I'm like, What do you mean it could be anyone? Don’t you have a database or something, like type in her name?So if it's her, or they could be like loads of Tiffany Yanni Wong's out there, like, Well, why don't you check? It was really frustrating. It was like they just could not give a shit. Like, this is a lot of money. We're talking 3.5 million Hong Kong dollars, like, this is a big scam. Help me. I was angry. I was, you know, I was like, pulling all the Let me speak to your manager card, and then his boss did come eventually. And he told me the same bullshit story. Well, it could be anyone, like, it can’t be anyone.

It was like, you know, like, this is like me saying someone's shot in the street and giving you a description of the person, what you're just gonna let anyone that could have been anyone, like, do some investigation, find out who it is. It was so frustrating. And at that time, you know, in early November, in Hong Kong, we were in the midst of protests. So the police were busy, I get it. And it was just like, they just could not give a shit about my case. And it was making me really frustrated. So after I'd been to see them, they told me that they would do some investigating.

But in the meantime, I thought, I've got to take this into my own hands, because they're not going to do a thing. And I then reached out to my insurance company to tell them what had happened. And they were like, ah, bad luck for you. This just sounds like a bad debt. You've got some money out of your client, but you haven't got all of it. So it's just a bad debt. The insurance company were trying to tell me that it wasn't a theft, because we had freely handed the diamonds over to this woman thinking that we received the money, but we hadn't. So the deceit for us was that we were fooled.

We thought we were being sent a cash transfer. And I was thinking then, oh, my God, shit. And I then reached out to a friend of mine who works in insurance. And I said, How can they do this? This is why I have insurance to protect myself against fraud. And I asked him to have a look at my insurance policy. And he told me that at that point, I really need to know all the details about this woman. And I said, Well, I don't know them, the police won't help me. So he gave me the referral of a private investigator, gave me her number and I contacted her straightaway, and she agreed to meet with me. The following day, in my office, within five minutes I had basically a full report for me about Tiffany. She told me that she'd only been released from jail eight months earlier.

And I was like, Oh, my God, had been jailed for 36 months for diamond fraud, car theft, jewelry, and handbag thefts and all these like a long list of frauds. And I'm like, Oh my god, oh my god, this is what I'm dealing with. And I was horrified. I'm like, Oh my God, this woman seemed so sweet. She's like Jekyll and Hyde. She's a really bad person. I was at the risk of losing my business.

This business that I've worked the last decade plus to build could have disappeared in an instant. I was crapping myself. And I had to borrow some money from the bank to pay my suppliers because I didn't want to screw them over. And in this business, it's all about trust. It's all about relationships. And I didn't want to ruin my relationship. The relationships that I've spent years, decades building to get the trust of my dealers, I didn't want a reputation out there that our Sally Ryder has been defrauded. Now she's not paying her suppliers. So the first thing I did was pay my suppliers.

Z: I asked Drs, Shiloh and Scott to talk about why we tend to be so trusting, and default to believing people rather than thinking they’re lying.

Scott: There's a biological imperative for that. We are tribal animals, much like most of the animal kingdom, even the vast majority of the animal kingdom, we are meant to survive. There's a reason that we are altruistic and have positive regard for our tribe for our clan members. Because we have a better chance of surviving if we do that. Now, that's why also I mean, if we look at it purely scientific, you know, saying the scientific model, that's why there is such a really low occurrence of people that their brains are wired differently, for antisocial or for, you know, sort of these lack of empathy, lack of compassion, individuals, you know, if they made up the bulk of the population, the race wouldn't survive.

Shiloh:So the question is, why are humans inherently so trusting, and Scott laid that out beautifully, but when something's inherent, there's no explanation other than it is for survival usually, and that has been further researched and developed and specifically by Dr. Timothy Levine with the truth default theory that we naturally operate under the assumption that people we engage with are being honest. And that's a lovely world to operate in. Imagine if we defaulted to thinking that people were lying all the time. I mean, that would destroy us, that would destroy our humanity. So trust is such a centerpiece of human society. Call it optimism, call it glass half full, I'll take this and get snowed or duped every once in a while over, walking through life thinking everybody's a liar, because that sounds like an awful way to live.

