

DIRTY DIAMOND

a short film

Written by

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INT. UNIVERSAL SHOPPING NETWORK - CAFETERIA - NIGHT

The night cafeteria is empty except for a few late stragglers and hold-outs.

HANK, 49, dyed blonde hair, crooked teeth, and BRENT DAVIS, 38, gelled brown hair, sit at a table. Hank's plate is stacked with beef rib bones and he wears a cheap suit, with a gold pinky ring and flimsy gold watch.

Brent wears a pristine Armani suit, with a turtleneck, and has grey sideburns that contrast to the rest of his slick brown hair, a sliver of middle age on the horizon.

In the back of the cafeteria, cleaning perfectly straight, glistening-white, false teeth, is KATHY MACINTOSH, 53. Kathy is a former Miss Kentucky with a killer smile. She wears a power suit.

Brent holds a binder, going over a script, preparing for a performance or something like that. Clipped into the binder are family photographs, including one of his wife on their wedding day, and a few of his small children. The photos distract him as he rehearses.

BRENT

(Rehearsing)

47th Street holds a special place
in my heart.

(then)

47th Street holds a special place
in my heart.

Brent looks at the family photos... and firmly continues.

BRENT (CONT'D)

(then)

47th Street holds a special place
in my heart.

Hank just wants attention from Brent.

HANK

I just have a few more contracts to
fax. Let's meet out back when
you're off the air, Brent?

BRENT

I wish I could, Hank.

HANK

Come on, Brent, the whole sales
team is going to the titty bar by
the airport.

BRENT

Thanks, Hank, but I think it's a pass for me tonight.

HANK

Is this about what happened the other morning?

BRENT

They're just teeth, Hank, and they help her sell my product.

HANK

I'm not talking about the teeth-bleaching.

(raising his voice)

It's a known fact that Kathy has the hots for you, Encyclopedia Brotanica.

Hank looks over at Kathy. She does not look back at him.

BRENT

I'm a happily married man, compadre.

HANK

Well, you know what they say, you can't have a million dollar dream with a two dollar smile.

Right on cue, Brent takes out a set of false teeth. It's a loaded moment between the men as Hank watches him do this.

BRENT

I better hurry. Kathy becomes displeased if I'm late.

Brent smiles. Hank laughs a mouth of rotted and crooked teeth. Brent trashes his salad.

INT. UNIVERSAL SHOPPING NETWORK - STUDIO B - NIGHT

In studio at the Universal Shopping Network. The set is opulent, with logos that boldly announce the name of a product: **"47th Street Dyamond Collection."**

A chandelier creates a champagne haze over a sleek table with a glistening glass display case. Small signs display prices for the jewelry inside: a charm bracelet, pendant necklace, and a ring - **\$120 each.**

NOTE: The jewelry is made of glass and cheap, but through the magic of television appears opulent and gorgeous.

Brent sits on a love seat. Beside him is Kathy Macintosh, her white teeth shining like pearls in the champagne light.

KATHY

A food bank, Brent? In Buffalo, New York?

BRENT

Daddy lowers the volume, and I remain on the carpet. The next morning they find six year old me fixed in front of the set, and the first thing I say when I open my little red eyes is that I want to end world hunger.

KATHY

Well, you could've fooled us, Mother Teresa Jr.!

BRENT

I saved starving boys and girls in my dreams that night...

KATHY

I bet you did, but why don't we save our dreams for later, hmm? For now why don't you tell our viewers how the gorgeous and handcrafted 47th Street Diamond Collection came to exist?

Brent smiles, but inside he's caving and crushed. No time for that, though, it's game time.

BRENT

Well, I was a salesman for Harry Winston.

KATHY

You sure were.

Kathy nudges Brent flirtatiously.

DOUG, the cameraman on set, smiles.

BRENT

This was a few months after Stanford, and there I was dining with another salesman from the globe's most prestigious jewelry company.

KATHY

Let me just set the scene for you, viewers at home. There you are, outside of a Marshalls, in the middle of nowhere-land Vermont, in the freezing cold, and a world renowned salesman from Harry Winston gives you the idea for what would become the second highest grossing jewelry collection in Universal Shopping Network's history!

BRENT

Being on the road must've inspired him because that sales trip changed my life.

KATHY

Okay. Now I want everyone to understand why you named this marvelous, handcrafted jewelry collection the 47th Street Dyamond Collection!

BRENT

Well, Kathy, 47th Street holds a special place in my heart. Even though the collection exists because of my friend the diamond salesman, the name comes exclusively from daddy. Every winter daddy would give my siblings and me a lesson in the American Dream by taking us shopping on Manhattan's 47th Street during the worst snowstorm of the season. Watching immigrant merchants work was his way of reminding us that nothing in America comes easy.

