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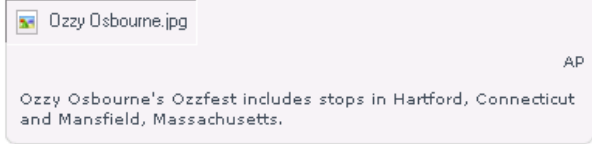
# Ozzy Osbourne interview: Rants, rocks and remembers

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Kevin O'Hare, The Republican

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Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, television star, former Black Sabbath frontman and current Ozzfesting Ozzy Osbourne led one of the wildest lives in rock history and has lived to tell about it.

Osbourne, who recently released his 10th solo studio album, "Scream" spoke at length about that career just prior to the kickoff of his traveling hard rock extravaganza Ozzfest. In the course of our conversation the 61-year-old Englishman talked about everything from the new album and tour to his past controversies – such as getting arrested for urinating on The Alamo and being tossed into the same prison cell as a man who'd allegedly murdered his wife hours earlier. He discussed his thoughts on a possible Black Sabbath reunion, his enduring pain over the 1982 death of acclaimed guitarist Randy Rhoads and his utter distaste for being a television star, despite the fact that his family's wildly successful reality show "The Osbournes" which ran from 2002 to 2005, reinvigorated his career.

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He is a character in every sense of the word. Osbourne talks fast, stutters occasionally, punctuates his thoughts with a steady stream of obscenities and is incredibly funny. But he is also

thoughtful, compelling and charming in a fashion that is utterly, undeniably and distinctively Ozzy:

**Why did you decide to have Motley Crue on this particular Ozzfest? It's the first time you've toured together since 1984.**

I don't know. My wife (Sharon Osbourne) books the artists through my son Jack. Motley's pretty good friends of ours. Nikki (Sixx) lives just up the road from me. They're a great (expletive) band. They're great guys, they don't (expletive) around, they put on the best show they can.

**You've always worked with extremely accomplished guitarists. What does your new guitarist Gus G., who is taking over for Zakk Wylde, bring to your music?**

People say, "Why don't you get someone who's established?" If I get someone who's established there's no (expletive) way, I might as well start with the old guitar player. And while we're on the subject of the old guitar player, I don't want anyone to think for the slightest second that Zakk and I are at war with each other. Zakk doesn't need me anymore. Zakk's got his own band, Black Label Society which is a (expletive) phenomenal band. I was putting off the inevitable for so long. Zakk was doing double duty in his own band and mine. He's (expletive) Zakk Wylde, he's not Tony Iommi. So I had to get a new guitar player permanently. Gus, what I like about these younger guys, they're (expletive) hungry and they've got a lot to prove. I love to see these kids who are hungry for it. Gus is gonna be ok. Right up to now he's excelled amazingly. His playing on the album is (expletive) phenomenal. He listens! I'm not one of these guys that rules my band with an iron fist. I just make suggestions ... As a veteran in the (expletive) business myself I know when I've

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(expletive) up. It's (expletive) great to see someone who says "I'm sorry," but you don't have to say you're sorry to me because it's you that (expletive) up, I didn't (expletive) up. The band I have now is a very good band. We did some gigs in Europe and it was (expletive) great to play.

**A lot of people used to think that because of your former lifestyle you might not be around very long. But you've been a survivor and you work out a lot these days. Tell me about your workout regimen and why you've made such a conscious change to get in shape?**

I used to get on the (expletive) exercise bike, I used to pedal for (expletive) hours. But now I mainly do an hour on it. If I don't exercise I get pissed off. It's good for my head y'know.

**The single "Let Me Hear You Scream" has done very well on the charts. Tell me a little bit about the song and what it means to you?**

I always like to put a thing for the crowd on there. Kevin Churko my producer was very good to work with, he helped me structure a great album. I don't know about you but unintentionally I could hear my Sabbath was coming out on there. I swear on my (expletive) children's life it was not an intentional thing. But "Diggin' Me Down" is very Sabbath oriented.

**Many people have said this is your best album since 1981's "Diary of a Madman." Do you think so?**

I'd question that. I'm glad they say that but any album I've made I've had fun making them. I like "No More Tears" (1991) as well, but then again I'm not always right. But in the past sometimes I've wanted to finish the album off and I've put something quick on there. People go, "It's the one you just click to the next track." But I bet you anything kids will come up to me and say "Why don't you play so and so?" And I'll say, "You like that?" I'm not always (expletive) right. I make a record for me primarily. If the world likes it, it's a bonus. If people are saying that "Scream" is the best album since "Diary of a Madman" then so be it. "Blizzard of Ozz" (1980) and "Diary" are very special albums for me 'cause they're with (guitarist) Randy Rhoads y'know.