Scott: We find that a lot in law enforcement, you know, I have been a law enforcement psychologist in the past. Dr. Shiloh is a law enforcement psychologist. And we deal with people who see the worst of the worst in the world. And it leaks over into their understanding of the world, which is not always accurate. You know, that's a generalization, which is what we call a cognitive distortion. It's a thought error. The idea that, are you going to let your kid go to a sleepover? And I can't even tell you how many times I would be counseling law enforcement that are like, Oh, no, I'm never gonna let my kid go to a sleepover. Because what could happen, it's like, well, the chance of that happening is actually really, really low. And you are taking away an experience, a pro-social experience for your child to use to have a healthy development and individuation. But, you know, unfortunately, law enforcement, seeing the worst of the worst, tend to be over protected. I think. People who fall for con scams or con artists are not stupid. They're not, they’re people who are generally higher income and intelligent. And it's just that the con artist, if they're a really good one, knows how to worm their way in and gain that confidence. That is where the artistry comes from, it’s they are building and establishing a foundation, a scaffolding of confidence in order to build their web on.

Shiloh: And con artists can be very successful in this world that we're describing. But only if there's not too many of them. Because it wouldn't work if there were, you know, every other person was a con artist. Because they would have to really, really dig to find the victims of the marks.

Scott: One of the examples, I mean, it's not really a super professional scam. But you know, if you're a savvy traveler and say you're going on a vacation, and you're going to go to Paris, if you do any research on vacationing in Paris, one of the first things that comes up is watch out for scam artists. They're all around Notre Dame, you know, unfortunately, Notre Dame is in bad shape now, but the other, you know, major tourist sites, and I had read about them, and I remember going and I thought, well, they're exaggerating. Well, they weren't exaggerating. There were tons of really adorable young women that looked like they were maybe 15 to 19 years old. All you know, trying to run this scam where they get you to hold something and then they demand that you pay and then another colleague comes up, but they were everywhere. It was like everywhere you looked was another dark haired, beautiful young woman trying to run the scam and funny because all the backpackers were like, you know, shooing them away. I thought that's a great like microcosm example of what Shiloh was talking about is that if you get too many of them in the same place, for one thing, where they're broadcasting it all over the world that this is an issue, you know, you're not gonna be able to find as many marks right.

Z: Simon is from Scotland, and became a diamond miner in 2007. This is his story.

Simon: Oh, that was a trip down to London, I bumped into an old friend who said, Why don't we take a trip over to Kenya, aren't cheap flights good? And I turned around and said that sounds like a good idea. I flipped a coin and I said heads we go, I’m going back to Brussels. So flip the coin and it came up heads. And then we got a flight from London Heathrow to Kenya, got to Mombasa and then my buddy bumped into one of his friends. So this guy pulls out these stones, and I said, What the hell is that? Because I know nothing about diamonds at all. It was actually a few rocks he pulled out and I looked at the rock and said, tell me that's not diamonds underneath that.

My friends says exactly the right thing, a bit more about this. So this guy was called Congolese. And he was from some place called Kinshasa. He says if you want to come out, you're welcome to come have a look around and pick the ones you want. And I was told you gotta watch out because sometimes people mix fake ones with the real ones and all the rest of it. So I said, I'm no expert, right? I mean, I made a phone call to one of my friends in India, who happens to have an uncle who's the head of the geology department of India, so I thought, okay, this is too easy. I got in touch with my uncle and said, Well, you got to look out for this, you gotta look out for that. And I said, Well, I don't have the expertise, right? Or the time to figure out if that is real or not. So could you do me a favor and send somebody over from India, because a flight from India to Africa was fairly easy back then.

