FRANKLY SPEAKING

Talking With Elliot Goldman of Bending Wave USA, Part One

ISSUE 175

PREV NEXT

Written by Frank Doris

Elliot Goldman is a partner in Bending Wave USA, distributor of Göbel loudspeakers, Wadax digital electronics, CH Precision electronics and other ultra-high-end products. He's been in audio retailing and distribution for decades and has seen and heard a lot. Part One of our interview begins here.

Frank Doris: Many readers might not know your background, so let's get started with that.

Elliot Goldman: After graduating from college, I kind of got interested in hi-fi kind of by accident. It happened about the same time I discovered marijuana. (laughs) I was invited over to some kid's place and the first album I ever listened to stoned was *Super Session* with Al Kooper, [Mike Bloomfield and Stephen Stills]. Pretty amazing. When I got out of school, I really wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I was thinking of going to law school and had worked one summer for a lawyer and found out that writing papers and reading books all day really wasn't what I wanted to do. So, I started out [in audio] working for a company called Lafayette Radio.

FD: They were a big electronics maker and retailer based on Long Island.

EG: Right. Their main office was in Syosset. I went through a management training program, which was really great for me because it taught me how to run a business. My first job [for them], which was one of the best jobs I ever had in my life…they were going through an expansion [period], building a lot of stores. So I had a crew of four guys, and we were going from area to area, wiring all the sound rooms and displays and doing the initial store set up of over a hundred in a couple of years.

We had a really good time doing it and I certainly learned a lot. After that I became an assistant manager in Manhattan, then got transferred. I got married and was living on Long Island, and I really didn't want to commute to Manhattan. So I got a job at a store on Long Island, and after working there for a while I met a guy and he offered me a job at [what was] at the time the first high-end audio store on Long Island, Sound Experience. That's where I got introduced to Audio Research and Mark Levinson and Magnepan and Quad and Linn and all those other things. Eventually I opened my own store there, Audio Den which I and a partner had for a while, then [sold my interest in it]. And then I went to work for Lyric Hi-Fi [in Manhattan]. At the time, Lyric was really the temple of high-end, as you know.

FD: Yes it was. And it had a reputation…

EG: It was the preeminent store on the planet. This was around 1978 or ’79, and anybody who was anybody wanted to do business with Lyric. [Owner] Michael Kay was very generous to me. I always described him as my second father. It was a lot of fun. You name the company, we sold it, or [a manufacturer] wanted to be sold at Lyric. From that, I [started] my relationships with people like Arnie Nudell, Jon Dahlquist, Dick Sequerra, Jim Winey, Bill Johnson and on and on and on.

FD: Everybody.

Yeah. And, and of course, Harry Pearson [founder of *The Absolute Sound*], who was my second mentor. Harry taught me a lot about how to listen and about music as well. [All of] that provided my background and my education and I'm grateful for that every day.

Harry Pearson in 1988. Photo by Bill Reckert.

FD: Obviously, Harry had a big effect on me, gave me my break, taught me a lot. *[I got my start in the audio industry in 1984 as a writer for* TAS *– Ed.]* He managed to piss a lot of people off too.

EG: Harry was a very difficult human being, and we were friends for a long time. Being friends with Harry Pearson, I don't have to tell you, was extremely difficult (laughs) because he can be your biggest fan and then be incredibly rude. I regret that we were not close at the end. But he had seriously pissed me off when he wanted to do his own website and I was helping him, [and] really not making any money working for him. Trying to reinstitute what I thought was his birthright [as a founder of high-end audio journalism], which through his own ineptitude he gave away for nothing. But that's a whole 'nother story.

He kind of embarrassed and humiliated me about something and I said, f*ck this, I'm not doing it anymore. After that I moved to Florida. But I am grateful that I met him. I am extremely grateful for all that I learned from him. I am a staunch Harry defender whenever he's attacked. I don't think most people really understood him or what the world was like back then. I mean, look, he was no saint and no angel, and he took advantage of some of the circumstances, but I think more people took advantage of him than [the other way around}.

FD: Interesting idea.