**What's your greatest regret?**

I have a lot of regrets, I've done some stupid things, and I'll probably continue to do stupid things. We all do. But I can't say I have one specific regret. When you come to the crossroads whatever road you take, you've got to live with the good and the bad. If it was all good it would be boring y'know? You've got to do a bad thing to know what a good thing is.

**Recently you and Tony Iommi of Black Sabbath announced that you have amicably resolved your problems over the ownership of the Black Sabbath name and court proceedings have been discontinued. Did that take a lot of work to get to that point and does it mean you'd possibly consider a Black Sabbath reunion?**

It's not going to happen for at least a year or two because I've got my tour and an album to do, whatever. But it's not added to the realms of never ever. I would be a liar if I said to you I wouldn't want to do the ultimate Black Sabbath album ... We never set down when we were kids and went like, "This is going to be looked upon when we're (expletive) 60 as a milestone in music." That was not our intention. But it kind of happened. I always wanted to be a Beatle and people said, "Well Black Sabbath is a heavy metal version of the Beatles." But I would love to do, absolutely love to do a really great monumental Black Sabbath album. Whether we can, I don't know. I spoke to Tony Iommi about three weeks ago, I spoke to Geezer (Butler) about a week ago, I speak to Bill Ward all the time. But I won't do it without the other three ... Black Sabbath is four guys as far as I'm concerned. We all depend on each other.

**Your television show was a major success in the US and really changed peoples' perception of you.**

I'm not the TV guy. I (expletive) hate doing these shows. I got railroaded into doing the (expletive) thing last year "Osbourne's Reloaded," ... (expletive) joke. I don't like it. My family does. I gave a sigh of relief when it was (expletive) canceled. I said "Listen, I do not like doing (expletive) TV." When we were doing "The Osbournes," I never saw one episode, I saw bits and pieces, but that's all.

**Recently you said the show caused you a lot stress and that you were taking 42 different pills a day due to the anxiety it caused. What was with that?**

I had a Hollywood doctor who was (expletive), "Have a happy pill," if I feel happy "Have a sad pill." Whatever pills I take now are prescribed for a reason. I don't take (expletive) Vicodin anymore. I

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don't take (expletive) sleeping pills anymore. People say I look pretty good for my age.

### **At your worst, how bad was your alcohol problem? How did you kick it?**

The first thing I quit was cigarettes. I used to (expletive) smoke cigarettes 24 hours a day virtually. I tried to make it difficult for myself so I started rolling my own. I (expletive) rolled 20 and smoked 'em for the night y'know. I thought: I'll smoke cigars. But in the end I was smoking 30 of them a day.

Then one day I was doing some stuff with Black Sabbath, Bill Ward had just come back from having a heart attack and he said, "I've tried the patch, (expletive) hypnosis, every (expletive) thing, I've gone all day with the patch on and not had a cigarette. But I take the patch off and have a cigarette. Now I'm smoking with the patch on." And Bill Ward says "Ozzy, I'm not going in your room to smoke, but can you chew gum, 'cause I can smell it, and it's (expletive) starting me on it." So that day I went home and I just said "I'm done." I threw the cigarettes on the (expletive) fire and I haven't smoked one since. After that it was pretty easy to quit the alcohol and the drugs. People say "What was the trick? What did you do?" There's no trick. I'd just had enough. There was a time I'd smoke a cigarette or have a drink or do drugs to get myself feeling up, but I was getting worse. What's the (expletive) point of doing it anyway?

### **You were involved in an infamous incident in San Antonio in 1982 where you were arrested after you urinated on the Alamo. What was it like being in jail and did your cellmates enjoy having a rock star with them?**

I've been in jail quite a few times. On that Motley Crue tour in 1984, I was always, there's (expletive) photographs of me in my book coming out of jail. But being in jail at 9 o'clock in the morning with a guy who just killed his (expletive) wife ain't a good idea.

Y'know people talk about that and the bat and the dove and all that (expletive). But that incident in San Antonio cost me a lot of money because I couldn't play there for (expletive) ever. Only relatively recently they let me back.

### **Great city.**

I did have some memorable times there at one point. Then I had more than a memorable time.

### **Let's talk about raising kids.**

You'd have to ask my wife because all I was for a long time was another (expletive) kid. My wife doesn't take anything. She doesn't drink. I'll tell you, she has - it gets me this word - she has the "occasional" glass of wine. I had the occasional glass of wine every three seconds. I woke up with a (expletive) bottle in bed. Somebody said to me one time, "Ozzy I've heard you bellyaching, imagine for once if you were the sober one and you go home and your wife is lying in a puddle of her own urine with her (expletive) hanging on the floor, do you think you'd stay around?" When someone put it that way to me I thought (expletive), I'm lucky to have a wife. Men are very selfish in a lot of ways.