So he sent someone over, he was good at eyeballing you know, the diamonds were there with the eyepiece. So we ended up taking a flight to Congo. And this is where I shot myself. This is where both of us were in a place no man's land. I mean, both of us were brothers kindred, but we still looked like two white guys standing out in that place. It was looking – So we met up with a guy we met up with in Kenya. And he took us to the village that he's from, and he's a chief there, they normally don't dress them to the tee, the table gear and all that stuff. I mean, the rate to Delhi I'm telling you, I've never been through a rate like it. Like being up in the Himalayas, 10,000 feet up with cliff edges and so on. That’s what I felt like, baby we got to this village and met this chief guy, and the guy translated it and I quickly figured out right now a lot of Western people have come up here. No, just dug for the menus and didn't give anything back.

In my head I thought like, or swap your container filler race medical supplies, because I got mine and so anyway, I ended up saying to the chief, I said how about you let me dig on your parcel of land. And I'll swap you for that container full of paracetamol. So the guy explained to the chief, and something sparked in this guy's eye, and he quickly turned over and this is before the Chinese have come over to Africa, you know so. So for me to offer him like a 40 foot container filled with rice right, which I had on my farm anyway, and then I saw it for free, or it was just postage and the medical supplies were, you know, straightforward for me, relatively easy. The chief of the village wrote something in his tribal language. He says that I have to go here to get the machines and he says these men of the village will go with you. And the guy that we met in Kenya, he says I've never seen him like this before, he goes, your offer must be very good. And also they had a couple of shops in his village itself like our barber setup and they'd have his skill set up in the community now that with the funds are given to the chief.

CHAPTER 2: Two Months’ Salary

Ever heard of the “rule” that a diamond engagement ring should cost 2 months salary? Any thoughts as to where that might have come from? I’ll tell you. It was the ad men and women at N.W Ayer. Before they told people - in this case, men, how much to spend on a diamond, it was anyone’s guess. But it was important that men knew this, And N.W Ayer made it so.

Part of this was because the ad executives knew that women could have had a far more practical suggestion for what to put a huge chunk of money towards, as they embarked on a life together. And if they had a hand in the diamond decision making process, they might have vetoed the purchase in favour of something less extravagant.

The solution to this problem was to remove women entirely from the decision making process. Under the agency’s instruction, films came out which depicted men perusing the glittering rows of diamond rings, in anticipation of the surprise his sweetheart would get when he kneels and opens the little velvet box. The way marriage operates, from the decision to propose, to meeting at the end of the aisle and beyond, was influenced by N.W.Ayer and shaped to be in the best interests of the diamond cartel.

Ad: In our opinion all diamonds are in safe hands only when they are dispersed and held by individuals as cherished possessions valued far above their market price. We are dealing with a problem of mass psychology. We seek to strengthen the tradition of the engagement ring to make it a psychological necessity capable of competing successfully at the retail level with utility goods and services. We spread the word of diamonds worn by stars of screen and stage by wives and daughters of political leaders by any woman who can make the groceries wife and the mechanic's sweetheart say, I wish I had which she has. Much of our market each year is made up of new people moving into the marriage age bracket. Future sales depend on persuading Millions of new individuals that an engagement diamond is essential. This is not practical as a short term objective because it takes years for individual opinions to develop into a definite course of action, specifically, in this instance into an insistent demand for an engagement diamond. Our advertising objective is to leave the impression with young people that the diamond is the only meaningful symbol of the love inherent in the engagement promise. The advertising should be targeted at these young people, but in such a way that it will encourage appreciation of the diamond engagement ring tradition by the entire public.

It is true that, in modern times, far more of the engagement ring decisions are made together than separately, as they used to be. This is no doubt reflecting the fact that gender roles have changed dramatically, and the strict delineation of who in the relationship should be the breadwinner is long gone. Shifting gender roles and perceptions of marriage, as well as the fact that marriage is in many places no longer limited to being between a man and a woman, mean that the rules are no longer cut and dry.