EG: Well, everybody tried to take advantage of him at the time. Let's go back and look at what audio marketing was in the 1970s and 1980s. Basically, most audio companies are small entrepreneurial entities, most of the time driven by somebody with some kind of technical background and not necessarily a sales background. And the only way they could get their product established was to get their product to a reviewer, particularly if it was Harry, and [have them] write something nice about it. And it made their company. Because they didn't really have any marketing or promotion. Most of the time they didn't even have a sales person. So Harry would come out and say, this cartridge is in his reference system, and all of a sudden everybody wanted to buy it. That's changed a lot. I don't think it necessarily works the same way anymore for a variety of reasons, which we can talk about later. But back then Harry was god.

Many of your readers maybe are a lot younger than you and I, [and they don’t know that] the industry was a lot smaller too. There was very few if any European products sold in the US, and very few high-end Japanese products. There were plenty of Japanese products, but not high-end products. The brands that were popular then and were important then were a much smaller pond to go fishing in than today.

FD: Getting back to Lyric Hi-Fi, because as you noted, some of today’s audiophiles might not remember this, but the store had the reputation of being rude and abusing customers and throwing people out. I remember at the time thinking, how can you do business like that? Is that really true or just something that audio writers wrote to stir up the pot?

EG: I don't want to come off as a jerk, but it was very true. Having said that, they weren't just rude [for the sake of being rude]. When I came to work for Mike Kay I was taught that we're in business; we're here to do business, we're here to make a profit. There's a lot of money invested in [the store], and we are not here to tolerate being taken advantage of or being treated badly. So I'm not going to say unequivocally that no one was ever treated badly at Lyric, because that's not true. But I will say that the overwhelming majority of people that might have been treated badly probably deserved it. I'll explain it this way. I don't know how audio [retailing] became what it is [today]. What I mean by that is I don't know how consumers expect that they can just go into a store and take up the people's time they have no intentions of buying. Have you ever worked in a retail business?

FD: For a couple of years.

EG: I'll give you two [examples]. If somebody walks into my place today and says, “hey, you know, I can't really afford to spend a [lot of money] but I was wondering if I could come in and take a listen.” I don't think I've ever said no to anybody like that. And when they're honest with me I'll play the system and give them a little of my time. But on the other hand, I've had plenty of people that pretend that they're going to buy something when they had no intentions of purchasing anything, or they were using your showroom to figure out if they wanted to buy something they could buy used or from their friend, or to hear it and then shop all over the internet to try and find somebody maybe in another state or another country to sell it to them cheaper. I find that behavior repulsive. And the people that did that at Lyric got treated [accordingly and] asked to leave.

FD: If you remember Manny's, the New York music store, they made it very easy. You'd walk up to the counter and the salesperson would say, “You looking to buy today?” And if you said no, "OK, next!"

EG: (laughs) We did that at Lyric too. I mean, as you remember, the original Lyric store was pretty small; I don't know, about 20 by 50 and [it] had a basement. So, we basically had two rooms and everybody had to walk through everywhere to get everywhere. There was no real privacy. There was an entranceway and then to a door into the first room. And through the first room was a door to an office and a bathroom, and then a door into the back room. Everybody coming up the stairs had to walk through those rooms. We could at most help one or two people at a time. And Lyric was incredibly busy then. On a Saturday morning there could be 20 or 30 people waiting on the sidewalk to go in.

So, you had to separate the “tourists” from the buyers, because at the end of the day, Mike Kay paid me to sell goods and to make money. I don't know how audio became this lending library and [customers got the idea] that everyone's time isn't worthwhile. I don't want to sound bitter. I'm not; I just think that people need to think about being honest with people when they go [into a retailer].

I don't consider myself a retailer anymore. I got into what I'm doing to be a distributor and kind of stumbled into [selling] some of the other products, because I needed to support myself, particularly during COVID. Trying to get a distribution company off the ground today is, especially with really expensive products, not easy.

I want to say this in the right way because I don't want to offend everybody, but I think being honest with yourself and being honest with the people that you're doing business with will get you farther than [doing the opposite]. I had a lot of people come into Lyric who were extremely rude. Fortunately for Lyric, we didn't have to tolerate that and you would get asked to leave. On the other hand, particularly when it wasn't busy, if you walked in and said “you know, I can't afford an IRS V [Infinity speaker system, considered the ultimate loudspeaker at the time], but would it be possible for me to hear it?” Almost a hundred percent of the time somebody would play it for you.

FD: Tell us about some of the product lines that Bending Wave carries today. Obviously Göbel, because Oliver Göbel is the founder and a partner in Bending Wave.

