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Diamonds

DIAMONDS ARE FORMED DEEP WITHIN THE EARTH'S CRUST, AND COME TO THE SURFACE THROUGH VOLCANOES. THEY ARE THE HARDEST NATURAL SUBSTANCE ON EARTH. THEY CAN ALSO BE HARD TO SHOP FOR. AND AS VALENTINE'S DAY APPROACHES, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE DOING.

IT'S TIME TO GO TO GEMOLOGICAL SCAM SCHOOL -- FOR A LESSON IN GETTING WHAT YOU PAY FOR. FOX 5'S ELISABETH LEAMY JOINS US LIVE WITH INFORMATION ROMANTICS EVERYWHERE SHOULD KNOW. IF YOU WANT TO LOOK POSH WITHOUT PAYING THE PRICE, THE FAKES ARE GETTING SO GOOD THAT NOBODY EVER HAS TO KNOW. BUT IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE REAL THING, WATCH OUT FOR DIAMOND DECEPTIONS.

MUSIC: "diamonds are a girls best friend."

DIAMONDS COME IN ALL SHAPES, SIZES --AND WITH A WIDE RANGE OF PRICE TAGS. PROBLEM IS, SO DO THE GEMS MEANT TO MIMIC DIAMONDS.

CERTIFIED MASTER GEMOLOGIST AND APPRAISER MARTIN FULLER SPENDS HIS LIFE SCOPING OUT THE GOOD FROM THE BAD, POINTING OUT PERFECTION --AND IMPERFECTIONS-- TELLING CUSTOMERS WHETHER THEY'RE BUYING THE REAL THING OR GETTING RIPPED-OFF. HE SAYS KEEPING UP WITH SCIENCE IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE.

MARTIN FULLER, CERTIFIED MASTER GEMOLOGIST AND APPRAISER:

"Anything that's grown in nature we ultimately figure out how to do in the laboratory."

"The original culprit was cubic zirconia."

SOVIET SCIENTISTS LEARNED HOW TO GROW CUBIC ZIRCONIA IN LABORATORIES IN THE 1970'S. A DECADE LATER, THE DIAMOND DOUBLE BECAME THE RAGE HERE IN AMERICA. MOST PEOPLE, EVEN EXPERTS, COULDN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE WITH THE NAKED EYE.

FULLER: "this device is called a thermal conductivity probe."

THAT'S WHERE THIS MACHINE COMES IN. DIAMONDS CONDUCT HEAT BETTER THAN CUBIC ZIRCONIA. THIS TOOL-OF-THE-TRADE HELPS EXPERTS KNOW WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT'S NOT. BUT, NOW, THERE'S A NEW CHALLENGE.

FULLER: "recently another material was developed to fool this device."

TECHNOLOGY'S LATEST ATTEMPT TO REPLICATE THE DIAMOND IS A PRODUCT CALLED MOISSANITE. IT LOOKS LIKE A DIAMOND, CONDUCTS HEAT IN THE SAME WAY AND EVEN FOOLS THE PROBE. THE METER MAXES OUT IN THE DIAMOND RANGE.. EVEN THOUGH THIS IS A MAN-MADE GEM.

FULLER: "Often times, it's difficult even under the microscope, to tell the

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difference between a man-made diamond and a natural diamond."

THERE'S ONE DIFFERENCE THOUGH. MOISSANITE CONTAINS SOME METAL, SO IT'S MAGNETIC. DIAMONDS ARE NOT. FULLER SAYS THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH CUBIC ZIRCONIA OR MOISSANITE, AS LONG AS THE RETAILER DOESN'T CLAIM THEY'RE DIAMONDS.

FULLER: "Our sparkle is alot better than alot of other stores."

IN OTHER WORDS, DON'T BE DAZZLED BY A FAST TALKING CLERK WHO HAS THE DIAMOND DIALOGUE DOWN. WE TOOK OUR SCAM CAM SHOPPING TO SEE WHAT KINDS OF PITCHES AND PROMISES WE'D GET FROM THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE COUNTER.

FULLER: "Diamond never small." "It has a total of one carat, g-h quality."
"You're going to be paying this price.... because of the color and clarity."

BOTTOM LINE: KNOW THE LINGO AND THE LESSON PLAN BEFORE YOU HEAD TO THE JEWELRY COUNTER OR YOU COULD GET CONNED. AND BEFORE YOU HEAD INTO BATTLE WITH A BUNCH OF CLERKS PAID ON COMMISSION, YOU MUST KNOW THE FOUR C'S.

FULLER: "There's the color, the clarity, the cut and the carat weight."

CUT RELATES TO THE SHAPE OF THE DIAMOND. CLARITY REFERS TO WHETHER THERE ARE INTERNAL FLAWS IN THE GEM CALLED INCLUSIONS.

FULLER: "The flawless diamond is much less common in nature and more expensive."

CARATS ARE A MEASUREMENT OF THE WEIGHT OF THE DIAMOND. AND COLOR IS SCORED ON A SCALE FROM D THROUGH Z, D BEING THE BEST.

PRODUCER: "So D would be the optimum?"

AND JUST AS MAN HAS COME UP WITH DIAMOND DUPLICATES THERE ARE WAYS TO FIX FLAWS WITHIN A GEM.

FULLER: "Just like they can fix a crack on the windshield on a car, there are techniques to make those cracks in diamonds invisible."

IF THE DIAMOND DEALER 'TELLS' YOU A GEM WAS REPAIRED, THAT'S ACCEPTABLE. IF NOT, IT'S FRAUD.

ELISABETH LEAMY: "Before you hand over hundreds or thousands of dollars for any gem, you should look at it under the jeweler's microscope. Even your untrained eye could spot flaws like this speck, or this crack."

IF YOU SPOT ANY FLAWS, CALLED INCLUSIONS, YOU CAN EITHER PASS ON THE GEM OR USE THAT KNOWLEDGE AS A BARGAINING CHIP. MINOR FLAWS ARE NOT NECESSARILY BAD.

FULLER: "Every diamond is unique and those inclusions are like a fingerprint."

IF YOU'RE TRYING TO FIND A UNIQUE DIAMOND FOR A SPECIAL SOMEONE, REMEMBER THIS SCAM SCHOOL LESSON WHEN YOU GO SHOPPING AND DON'T FALL VICTIM TO A DIAMOND DECEPTION.
ELISABETH LEAMY, FOX 5 NEWS.

OUR EXPERT SAYS THERE ARE GREAT DIAMOND DEALS TO BE HAD AT WAREHOUSE STORES LIKE COSTCO AND SAM'S CLUB. JUST BE SURE THE DIAMOND YOU BUY IS CERTIFIED BY THE GEMOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA --NO MATTER WHERE YOU BUY IT. AND GET THE WARRANTY AND RETURN POLICY IN WRITING TOO.

THERE'S ONE MORE DIAMOND DETAIL YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND:
SOME RETAILERS TRY TO PASS OFF DIAMOND CHIPS AS FULL
DIAMONDS.

A CHIP IS ACTUALLY A SMALL IRREGULAR PIECE OF DIAMOND THAT'S
NOT NEARLY AS BRILLIANT OR VALUABLE.

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