Patrick: Cutting quite a long story short, I came to Hong Kong 50 years ago and ended up in a bit of a dodgy nightclub on Elgin Street on a work’s due date. Met someone I really liked then a bit of to and fro and a few phone calls here and there and a couple of drunk New Year's Day phone calls from Sydney. And after that, we decided that we wanted to have more things together. And he's not exactly what I expected to be in Hong Kong, he’s a South American man, a professional guy working here. So it wasn't exactly widely anticipated. And really, we moved in together eventually, we've lived in a very small space for 13 years without too many arguments. And about 11 years ago, I went to Macau. And he proposed to me in Macau, which was a lovely surprise. And then a year later, we got married in Hanoi in Vietnam. Now, still, to this day, the British Consulate doesn't allow British Nationals to have civil partnerships in Hong Kong, it depends on your nationality. I think some countries do, some don't. So we had quite a traditional engagement and where I was given a ring, and then a lovely wedding in Hanoi. And we've been happy ever since.

A year of engagement, and we've been married about nine years. When it came to engagement and wedding rings. So I got a beautiful diamond ring from Bulghari, which is absolutely beautiful and lovely. And I wore that and I didn't give a ring. So I got off a bit lightly there. But then I did get a wedding ring from my husband at a later date. And I got a wedding ring as well. A friend of mine who's a jeweler here, organised a whiteboard ring for me, which I've worn since then. So it was not chosen together. It was all done separately. And a little bit of guessing what we'd like but yes, I've got quite a traditional, or this little diamond set into a ring yet. So it's kind of you know, it's quite discreet and quite subtle. But interestingly, in Hong Kong, I’m legally still not married.

And when I'm doing my tax return, I still tick the single box because it's not recognized here. But really we are married in all intents and purposes under the civil partnership rulings, but the rings, the rings have been important to us. I think that when it comes to engagements and weddings, I think people even though you have very contemporary and different relationships, and things have opened up a lot really in the last 20 years, people become quite traditional at times like that, I think and when I think about my family, I think wedding rings in the old days were not expensive. I think they were a lot cheaper. I think the husband may have spent a month's salary on it. But most of the wedding rings, my family I seem to remember are quite clean. I mean, when you go back way back in history, I mean, the Vikings and all the Celts use rings for fidelity towards husbands who are away for a chief for a clan, I suppose. So there's a nice historical feel to having a ring.

CHAPTER 3: The private investigator

Melissa: So Sally's friends with someone I know through work as well whose name escapes me at the moment. But he had written to me one day and said, Can I introduce Sally who has a need for my services? And obviously I said, Well, yes, of course because a new client is always a good thing. And so Sally and I made an appointment to meet and very quickly, she kind of ran me through what happened. So I'm a private investigator. And I've been doing this now for six years. And Sally's case was probably the first, it's not my first diamond case. But it's definitely the first case whereby so many people, so many people were involved and how quickly it moved as well. And so I was tasked with finding Tiffany and very quickly within half an hour we established that Tiffany had a criminal record. At that point, she should have been in prison. But for some reason she wasn't. And we never actually did find out why she wasn't in prison, because according to the records that at that time she had gone to visit Sally to buy those diamonds, she should have been in prison. And so we found out all of those things about her, we found her home address, we checked out the home address, and it was an address where parents still lived at and all of those things. Yeah. And that's when I guess the chase started properly.

Z: In the course of the PI’s investigation, she found out that Tiffany was actually a beauty therapist who worked in Kwun Tong, the second most populated of Hong Kong’s 18 districts. We asked her how easy it was for her to find out information about Tiffany’s criminal history.

Melissa: So all of these are a matter of public records, we're able to do litigation searches. And a litigation search tells us when the last time someone had appeared in court. And when someone appears in court, that is a matter of public record, the kind of hearing is also a matter of public record. So we could find it very easily. And on top of which, because we had all of those things, we can surmise, quite succinctly and quite accurately for most time, what the judgment was, and consequently, how many months they were given a sentence for and stuff like that.

