

# Now You Have a Friend in the Diamond Business

In appreciation of Shane Co. and the catchiest radio commercial there ever was

By [Claire McNear](#) Jul 15, 2016, 8:30am EDT



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All my jewelry is made of plastic. I guess there's some metal, too, the kind with a finish that rubs off after a couple of months and turns your finger green. Mostly it's from H&M or Forever 21 or the county fair, or else it's *really* old stuff from Claire's, where they will not give me a discount even though they pierced my left ear too high when I was 6

so all my finishless earrings hang a little lower on the right. I don't know anything about karats or settings or gem clarity. What I'm trying to say is: I'm not one to shop for diamonds.

But I have a friend in the diamond business.

Shane Co. is one of the largest jewelers in the country. It sells engagement rings and wedding bands and lots of other glittery things at outposts in the Bay Area, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Denver, Seattle, St. Louis, Portland, Nashville, Indianapolis, and beyond, or so I'm told. I've never seen one. What I can tell you for sure about Shane Co. is that you can find stores in Cupertino, San Mateo, Novato, and Walnut Creek.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mm8MFle3Ot0>

I know this because I have been told this fact somewhere around — if I had to guess — 10 billion trillion times. The words come to me sometimes, as they did this week, as they do every week, and I wondered: why? Join me, friends, on this journey of diamond pitching, and of the catchiest radio commercial there ever was.

Every metro area has an ad jingle that plays year after year after year, burrowing its way into the local consciousness: [Empire Today](#), [Carmel Limousine](#), [Kars4Kids](#), [J.G. Wentworth](#), [Beacon Plumbing](#), [Cellino & Barnes](#), [Eastern Motors](#), [Luna](#). And if you've spent time in any of the places Shane Co. calls home, you've heard founder and CEO Tom Shane extoll the virtues of his diamonds, explain the intensity of his relationships with diamond traders in Antwerp, list the reasons your sweetheart might deserve his wares, and so on. But just saying you've heard Shane talk wouldn't do justice to the sonic carpet bombing that Shane Co. carries out. The ads are seemingly on every radio station,

waiting to pounce on every last commercial break. You cannot — simply cannot — listen to the radio without hearing them. The music stops, and *bam*: Tom Shane’s deep, nasally voice fills the air, over-enunciating the directness of his sources and just how soon the holidays are. Then he says the magic words: “Now YOU have a friend in the diamond business.”

Do you know what comes next? Are you reciting it in your head? Do you know that Shane Co. is open weekdays till eight, Saturday and Sunday till five? That you can find them online at *shane co dot com*? Do you know the exact towns where Shane Co. has locations? Could you repeat the entire ad from memory, down to the little pauses, the words he says just a little bit louder so you know they’re important?

There are catchy ads, and then there are Shane Co. spots. There is contagion, and then there is having a friend in the diamond business. When I die, the last thing I’ll think about is the Bay’s Shane fiefdom: *Cupertino, San Mateo, and Wal-Nut Creek*. (The Novato location has since closed, but lives on in a looping drone in the hearts of Bay Area radio listeners.)

Let’s talk for a minute about Tom Shane. He’s in his late 60s now, and has been recording these ads for four-and-a-half decades. He’s been rumored to [speak quietly in public](#), to avoid detection. It’s the only job he’s ever had.

“I am a very consistent person, and I seldom change my preferences,” Shane wrote in a 2014 blog post that revealed, among other things, that he [doesn’t actually like jewelry](#). “I finish what I start, and keep promises that I make.”

But the internet does not seem to like Shane Co. It especially does not like Tom Shane, who, perhaps because of his humdrum ubiquity, has been the subject of outlandish, satirical tales. “Tom Shane is \* not \* my friend in the diamond business,” someone wrote on Yelp. Facebook groups have been formed in protest; open letters have been written. He was even made fun of on a 2007 episode of *South Park* as one of Colorado’s biggest stars. What, exactly, has Tom Shane done to make everybody so angry?

Here’s Tom Shane recording another ad:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=ww8OoX5cQDY&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=ww8OoX5cQDY&feature=emb_logo)

Perhaps it’s something in his cadence, that famous monotone. More likely, it has to do with the repetition, the endless offers of jewels you’ll never wear and the feeling that you’re one or two offers of diamond-business friendship away from either a mental break or being hypnotized into handing over your credit card, a dizzy chicken staring glassily at the line drawn in front of your San Mateo-bound car.

But I’m here to commend Tom Shane, because what he’s achieved is a feat: The Shane Co. ads are a spoken package that is every bit as memorable and catchy as a musical jingle. Who else has challenged Mister Softee by listing regional highways?

I moved away from the Bay Area a while ago; Tom Shane doesn’t tell people how to get to his stores in the city I live in now. But when I go home, I know just where to find him.