EG: I was out of the audio business for a couple of years. The recession hit my company, which was called Front Row Center. It became difficult for both me and my partner to make a living. He [handled] the installation portion of the business and wanted to continue, so it morphed into Front Row Theater. I went to work for another dealer and really didn't like that situation very much. Then I worked for an internet watch company for a couple of years. I wanted to learn more about doing business on the internet anyway. I was doing well there and probably would've stayed except they sold their company to a company in Philadelphia, and I wasn't planning on moving at the time.

I happened to see something about a speaker made in Germany by Oliver Göbel. He was doing business in Asia and Europe but had never done business in the US. So I went to Germany, listened to the product and fell in love with it. We decided to distribute Göbel in the US. While setting up a showroom, I was looking for products [to complement the speakers]. I had seen CH Precision in Europe and really liked the sound of it. They were kind enough to send me some product to try once I was ready. I liked it better than anything else I had heard. I became friends with Fink Team at an audio show. Wadax kind of found me. In my opinion they're the finest digital products on the planet.

Göbel Epoque Reference loudspeakers. From the Göbel High-End website.

We will be seeking dealers for Göbel around the country and introducing the new Divin Sovereign subwoofer at Capital Audio Fest. Göbel just opened a new factory outside of Munich and they'll have two sound rooms open by probably early next year. I think every manufacturer should have that.

EG: Göbel speakers are as perfect as somebody can make a speaker in the fit, finish and packaging; everything is done to the point of no excuses. Having been in the ultra-high-end for the better part of my life, I'm constantly hearing from my customers things like, “I wish they had done that," or, "I wish they had done this” when it comes to audio products. There's none of that with Göbel.

FD: What in your opinion makes the speakers special? I know they use a full-range driver.

EG: Oliver has a patent on the bending wave driver used in the Aeon line of speakers. The Bending Wave driver goes from 160 Hz to over 30,000 Hz. It's not a push-pull driver. Sound travels across the Bending Wave driver like it does on a piano soundboard. It’s the fastest, clearest driver that I am aware of. It has no phase issues because it's not presenting in-phase and out-of-phase information at the same time, like a lot of push-pull drivers do. Its downsides are that it's inefficient and requires a large amplifier. It's expensive to make, and it's expensive to make the baffle and all the other parts that it has to sit in.

There are different markets in the world and the largest market for his speakers has been Asia. But they've have been requesting for him to build something that was more efficient and easier to drive. So that was the beginning of the Divin series, which are 92 to 98 dB efficient and can be driven with small tube, or any kind of amps. From working with Bending Wave technology, Oliver learned how to build midrange drivers and woofers of a more conventional note using the Bending Wave technology.

I'm sitting in my sound room now with Divin Marquis, our entry-level speaker, and I have two Sovereign subwoofers. The Marquis work better in my room than the bigger Göbel speakers. I'm not saying they're a better speaker, but a bigger speaker like the Divin Noblesse really belongs in a bigger room. There's an optimal size for a speaker in a room. A speaker that's too big for your room is not your best choice. I'm not saying it can't work. But it's really difficult to take a giant speaker and put it in a small room and make it work.

Divin Marquis loudspeakers.

FD: What kind of sound do you like to hear? What sonic attributes do you find most important?

EG: I don't think there's [any] one thing that's important. I think it's all important. I think a lot of audiophile [descriptive] terms have been corrupted. Harry Pearson tried to invent a language and I think that language has been corrupted or perverted. First of all, I want something to sound real. I am trying to create that illusion that I'm listening to real instruments. Harry Pearson's original definition of "the absolute sound" is something I agree with: un-amplified music, acoustic instruments [in real life], but that's not all the music I listen to. When I go to an orchestra or [a] jazz or rock [concert] they're really very different.

There's probably not a brand on the market, up until maybe a few years ago, that I haven't represented at some point in time in my audio career. And there are more good products today than ever. But my sensitivity has always been to transparency and coherence. I want the speakers and the system to get out of the way. I want the system to get out of the way. I want to be able to listen through it and hear what the artist is trying to do, number one. Number two, I have found over years that the midrange and high frequencies are generally a lot easier to do than the low frequencies. Even the great speaker designers like John Dahlquist and Ross Walker and Arnie Nudell worked forever to extend what they were able to do [throughout the frequency range]. But the bass always sounded to me, on almost everything that I've ever heard, like it was an apple and an orange. When I go to a concert, and I don't care if it's rock or jazz or whatever, I, don't hear the bass differently than I hear the rest of the music. It has detail, speed, a location. It has dynamics. And so when I finally got a chance to listen to Oliver's speakers, it was the first time I felt that I was listening to almost the sound of a single driver.

