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"Torch Snuffed": Ozzy Opens Up On Costly Survivor Gamble, Emotional Exit

Posted By: John Powell | May 7, 2026



"The Blood Moon" – A mysterious boat arrives delivering an exciting message, "Drop your buffs!" A mad dash ensues when castaways discover that an advantage is hidden deep in the jungle. This week's mouthwatering challenge reward lifts spirits, but only briefly. A true Survivor first, the dreaded blood moon leads to historic tribal council, on SURVIVOR 50, Wednesday, April 1 (8:00-10:00 PM, ET/PT) on the CBS Television Network Pictured L to R: Ozzy Lusth. Photo: Robert Voets/CBS ©2025 CBS Broadcasting, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

By John Powell – GlobalTV.com



After playing the game four times and as one of the faces of Survivor for 20 years, Ozzy Lusth has literally grown up on the show. He was introduced to us at the age of 24 as the wild but sensitive “jungle boy” who was still finding his way through life and at 44 on 50, we saw a more focused, a more emotionally intelligent Ozzy that we have ever seen. He also played the best game of his Survivor career, a more well-balanced, thoughtful, polished game. It is for that reason that he trusted the wrong people based on his new-found social game.

John Powell: Ozzy, it’s wonderful to be talking today. How are you?

Ozzy Lusth: Hey, you know, I could be better but I’m all good, man. I’m all good!

John Powell: I’ve spoken to survivors over the years, and usually, when you watch things back, sometimes all of those emotions put them right back into the moment. How are you feeling today, watching everything back last night?

Ozzy Lusth: I mean, it’s rough. Obviously, it’s one of the worst decisions I’ve ever made in my life up to this point, a \$2 million decision. It’s hard to walk away from that. It’s hard not to have regret. I’ve been thinking about this moment for the last ten months since I got my torch snuffed, thinking about what it was going to be like sitting in a hotel room in New York City, talking to all of y’all saying, “Oh man, that was such a boneheaded move.”

But it also provides a little bit of closure, right? I got really lucky with the way that my story was told and I am just so blessed. I feel like I had a nice, kind of well-rounded arc to my Survivor experience. And yeah, I didn’t win, but it’s one thing I’ve learned about survivors: sometimes, when you lose, you can win.

So yeah, I mean, it’s been just an absolute blast. I had a watch party here in New York City with 300-plus people and fans. To be able to share and be vulnerable in front of that many people, and to go out and say, “Thank you for sending me here, thank you for being here, thank you for putting me here, and thank you for receiving me when I finished.”

John Powell: You have to take heart in the fact there are fans out there who’ve been fans of yours for 20 years; that’s a considerable legacy to have. There’s been a lot of talk that you’ve played your best game yet. Do you feel a little bit of redemption in that fact?

Ozzy Lusth: Yeah, I’m just grateful that I had a chance to go out and prove that sometimes an old dog can learn new tricks. (laughs) I’m maybe just a little too old to learn all the tricks but I learned my lessons. (laughs)

I think one of the biggest takeaways for me is that there's an intuition that we all hold. There is a subconscious. There are other senses that we don't put enough value on as we go through this life, at least a lot of people, myself included, we go through life by thinking things through when often you need to check in with other parts of your body in order to make the decision that is going to get you further in life and not just in a game.

So that was my big mistake. All of the warning signs, all of the alarm bells, were going off. I had a nightmare the night before. I woke up that morning knowing I needed to play the idol. I saw all the signs, and then, sure enough, my mind played a trick on me. I talked myself out of it and then: Torch snuffed!

John Powell: From my perspective, you successfully changed your game. You were more social with people, more empathetic with people. Do you think that affected your decision not to use the idol?

Ozzy Lusth: Oh, for sure. 100 percent. Part of that, though, was, this didn't make the cut, but you saw me talk to Devens and we had a really heartfelt moment. That same day, I think earlier in the day, we had gotten our family letters, right?

So, everyone's talking about the hard things and I had a really touching moment with Jonathan and felt like we really bonded. I felt like we really grew closer as brothers outside of the game and I put a lot of weight into that. So when we got back to Sila, I felt like, "Oh, Jonathan and I are just so connected. Jonathan's not going to screw me over now; he's like my homie."

So that's part of the thing that got me in trouble but it doesn't even matter because I knew that I needed to play the idol. That's partially why I told Aubry my plans, because I was trying to get this jury vote happening but by not playing the idol, telling Aubry makes no sense.

So, I had a great plan and then at the last moment I just risked it because I was getting a little too greedy. I was hoping that if I stayed one more day, then all of a sudden I'm sitting there in the top five and maybe the final four, you know? It just starts running away with you.

John Powell: You're a very spiritual person. You talked about your dream giving you that warning. There have been other people in the past who've said the same thing to me, like, "I had a dream" or "I had a feeling" on the island. What do you think it is about the Survivor experience, or just being on that island, that makes people more in touch with those other senses that maybe we don't pay attention to in the hustle and bustle of city life?

Ozzy Lusth: I think you're hitting on it right there. I think that we're so distracted on a day-to-day basis by life, the world and our phones. When you're out there, you can really just... it's really just all of that.

