



Local Hunter and Dog Get Skunked

By Steven Bridges
The Goldthwaite Eagle

A few years ago, when my wife, Debra, was pregnant with our daughter, Amber, we went out to the ranch to get my bird pen. I use pen raised quail to train Radar, my Vizsla bird dog. Debra, who self-admittedly has a "soft heart," didn't want Radar out in the September cold that night, so he was in the cab with us.

As we were making our way down the county road adjacent to our ranch, I spotted a wild covey of quail crossing the road. I jumped out of the truck with Radar thinking it would be a great opportunity for us both.

Debra says she remembers us both hustling over the fence and taking off into the pasture. We only made it about 10 yards when Radar went on point. It was the most elegant point a bird dog ever made, and I was pretty sure we were onto something. I had no shotgun, because this was just a training trip.

Radar was onto something alright, but not the wild covey I'd hoped for. I walked over to Radar ...

and then it happened.

From the truck, Debra says, she saw Radar and I suddenly enveloped in a huge greenish-yellow cloud of skunk spray. Radar cried out and went running into the grass, rolling and rubbing wildly. I knelt down to try to get him to come to me, and he literally jumped into my arms, whimpering like a little pup.

"They were literally just dripping with that skunk oil," Debra has said, telling the story.

That's when the long ride home started. From the time she caught wind of us, Debra (six months pregnant) was sick; she was leaning out the driver's side window throwing up almost immediately.

Since it was obvious neither Radar nor myself would be permitted back into the truck cab for the ride home, we both got in the back, and Debra headed for home. We were quite the sight. I was throwing up. Debra was throwing up. Even Radar was throwing up.

Poor Debra had to stop about every 500 yards or so, open the door and throw up some more. It was a long ride home.

I guess it was temporary insanity brought on by the horrendous assault on my senses, but when we finally got home to our house in Goldthwaite, I brought Radar through the house into the back yard. This was, as my little Amber says nowadays, "not a good decision."

Radar went about rolling and rubbing his face and body against every available surface in our house, rendering it impassible to Debra, who was becoming more frantic every minute. I could hardly see, my eyes were burning badly and I was still dry heaving a bit. Debra was in the front yard, still getting sick herself, calling her parents on her cell phone to come help.

I tried every home remedy you could think of to get that smell off Radar and me — soap, baking soda, tomato sauce, ketchup. Let's just say I put everything in the kitchen on that dog. And nothing was helping. He just ended up smelling like a skunk that crawled out of a McDonald's dumpster.

In the meantime, my mother-in-law, Carol, showed up with several boxes of Massingill douche, which she'd heard would cut the smell. She unceremoniously tossed the boxes to me, saying,

"Here, Steve, use this ...," and as I wondered first, "Does she mean on me or the dog?" and secondly, "How do I use this?" I made my way back to Radar.

Debra was still in the front yard, heaving away, and her parents were in the house trying to make it habitable once again as I fumbled with "solutions" and "applicators" and other things, which before that day, were all pretty unfamiliar to a guy like me.

I finally got everything mixed together in a bucket and poured it on

Radar. I would never have thought it, but it did a much better job cutting the smell than anything I'd tried beforehand. It still wasn't enough, though.

Eventually I got in contact with a hunting buddy who advised me to use a mixture of peroxide, water, baking soda and dish soap, and I scrubbed Radar until he shined.

That was one task down, but the debacle was far from over. Just imagine ... I was still squeamish myself; I still had a sick, pregnant wife in the front yard; one in-law inside cleaning up after Radar, and another in-law asking me loud enough for neighbors to hear, "Did the douche work? Steve, did my douche work?"

I knew I still needed to get myself cleaned up before I'd be allowed in the house. I managed and was permitted to enter the house, but needless to say, I slept alone that night.

Debra went into the pharmacy about a month later. The pharmacist, Mike McMahan, asked her about the "funny skunk story," but she only got about two lines into the story when the memory of the incident made her sick all over again, she told me. She still doesn't really tell the story without getting a little queasy.

Two years later, I can finally tell the story and laugh. Believe me, no one who heard the story after it happened has let me forget it. I still get requests for "the skunk story," and I wonder if my friends and family will ever forget.

Still, a more pressing question remains.

Just what the heck is in Massingill douche anyway?

Sadly, Radar has now passed away. He gave me and my family 14 years of joy, comfort and sometimes frustration. He was truly one of the full members of my family. He will be missed.



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