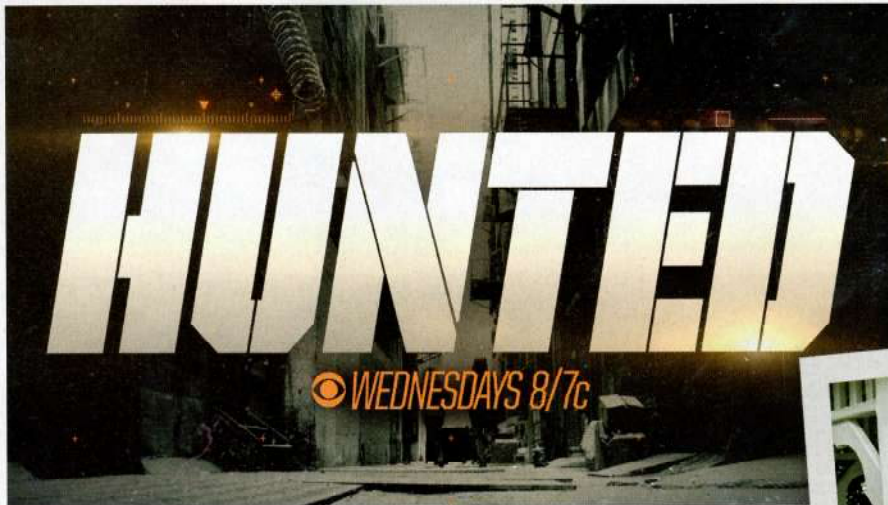
A long, dimly lit tunnel with a person walking away in the distance. The tunnel has a high, arched ceiling and a floor that appears to be made of stone or concrete. The lighting is warm and focused on the person in the distance, creating a sense of depth and mystery. The title 'ON THE RUN' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

ON THE RUN

If you were asked to disappear and go off-the-grid for 28 days, could you do it? It may be harder than you think. Just ask English and Stephen King, a married Hillsborough couple, who competed in – and won – the first season of CBS's reality TV show, *Hunted*. Described as a combination of the world's coolest game of hide and seek and a real glimpse into what happens when law enforcement agencies go after fugitives, the show awarded winning teams with a cool \$250,000.

By KRISTY STEVENSON



The Kings are not your typical Fugitives. English, a clinical audiologist for UNC Health Care, and her husband Stephen, a stay-at-home father to their three children (Emery, age 11; Ensley, age 7; and Ellery, age 4), were underestimated and not considered much of a threat by the Hunters. Lenny DePaul, the *Hunted* Command Center's head of operations, expected the couple to have limited skills, and that their biggest challenge would be themselves. Quoted as saying, "English and Stephen's chances of success are slim to none – and slim's out to lunch," he gave them a fugitive rating of 5/10 and estimated that they wouldn't last more than two weeks on the run.

Self-proclaimed junkies of another CBS hit, *The Amazing Race*, English and Stephen initially auditioned for that show. They were elated when a call came from the network in late 2015. But the discussion was for a show called *Hunted* that the Kings had never heard of. The casting department encouraged them to watch the UK version just to get a sense of what the show was about. They looked at each other and said, "I think we can do this."

Their families' immediate reaction, however, was laughter. Amber Davis

knew that a challenge like *Hunted* was far outside of her sister's comfort zone. She describes English as introverted, shy, directionally challenged, and someone who does not like talking to strangers. So to see her on TV going up to people she didn't know and, as English puts it, "hustling" them, was surprising.

"We laughed at her and said, 'Okay, good luck with that,'" says Amber. "We were the first doubters. But the more they talked about it, and the further they got along in the interview process, the more we realized: 'This is happening!' Despite English's shyness, she's also incredibly competitive. There is no friendly board game in our family. So we knew that once she and Stephen committed to the show, they were in it to win."

English admits to being stubborn, and when someone tells her that she can't do something, it fires her up to win just to prove them wrong. From a physical standpoint, the Kings are both runners and felt ready for the endurance the show would require.

