

RETAILER UPDATE

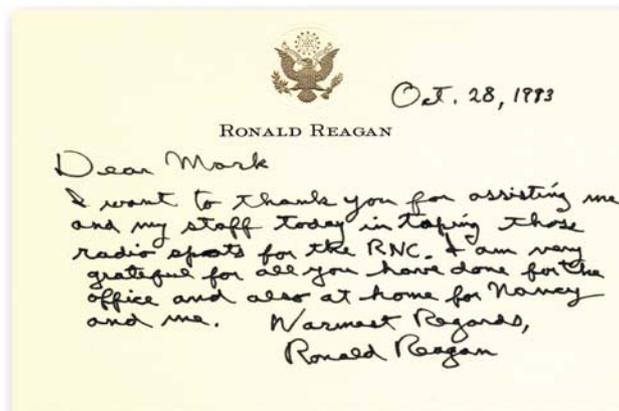
PRESIDENT REAGAN AND MARK SPIWAK

How The Leader of The Free World Came To Call West L.A. Music's
Sales Manager A Trusted Friend

Located in West Los Angeles, two blocks west of the 405 freeway, West L.A. Music bills itself as the store "where the pros shop." So one busy afternoon in 1992 when three grim-looking men sporting dark glasses, crew cuts, and ear pieces walked in, it was immediately obvious that they weren't typical customers. They approached Sales Manager Mark Spiwak and said "some friends of ours from the FBI said you could help us." When Spiwak asked what they wanted, they took him to a van parked outside the store and pointed to a Presidential lectern in the back. "Our boss needs this wired with microphones and lights and we need it in two hours." Spiwak agreed to do it, and when the trio returned to pick it up, one handed him a cell phone and said, "Our boss wants to thank you." The three men were Secret Service agents, and the man on the other end of the phone was former President Ronald Reagan. The chance encounter led to a warm friendship between Spiwak and Reagan, and regular meetings until late 1996 when the former President's Alzheimer's disease became



MARK SPIWAK, WEST L.A. MUSIC sales manager and the 40th President of the United States. Days after equipping Reagan's lectern, Spiwak stopped by the President's office and presented him with a leather AKG tour jacket. Below, one of many thank you notes Spiwak received from the President.



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The day after Spiwak wired the lectern for the President he received a call at work from Reagan's office. How would he like to stop by the President's office in Century City for a visit? Days later, Spiwak, his wife and two sons were sitting with Reagan in his 34th floor office. "We started talking about the music business, his days as a lifeguard in Illinois, and the movies, and he handed out jelly beans," recalls Spiwak. "From the minute you walked in, he was so charming and kind, and an incredible storyteller."

When the conversation shifted to golf, the President complained of his slice. Spiwak responded that he had helped his father, who was about the President's age, overcome his slice. The next day, Reagan invited Spiwak to play a round with him on the Los Angeles Country Club. "I was pretty awestruck being on the golf course with President Reagan and three secret service men," he recalls today.

Spiwak became something of an unofficial audio consultant to both President and Mrs. Reagan. He was regularly called to record official state-

ments from the President for important events, like the death of Richard Nixon and the Northridge earthquake in 1994. He also recorded over 300 hours of the President's reminiscences that are on file at the Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California. "Those sessions were the most interesting," said Spiwak. "Listening to Reagan explain how he overrode his advisors at the State Department when he gave the speech about tearing down the Berlin Wall was really inspiring." Spiwak also regularly visited the Reagan's home in Bel Air to set up sound systems for parties and other events.

One morning at work, he got a call to join President and Mrs. Reagan and Colin Powell for lunch at Chasens. "It was an event I will never forget," he says. On another occasion he was invited to a small reception at the Presidential Library where Randolph Churchill was the guest of honor at an exhibition of his grandfather Winston's water colors. "Having President Reagan



WEST L.A. MUSIC'S Don Griffin and Mark Spiwak flank President Reagan. "He treated you like you were a very important person," said Griffin. "He took a genuine interest in me and my family."

introduce me to Churchill's grandson was a thrill."

Spiwak became a regular visitor at Reagan's office, often bringing friends and associates. Don Griffin, owner of West L.A. Music, occasionally accompanied him. "When you went in to Reagan's office, there was this guest book filled with the signatures of

sheiks, ambassadors, senators, prime ministers, and other world leaders," recalls Griffin. "yet he treated us like we were the most important people. He was a very kind and considerate man." The day Griffin brought his young sons to visit the President he remembers that Reagan "took a sincere and personal interest in my kids." The only thing that marred the visit was when Secret Service agents confiscated some jelly beans that one of Griffin's sons had brought to give the President.

Why did a one-time leader of the Free World spend so much time with an m.i. sales manager? Spiwak says, "I think he was a terribly genuine person and if he liked you, it didn't matter who you were." Griffin adds, "I think he found something relaxing about being with people who weren't players on the world stage."

As this issue went to press, Spiwak was en route to Reagan's funeral at the Presidential Library in Simi Valley. He was set to attend a small gathering of friends.