Quite honestly, that information was useful to know, but I don't think it made any difference whatsoever to Sally, because it didn't make a difference to the fact that she had effectively given diamonds away. So all of that information was useful for us to make a police report with, it was useful for the lawyers if they wanted to pursue some kind of legal avenue. But in terms of making a difference to Sally's case itself, not much, to be honest. We had Tiffany's full name. And then once we had Tiffany's full name, we could do a public record search and find a home address for her. We then decided to visit the home address. So we did. And we found I think her parents still live there. But I don't think she lived there anymore. because well, because she'd been in prison.

So it wasn't me who went, it was a colleague of mine who went but it was just a quick conversation, it was just us knocking on the door saying, we have this address, we're looking for this person, we're looking for Tiffany, and the person who answered the door responded with, she no longer lives here. And then we tried to ask for their identities and all of those and they were not very forthcoming with information. But that's to be expected. Because a stranger knocking on your door asking for information is not exactly the most conducive of all situations to divulge information. But through public records, we were able to establish the people who lived in that flat were Tiffany's parents.

That was basically my job done. Because when I had seen Sally, the truth of it is I could find out all of this information. But I have very limited powers as to actually making a real difference. Because I can't force Tiffany to give up the diamonds. I can't force her to effectively do anything.

Sally: Tiffany, if you have nothing to hide, why aren't you sharing your identity? I don't believe you will report yourself to the police on Thursday, as you've promised. Show me You are being honest. And send me your Hong Kong ID card.

Tiffany: If I hide, they will find me. I will show up after I settle all the payments within these two days.

Sally: I have no reason to trust you. Now you have stolen and you are still lying.

Tiffany: Not stolen.

Sally: Why are you still hiding your identity if you assure me that you can make the payment within two days? The payment was due two weeks ago, you haven't paid. This is theft.

Tiffany: This is my personal information. If I go to the police station, they can take my ID card and check my bank, but I cannot hide anymore. It's my real name, real phone number, this phone number has been used for over 15 years. How can I hide, if I cheat you? I am not using my phone and my name and my check. They will find me right. So don't worry about that. Because they are handled now. And I call them already.

Sally: Tiffany, you are a criminal. I know you have probably done this many times before and know the procedure, which is why you're not showing your ID.

Tiffany: No, if I use many time, why I use my name?

Sally: How do we know if it's your real name if you won't share your ID with us.

Tiffany: I can use the others. The police will know my name and my check. You said I done many times, time can prove everything. No need to talk too much because you don't trust me. But I told many excuse before, I know. So you should be think me like that. But I just want to settle now,

Sally: Tiffany, I understand your situation and I now understand why you don't want to give me your ID.

Z: So Sally finds herself between a rock and a hard place. The police don’t see her case as worth pursuing, and hiring a private investigator brings a whole lot of information but not a whole lot of possibilities for action. The information, which the PI was able to put together easily and within a very short amount of time shows that Tiffany is a convicted criminal, who has not only been to prison before, but was in prison for exactly this crime. Stealing diamonds.

If Sally wanted to get Tiffany arrested, she probably could have. But Tiffany wasn’t hurting Sally any further - in fact, she was chipping away at what she owed with small payments of 50K here, 100K there.

CHAPTER 4: Sally’s background in diamonds:

Z: Here’s a bit of Sally’s backstory, including how she got into the diamond business.

Sally: I was born in Melbourne, and lived in Australia until the age of 12. And when I was 12, my dad lost his job. He was a pilot with Australian Airlines and we had a big dispute. 1989 it was and dad lost his job, which meant that he had no job, he had no income and all the Australian pilots that work for Australian airlines and resigned from their jobs. And it was Bob Hawke and Peter abels at the time, and they just recruited foreign pilots to take their jobs. So there are no jobs for them in Australia anymore. And for income, my dad bought a chicken farm. And we moved to Red Hill on the Mornington Peninsula. And so that's where our family home was then and I' m so grateful to my parents for doing this to me at the time, it was so traumatic.

