

A Quietus Interview

The Ozman Cometh: Ozzy Osbourne's Egg Beef With Bruce Dickinson

—Joel McIver, July 29th, 2010 09:10

Ozzy Osbourne tells a frankly gobsmacked Joel McIver the truth about drugs, Iommi – oh, and Bruce...

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Heavy metal will change drastically in the next five to ten years. At the moment the movement's upper reaches are occupied by a handful of veteran bands, most of whom are playing out their golden years in the glow of deserved respectability. Iron Maiden, Metallica, Judas Priest, Motörhead, Black Sabbath and their sometime singer Ozzy Osbourne are all aged between their late 40s and their mid 60s, and it's a genuine privilege that these behemoths are still around after all these years. When they're gone they won't be replaced, though, which is why interviews such as this one are worth treasuring. Behold, as Ozzy Osbourne – who has an album, a book, a new band and a forthcoming tour to talk about – tells it like it is, one more time.

Are you pleased with your new album, *Scream*?

Ozzy Osbourne: I am, yes. People say it's progressive, it's different, they say it's overproduced or they say they love it – y'know, I've never gone into a studio [thinking] "I've had a great, successful career, I'm gonna do a shit album for once." Know what I mean? Every time I go in and do an album, I try to do a different album. There's a track on the album I really like called 'Life Won't Wait', with a different kind of a vibe – it's a really interesting sound, you know.



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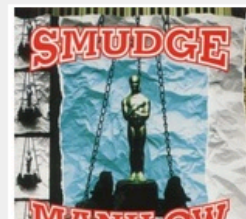
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Is your new guitarist Gus G settling in OK?

OO: Absolutely, he's wonderful. Every time I get a new guitar player, it's always tough. The one thing I always say is that nothing happened with Zakk [Wylde, previous guitarist]. What happened was, it was time for me to get a permanent replacement, because Zakk didn't need me any more. Zakk's got Black Label Society and he's doing great. This band's been working great: we did a couple of gigs in Europe when I was just over there, and it was good fun.

Is the situation with Gus similar to the way it was with Randy Rhoads in 1980, in that you plucked an unknown but talented guy out of relative obscurity?

OO: If I hire a guy who's got a name, then I've got to deal with his fuckin' ego. I like to get people who are hungry for it, you know, [not like] some fucking Ritchie Blackmore or someone else who's known as a great guitarist.

Your autobiography, *I Am Ozzy*, turned out to be a pretty informative read even though you'd spent years telling people that you couldn't remember anything.

OO: What's a problem for me is my short-term memory. I don't know if it's my age or what, but I'll fucking go up and down stairs all day going "What the fuck did I come up here for?" It's probably a combination of the accident [Ozzy nearly died in a quad bike tumble in 2004] and my age, I dunno. [Without] Chris Ayres, the guy who did the ghostwriting for me, I'd still be on fuckin' page one: I can't sit still for five minutes. Anyway, we got to the end and he said he had enough for another book, although I thought he was just winding me up. So probably that'll be called *I Am Still Ozzy*, or something.

What advice would you give young bands who want to make a living out of music?

OO: Nowadays? Fuckin' hell! The other day, I was informed that new bands who've just signed with their record companies have to give away part of their publishing, part of their gig money, part of their concessions, whatever... What the fuck is going on? I wouldn't like to be one of the bands of today. It's fuckin' disgusting the way they treat the bands.

Is it tougher for musicians nowadays than it was in the 60s and 70s?

OO: Oh, absolutely. One thing I can really say I'm proud of is that Black Sabbath were four guys from Aston, Birmingham – which is not that big – who had a dream that came true, bigger than we ever expected. That's never gonna happen again, with today's market. You've got to be a computer fuckin' expert now as well. It's changed so much. Someone can be the biggest thing in the world, and then the next month you go "What happened to them?" Record sales are no more – they aren't selling records that much any more, because of this downloading thing.

How would you advise new bands about management? Sabbath were ripped off by their managers in the early days.

OO: You know what? When we were kids and we wanted to be successful, we didn't know what the fuck we were signing. We didn't know anything about publishing companies or whatever. Now you can go onto your computer and you can fuckin' find out what to go for. You can open your laptop and find out what a manager's average fuckin' percentage is. But if you make it, there's big money to be made – and the moment big money happens, people get weird. I said to [Sabbath drummer] Bill Ward once, "Regardless of the fact that we got ripped off, all our lifestyles

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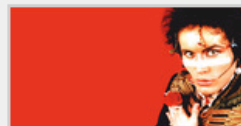
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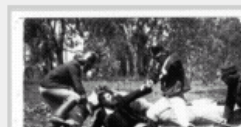
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[improved] about 15,000 times higher than they had been." Our lives did get a lot better. We had cars, we had houses, we could go and have a pint when we wanted, and we could buy our own packet of cigarettes, rather than just one between the four of us.



