

## Foraging For Food

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**By: Robin Pascoe**

Two expatriate wives were recently interviewed on CNN about their unique business venture. They had initiated a service for recently arrived women like themselves having trouble adjusting to the rigors of grocery shopping in a new international capital city.

Calling their enterprise “Hunt and Scavenge Inc.”, the women had attracted a high number of clients by offering personalized tours of grocery stores, hotel delicatessens, bakeries, and specialty food shops.

Their informative monthly newsletter – “Scroungers Anonymous” – was becoming de rigueur reading among foreigners. Even long-time residents who had never quite got the hang of distinguishing foreign-labelled salt from sugar, baking soda from powder and assorted other fundamental skills required inside an unfamiliar food shop were after their services.

The business was so successful they were receiving calls from other expat communities interested in franchise opportunities.

The following is a transcript of the CNN interview:

CNN: A non-expatriate might be wondering why you don't just drive up to the nearest grocery store, park your car, grab a cart, and shop. (The CNN camera cut to the two business partners – seasoned travelling wives of an undetermined age – and caught them giving each other a weary look which translated from expat body language said: How badly do we need this publicity?)

Hunt and Scavenge Partner #1: Well, Bobby... that is your name isn't it?... Let me ask you a question. Have you ever lived overseas before?

CNN: Actually no. Is it that different? I hear shopping can be great in places like Asia.

H and S: Yes, it can be. Of course, that's if you want silk underwear, leather purses or antique jars. But buying milk in some cities, just as one example, can be a hassle.

CNN: Why is that?

H and S: For starters, there is often no consistency in the delivery date of anything, and I'm not just talking milk here. There may be a reported mozzarella cheese sighting, for instance, and then just when you can sleep at night knowing you can feed your children the lasagna they have been craving, the cheese vanishes.

CNN: Why is that?

H and S: Hoarders may have got a hold of it. Or the shop may simply have got it in the first instance by accidently thinking it was hand soap and never ordered it again.

CNN: Why is that? I seem to be asking that a lot. What I mean is, surely you can just ask a clerk for assistance?

H and S: (stifling a cynical laugh) How many languages do you speak, Bobby?

CNN: Just English, I'm afraid.

H and S: So how do you suppose you would ask for assistance in a foreign country?

CNN: I assume everyone speaks English.

H and S Partner #2: Can I interrupt here?

CNN: I wish you would.

H and S: I'd like to tell you – and your viewers of course – exactly why we went into this business because I'm sure you would have got around to asking that question eventually.

CNN: (Checking her list of questions). Actually, no. But please proceed.

H and S: Well it's a wonderful story. My partner and I actually met in a grocery store. She was wandering around aimlessly looking for eggs (in the refrigerated section of all places) and I was having a nervous breakdown trying to figure out if I was buying flour or laundry detergent. We kind of eyed each other sympathetically but didn't speak to each other. It wasn't until we were standing outside the store and her driver was helping her with her bundles and I was trying to get a cab to stop for me before the meat I had bought defrosted in my hands, that she just turned and introduced herself to me. We started saying what a great idea it would be if someone – anyone – could help us through this grocery store nightmare when –

CNN: And the rest is history, as they say. Unfortunately our time is up. Maybe next time you can tell us how you picked your company's name

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