But in hindsight, it wasn't the best thing that ever happened to me. And since birth my parents had had me down for MLC, a lovely private Girls School in Melbourne. And dad lost his job just as I was about to go into year seven. And they just didn't know if they were going to be able to financially support a private Girls School in Melbourne. So they sent me to Doncaster high, which was this really really crappy local high school in a pretty rough area of Melbourne. And it really kind of shocked the socks off me you know, the kids doing drugs in the toilets at lunchtime and like all sorts of terrible stuff that was going on.

Just wrapped up kids as well that went to the school. And then halfway through the year we moved down to Red Hill, dad bought the chicken farm and then they sent me to Tourette College in Menta Iser, which is another beautiful private girls school. And I remember going down to get fitted for my uniform and they had the uniform we had to wear socks above our knees and a tie and a blazer. And you got detentions for not having your socks pulled above your knees if you left the school ground and you know, it was chalk and cheese, these two schools and I remember sitting down in the classroom and looking around at my new classmates thinking, you bitches don't know how lucky you've got it.

I felt so privileged to be there. You know, I had a really great time in Red Hill and Tourette College was a beautiful school and they really pushed us academically. And I loved languages and the arts and those sorts of things. And I was lucky enough to get a scholarship to go to a university in Japan for my first year of uni called Osaka Kokusai Joshi Daigaku, which translates to Osaka International University for Women. And I did my first year of university there, in Osaka. And it scared the pants out of me actually to like, you know, I thought I was International, you know, my dad worked in and he was then with Singapore Airlines. By the time I finished school. And we've done a lot of international travel with dad's job. It was fantastic.

And I thought, yeah, I'll go and exchange to Japan for a year. That sounds really fun. And I really gave myself culture shock when I arrived because it was so foreign. You know, I live with a Japanese family that didn't speak any English. I went to a Japanese University. I was one of the 10 exchange students from around the world. And I didn't get to see a lot of them. So I was very integrated into Japanese society very quickly. And it was shocking. Like I scared myself. So yeah, I learned Japanese and that was great. And then yeah, while I was at uni, I did two degrees. I did a Bachelor of Arts, Japanese and German and a business international trade degree. And while I was studying, I was working at the diamond company on the side. You know, my love of diamonds is not really because I love diamonds themselves. What I actually really love is the business side of what I do. And it's the relationships with the people that I'm selling to.

You know, I feel like I'm not making a sale to a customer. I'm doing them a favor. I feel like I'm really giving them a great deal and teaching them how to buy well because there's so many places that people get scammed with diamonds, you know, just buying luxury jewelry being scammed. You know, you weigh over paying for the value of the product that you're buying. It’s all marketing and to some people it's worth it, but if they spent the same money with me they get a diamond probably double the size and the really interesting thing about a diamond is that you know being at 100% crystallized carbon means not only can they not tell where in the world it's come from, it can't be branded, you know, because being 100% crystallized carbon and graded with four Cs means that a diamond that Tiffany sells versus a diamond that I sell versus a diamond that Harry Winston sells are no different. You can't brand them. I'd always had a dream of creating my own business. And for years, I just thought about what it might be. And by luck, I fell into diamonds. That was my first ever job.

While I was studying at university at Monash in Melbourne, I was working part time for a diamond company called the Australian diamond company in Melbourne. And that's where I got my diamond experience. And I worked for them for, I think it was about four years, actually on and off part time. And it was a brilliant job. I loved helping people and was such a happy occasion in their life, usually that they were coming to buy diamonds. So I'd loved the industry. But I really hated the guy that I was working for at the time he was, he just wasn't ethical, and they were buying crappy diamonds and noncertified. And people were just getting ripped off. And, you know, I looked around the market and there was a really high end jewelers like, you know, the luxury brands, Tiffany's, Cartier, those sort of businesses. And then there was a really low end and not a lot of inbetweeners.

