

Jeff: Hello.

Interviewer: Hi, good afternoon. Is this Jeff?

Jeff: Yes.

Interviewer: Hi Jeff. This is **Dinkar Ganti** from Sarva Bio Remed.

Jeff: Yeah. Hi.

Interviewer: Hi, how are you?

Jeff: Good. The phone connection is not the best. I hear an echo.

Interviewer: Oh. Maybe Skype was not going to work for us then. Okay.

Jeff: Well, your voice is fine. It's when I speak I hear it.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. I guess I didn't test it out. Let me see –

Jeff: I'm willing to go ahead if you're okay with it.

Interviewer: For me, I'm not getting an echo so it's okay with me, but I hope that's not going to put any damper on what you have to say.

Jeff: No. I think it's going to be okay.

Interviewer: All right, great. Okay. So I wanted to first start off with a background on the project. So how you want to describe the project as to start and then we can go forward from there.

Jeff: Okay. Okay. We purchased house in December of 2005 and we knew from the disclosure that there had been some sort of oil spill, but they said things were cleaned up. We smelled oil strong in the house, but presumed it was because the oil tank was inside the house. It's a 1960 or 1940 farm house and additions have been on the back. And the oil tank which I believe was outside at one point originally was enclosed inside the house. And they simply built a drywall wall surrounding it.

So we purchased the house. I began renovation. We removed the oil tank. We found that the drywall and the installation behind the oil tank along the exterior wall had been – had a lot of oil smell, even oil discoloration. We removed the oil furnace. We removed the drop ceiling. We **skimmed** the floor with concrete. And we

rebuilt the house. We put new installation, new drywall, new ceilings, new electric furnish; new wood laminate flooring.

And for three months we had no smell, no oil smell at all. So we were surprised in the spring – let's say maybe May. So we moved in in March and then by about April, May, on 90 days, we started to smell oil returning. And now I know why we were smelling it on 90 days. It was because the water was sitting outside house and was – the oil was following – things stirred up and followed the water.

So we went away at the end of June on a weeklong trip; came home. The house had been shut. The windows were shut and the entire smelled intense of oil fumes almost as bad or worse than when we first looked at the house to purchase.

Interviewer: I see.

Jeff: And so we didn't know what was involved. We thought maybe it was the **historic** process and is it turned out it took about six weeks and a lot of effort. But we are now back in the house and it's oil free at this point. We have no oil odor and I'm confident that we will get no more oil odor returning from the – underneath slab foundation.

Interviewer: That's good to know. That's good to – I wanted to ask you when you started this entire project did you ever anticipate that it's going to be as complex – as I see from the pictures that you sent out to us – and how did you – did you just start thinking about it on the **feet** and –

Jeff: Yes. I believe the project was – I didn't know exactly how to handle the project. I just knew we needed to do something. So my wife and children moved out to live with my parents an hour away. And my plan was to take up the floor and simply seal it. I was – naively I thought that using a paint sealer would seal out the odor. And as I know now, there's no way. Those oil fumes will go through anything.

So I thought it would be a three day job of picking up the floor; sealing it; putting the floor back down. But when I took up the wood laminate and the six mil plastic underlayment _____ barrier, it was as if we unlocked an oil monster. The smell was just intense in the home and that's when I started reading online and found, from the internet, the website on BioRemed and VaporRemed. And started reading about different oil spill situations and ordered

the product. I think we ordered two gallons initially. And that point we were optimistic that we could just spray the VaporRemed and it would – the bacteria would eat the oil vapor and we would be done. As it turned out, that did not work.

We ordered more gallons and I drilled holes into the concrete slab from the inside and from the outside under – through the foundation and sprayed the solution down into the holes and of course that didn't work either. There was so much oil underneath the foundation that it never would have worked to spray the solution. I had to remove the oil affected dirt.

And I didn't know at the beginning that how deep the oil was gonna seep. All I knew is I had to do something and I couldn't afford to hire a company to come in and do this. So I took out a sledge hammer. I took out a sledge hammer and I started to break up the floor and remove four inches of concrete. And by hand, I started to dig. And I dug down, at one point, about three feet, three to four feet. And just slowly I started digging.

I used VaporRemed along the way during the process to **keep** the odor – VaporRemed is amazing because when I oil smell is so intense, spraying the VaporRemed there's almost immediate dissolution of the odor, although in my case, it kept returning because the source of the problem that I dealt with.

So during the process I wore a dual respirator mask, but continually was spraying the solution. Specifically overnight, at the end of the day, when I was done digging for the day, I would spray the whole solution down to cut down the smell from permeating throughout our house during the night.

