

Blasts from the Past
The Big Bang Theory gets the prequel treatment this month, with CBS's *Young Sheldon*, starring Iain Armitage (of *Big Little Lies* fame) as the 9-year-old version of the fan-favorite scientist. Here, a guide to other TV prequels that took our favorite characters back in time. (SEPT. 25)

The Muppets
 in *Muppet Babies*



Bruce Wayne in
Gotham



Carrie Bradshaw
 in *The Carrie Diaries*

Saul Goodman (né Jimmy McGill) in
Better Call Saul



Baby

Adult



Diamonds Are the World's Best Friend

All that glitters is ... nuclear waste?

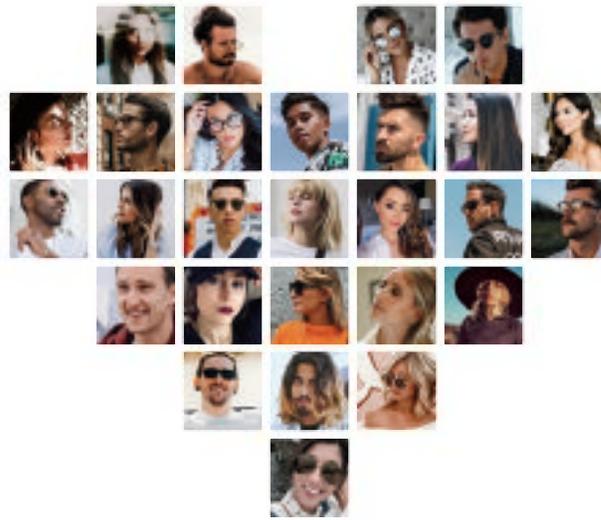
ECOLOGY The diamond industry has gained an odd new player, and its sparkle comes from a surprising source: nuclear waste. Researchers at England's University of Bristol found that leftovers from power plants (which normally leave behind a radioactive trail for millennia) can be safely stored in lab-created diamonds. When these diamonds get close to another radiation source, they can generate a small current, acting as tiny batteries that can produce clean energy for thousands of years. Better yet, they're more cost-effective than other disposal methods—and less radioactive than a banana.

In the future, these gems could be ideal candidates for devices in which longevity is crucial or battery replacement is dangerous or difficult—think pacemakers, spacecraft, or satellites. “The project will turn a long-lived problem into a long-lived solution for remote power requirements,” says Dr. Chris Hutton of the school's Interface Analysis Centre.

The #diamondbattery project, as it's called on Twitter, recently received funding, and Hutton predicts major progress in the next three years. “Proving that we can make use of nuclear waste in a battery that lasts for over 5,000 years should help the public understand that waste [can be] managed safely,” he says, “and not left for future generations to deal with.” —HANNAH LOTT-SCHWARTZ

Under the Influence

Inside the big business of social media influencers



BUSINESS

Spend any time on social media, and you'll notice regular folks racking up millions of followers and likes for posts. The rise of “social media influencers,” who can earn six figures plugging places or products to other millennials, makes sense: Nielsen data shows that while only 33 percent of consumers trust banner ads, 92 percent trust peers.

“You cannot pay an influencer enough to promote something they don't want to,” says Beca Alexander, founder of New York's Socialyte, a creative agency that casts and manages influencers. “Their following is everything to them; one misjudged commercial decision, and they lose everything.”

“Influencer marketing is word-of-mouth on steroids,” says Emilie Tabor, founder of Amsterdam's Influencer Marketing Agency. “If you think it's just a fad, then you must also think social media is not here to stay.” Tabor says the key is matching brands to the right influencers. For instance, she once hired 20 truckers to create videos about TomTom GPS systems.

“The best results occur when an influencer is given a product and told to do whatever they want with it,” says online marketing guru Jonathan Long. This fall, blerrp, the influencer marketing division of Long's Market Domination Media, will open The Influencer House, a Florida property that will house bloggers, models, and actors. “We'll provide them with an over-the-top luxury setting to create content from,” he says, “which will be branded in a very organic and subtle way.”

Some influencers have even made the leap from their digital presences to real life. “Contract terms now ensure certain people promote particular brands, or refrain from endorsing others, when they are out in public,” says Alexander. “No one said being an influencer was easy.” —BOYD FARROW

HENSON ASSOCIATES/EVERETT COLLECTION (KERMIT); FOX/EVERETT COLLECTION (BRUCE); CW/EVERETT COLLECTION (CARRIE); AMC/EVERETT COLLECTION (SAUL); COURTESY OF SOCIALYTE (INFLUENCERS)