And when I came to Hong Kong, you know, I just couldn't shake this idea of wanting to create my own boutique diamond business. And I looked around Hong Kong and I found that there was lots of high end and lots of low end, but nothing sort of in the middle. And what I wanted to really offer to people was an opportunity to do bespoke jewelry. So come and meet with someone and have something designed and their stones chosen and then crafted. And the secret to that being successful was finding good craftsmen. When I came to Hong Kong and worked for Merrill Lynch on my lunch breaks, I was meeting diamond merchants and gold merchants and looking for jewelers.

And at one of the trade shows actually in Hong Kong, you know, Hong Kong has the biggest diamond trade show in the world. They hold them in March and September every year, not this year, obviously. And I really wanted to get involved in the manufacturing process and actually see the jewelers at work. So we're an interim service, when a client comes in, we first teach them about how to be smart about buying a diamond. And that comes from my 20 years of expertise working in diamonds, I really teach them about how to buy smart and there's four Cs a diamond. And basically it's a combination of those four that make a diamond both beautiful and good value for money.

So there's things that you should focus on that contribute to the beauty and things that you should definitely compromise that don't affect the beauty at all, but drastically affect the price. We start with the carat weight, which is the size of the stone, the color, which is the whiteness of the diamond, we started D for diamond and as you move down the alphabet, the saturation of color becomes stronger. So you'd see like if you compared say a J to a D, the J would look a little bit yellowish. And then the clarity, which refers to natural inclusions in a diamond and the more of them, the bigger they are and the more centrally located they are, the lower the clarity grading will be. And then the fourth C is cut. And a lot of people confuse cut with being the shape of the stone. So you know that it's round diamonds, it's round brilliant. There's the square shape, which is called the princess cut. The cushion cut, the marquee, there's lots of different shapes of diamonds, and people confuse cut with shape. But in actual fact, when we're grading diamonds, we're talking about the four Cs cut, we're talking about how well faceted the stone is to maximize the light return. So if the cutting is precision cut, and there's the perfect table size and crown angle and depth in the stone, you'll get a really beautiful fiery, sparkly stone. So cut is key.

So the one thing they shouldn't ever compromise on is cut. So that's how to get a really beautiful stone. So the thing that you should compromise on is clarity. And it's a big misconception and it's very common in Asia that, and people desire high clarity diamonds thinking they're getting diamonds that sparkle more. So they think that buying high clarity is going to get them a more sparkly diamond and that's not true. It's the cut that produces the sparkle. So if you walk down Queen's road in Central and look in the shop windows of you know, Chow Tai Fook, etc. There'll be lots and lots of D flawless VBS.

One really high clarity stone because really in Asia or Hong Kong it’s the only place that will ever sell. Because culturally the people here have been culturally educated to want and desire high clarity diamonds because they think they sparkle more. But they've been mis-educated, they don't sparkle more, they're much more rare, which is why they're much more expensive, but it doesn't affect the beauty so much. So if you go to a clarity grade save an SI one which looks much lower on the scale, compare it to a flawless visually it can look identical, however, the price will be a lot higher for the flawless. So it's compromising on the clarity to a certain extent. You don't want to see inclusions with the naked eye. But as long as you can't see them with the naked eye, it should look no different to flawless but they're much more attractively priced. So that's how you get good value for money. You focus on cash, you compromise on clarity. So that's the first part of our process.

When someone comes to visit us we first educate them on diamonds and how to buy smart. I've been developing my supplier relationships for decades. So that's really important for our customer to get great service, my supplier relationships are really important. So whatever they're coming to see me for whether it's a one carat brilliant cut diamond or a 10 carat D flawless, Asher cut diamond. I've got all the right supply relationships, so I buy from the source.