"It was more about researching and going over the fine points," says English. "No one knows more of the details of the UK *Hunted* series than this girl." She took meticulous notes on



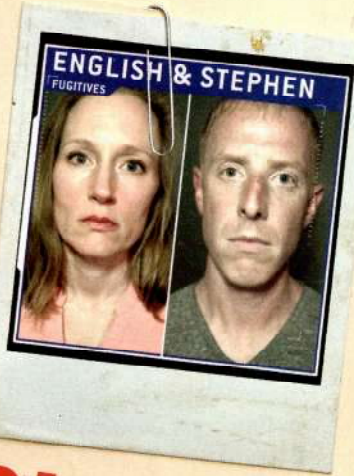
Steve Novitsky

what competitors did right, and what got them caught. And she read a book about how to disappear. The couple ran through various if-then scenarios in their heads in deciding how they would play the game and stay hidden for 28 days.

But when officials approached them far from home during a family vacation to Charleston and said those magic words, "You're on the run," the plan they thought they had in place quickly disappeared.

FROM FUN TO RUN

"We were on the way to get ice cream," says Stephen. "So the mood went from the excitement of going with our children to get something to eat, to stressing about going on the run, and our girls crying and upset that we were leaving so abruptly." They had envisioned where they might be, or



RULES OF THE HUNT

Hunted followed nine teams in a real-life manhunt as they attempted the nearly impossible task of disappearing in today's vast digital world. Highly skilled investigators combined state-of-the-art tracking methods with traditional tactics to pursue them. From searching targets' homes and scouring their internet and cell phone histories, to identifying behavioral patterns, Hunters in the field and command center investigators worked together to identify clues to potential fugitive hiding places and collaborators.

- Hunters were comprised of teams of law enforcement, military, and intelligence personnel.
- Fugitives were 2-person civilian teams, randomly notified that the game had begun.
- Once tagged as "on the run," fugitive teams were granted a 1-hour head start before the Hunters were alerted.
- Hunters then had access to their names, photos, and last known location.
- Fugitives were provided limited funds: \$500 on a debit card with a per day withdrawal limit.
- Fugitives were required to stay within a four-state, 100,000-square-mile hunt zone in the southeastern United States.
- Teams who evaded capture for 28 days won \$250K.

what they might be doing when they were approached. But being in a place that was unfamiliar to them, with no knowledge of the area, and not having any network of friends when they were launched into this game made it a big challenge from day one.

English immediately called her parents, who were vacationing with them, back from the grocery store to take charge of the children. The girls were understandably both frightened and worried. "They told us they were going to be gone, and that they would be okay and we would be okay," says eldest daughter Emery. "They kept reminding us that they loved us – that it

was going to be hard, but to remember that they'd be back."

"The girls knew Mommy and Daddy were going to be gone for 28 days – win or lose," says English. "We would not have done this, or even considered it, had we not had family and support at home, however. We're fortunate that most of our family lives here in the Triangle, and we knew the girls were left in good hands and would be well taken care of."

CAMERA SHY

Once alone in South Carolina, they had to be cognizant of their surroundings in trying to avoid cameras

**"English and
Stephen's chances
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— *Lenny DePaul*

HOW TO STAY UNDER THE RADAR

- **The first 48 hours** of a hunt are crucial; that's when a Fugitive is setting up their chessboard to make moves.
- **Just drop it all and go;** decouple from all associations, family and friends. Hunters look for patterns. You have to change your mindset and be someone different during this time.
- **Make peace with discomfort.** You won't be hiding out in a 5-star hotel.
- **Avoid use of all technical devices.** Burner phones are only beneficial if the receiver is also using one. Even the use of GPS devices can be intercepted and tracked.
- **Use technology to your advantage.** Those on the home front can disseminate false information requiring time and energy to filter. That temporarily takes the focus off of you.
- **Stay off-the-grid** – not only electronically, but simply by hiding out away from civilization and CCTV camera feeds.
- Save important emails to **Draft folders** as only Sent messages can be intercepted.
- **Send a decoy** to a leaked location, routing Hunters miles away from where you really are.
- If you must reach out for help, remember to do so with **someone you are not in close contact with**, and who is not active on your social media circles or address book.



in metropolitan areas. Their strategy became trying to stay off-the-grid, not use technology, and not make calls to people that the Hunters could ultimately track. Instead, targeting rural areas and utilizing people that had no connection to them is what they thought would win them the game.

