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## Rechanneling Their Passion

Musicians' Plum Gig Is Between-Song Patter on Satellite Radio

By Buzz McClain  
Special to The Washington Post  
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### SAN DIEGO

Hasil Atkins, the late, lunatic rockabilly pioneer from West Virginia, is singing his rant from the 1950s, "She Said," which describes his one-night squeeze as looking like "a dyin' can of that commodity meat." It's right there on the radio. The only thing that could top that unlikely number would be Ricky Skaggs and Bruce Hornsby doing a bluegrass version of Rick James's "Super Freak."

And there it is. On [Sirius Satellite Radio's](#) "Outlaw Country" Channel 63, such songs are not anomalies, they're the norm.

The deejay is none other than Mojo Nixon, he of 1980s college radio rave-ups including "Elvis Is Everywhere," "Destroy All Lawyers" and "Debbie Gibson Is Pregnant With My Two-Headed Love Child." He toured for years appeasing a faithful cult following, crisscrossing the country in a van, sleeping on couches and doing all the nefarious things rock-and-rollers are expected to do.



Mojo Nixon hosts "Outlaw Country" on Sirius from his San Diego bungalow. (By Fred Greaves For The Washington Post)

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welcome to the human network. CISCO

These days Mr. Nixon -- born 49 years ago as Neill Kirby McMillan Jr. -- gets to work in his living room by 9 a.m. and is finished by 11. He has something to eat, takes a nap and watches CNN or reruns of "The Andy Griffith Show." He lives in a 700-square-foot gray bungalow with a screen door with a hole in it and a large picture of Elvis in the front window on the otherwise picturesque peninsula of Coronado, across the bay from San Diego.

There's no high-tech studio here, no sound baffling or soundboard -- just a few electronic components and a wind-socked microphone to capture Nixon's patter and periodic "yee-haws!" between songs.

He doesn't play concerts, not even locally; he doesn't record and he doesn't write songs any longer. "I could have turned Mojo Nixon into a cottage industry catering to 5,000 or 10,000 fans," he says. "But that doesn't sound very Mojo. I could exercise, lose weight, do all of that and continue touring, but who wants to do that? So I thought I'd get a job in radio or something."

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He's not alone. Nixon is one of an ever-expanding roster of major and minor performers who are working as full- or part-time hosts of programs broadcast over the digitized airwaves of New York's Sirius and Washington's XM Radio. The advent of convenient, efficient technology and an open-arms attitude by the satellite networks have made for a new type of deejay. As much as their names are a draw, so is their deep knowledge of the formats they play.

Musician jocks for Sirius include B-52s singer Fred Schneider, New York Dolls frontman David Johansen, Ramones drummer Marky Ramone, glam rocker Joan Jett, country fiddler Charlie Daniels and area folk heroes the Kennedys, among others.

XM has icons including Bob Dylan, Tom Petty and Graham Nash, pioneering producer and performer Quincy Jones, rappers Snoop Dogg and Chamillionaire, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis -- and more to come, says Lee Abrams, chief creative officer of XM.

"It's another prong in their creative output," Abrams says. "They've been onstage and made records and now they can express their musical feelings via radio. And a lot of them think they have something to say musically and can say it better than the typical deejay."

"Typical deejays" stick to a song list and limit their between-tune patter to the weather or the virtues of a car dealership. If they are authoritative on the music they play, they don't have the luxury to demonstrate it. Time is money on terrestrial radio. But satellite radio gives programmers a chance to break the rules.

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