I think a big part of it for me was that I took up a meditation practice. Every single morning, as soon as I woke up, I'd go sit on the beach for half an hour or 45 minutes and just get clear, let the thoughts go, and visualize where I wanted to be. I think that practice alone starts to clear things out and you start to really become in touch with your subconscious. It is picking up information all the time but you can't hear it if you're just listening to your thoughts. You don't have any real reference and you just start to confuse yourself.

John Powell: Looking back at the beginning of the game, we had that challenge with Coach and that whole situation. What is your view about what happened and why?

Ozzy Lusth: You know, at the end of the day, I felt like I wanted to work with Coach really badly. I wanted our story to change. I wanted us to be able to say, "Look, we learned, we grew, and we made it far in the game together."

But then when he just took the key, I started to say, "Maybe I'm not as down to trust Coach as I thought." Because if Coach had just been like, "All right, I got the key. But hey, guys, let's talk about this," there would have been an opportunity to build relationships and trust. Instead, he's just like, "I'm taking this, I need it." So I was like, "All right, well, I can't necessarily trust him in the way that I thought."

But in all honesty, that was such a blessing, because then I got the extra vote and I locked in with Cirie. Cirie then survives last night's vote because of that one maneuver from Coach. Survivor teaches you that sometimes even when you lose, you actually win, and you've got to be ready for an adjustment.

John Powell: Throughout the season we saw a lot that you didn't even get to see, that Cirie was really in your corner; she was really behind you. Were you surprised by this? And what do you think about your partnership with her? Because, again, she was putting in a lot of work for you, Ozzy, which was good to see.

Ozzy Lusth: Yeah, I love Cirie with all my heart and I feel blessed that I can call her a friend. She's a legend. To sit front row to her masterclass in how to play reality TV properly—whether it's Survivor, The Traitors, Big Brother, or any other show she is a part of, she's really amazing.

You don't always know if someone who says they are on your side to your face actually is, right? But she really proved it time and time again. And of course, the one tribal where we're not together, Ozzy blows it by not listening to his gut. (laughs)

John Powell: What was it like, Ozzy, playing with these "new school" players, these "new era" players?

Ozzy Lusth: For the most part, it's a pleasure. I do think that they have a bigger. how can I put this. they... I mean, look, if you have never played the 39-day game, you don't really know Survivor. You know Survivor Lite. It's Diet Survivor.

Because of that, some of these players come in and they want to create chaos. They want to make big moves early on and make sure that they have this reputation and are adding to their resume. And it's like, "Yo, just chill out." Do you need to stab one of your best Survivor friends like Christian? Christian's not a new era player but I still feel like he fits in with that. Stabbing Mike White in the back ended up hurting Christian majorly. Emily throwing people, wanting to vote people out left and right, it's chaotic. Super chaotic.

"Riz God," the self-proclaimed "Riz God", who has now stabbed me in the back and exploded his relationship with Cirie all for the sake of a little bit of clout... I just think that, of course, there's a way to play Survivor in that new era way but I do think there are a lot of lessons the old school can teach. It doesn't have to be about honor and integrity but having people that you can trust, going to the end with a couple of people and locking in to make it all the way together is still really powerful. I really hope that somebody from the old school wins this game.

John Powell: When you were pondering who to award the winner of Survivor 50, what were some of the things you were thinking about as an experienced veteran player?

Ozzy Lusth: You know, it just comes down to who played the best game. I tried to really take my own ego out of it and just look at who was able to adapt, who was able to move through and find a way to the end by any means necessary, but doing it in a way that I think is respectful and not just riding coattails, but making moves.

I'm looking at all sorts of criteria. Even for people that stabbed me in the back, in the past, I'd say, "You know what, I'm not voting for them because they stabbed me in the back." No. This is a different Ozzy, and I've got a different criteria for who I'm voting for. It really just is: who played the best damn game of Survivor?

Ozzy Lusth Survivor 50 Exit Interview

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John Powell: Well, Ozzy, it was great to watch you again. It was great to see the evolution of Ozzy, too. It's not very easy to put yourself out there and expose your emotions. As a person who wears his emotions on his sleeve, I understand how that is and how that could be good and bad for all of us but it was wonderful to see you out there again and I heard about the restaurant, good luck with that, that's fantastic! I can't wait to see you at the finale, Ozzy.

Ozzy Lusth: Well, the restaurant is just part of it. I have a project that I'm working on where I'm opening an eco-resort that has a Survivor experience factor, a little Survivor hook. So you can come down, stay with me on the beach in Mexico, learn how to open up coconuts, climb coconut trees and maybe go spear fishing.

Maybe we even play a little mini version of the game so you get a little taste of what it's like to actually be there on the beach, fighting for your life, getting your torch snuffed, backstabbing, the whole thing that goes along with Survivor. So stay tuned on that. I'm working on it because I want to be able to share what I've been able to experience through Survivor with all the fans that will never get to play the actual game. You can come and play with me.

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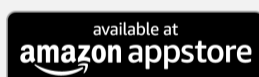


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