

Overt Infiltration (Solution)

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Start by assembling the provided strips. The page is incomplete, but clues including the different formatting, references to "last year", the North Pole, and the character Red should point you to the 2024 Advent Hunt. Indeed, on the [same date last year](#), there was another puzzle consisting of cut out strips of paper.

In the previous puzzle, part of the page was missing, and you had to infer what was missing. In this puzzle, we've given you that missing part of the page (different from what you might have inferred!). Assembling these strips combined with last year's puzzle creates the following, shown on the next page.



Elf Condo Covert Infiltration

Red claims he's already figured this out last year, but look again! You need some help with assembling critical pieces of clueful phrases before it's too late!



In this puzzle, we got a grid of 16 elf faces in windows of a condo overrun with penguins! Each one had a speech bubble giving us a clue. Using these clues, we had to figure out what to say to our friend, an elf.

- All 16 names appear in the clues, so we just need to phone Antarctica's representative to the United Nations.
- Some easy clues let us place 4 elves right away: Nathan's famous founder, Alice, Bob, and Terry.
- The elves wearing scarves are all characters from Sharknado. They remind us "Shark" and "Snack" have the same first and last letter. The one elf in row 2 wearing both things can only eat frog legs.
- Silas states that one row contains 4 elves whose names have "NN". N is a member of the hall of fame double letter. By looking at the full list of names, the only possible double letter is N because N is just that good. No N was placed in the previous step, so the remaining four must all be in that row.
- The film referenced by the "cinematic couples" statement is the Christmas movie *Love Actually*, which lets us place the latter in that row, and the former below her. (Confirmed by reading tea leaves. The lady whose name ends with Y must be orthogonally adjacent to another such elf)
- Then, the clue about names of British princes means that any grandmaster could tell what pieces must be diagonally adjacent, which locks in the row.
- We can put the elf whose name is a Greek god below Daphne. Wait, I just noticed Daphne's name also contains "PH".
- Iago must be a scarf-wearer diagonally adjacent to bottles of whiskey. There is one bottle that has a name with a bear, and one that shares the last name of a losing US presidential campaign manager. My favorite guacamole spot works with these constraints. Then Sandy goes in the last spot in row 4.
- And finally, I obviously know the location of my own apollo commander (He taught me how to use process of elimination)

That gives us the following layout:

 ALLISON	 ELLIE	 RANDY "DEEP" JOHNSON (21) <i>At last, we've infiltrated the North Pole.</i>	 EMYR "WINNIE'S HAIR" JONES PARRY (32)	 RAY "SMILING ELVES" ROBSON (11)
 NATHAN	 ROMEO	 EMILY "WRITTEN ON A SNOWFLAKE" (22)	 <i>Look at those bullet points of nonsense text!</i>	 IDA "DAYS OF CHRISTMAS" HANDWERKER (20)
 SILAS	 IAGO	 DAVID "THE LONELIEST" PLOUFFE (29)	 <i>They'll never find where we're hiding in there</i>	 NOVA "ROWS BY COLS" CLARKE & FIN (23)
 WINNIE	 SANDY	 HERMES "COUNT THE SCARVES" (8)	 RED	 GENE "ONE UNDER 13" CERNAN (15)

From the final layout, we can read that the ANSWER IS RED HERRING.

Guess you better
look elsewhere lol

Now we can solve the puzzle. The solve path is hinted by the penguins' speech bubbles as well as the flavor text: A clueful phrase for each penguin's name appears somewhere in the block of bullet pointed text, one penguin per bullet point. The enumeration of the phrase is given in parentheses, and the penguin's "nickname" clues another number to use as an index (sometimes referencing other data on the page). In bullet point order:

Penguin	Phrase	Index	Extract
Emyr Jones Parry	Representative to the United Nations	4	R
Ida Handwerker	Nathan's Famous founder	12	U
Nova Clarke & Fin	Characters from Sharknado	20	N
Randy Johnson	Member of the hall of fame	6	R
Emily	Lady whose name ends with Y	9	E
Ray Robson	Grandmaster	5	D
Hermes	Greek god	2	R
David Plouffe	US presidential campaign manager	1	U
Gene Cernan	Apollo commander	12	N

The answer is what you should say to our friend Red: **RUN RED RUN!**

Author Notes

Some of our testsolvers wondered whether this sequel puzzle was already envisioned when I wrote last year's Elf Condo Construction. The answer is no—this puzzle was only designed at this year's writers' retreat in July. We knew that we wanted some callback to Red in this year's hunt, and once this feeder answer was on the list, it felt like a natural place to do it.

Shoutouts to Sara Walker and Alex Walker for the callback idea, and Zach Barnett for some rubber-ducking on the mechanics.