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Do you recall MTV's *The Osbournes* series fondly?

OO: You go to bed one day and you wake up [the next day] and the world's completely different. Everywhere there's fucking cameras, you get attacked by the fucking things. The kids couldn't handle it, my wife couldn't handle it: she had colon cancer. On the one hand it was phenomenal, on the other hand I had to watch my family [suffer]. But we invented a new form of television. We started the ball rolling for all these fuckin' new shows now. Would we do it again? I dunno. I don't think so.

What's the best country to live in, in your opinion?

OO: I'm kind of Anglo-American now. I've got my children in England from my previous marriage and my [other] children in America, just down the road from us. I'm a TV fuckin' cabbage... couch cabbage...

Couch potato?

OO: Yeah, one of those vegetables. I watch documentaries over here [in the USA]. But when I was back in England the fucking weather was so wonderful I went out and bought myself a sports car, ha ha!

In 2005 your wife Sharon allegedly arranged eggs to be thrown at Iron Maiden while they played at the Ozzfest, supposedly because Maiden singer Bruce Dickinson had made some comments on stage that she disliked. What's your take on that?

OO: You know what? Unbeknown to me, every night he was going on stage slagging me off. And that wasn't fair. If he didn't like the fuckin' tour, he should have said "I'm jumping [off] the fuckin' tour", but to go on stage and fuckin' slag me off for no reason... I'd never said a fuckin' bad thing to him. The bass player [Steve Harris] came round at the last gig and said "I'm sorry about Bruce" and I'm like, "What the fuck are you talking about?" Nobody had told me, you know. I said, "You know what? I don't understand what the fuck you're talking about here."

And so, I mean, Sharon got pissed off... it was nothing to do with me. I suppose Sharon got pissed off. I'll back my wife up to the hilt, but I didn't know what was going down. But you know what? [Maiden were getting] a few fuckin' quid out of that Ozzfest. If you've got something to talk to me about, be a man. Come to my face and say, "I think you're a fuckin' asshole." Don't be a fuckin' idiot. It's so pathetically childish.

Unfortunately the rest of the band had to suffer: I suppose they were pissed off with him. But it's wrong: I've never, ever, ever spoken to the guy... no, I tell a lie, one night they were about to go on stage and I didn't know anything was going down, and I said to them, "Have a good show, guys." But I don't like all that shit going down. If you don't like me, just say "I don't like you, I'm doing this festival but I think you're a cunt." That's all right. But to go on my stage and start slagging me off – that ain't fair. They weren't fucking slagging me off when they got paid every fucking night.

It was disappointing to see the two biggest British metal bands in disagreement.

OO: To this day I don't understand what the fuckin' beef was. I just don't get it. To go on the Ozzfest and slag [people] off, that's crazy. I really think he needs a fuckin' psychiatrist if he does that, he's fucking nuts. It's an irresponsible fuckin' thing to do. Sharon must have got pissed off with this cunt, you know.

You recently embarked on a court case between you and your Black Sabbath bandmate Tony Iommi over rights to the Sabbath name. Is that resolved now?

OO: Yeah. It was just a thing that I had to do, because it was pointed out to me that band names like Deep Purple and Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin are a brand name – like all kinds of things; wine, fucking beer, fucking clothes, logos – and I wanted my fair crack of the whip, so I had no other alternative but to do it.

Is it possible to sue someone and still be friends with them afterwards?

OO: I spoke to Tony when I came back. Business and friendship are completely different, and I love those guys – all of them.

Are you sober nowadays?

OO: Yeah. I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't do drugs.

What would you say to kids who want to know if they should try drugs?

OO: Well, I'm not the person to ask. All I can say is, I tried it when I was young and it nearly fucking... how I'm here, talking to you now, I really don't know. I don't think it's a good idea... I don't do it any more and I like [my life] much better without it. I used to think I couldn't enjoy making music if I wasn't stoned, but it doesn't work. Out of the question. The availability now is so fuckin' more than it used to be. For instance, I have a house in England near [quaint Buckinghamshire town] Beaconsfield, which is a picture-postcard fuckin' village, and one of the local bobbies was talking to me one day and he said "Every Friday and Saturday night, the kids we see, nine times out of 10 they're carrying crack or some fuckin' thing'. It's scary. It's like the thing [to do] now. Cocaine, when I was younger, you had to know somebody who knew somebody who knew somebody. Now you can get it in the fuckin' pub.

Should we legalise cannabis?

OO: I don't think so. I don't think smoking too much fuckin' cannabis is gonna kill you, though, because you can't smoke as many cannabis cigarettes as you can regular cigarettes. You can have a go, but there'd be a lot of food being eaten.