I'm not a bass freak, but I love drummers and what drums and bass do to the music. There's a lot going on there. I want to be able to listen through the music and hear what the drummer's doing and what the bass player's doing and listen to the guitar solo and listen to the keyboard. I think Göbel speakers do a better job of doing that in than anything else I have currently heard. I'm not saying everything else is bad and we're good. It's just this is the closest thing to what I want to hear.

FD: I don't like a speaker that's too bright or too "hyped" or forward. For me, tonal balance is the most important aspect of a speaker.

EG: Well, I think, Frank, [that] most speakers that are bright-sounding don't have good bass. You go back to audio in the Seventies, and as [designers] were trying to get more information and more detail, the speakers became brighter [and] the electronics became brighter. And that's not what real [music] does. The other part of the system that's [extremely] important, of course, is the source. I've learned, particularly over the last decade, that all or most of the digital problems that people wanted to pick on in the Eighties and Nineties were really more [due to] the hardware than the software. I think that most Red Book CDs are much better than we gave them credit for back in the 1980s. It was specifically [because of] the hardware and not understanding their technology. That has changed. I think some of my oldest CDs sound amazing, now that the technology to play them back has dramatically changed…

WADAX
W
M
ATLANTIS
REFERENCE DAC
AES-EBU
SPDIF RCA
SPDIF BNC
PHASE
MUTE
TRANSPORT
WADAX LINK
USB

Wadax Atlantis Reference DAC.

This interview, which will cover many more subjects, including the state of high-end retailing, reaching a younger generation, streaming audio, and much more will continue in Issue 176.

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Talking With Elliot Goldman of Bending Wave USA, Part Two

ISSUE 176

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Written by Frank Doris

Elliot Goldman is a partner in Bending Wave USA, distributor of Göbel loudspeakers, Wadax digital electronics, CH Precision electronics and other ultra-high-end products. He's been in audio retailing and distribution for decades. Part One of our interview appeared in Issue 175.

FD: Digital playback software and hardware's gotten so much better. I mean, I have a Cambridge DacMagic 100 that retails for $249 and it sounds great. When CDs first came out the playback didn't sound great.

EG: I think the greatest invention that's ever happened, particularly today, [is the] ability to stream. I've talked to all my customers about this. I'm not putting down records or tape or anything else. Play whatever you want to play. I am not a collector. I used to have 6,000 albums and found it to be a colossal pain in the ass. (laughs) Every time I wanted to [hear] something, I had to go find the record, clean the record, and clean the stylus…I am a very stream of consciousness listener.

Sometimes I just want to hear a song or two. Now, for 15 or 20 bucks a month, I have pretty much every album ever recorded at my fingertips. And, being an older guy now, I value my time that I get to listen. To get my ear going and to explore new music. That exploration of new music brings me a lot of joy.

It's very frustrating when I go to audio shows to see that so many people just listen to the same records over and over and over again. Which makes me sad, because I think they're really spending too much time listening to the equipment and missing the point. I don't consider myself an audiophile. I'm a music lover. I'm not saying I don't enjoy the equipment, but the days of me spending days comparing one piece to another piece to another piece are long gone.

FD: Getting back to the Wadax gear. Review after review has high praise for the products.

EG: Wadax changes my viewpoint of what's possible in the digital domain. Is it for everybody? Of course not. Is it expensive? Of course it is. Okay. But it shows you what the technology is capable of. And this rush of technology is really what the high-end audio business has always been about. Advancing the technology makes everything better long-term, from the early days of Linn trying to improve its turntable, or Audio Research or Conrad-Johnson or CH Precision or Mark Levinson or Wilson or Magico. All of these companies are trying to make their products better. [And] nobody puts a gun to your head to make you wanna buy it. Nobody's telling you what you own before is junk. Technology keeps going on.

Wadax Atlantis Reference DAC.

