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Narrative Essay

You Need New Shingles On The Roof If You Want New Kitchen Cabinets

Bob Vila, the host of "Home Again," always makes his projects look so easy. Most people fail to realize why good ole' Bob is able to make things appear so easy on television. You see, Bob has a fifty man crew made up of world class carpenters hidden out of site behind the camera. These carpenters are the best and are armed to the teeth with Sears' best craftsman power tools. They stay out of site until a commercial comes on and then they run out from behind the camera and take care of all of the hard to do tasks that good ole' Bob never tells you about. Seemingly harmless projects to fix up your house can have terrible consequences that lay waiting for the poor and unsuspecting handyman. They are usually a great deal more involved than what you may have bargained for.

Around September in 1995, my wife was watching Bob on television. He was installing a new set of kitchen cabinets in an old house. Well, she decided that I needed to do the same thing because it was a very simple and non time consuming project. She said that Bob did it in thirty minutes and so could I. She took me to "Home Depot" in Orange Park and picked out her new kitchen cabinets. I was a little unsure about this kitchen cabinet thing, but the salesman assured us that the entire project would be a "turn key" installation. The salesman asked me if I wanted them to deliver the materials. I declined his offer because I could do it myself and save money. So, I waited for a nice clear day to go back to pick up everything. I was using an open bed truck and it was a pretty sizable load to carry such a long distance. Well, the worst rain storm in Florida history developed over Green Cove Springs on the clear day I chose to pick everything up. I was about halfway home and this terrible rain storm ambushed me. I couldn't get away. I was surrounded on all sides. It soaked everything in the bed of the truck. I drove like an insane person to get home so I could unload it in this down pouring rain and get the boxes dried off. Luckily nothing was damaged from the water. It was an omen and I failed to see it.

The next day I took my ten pound hammer and began tearing out the old cabinets. I was having a pretty good time beating up all of this wood in my house with this hammer. It was fun until I realized that the cabinets were actually part of the wall and now I was going to have to rip out the whole wall. I said to myself, "Oh what the heck, it's just a wall and I can rebuild it." So, I tore the whole thing out. Unfortunately, after this, I discovered that water had been leaking from behind the wall and rotted several floor joists under the kitchen floor. Now I was going to have to rip up the entire kitchen floor. The next morning I removed the appliances and ripped out the floor. I had successfully taken a very functional kitchen and turned it into a rather large pile of busted up wood, which was now trashing up my back yard. For some strange reason, this incredible euphoria of accomplishment made me fantasize about choking the life out of Bob Vila. I was now prepared to remove the damaged floor joists. I was trying to be very careful while removing the joists, because the center of the house could collapse without their support. When I removed the second floor joist, part of the house shifted and broke the main water lines that routed under the floor. It also sheared off the cast iron sewer vent that went up to the roof. As the water was steadily soaking me, the term "Uh oh" began to repeat itself in my thought pattern. These pipes were very old and could not be repaired, they had to be replaced. Now I was looking forward to replacing the plumbing.

At this point, I realized that I was in over my head. I called my wife's brother, Steven, to help me. He agreed to help and came right over with his tools in hand and ready to go. He started working on the sewer lines while I jacked the house

back up and replaced the floor joists. When Steven was repairing the sewer vent line he was beating on it with a hammer. Not realizing that this old cast iron pipe might be full of large chunks of rust, his hammering inadvertently clogged it up about thirty feet out in my back yard. We tried desperately for several hours to flush it out with a snake, but it would not unclog. Now I had to dig a thirty foot trench that was five foot deep leading from under my house and out into my back yard.

After several weeks and a lot of money, we managed to fix the wall, back yard, sewer vent, plumbing and kitchen floor. Now all I had to do was fix the roof where the sewer vent came out. Steven and I climbed up there and put down the new tar paper and shingles. I was just starting to feel good about this whole thing, but that feeling would soon pass. An inconspicuous and somewhat slick piece of tar paper managed to sneak it's way down to the roof's edge where the ladder was. While making a feeble attempt to climb down, I stepped on this harmless piece of tar paper. You would be amazed at the rate of acceleration that the human body can achieve in a twelve foot free fall. As my luck would dictate, it was necessary that I land behind the air conditioner; otherwise, I would not have been able to rip out the copper freon tubing to it as I made re-entry through the Earth's atmosphere. Needless to say, I hurt my back. My injury gave me a few days to get it fixed before returning back to the project.

After a lifetime worth of catastrophe and rebuilding my entire house, I was ready to install our new cabinets. Steven and I unboxed them and snapped them together in practically no time at all. We leveled them out and bolted them up on the new wall. "Wah Lah!" We had new cabinets in less than an hour. What could be easier? Bob Vila doesn't tell you the whole truth. So, if you ever decide to do a home project, you might want to exercise a little more forethought into it than what I did. You never know what you will get into once you start. Our front porch light has been burned out now for about six months. My wife keeps nagging me to change it, but I tell her that I am trying to consider everything that could happen to the house if I do. You never know, one day you change a light bulb and the next day you might find yourself digging up the driveway because of it. Who would have ever thought I would need new shingles on my roof to install new cabinets.