Ozzy's album [Scream](#) is out now on Sony. See [Ozzfest.com](#) for Ozzfest dates later this year.

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Robbert

JUL 29, 2010 3:25PM

This was a good read.

"I Am Ozzy" was a great book, but incomplete if you ask me. He didn't wrote anything about Newsted or Trujillo for example. Also, the whole Sabbath-reunion part was too short. Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed the book very much all the way through. But there's a lot missing. Guess we will see that in Volume II.

Ozzy's been getting a lot of slack over the years, but I wish him all the best. When a Sabbath-reunion might come to town, I will be there, front row!

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Inquirer

JUL 29, 2010 3:46PM

""""OO: You know what? Unbeknown to me, every night he was going on stage slagging me off. And that wasn't fair. If he didn't like the fuckin' tour, he should have said "I'm jumping [off] the fuckin' tour", but to go on stage and fuckin' slag me off for no reason... """"

Yeah, how strange. I've never, ever seen Bruce slag off Ozzy, and I very much doubt he was doing it every night. Why is there no youtube videos or other reporting of this supposed "slagging" he was doing every night?

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Mikey Reds

JUL 29, 2010 5:26PM

Ozzy has always been a straightforward kind f guy. I love his honesty in every interview that I've read or watched. The "I Am Ozzy" book describes bits and peices of his life that has not been told. It was a great read and can't wait for the next one.

With all the crap he has delt with over the years the man is still going strong. He's in his mid sixties and can kick the shit out of any performer. I did not hear about the beef between him and Bruce, but by reading this article it sounded like Bruce was being a dick. Sounded like someone is a little jealous of Ozzy and if he has a problem should go and talk to him. No matter what anyone says the Ozzman is still the best. May he live forever!!

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David Tomasello

JUL 29, 2010 9:50PM

OZZY RULES BECAUSE HE'S THE REAL DEAL!

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Tom

JUL 30, 2010 12:33AM

Wether bruce did or did not slag Ozzy off i dunno, but stopping the show like a moronic child is out of order, people pay to see their bands out of their hard earned cash, not so some celebrity fame hungering witch "sharon osbourne" can come and ruin it for them.

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Varun

JUL 30, 2010 6:24AM

The truth is..Bruce told shit about Ozzy's reality show in a concert or maybe 2. Ozzy exaggerated saying Bruce "slagged him every fucking night" - which is a lie. And... Steve Harris never apologised..if he did, Ozzy would never call him "the bass player".
It was bad on Bruce's part in expressing his opinion in a concert but that doesn't mean Ozz and Sharon can egg Maiden. They're hard to get and they don't really care about fame and commercial success.
Iron Maiden are clearly bigger than Ozzy. More people may have heard of Ozzy but Maiden have way more devoted fans.

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David McNamee

JUL 30, 2010 1:32PM

In reply to Varun:

I remembered it at the time as being that Bruce gave the game away in an interview about Ozzy using autocue onstage, and thats what got Osbourne Inc's back up. Very much doubt the thing about him slagging him off every night onstage, or even once.

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sembi

JUL 31, 2010 12:31AM

He was great for the first five Sabbath albums, but he's pretty much been a clueless idiot for decades now..

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Kevin

JUL 31, 2010 1:32AM

The new record is awful. The pitch correction on his voice is obvious & disturbing. I think Sharon was at the center of any band conflict. Bruce wanted to play a longer set.

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van vliet

JUL 31, 2010 6:43PM

so bored of this overexposed retard and his fucking awful family, some one needs to ask him the following question, Ozzy, now that you have so little control over over your bladder, and you need to empty buckets of water over your head on stage, because you keep pissing yourself and you really embarrassed that the punters might spot the piss stains, isn't it time to fuck off and die? or at the very least retire?
oh and fuck Iron Maiden too another horribly wank band that appeals to the dungeons and dragons brigade...

REPLY TO THIS ADMIN

Mlinkk

JUL 31, 2010 8:03PM

Regarding the beef between Ozzy & Bruce, I wasn't there as a witness to make an honest comment. I can say after following Ozzy/Sabbath & Maiden for 30-plus years, I respect what they've each contributed to the metal scene. Who knows what "Metal" would be like (or if it would even exist as it now does) without these guys. I wish each of them the best!

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goldsoul

AUG 3, 2010 1:20AM

In reply to van vliet:

So why comeon this page and read it if you carnt stand ozz, or maiden? And then to make a stuipid comment, go away and let the rest of us civil people, talk about it with out sounding like a child

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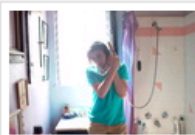
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