BREENG-BREENG. A phone rings.

KATHY

Good evening, Betsy, you're on with Brent and Kathy from the 47th Street Dyamond Collection.

BETSY THE CALLER

(on phone)

Just a huge fan of the collection,
thank you for creating it and
bringing it to the television, Mr.
Davis.

KATHY

Thank you for being such a loyal
customer, Betsy.

BETTY THE CALLER

Well, it's never been easier with
such entertaining hosts.

Brent and Kathy high five. Frank and John, the PA's, giggle.

KATHY

We just so love hearing that.
Which piece, or pieces, did you
select, Betsy?

BETSY THE CALLER

(on phone)

I just had to get the Dyamond charm
bracelet for my sister, who had a
nasty fight with Cancer last year.

Betsy's voice trembles, clearly emotional. Kathy meets her
there.

KATHY

I'm sorry, Betsy. Is your sister
firmly back on her high heels?

BETSY THE CALLER

(on phone)

Her Cancer is in remission, yes.

KATHY

God bless her, and you know what,
47th Street's Dyamond ring,
absolutely no pain in that. None
at all, it's such a beautiful piece
from such a simple and luxurious
handcrafted collection.

BOB (O.S.)

(on phone)

Do the salmon walk!

KATHY

Well, it sounds like someone at home with Betsy wants Brent to do his infamous Salmon Sunday walk. What do you say, Brent?

Brent smiles, but really doesn't want to.

KATHY (CONT'D)

I know it's not Sunday, but you can still do it for Betsy, right, Brent?

Brent launches into the salmon-walk, which he executes with his elbows and knees, and also his stomach, to create a lurching forward momentum like an amphibian-fish.

Frank and John, the PA's, giggle.

BETSY THE CALLER

(on phone)

Bob, the meatloaf is burning.

(then)

Bob!

KATHY

It sounds like Betsy's husband, Bob, forgot to turn the oven off. Thanks for calling in, Betsy.

Betsy hangs up the phone. Brent is still salmon-walking.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, I have just been informed that \$46,000 of the 47th Street Dyamond Collection has been purchased. Can you tell us a little about your pillow-case-packaging, Brent?

Brent is still on the ground. Kathy makes sure he heard her.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Your pillow case packaging.

Brent delays for a half second longer, second guessing himself, before jumping up with faux joy.

BRENT

We put more effort into our packaging than most jewelry brands put into their stones!

KATHY

And that kind of attention to detail is exactly what sets the 47th Street Dyamond Collection, by Brent Davis, apart from the pack. So, how can we move on without hearing the rest of your story.

BRENT

Well, Kathy, 47th Street holds a special place in my heart. On 47th Street--

BREENG BREENG. The phone rings again.

KATHY

Oops, it looks like we're getting yet another phone call! I promise we'll get Brent to share the magical story behind his marvelous collection before our time is up. You're on the line with Brent and Kathy, and the 47th Street Dyamond Collection, Ed.

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

This is Ed calling from Maine.

KATHY

Hi, Ed from Maine. What pieces from the collection please you today?

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

Well, I have to say that I have been following this collection ever since it debuted on the network, and for Christmas last year I purchased, on Fast-Pay, the Love Bracelet, the 47th Street pendant necklace, and the ring, one for each of my three daughters, and they were so in love with the jewelry that they have been wearing it all year.

KATHY

Are all three of your girls hitched, Ed?

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

My youngest was married in 1990,
and their husbands have all given
me a piece of their banana brains
because their wives like your
jewelry more than their engagement
rings.

BRENT

Ed, I tell you, I'm not at all
surprised.

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

On the bible, these Dyamond rings
are glued to their fingers!

KATHY

Well, thank you for your call, Ed.
We certainly wish your daughters
good luck with their husbands.

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

And they have no clue I'm calling,
so please don't tell them, and
especially their husbands.

Brent laughs.

BRENT

Not to worry, Ed.

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

Before I hang up, could you slide
open the back of your display case,
Brent?

KATHY

Surely.

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

What a thrill, I can see you on my
television.

Brent slides open the back of the display.

ED FROM MAINE (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Now who thinks Brent and Kathy can sell \$1,000,000 worth of 47th Street Dyamond merchandise in the eight minutes they have left on television?

Brent bends down to be eye level with the back of the display case. Inside there is a Casio watch wrapped around a digital explosive, counting down from 8 minutes.

ED FROM MAINE (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Tick-tock, tick-tock. Better start selling because you don't want to see what happens if the chick becomes a cock.

BRENT

Who is this?