[Today] you can park your ass in a chair and stream anything. I'm a big Roon lover too: it "learns" what you like and presents it to you. Qobuz does this too, and this has dramatically expanded my love of what I do and my knowledge and enjoyment of music because I've found so many things that I didn't know [about before]. For example, Guy Clark. I can't believe that I didn't know who Guy Clark was. I would've never come across him in a record store.

FD: Yeah. I think streaming audio is one of the greatest things to ever happen, aside from the issue of payment to the artists.

EG: I can't say anything [about artist compensation] because I'm not in that business. I certainly hope that artists earn what they deserve to earn.

I think that in order to really appreciate what [high-end audio is] capable of, we need to present people with the *experience.* It's not just about picking a bunch of boxes and throwing them together. Because I don't think that's really how it works. And I think that's why many people who [put a system together that way] are unhappy.

FD: What do you think the future of high-end audio retailing is? For decades we've been listening to people wringing their hands about a shrinking customer base and that we're becoming irrelevant.

EG: The audio business is generally an undercapitalized industry. And for 50 years, very little marketing has been done. And I don't understand that. The audio industry has not for the most part used the technology and the tools that are available to [enable a business to] grow. Companies seem to be very insulated and have great difficulty doing things cooperatively to expand the customer base. There are YouTubers that have 20, 30 million viewers [who are talking about products that are far less interesting and far less diverse than our business.

FD: Well, Steve Guttenberg (The Audiophiliac) is doing a nice job, to name one example.

EG: Well, I said for the most part.

We haven't done [the] job at all of addressing the luxury market and putting our products in front of people that buy $100,000 dollar kitchens – and don't cook. They buy Steinway pianos to put in their house and don't play. They buy all kinds of things because they’re the best, but that's not true [with] audio. Okay. The audio brands that people know are Bose and Sony and, maybe the most high-end [kind of products they might be aware of] are Bang & Olufsen or McIntosh.

But these [luxury] customers are buying stuff. And we have this whole custom-installation industry. But they [need to sell the] *experience.* Having been a retailer who has had multiple high-end showrooms over my career, it's amazing to see people's faces when they drive up in their high-end car, and they, they live in their high-end house, but had no idea that any of the brands that we're talking about even existed. And that they could get this kind of experience in their home.

High-end audio is an experience, and learning to listen is a learned skill, just like learning to appreciate wine. I'm sure you remember your first great meal or bottle of wine and it's something you need to be exposed to. If nobody ever took you to a [great] restaurant, you would have no idea what's possible. There *are* good audio retailers around the country, but not as many as before, and not nearly as many that are trying to provide that service rather than just having large selections of brands that people can pick out and, get a discount, and take a box home.

If I had the available capital, I'd like to have four or five Göbel “experience centers” around the US. I think these “experience centers” have to happen.

And it's really hard to break into the market today because there are some brands that are very well-established and believe me, I understand this as a speaker manufacturer. {If I want] to get my product in a lot of stores, they already have giant commitments to other brands. For me to put a speaker in there that's going to compete with those brands, perhaps [sound] better than those brands, really doesn't make sense for the dealer. Why would you want to invest multiple thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars to put something on your floor that probably is just gonna divide your sales? It's really not going to increase your sales.

Göbel Divin Majestic loudspeakers.

FD: When I was at AXPONA, I was struck by the number of $100,000 and up speaker systems.

EG: Go to the Munich HIGH END show – there's are multiple floors of seven-figure systems on display.

FD: So, *somebody's* buying the stuff.

EG: I hope to have more dealers now that COVID [restrictions] are over. When people hear our speakers, they buy them. It's just, again, providing that experience is a difficult thing for a small company, which is me.

FD: You're segueing right into the questions I inevitably have to ask people, which is how COVID has affected their business.

EG: COVID certainly didn't help mine. Right at the beginning of COVID we had plans to [go to audio shows]. We got a really good review of the Göbel Divin Marquis from *Stereophile,* and we had people interested. And then you had two years of stores being closed. [Since we were a relatively new company, potential customers] didn't have time to be exposed to the product and develop interest. Knock on wood, we survived. Our clients supported us and bought things from us. But we kind of contracted into survival mode.

FD: As we know, some businesses were helped by the pandemic. Well, knock on wood, it'll get better for everybody.

