

# Symbols of Southern pop culture talk to stv

**S**tv's *Off the Cuff* is already getting the jump on a new segment it will produce next semester, "Inside/Out," which will focus on celebrity interviews and will be produced and run by stv veteran Larry Weaver. On Nov. 26-27, Weaver inter-

**JONATHAN POOLE**

**T.V.**

viewed two notable symbols of Southern pop culture, the Reverend

Billy C. Wirtz and Mojo Nixon. The interviews will air next semester, beginning the show's new season. Both interviews reflect the musico-comedian's strange brand of humor.

Rev. Wirtz, a South Carolina native, wanted to accomplish three goals: to enter the music business, to go into

comedy and to become a pro-wrestling manager. He has managed to attain all of these dreams.

Wirtz began performing in a Virginia hillbilly club in 1977. His usual gigs were "barn dances and places with sawdust on the floor." He prefers artists on the fringe of blues and rock; his piano is influenced by the likes of Jerry Lee Lewis and other disciples of early rock'n'roll, he said.

"I always listened to artists like Screamin' Jay Hawkins and Frank Zappa — people on the border of preaching."

Wirtz blames his philosophy and look on "Earnest Angely, pro wrestling — anything on late night or early morning T.V. before the advent of satellite-influenced programming." He always felt that pro-wrestling managers were the best form of entertainment on T.V., he said. He became a manager and won a tag-team belt during a six-month tenure before his music career took off. In and out of the ring, he became famous for his "Rick Flair meets Nietzsche" philosophy and preaching.

Wirtz has released two major-label albums, "Deep Fried and Sanctified," and his latest release, "Backslider's Tractor Pull," which includes the hit song "Sleeperhold on Satan." He describes his sound as "Oak-Ridge boys in their pre-pop days." He will be bringing his piano and his First House of Polyester Worship to the Triangle on Dec. 7 and Dec. 8, at the Brewery in Raleigh.

Mojo Nixon expressed similar

opinions on life, offering his two cents on the Gulf Crisis, Dean Smith and MTV. He may be best known for his loud, bizarre stunts on MTV years back.

"I had a big fight with MTV because they wouldn't play the 'Debbie Gibson is Pregnant With My Two-Headed Love Child' video starring Winona Ryder," he said. "Some people were more interested in making money than having a little fun."

His new video, "Destroy all Lawyers," should be airing on video stations soon, along with his other release, "I Wanna Race Bigfoot Trucks," which should be showing on TNN and similar networks.

Mojo's latest project, *Otis*, has received favorable comment from Mojo fans despite his breakup with longtime companion Skid Roper. "Things took their natural course," he said. "I wanted to do the band thing, and Skid didn't."

Mojo described *Otis* as "the kind of music you want to play when you're driving around in a '66 Malibu, and you put the 8-track in." Songs from the track include the smash hit "Don Henley Must Die" and other favorites like "Perry Mason of Love" and a tribute to his mother, "You Can Dress 'em Up but You Can't Take 'em Out." The album owes its name to all the *Otis*' out there: *Otis* the town drunk, *Otis* Redding, *Otis* Rush, *Otis* Day and *Otis* Nixon, to name some of the elite.

"*Otis* is someone who always knows where to get the best barbeque, where to find some moonshine," Mojo said. "Otis always has a friend who can fix your car if you got a transmission problem."

Mojo recently started a small side career in the movie business with the movie *Great Balls of Fire*.

"It was good to get a foot in the proverbial door," he said. He plans other roles, including a ranting reverend in the movie remake of *Car 54 Where Are You?*

Mojo, a Tarheel native, said he was pleased to do the interview with stv. "North Carolina has the three best things," he noted, "best barbeque, best college basketball and the best stock car racing — what more could you want?"

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## NIELSEN RATINGS

- (2) **60 Minutes**, CBS  
22.5 rating, 21.0 million homes
- (X) **It Part 2**, CBS  
21.4, 19.9 million homes
- (X) **NFL Monday Night Football**, ABC  
20.2, 18.8 million homes
- (10) **America's Funniest People**, ABC  
19.9, 18.5 million homes

Listings include the week's ranking, with full season-to-date ranking in parentheses, rating for the week, and total homes. An "X" in parentheses denotes one-time-only presentation. A rating measures the percentage of the nation's 90.4 million TV homes.

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