As the Hunters predicted, the King's early anxiety levels were almost to the point where they didn't talk. Stephen struggled with not knowing what the girls were doing or if they were happy. English's plan had been lost, and the couple was expected to fall apart. But they turned those ex-

pectations to their advantage. Each day, the couple didn't know where they were going to land. And if they didn't know where they were going, where they were staying, or who they were using for help, how could the Hunters? It was freeing to walk down a random road just to see where it lead and be able to say they had absolutely no plans for weeks at a time.

"It gives you a whole new perspective and way to think about things when you come from a world that's about scheduling everything and what's on your calendar," says Stephen.

English had also left instructions



with her siblings who had access to the couple's social media accounts and email addresses. Amber and her brother, Preston Ivie, routinely emailed as English and Stephen and posted false information online to try and throw the Hunters off track. The family knew they would be found out, but the ruse may have bought the King's precious moments.

"We're a close knit family, and my sister is my best friend," says Amber. "To not know where your loved ones are for that period of time is difficult. I missed being able to pick up the phone and talk to her – just to hear her say, 'Hey, we're good and I'm okay.'"

English and Stephen spent a lot of time on foot and memorably braved June's oppressive heat and the pouring rains of Tropical Storm Colin, created an amazing diversion with the help of strangers, and dodged engine problems with the sea plane used in their final escape.

And then there was Meredith the snitch. As a distant professional colleague living in Charleston, English thought she would be perfect to call on for help – until Meredith sold them out for \$500. They phoned her and ended up leaving a voicemail message. So they moved on to Rebecca, a mutual friend and therefore easier for the Hunters to connect. As a realtor, Rebecca made an excellent contact working flexible hours and willing to answer a call from a foreign number.

"Meredith didn't have any knowledge of our run because she wasn't part of it," says English. "It's by sheer coincidence that she's friends with one of the people that Rebecca recruited to help in getting us a ride. Because she was friends in that network, Meredith knew that we had been in Charleston, who we got a ride with, who we ended up staying with, and the Hunters were able to extort that."

THE HOME STRETCH

Undeterred, they began using English's attention to detail to write everything down. "It eased the negative of not being able to use the plan and instead became a positive for us," says Stephen. When they needed to make contact with the next person, they used untraceable lines and took notes indicating which phone was used to call which person, and that phone would not be used again. "We were not going to backtrack, making it very difficult for the Hunters to connect the dots," adds English. "That became our strategy and our rule book."

The couple also meticulously noted every single name, address, and telephone number of those who gave them any degree of help so they could follow up with a thank you. They've kept in contact with each of them.

The King's motivation in competing was to show their girls that not everything or everyone in this world is bad; there are loving, kind, and generous people out there.

"We are truly humbled and grateful for the help we received while on the run – some who did not have a lot and most of whom were strangers," says Stephen. The rides, beds, meals, support, and encouragement did not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Both found that when they opened up, complete strangers became invested in them and wanted to see them win.

"Before this experience, I was worried about fixing dinner, packing lunches, giving the girls baths, and getting them to bed. Now I realize that it's okay to have a few min-

utes of let's just sit here on the couch and snuggle; I'll deal with the dishes and the laundry later," says Stephen.

"I don't have my work email on my phone anymore," English adds. "There's time for family, and I'm trying to have a better balance."

TIED FOR FIRST

The Kings were not the show's only victors in a nail-biting finish: friends Lee Wilson and Hilmar Skagfield also took home the grand prize for eluding the Hunters. So as not to potentially aid any future Fugitives (or actual persons running from the law), the show did not give away all secrets of the Hunter's trade craft or technical abilities. And with solid Nielsen ratings and a large fan base, Hunted is in good shape to be picked up for a sophomore stretch. Although the deadline for (a potential) season two was in early March, submissions from "outgoing, adventurous, competitive and humorous applicants" who would like to appear on the show will be taken year-round at huntedcasting.com. CBS All Access subscribers can stream season one at cbs.com/shows/hunted/video/ ■