EG: CH Precision has become a bigger brand. [I feel that] WADAX is the preeminent digital product on the planet, and we're selling them. We're selling Göbel speakers as well. I just want to do more. My plan is to be traveling and supporting dealers and doing shows and growing the [Göbel] brand in the US because I think it deserves to be heard.

Being a distributor in the US is very different than being a distributor in France or Spain or Denmark. It's like having [to deal with] 50 countries.

+11.0 dB
L10
L10

CH Precision L10 preamplifier.

FD: Let's shift gears. Tell us about Elliot's List, the playlist that's available on the Bending Wave USA website.

EG: I started doing that because customers are always asking me about the music I play when I do shows. I refuse to play the same dozen ["audiophile-approved"] tracks.

FD: Like "Tin Pan Alley" by Stevie Ray Vaughan.

EG: Stevie Ray's a great artist and so are some of the others, but there's millions of pieces of music, so, I started to put then up [on Elliot's list. To be honest, I, I apologize for not continuing with it. I just got busy and, and, whatever. People written me really nice letters thanking me for just making them aware of some stuff that I like and most of which is good-sounding on a good system. Some are obviously better than others [in sound quality] but I think all the music is interesting. I've been getting into and learning more about classical and jazz. [It's like going] back to my listening to music with Harry Pearson (former editor of The Absolute Sound – *Ed.]* – he was a big classical music person and knew a lot about it.

If you go back and read the early magazines, he was exploring and taking you on his journey. A lot of that has been corrupted. There seems to be a reviewer for everything and everyone. A lot of people don't realize what they don't know. I'm not referring just to reviewers, but the audio community as a whole. I mean, I've been doing this 50-something years and I'm still learning every day.

In audio, like everything else, there are different skill sets. Having the ability to manufacture a speaker doesn't mean that you're a world-class setup artist. [Regarding audio shows], I challenge anybody to take a million dollars' worth of gear, put it in the truck, travel eight or 10 hours, unload the truck, unpack everything in a strange room, and in four or five hours, make it sound like a mature state-of-the-art system that you've had in your house for two years. This is not an easy thing to do. We do the best we can.

FD: That brings up another point, the prevalence of know-it-alls. The internet is such an enabler of people who are so quick to put somebody down. For example, the viewpoint that cables don't make a difference. And if you think they do, you're a fraud. You're an idiot. You're bought off. I mean, who needs any of that?

EG: The internet does a lot of good and it does a lot of bad. The trollers want to go and make their 15 minutes of fame on the internet, by trashing manufacturers, by trashing distributors and dealers, by saying horrible things about their gear at a show, things like that. I'm all for freedom of speech, but I think some people have lost the ability to understand [the credibility of] the voices [they're] hearing.

Why aren't more publications and manufacturers doing video? The best videos they could do would be educational. Show and teach people.

FD: Like you say, there's so much more to learn. I was lucky when I got into the business. I was a neophyte and I knew nothing next to people like Arnie Nudell [Infinity] and Bill Johnson [Audio Research].

EG: Same thing for me. I remember going to a show and wanting to [become an] Audio Research [dealer] and I went up to Bill Johnson and felt like I was going to see the Wizard of Oz. (laughs) I was trembling and frightened and, and Bill was very kind to me. And yeah, I became a dealer.

FD: (laughs)

EG: I [became] good friends with Arnie and traveled to his place a bunch of times to listen to new stuff that he was doing. And that's how the industry was. And now…I think it is a function of our society, Frank, that there are a lot of people who think the world didn't exist before they were born. There are people who don't want to learn from the past.

FD: I sometimes feel like I'm so old school, like I'm like the last of the old guard, but on the other hand, I'm not just gonna roll over and say, "Okay, that's it. I've had it."

EG: Those who refuse to learn history…

FD: …are doomed to repeat it.

EG: History is a great teacher and we have a tremendous amount of really qualified people out there.

EG: Let me say one more thing my father taught me. I think this is really important. He used to say, do your research on *who* you buy from before you decide *what* to buy. Because in most cases, they're gonna know much more about what you are buying than you.

There's an old expression in retail. Everybody wants the best product at the best price with the best service. Now choose two out of three. The customers that come and allow you to do your thing and buy a system and allow you to make [a living], those are the ones that you're gonna break your chops for.

Header image courtesy of Harris Fogel.