RUNAROUND META (SOLUTION)

by Ong Kah Kien

After completing their secret agent training, solvers will need to use the 4 answers they learnt from the training camps to solve the runaround meta. Each of the answers thematically reference the last name of a fictional spy, as hinted in the flavortext by the "secret agent training" they had just received. Using the given pairs of indices to extract from the full names of the corresponding spy in camp order gives the answer to the runaround meta, that they have been trained to become – **ALL SPIES**.

The table below summarizes the camps, answers, the referenced spies and the extracted letters in camp order:

Camps	Answers	Spy references	Indices	Letters
Camp 1 Strategy	HIGH IQ	MAXWELL SMART	[10] [6]	**AL**
Camp 2 Prescience	COMMON TONGUE	JOHNNY ENGLISH	[10] [12]	**LS**
Camp 3 Sandwalk	ABILITIES	AUSTIN POWERS	[7] [5]	**PI**
Camp 4 Observation	COMMITMENT	JAMES BOND	[4] [5]	**ES**

Constructor's notes:

Like last year's runaround, we included a meta as solving it would be a nice satisfying conclusion to the in-person event. Hong Jhun first spotted the potential pun between SPICE and our narrative theme of SPIES, which could be used for the runaround meta. However, we struggled to find a viable adjective that could prefixed to both to create viable pun phrases that made sense in both these context. Finally I thought of ALLSPICE, which as a standalone thematic word, would be a workable pun with ALL SPIES. And this answer also inspired me to the idea for this meta, which is to use a list of names who are all spies. And incidentally, there were just nice 4 last names of very well-known fictional spies which could be reasonably referenced. And these reference words/phrases could also be thematic answers to the 4 camp tasks that we had already planned for solvers. The initial plan (for the lack of a better one) was to just employ a thematic shell meta to extracts from the answers, so this eventual pure meta idea is much better. While it was definitely very challenging for the solvers, who mostly needed some helpful prompting to get them into the typical meta solving approach, it was nonetheless useful (and relatively rare) for them to experience solving a pure meta, and the excitement of getting a not so trivia aha.