



'OZZY WANTS TO GIVE ME HIS KIDNEY'

Ozzy Osbourne is world famous for his amazing wild antics on stage – but off it, he'd risk his own life for a loved one

ROCK'S WILDEST MAN TRIES TO SAVE SICK BROTHER'S LIFE

Orrible Ozzy Osbourne, the wild man of rock, has shown an unknown gentle side to his desperately ill brother, Tony. The abominable showman, famous for biting off a bat's head on stage, and his crazy years of drinking and drug-taking, has offered 32-year-old Tony his most precious gift... a kidney.

Tony, whose own kidneys have both failed, is surviving on a special kind of dialysis treatment four times a day. He is on the kidney transplant list, but has no idea when he will be offered a transplant.

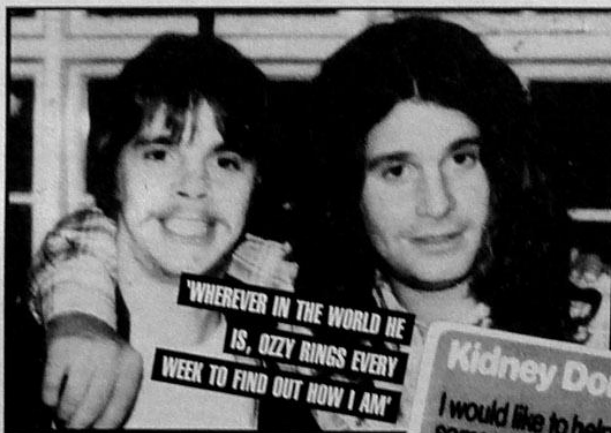
So big brother Ozzy volunteered to donate one of his own kidneys for Tony. "He said he'd willingly give one of his if that would save Tony or give him back a normal life," says Ozzy's mum, 71-year-old Lil Osbourne. "He is as upset as we all are about our Tony's illness. He rings me every week to see how Tony is."

There couldn't be a bigger contrast between the lifestyles of the two brothers. Ozzy lives in a £1½ million house in London, surrounded by his antiques and paintings, while Tony rents a two-bedroom terraced house from a Sikh temple in Walsall.

He hasn't been able to work for six years now because of his illness, and survives on £32 supplementary benefit a week. For the last year he has been very ill, as his kidneys – which never developed properly in childhood – finally gave out. His doctor told him a few months ago that he needed life-saving dialysis – then added that there was a waiting list.

"I survived by taking 16 pills every three hours, and following a very strange diet. It was real hell. I was allowed 3oz of meat a day, no vegetables, no fruit, no bread, no beer or wine and no milk. The doctor said I could drink a little Scotch, but I went over the top and spent the first fortnight blitzed – I was trying to drink Scotch the way I'd drunk beer before!" Too much is really bad news for failing kidneys.

Tony was very touched by Ozzy's



Always close, Tony Osbourne feels a special bond with his rockstar brother Ozzy nothing can break

offer of a kidney. "My other brother Paul and my sister have also offered to give me one of their kidneys and so have many friends – including one of the Sikhs from the temple around the corner," says Tony.

"But I'm not sure I could take a kidney from a living person, just in case something dreadful happened and their other kidney stopped working. I'd feel like I'd murdered them."

"So I think I'd rather wait until the hospital can get a kidney from someone who has died that matches my tissue type. But I feel pleased that Ozzy has offered me one of his. Just

as I'm touched and pleased by all the other offers. It's really great to think that so many people care."

During his wait for treatment, Tony came face to face with death. "I knew it could be only a matter of time for me. I cried a few times, I must admit. On one occasion I was rushed to the hospital, seriously dehydrated, vomiting all the time."

"The potassium level in my body was way above the point at which most people would die. But I was put on a drip for a few days, then I was all right again."

When Tony was taken ill, his girlfriend of 11 years, 33-year-old Jan Lantz, ran to six telephone boxes looking for one that wasn't vandalised, to ring the hospital. Then she and Tony had to find £10 for the taxi fare to get him there.

Once he'd fought back from that crisis, Tony and Jan spent all their spare time campaigning for more cash to be spent on kidney patients. Jan collected 1,000 signatures for a massive petition that was delivered

by the Kidney Patients Association to Downing Street. Then, just before they were due to leave for London, Tony got the good news that he had been chosen for the special dialysis treatment. He was in hospital being operated on when the petition was handed over.