And meanwhile, I also kept the fan blowing outside through the doorway on the side of the house that we added, right where the oil furnace used to sit, keeping the air circulating out. And so what I found was – I found a layer – well, I should say this, there's four inches of concrete, eight to ten inches of what is called – it's a coal byproduct. It's like the cinders of a – cinders, I think it is they call it. Back in the 1940s or 50s I think they used this instead of gravel. And it looks black, but it's not black because it's oil affected because it's a byproduct of, I think, of burning coal. So it has no odor and it was gravelly almost like volcanic rock. I thought that was the source of the problem because it smelled. But as I found out, that was not the problem.

Digging down deeper, I found a layer of brown clay and then below the brown I found a greenish gray color. And it was maybe two feet, one and a half to two feet thick at one point. And then I started digging horizontally towards the interior of the house and it tapered out maybe eight feet in. It tapered out to be nothing. And I found all brown again. And when I removed – the oily gray clay had a sweet odor almost like rotting candy. Okay. So we removed all of that dirt by hand. I removed all the dirt; just digging; putting into five-gallon buckets; carrying it out; dumping it into piles.

I should have taken a picture of the pile of dirt. It was seven feet tall and twelve feet around or something.

Interviewer: It must have been a mountain.

Jeff: Yeah. It was a mountain. And so we made this large pile outside the house. I kept digging and I dug out a huge – as the pictures show, a large trench and I followed the line of where they gray – where the oil had spilled was. But I will say this, even after removing the oily dirt, there still was odor. And that's when I sprayed VaporRemed and then the odor did not return from the dirt.

The cinderblock foundation wall is another story. The cinderblock wall specifically, for about ten feet where the oil tank was, I knew I needed to replace that wall because the oil, even after drilling in and spraying gallons of VaporRemed inside this wall, the smell kept returning. So I knew I had to take the wall out.

So I learnt how to jack up the house. I used **little bottle** jacks and started at one end and took out some cinderblocks and jacked up that edge of the house and then worked my way across using 4x4 braces as I went taking out the cinderblocks. And what I found inside the hollow of the cinderblocks was a oily sludge that was very sweet smelling and it was obviously the oil that had seeped in along with the water.

The water, I think, is – the water had been sitting on the side of the house because the EPA – when they came to do the cleanup one year ago, and this only happened one year ago, a year and a half ago – okay, when the EPA came out, they – all they did was dig up the drainage and block it to keep anymore oil from going out into the creek, into the storm drain, and into the creek.

So they did nothing to really clean up the mess on the property. They dug out some dirt, but that's all. Okay. So then water, for a

full year, was sitting along the house and every time it rained, water filled up along the house and carried the oil deeper into the cinderblocks, I believe. So inside the cinderblocks was a black layer. You could see the layer the water had been at and also it was the oily layer. There was a sludge in the bottom and so I kept taking out those cinderblocks until I stopped finding the oily residue. And then I went ahead and drilled more over, but I had no oil smell. So I stopped going any further in the foundation.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jeff: I removed that entire cinderblock foundation and sprayed everything with VaporRemed. The one thing I did not do that I may need to go back and do later is to peel off of the siding on the outside of the house and take off the wood siding which is underneath there that maybe has become vapor affected, although **it did finally** have no smell. I'm gonna do that until we ever start getting smell again.

Interviewer: Great, yeah. As long as there is no smell I see no why we should go that – if you see it, yeah, that's good. We were impressed with the – I also wanted to take some time to see what your background is as to why – you took up a lot of initiative to just solve this problem.

Jeff: Part of the reason why I did this is I was desperate and I didn't have any money. And so I knew I had to do something and I couldn't afford to hire and I saw no solution except to learn. But I will tell you this; I've been – for the last three years, I started a real estate rental business where I purchase a property. And I started off by hiring workers to fix it up and then I would rent it out. Okay.

But every time I hired a worker, I asked them to teach me what they were doing or I would watch them and learn. So I learned a little bit of plumbing, a little bit of electric, a little bit of carpentry, a little bit of roofing, a little bit of concrete, just enough to make me dangerous. I had just enough so that I felt like with some coaching I can do anything. And so this is new to me. I knew none of this three years ago. But I've been a full-time student.

My wife is home with the kids, full-time, as a mother. And I needed to generate income while I was studying for my PhD, my doctorate. So I – that's when I started this business and I started learning how to do something. And I had never done – I had never jacked up a house. I had never done a concrete foundation. I had

never done any of that. But I knew it was – I could do anything. I knew with help and coaching and instruction and I had time because I don't a full-time job. My full-time job is to be a real estate landlord and to be a student. And so both of those are flexible. So that's why I was able to for six weeks focus in on our own home because I wasn't working another job from nine to five. And so not everyone is able to do that, but I'm thanking God that I was able to do that.