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

This is Ed from Maine.

BRENT

This is pretty funny, Hank.

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

Not Hank; Ed from Maine. I manufacture your Dyamonds. Or should I say I did, since your "diamonds" will now be mass produced in China.

KATHY

Isn't Ed hilarious?

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

That explosive is bolted to your display by titanium screws and controlled by a remote in my possession. So, unless you want your children to see their mommies' and daddies' guts inside of a lunchbox, I suggest you start retailing. Oh, hang up or run away before your eight minutes are up, and you're disqualified. You *comprende*? No running off set, or you go kablooey!

Doug, the cameraman on set, is alarmed. Frank and John, PA's, also look quite scared.

DOUG
That aint Hank.

FRANK/JOHN
No.

Brent is spitting over the side of the love seat. Kathy is looking at the camera, trying to remain calm but failing and becoming unhinged.

KATHY
The world record is,
(clearing her throat)
\$250,000. In one hour.

Kathy whispers to Brent, "is this a prank?" Brent shakes his head.

KATHY (CONT'D)
This *is* a prank, Brent.

Kathy smiles, trying to convince herself. She checks the display case. Realizes it's not a prank.

Kathy's legs rattle in fear.

KATHY (CONT'D)
I... I would just like to remind those of you who are watching us from home, that the 47th Street Dyamond Collection has some of the most inspired diamond work you will find anywhere in the world for gold and diamond necklaces, bracelets, and rings.

BRENT
What are you doing, Kathy?

KATHY
If you have a niece or a nephew who is a graduating senior in the class of 1992, or have a child coming home from the Gulf War, what better way to show your courageous sons or daughters a little piece of your heart than with a handcrafted necklace, charm bracelet, or ring from the 47th Street Dyamond Collection by Brent Davis.

Kathy tries on all of the samples.

BRENT

Kathy, what are you doing? We have to get out of here before the bomb explodes!

KATHY

Just have a look at these charming and elegant handcrafted bracelets, ladies, these are truly marvelous pieces to mark those memorable moments.

The jewelry is breaking as she puts it on, revealing how cheap it actually is. Doug, John, and Frank are running off set.

BRENT

Christ's sake, Kathy!

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

Now Brent, I wouldn't try any funny stuff. That explosive is remote controlled.

Kathy holds Brent's hand, facing the camera. Squeezes it tightly.

KATHY

Ladies, we have an opportunity right now to do something that has never been done in the history of the Universal Shopping Network. We have a chance to make television history. Isn't that right, Brent?

Brent tries to let go of Kathy's hand, but Kathy won't let him.

KATHY (CONT'D)

When we broadcast to over 12 million of your TV sets, we're not just asking you to buy a diamond charm bracelet or ring, we're inviting you into our home. Isn't that right, Brent? Brent, isn't that a fact?

BRENT

That's factual, Kathy, yes.

KATHY

Tell them why, Brent. Tell them why by telling them where this one of a kind, handcrafted collection comes from.

BRENT

Where it comes from?

KATHY

Yah, umm-hmm, why you named it the 47th Street Dyamond Collection, and not, say, the Madison Avenue Collection, or the Rodeo Drive Collection?

BRENT

Well, Kathy...

(Brent clears his throat)

... selling is one part business and two parts muscle.

Brent taps his heart with his free hand. Kathy won't let go of the other one.

BRENT (CONT'D)

... the Harry Winston salesman had this saying, stone turned to diamond only when under intense pressure, and sales only go up when you want to sell the least.

Ed laughs heartily.

ED FROM MAINE (O.S.)

(on phone)

No, tell the truth, there never was a Harry Winston salesman. You invented that story and sprinkled in some details of your personal history so you could sell more fake diamonds. You sales people care zilch where your products come from. When's the last time you actually touched a 47th Street Dyamond before it went inside one of your "pillowcase" boxes, Brent? Salesmen used to be our co-pilots! They could no less sell a stone without knowing how it was made than we could make it without knowing how they would sell it.

(MORE)

ED FROM MAINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Move your business to China, hire
 whatever labor you choose to mass
 produce your "handcrafted"
 merchandise, but I'll be damned if
 you're going to do it on my back.
 "Handcrafted." Your jewelry is
 fake, your Harry Winston story is a
 sham, and you are nothing but a
 suck-up phony. You people, you make
 me so sick to my stomach. Yich!

A moment or two of silence passes. The explosive timer ticks.

KATHY
 Let's keep those phones ringing,
 people, this might be your only
 opportunity to join the Universal
 Shopping Network family, and your
 loved ones will not be disappointed
 when they open the box and find a
 pillow of handcrafted diamonds from
 the 47th Street Dyamond Collection.
 These diamonds come with a lifetime
 guarantee.