Once we've decided on the stone, we talk about design. And I'm really passionate about the age-old traditions of fine jewelry design. So everything we do is done by hand. We don't use CAD machines or you know, like computer assisted design, everything is done by hand. And once we've chosen the stones to do the design, it's all hand sketched. And that hand sketch Once approved by the client is then passed by the workshop, and Frankie and I work on creating the piece of jewelry. So that's how Ryder’s diamonds work. You know, it's an old school business. It's an old school bespoke jewelry company. I love the way that we do things here. It's really different. And it's a rarity today. It used to be the only way but today it's a rarity.

Z: Here’s another diamond story.

Woman: So when I was young and stupid and got engaged for the first time, like at 25 or something, I thought I had to have the you know, the most beautiful big diamond ring and I made the guy take me to a jewelry store and I wanted a marquee I think it's called it's like an oval shaped diamond. And I wanted it on an angle and I wanted clawed little extra diamonds on the side. And it was quite hideous. And I think that was the beginning of me not liking diamonds. So it was really funny that I actually grew into liking diamonds and then we broke up and because he owed me money, I took it back to the jeweler and sold it to them because I hated it so much. So I ended up hiding diamonds and now loving them.

I never really loved them until my mom got really sick. And she always says to me, when she dies, she's gonna leave all her jewelry to me because I'm her only daughter. I was like Ew, I don't want your jewelry. It's all old fashioned and crappy. Well, of course she did die. And it was really lovely to have that part of her that was so important because my mom got married to my dad when she was 17.

So she got this unbelievable, stunning little diamond, but it's just beautiful. And it's a filigree diamond ring. And it has a matching wedding band and they didn't have a lot of money. So it took a while but then eventually she got her eternity ring, which is also stunning. And when I wear it, I feel really close to her and him because he'd already died. So it was really nice to get that jewelry from my mum. And then while I was looking around at the jewelry that I had at my mom's, I forgot that she had this diamond ring. That's like a little Daisy. And this is the prettiest little ring.

And it's not little, it's quite a bit diamond with little diamonds all the way around it and it looks like this really pretty little flower, which is exactly something I would like because I like flowers and I just love it. I forgot about it. I thought someone had stolen it in my head. I thought I hadn't seen it. And it wasn't that long ago that my mom died. So I just haven't wanted to look in her jewelry for such a long time. So I did find that and then I was so excited. I found my Nana's rings.

One of them is her engagement ring. And the other one is her eternity ring. And she would have had these since she was in Malta. And that was like eighty years ago. So this jewelry is unbelievably beautiful and amazingly precious to me. And I'm so so happy to have them.

I think my most amazing jewelry diamonds story is, I bought my husband back to his home country of South Korea. And his parents picked us up at the airport. This was five years ago. And while we were in the car coming back and I didn't know his parents very well then. His mother never thought that he would move back to this country. And she was so grateful. We were in the car coming back from the airport where she picked us up. And she gave me this amazing Solitaire diamond in the car. And I actually said to him, is it really? Is it a cubic zirconia? He's like, No, I'm sure it's real. It's like a full carat, with amazing clarity. diamond ring in a white gold setting. And I was just stunned like, blown away stunned. It is the most stunning diamond I think I've ever seen. I mean, my mother is beautiful in a very different way and obviously very sentimental.

But this one's just stunning. And she said to me, don't tell the other sister in laws because I didn't buy them one. So it was very cute. It has such a nice meaning and she's always really grateful when I wear it. I'm terrified when I wear it because I’m worried I’ll lose it because I'm not very good at things like that. So she actually bought me something called a stop diamond ring. And I was like, what's to stop the diamond ring, eomma? And she showed me and it's a little band almost like a wedding band and she chose one with more little diamonds in it. That holds it on. It's quite tight and quite fitted. So now I've got a wedding set of rings from my mother in law and my mom's wedding set of rings. So from both of the mothers in my life, I have beautiful diamonds that mean a lot to me.

Next episode: As the story gets more and more complex, Sally begins to develop her game plan, and it’s not what you might assume. I also get curious about who Tiffany really is, and also what actually makes things valuable. Let’s hang out next episode - Make sure you subscribe so that you don’t miss it. It’s called “Keep your friends close.”