The full name of his type of dialysis treatment is Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) and it does away with cumbersome machinery. Basically, it uses the peritoneum, the big membrane in the stomach cavity, to filter out all the impurities the patient's own kidneys simply can't cope with in their condition.

Firstly, Tony had a permanent latex tube inserted into his stomach cavity, one end to lie against his peritoneum, the other coming out through his side, just above the waistband. About three or four times a day, he has to connect himself to a bag of 2½ pints of clean fluid (a mixture of salts, minerals and so on, of just the same strength as that found in a normal, healthy body). The fluid washes round inside him for about 15 minutes, then the other end of the tube is opened and it is flushed out again, taking the impurities with it.

The process must be done under conditions of complete hygiene, and there is a risk of infection – the first sign of which is cloudy fluid coming out. "It may sound terrible to other people," says Tony. "But to me it's wonderful. Compared to how I felt before, I'm a new man."

These days, the spare bedroom of his tiny house is piled to the ceiling with supplies of the fluid and other equipment. Every day, Tony uses 12 syringes, 12 swabs, 24 needles, 8 connecting shields and 4 connecting caps. Then there's lots of antiseptic handwash and antiseptic spray for cleaning the table where he carries out the treatment.

His £32 a week is stretched, he admits. "Most of my money is spent just keeping the place warm," says

'I've got a latex tube permanently in my stomach and 4 times a day I pump in 2½ pints of filtering fluid then, 15 minutes later, drain it out again'

**'JUST KNOWING
OZZY CARES
MAKES ME FEEL
SO MUCH
BETTER'**



**'The spare bedroom's
piled high with
stuff just to keep
me alive'**



New-look Ozzy lives in a luxury mansion, while Tony copes in his tiny terrace, helped by girlfriend Jan. "Money like Ozzy's got just brings problems," he says. "We're happy enough"

**'I don't envy Ozzy his money
- but I could do with a bit
more than my
£32 a week to live on'**



Tony. "I've been told that I mustn't get too cold, especially while I'm carrying out the treatment. I have to heat the fluid that I put into myself to body temperature, which is difficult. It takes about four hours on the hot water tank. But now my mum has bought me a microwave oven, which is how they heat it in hospital."

His girlfriend Jan, who lives just round the corner from Tony, has also been out of work for the past 10 months, after being made redundant from the Post Office, where she'd worked for 15 years. "I've applied for jobs, but I wouldn't have been happy leaving Tony alone, not before he got the dialysis."

Tony also has an 11-year-old son, Daniel, from an early marriage - he sees the boy every weekend. "His mother died a couple of years ago and at the moment he's in care. I'm not allowed to have custody because I haven't been well enough to look after Daniel. But now I'm on the dialysis treatment I'm hoping he'll be able to come and live with me."

Tony hasn't seen his notorious brother Ozzy for over 18 months now - since their mum's 70th birthday party, which Ozzy laid on for her at a Birmingham hotel.

"I haven't got a phone so he can't call me direct. But he talks to my mum every week, and rings up our oldest sister, Jean. She's the one who keeps in touch with all of us - there are six of us altogether."

"I wasn't tempted to get in touch with Ozzy to ask him to pay to let me jump the queue for treatment," says

Tony. "No, I didn't think that was right. I do believe treatment should be available through the health service for everyone who needs it. At the time I was waiting for my dialysis, there were 100 other patients attached to the kidney department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, all of them waiting. But only 40 of us were accepted. It's a terrible scandal."

Like his big brother, Tony plays in a band and is currently planning a gig to raise money for kidney research. "It's not Ozzy's kind of music, though," he says. "Ours is much more alternative. But the guitar I play with now is the one Ozzy gave me when I was 16."

"I certainly do not envy Ozzy his money. I could do with a bit more than my £32 a week, but I wouldn't want what he's got. It just brings problems. You don't know who your friends are if you're rich and famous. Whatever my problems, at least I know that nobody is going to be after me for my money - I am sure of that!"

Report by Jean Ritchie

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH BY OSWALD HOPEWICKER; LEFT ANDY EARL; RIGHT