Interviewer: And we were – when I looked at the pictures we were just amazed at the amount of work that went into this – addressing the problem. Yeah.

Jeff: There was one more – yeah, there was one more element and this was out of my league, and this was repairing the drainage so that water would not sit and seep into the house again. And so that's where my neighbor had a friend who has a backhoe and he – a trackhoe I guess. And so he came in and he dug down the trench that you'll see in the pictures. And then I tarred the outside.

After pouring the concrete, I tarred the outside of the house to waterproof it and put in the drainage pipe. And also I put in – you may notice in the photograph, I put some pipe on the inside of the house and connected it to the outside. And the reason I did that is – well, I backfilled the hole with gravel and I put a plastic layer, several plastic layers in there just in case there was ever more oil or more smell that was seeping up from the ground.

I **soaked** it with VaporRemed, but still, I wanted to make sure if there was ever more oil that was under there, it would seep up and it would seep up and it would follow the path of least resistance which was a perforated pipe. And then that would take it outside and down to the vents and to – away from the house. So that's the pipe that you may see that has a white liner over the top of it.

Interviewer: Yeah. And it's blue on the other side _____.

Jeff: And it's blue solid on the other side with holes on the bottom.

Interviewer: Yeah, right. I see that.

Jeff: Okay. So we just finished putting all the trim back on and painting in the hallway on Sunday. And so it was about 52 days that was the whole process took. But that was not working full-time. Some days it was working from seven to midnight. But then some days I would leave halfway through the day because I had to go deal with

an issue at a rental property or I had a showing or – and some weekends I took off.

But I worked mostly full-time and mostly by myself. I had a little bit of help in the process, but I didn't know – if I would have known what I needed to do, I could have done this much quicker because I would have brought in a crew of people and we would have just instantly just dug down. We wouldn't have wasted time drilling and spraying and waiting and – I would have just instantly dug everything out and then – well, now I know how to solve the problem. You remove all of the oily contaminated dirt or concrete and then you rebuild and meanwhile using the VaporRemed to eat up any of the vapor affected areas.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Jeff: So that's my background. And actually, I must say because of that because of this project, I learned some new skills and subsequently I went out and rented a large piece of heavy machinery and used it to dig at a different house to some drainage. So I learned something. I learned something through this also.

Interviewer: It's just great. It's a great way to end the story. And we like the fact that it's fine and you're all back in home. And I would like to thank you for your time for this interview.

Jeff: Yeah. And my hope is to like hope to other people who may find themselves in a situation where they either have an oil spill or they find out they've bought a property or something that has an oil spill. There is hope. With a good deal of work, but in the end, my out-of-pocket expense – and maybe don't mention this in the interview or anything, but in the end, my out-of-pocket expense was probably only about – well, let's see, maybe 7 to 800 for VaporRemed, which I wouldn't have needed all that. So knowing what I know now, that could have been of that amount probably.

And then there was 350 to have somebody dig. And there was gravel, several hundred dollars in gravel, and 150 in concrete. So really we're only talking about 2,000 plus my time to resolve this problem. So it – I thought of trying to take legal action against the former owner, but the former owner was a lifelong smoker. He had been battling lung cancer for much time. And he has since died of cancer. And I decided with his widow I was not going to take legal action to recover damages. That this was just a lesson I needed to learn and move on.

- Interviewer:* And we are very glad at least we could be of some part in that whole picture and just try to solve the problem.
- Jeff:* You certainly were and **Satya** was a source of encouragement. His empathy and his consideration and desire to help meant a great deal. At some points I felt very alone. And Satya was a friend to me. He was an encouraging voice that there was hope. And so that's what I hope maybe my interview can be to others are out there who may battle this.
- Interviewer:* Great, yes. We'll try to put that – most likely we'll put most of the interview on the website. The cost is fine, which is as it is. I wanted to make it as little editing as we could do so that people have – so that the listeners get an idea of what we did. But I'll try – if at all we do any editing, I'll probably send out to you for your review and –
- Jeff:* That's fine. Yeah, that's fine. You can edit as much as needed, as much as you would like to. That's fine.
- Interviewer:* Okay, great. Thanks a lot for your time again. And good night. And I'll keep you posted on this.
- Jeff:* Okay, thank you very much, Dinkar. I'll talk to you later.
- Interviewer:* Sure, bye.

[End of Audio]

Note: Content modified to clarify some words (marked in red).