### **You mentioned the late Randy Rhoads before. When you're thinking about him, what are your favorite recollections?**

There are so many. In the bottom of my heart I said to one of the band members I don't think he's going to make old bones ... "Only the good die young," they say. The worst thing of all is that I still keep in touch with his mom. She's very, very old, she can hardly see, she's still teaching in the school. I get so (expletive) sad. To think of losing one of your kids before you die is just out of the question. I know that if that was the case with one of my kids, my wife would go (expletive), and I'd be three seconds behind her. That's what really gets me. It's very (expletive) sad.

I remember years ago, I did a video for "Crazy Train." We used his flying-V (guitar) with the polka dots for the video. I opened the guitar case and it had not been opened since the day it was sent back to his mother from the tour. There were still the half-smoked pack of cigarettes and (expletive) it freaked me out man. I'm not just saying it because he's gone. He was a special person. He was loved by us all. He was the first guitar player - remind you I only had one before - from Sabbath to Randy was such an enlightened move because with Sabbath they'd go, "OK, this is the riff, you got to put a vocal on that." I had to move around them. When Randy came, I had the melody to "Goodbye to Romance." He said "Is that a song or no?" I said, "It's a melody." He said, "Let's work it out," and then he said "It'd be better if you sang it in this key." He was very good at doing that, he helped me more than just give me something to sing on.

### **Who is your favorite songwriter?**

There are so many. I like David Bowie a lot. I wish he'd stop (expletive) around now. Newer bands, I don't pay attention. To me there aren't any new (expletive) bands, plus I want to be careful, if you start getting into something it indirectly comes out in my music.

### You recently met President Clinton and Muhammad Ali at a charity event. What did you say?

Muhammad Ali, it breaks my (expletive) heart when I see this guy. He can't speak ... and I'm thinking what the (expletive)? I look at this guy and I think, Jesus Christ, you were the biggest (expletive) thing in the world one time. Look into that man when you have a problem. You ain't got a (expletive) problem man. This guy did so much for the entertainment game and the sporting game, and he was phenomenal.

Bill Clinton, he was very nice. He was talking about how he was looking forward to his daughter's wedding and how excited she is. I have a lot of respect for him. Steve Martin was at our table as well. He is a (expletive) funny man, a funny man.

### What do you still want to achieve?

Now that I've got my head out of the clouds with all this (expletive) TV thing, music is my passion. Rock 'n' roll is what I'm known for. I'm not the (expletive) weatherman. I don't want to be a TV person, I don't like TV. I really don't.

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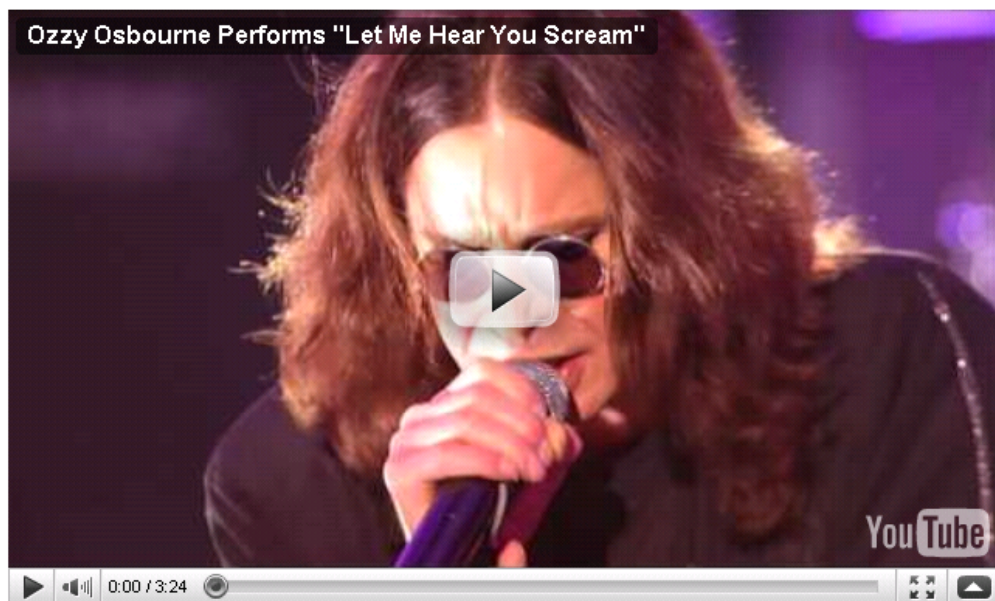
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