Kathy turns to Brent, pleading for help. Brent is mumbling,
 "47th Street holds a special place in my heart," "47th Street
 holds a special place in my heart..."

KATHY (CONT'D)
 And now with USN's Fast-Pay this
 decision goes from a "heck yeah,
 sign me up," to a "ha-ha no-
 brainer." Three Fast-Pay payments
 of \$39.99, for either the Love
 Bracelet, the 47th Street pendant
 necklace, or the ring; where else
 can you find that kind of value?

BRENT
 Shut up, Kathy.

KATHY
 I beg your pardon.

BRENT
 Shut the fuck up. Stop selling.

KATHY
 Maybe that's not such a hot idea,
 hmm?

BRENT
 Ed is right. My diamonds are fake.

KATHY

Umm-hmm, yes.

BRENT

I hated those never ending trips to 47th Street with daddy; countless hours in the rain waiting for him to wheel and deal with men who would sell their wives and children for a profit if they could. One wonders, why name an entire collection after such an extraordinary experience--

KATHY

To honor it, Brent.

BRENT

No, to forget it. And what better way is there to forget something than by turning it into a sales pitch, hmm?

Brent looks at Kathy for the answer. She is flabbergasted.

BREENG BREENG - a phone is ringing.

KATHY

You were saying, Brent?

BRENT

I'm sorry I'm not as honest as you are, Ed. I did lie about the Harry Winston salesman, and you wanna know something, I'm happier for it. I just wish that I hadn't waited so long to start cheating!

Another phone rings.

KATHY

Look, we have another caller.

BRENT

Everyone "sells out," Ed! I don't care if you're selling women's bras at JC Penny like Kathy used to do, or selling sex like Madonna. We all sacrifice something to compete.

More phones ring. Kathy can't keep up with them.

KATHY

(on phone)

Mary from Utah, you're on with Brent Davis and Kathy Macintosh from the 47th Street Dyamond Collection.

(then)

Phil from Tennessee, thank you for your order.

(then)

Yolanda from the great state of Mississippi, thank you for your \$75,000 dollar order of the 47th Street Dyamond collection by Brent Davis!

BRENT

I wanted to save children...

It appears that Brent is done for... But then suddenly...

BRENT (CONT'D)

It started with Principal Everbright!

KATHY

Principal who?

BRENT

(trying to recall)

I cheated on the math test.

KATHY

What math test?

BRENT

No, I failed the math test and lied about it so daddy would give me more attention!

KATHY

Way to go, people, let's keep those phones ringing for the 47th Street Dyamond Collection!

BRENT

I invented a persona, first for daddy, and then television! I've been doing it since I was a child; for love, for money, for fame; for Marsha. I've been weak, Marsha. I never went to Florida for a business trip.

(MORE)

BRENT (CONT'D)

I was with a flight attendant from Florida at the Double Tree. I use people. I pretend to be something I'm not, and hate children! I swear to mama's ghost, if I have to go to church one more time; I love you, Marsha, and you too Peter and Matthew! I swear to change if you give me the opportunity to! I swear to be a good father. I swear to try and be a better man. I love you all so much that... that... that 47th Street holds a special place in my heart. 47th Street holds a special place in my heart! 47th--

KATHY

Ladies, you won't find a spicier offer anywhere for such a luxurious and simple collection.

(then)

Coming up on the end of our time. Three seconds, two seconds, and--

Silence. Brent shuts his eyes and prepares to die.

Kathy looks at Brent, overwhelmed with joy.

KATHY (CONT'D)

We did it, Brent.

BRENT

(to himself)

47th Street holds a special place in my heart...

KATHY

(quietly)

\$1,000,006 sold; in one broadcast. A new record for the Universal Shopping Network.

Brent looks at the display case. The explosive timer is no longer ticking. The bomb has been deactivated.

KATHY (CONT'D)

You just sold \$1,000,000 of your collection in one broadcast.

Brent is speechless. Ed from Maine chimes in, trying not to be a sore loser.

ED FROM MAINE

(on phone)

Congratulations, Brent, I knew you could convince them to buy your phony collection. Now, never forget how you did it.

Click. Ed from Maine hangs up.

KATHY

We did it.

A Universal Shopping Network logo appears on screen. Then some cheesy Universal Shopping Network music.

An exasperated Brent is down on his hands and knees, holding one of his rings.

A proud Kathy in on her feet, applying bright red lipstick.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Is picture still rolling?

(then)

Hello?

(then)

Brent?

(then)

Ed?

Kathy looks around aimlessly, suddenly worried.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Ed?

FADE TO BLACK.