

**THE BLOG****Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt**

By Marty Kaplan

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With Drudge pointing out, in snarky brackets and scare quotes, that Shiloh means ['MESSIAH'], the message couldn't be clearer: Not only did Namibia put control of its borders and airspace into the hands of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie; the world's most beautiful couple's egomania apparently extends to the notion that their new baby girl will be the savior of the world.

At least the Hebrew meaning of 'Shiloh' doesn't have a disputed provenance, like the name of TomKat's daughter Suri, whose parents said it means 'Princess,' but which Israelis say actually means either 'Syrian,' or the usefully paparazzi-unfriendly 'Go Away.'

Shiloh's middle name, 'Nouvel,' means 'new' in French. Conceivably, this was meant by her parents as a gesture of humility, a way to avoid the impression that they're dissing that other Messiah. On the other hand, 'Nouvel' is an inconveniently masculine adjective; 'Nouvelle' would be the correct feminine form, and as long as we're carping, it should precede the noun, Shiloh, though in that case you could argue that 'Shiloh,' though its bearer is actually feminine, is itself a masculine noun, so Nouvel Shiloh might actually be kosher, though to go down this grammatical path is itself a kind of madness.

The couple could, of course, have named their baby Prince Michael III, Mother Theresa, or Cheez Whiz® — they'd still be able to ransom her first photo for a \$5 million charitable contribution. Besides, it's not only planetary superstars who have the inalienable right to coin names for their children; the popularity of Nevaeh, which now eclipses Sarah and Vanessa, attests to that. (For the uninitiated, it's 'heaven' spelled backwards. The name is especially popular among evangelical Christians and African Americans, and its first bearer is said to be the daughter of singer Sonny Sandoval of the Christian rock group P.O.D.; apparently its initial popularity was spread virally, on the Internet.)

As most humans discover in childhood, there are inevitably many cruel ways for their peers to mock their names. In Shiloh's case, Drudge may be accelerating the timeline, but the instinct is probably genetic; no doubt our ancestor Og was taunted as Ug by his cave-mate Oop, who in turn was then branded as Poop.

The urge to cut down to mortal size the child of people so rich, famous and physically perfect as Shiloh Nouvel's parents might ordinarily intensify this kind of playground humiliation. But it's conceivable that the same kind of bubble that protected Branjelina even before the birthing — the zone of sycophants, retainers, ten-percenters, groupies,

entourages, courtiers and sympathetic African nations — will now include their daughter. Just as George W. Bush has largely been successful in isolating himself from the rough-and-tumble of checks-and-balances, especially the press, so it is also possible for Shiloh Nouvel to grow up pretty much surrounded by the little Gannon/Guckerts of the world, rather than the little Helen Thomases.

Of course Mr. Pitt and Ms. Jolie have every right to name their daughter what they please, to protect her from the ravenous media beast, and to raise her as they choose, short of Britney-style negligence. It's worth wondering, though, what's lost when the ordinary give-and-take of youth is replaced by a fairyland of faux-royalty. It's also worth speculating what the consequences to history might have been if the Drudges of the world had aimed their arrows at the coddled dauphin now risen to the White House. Did you know that George means ['ANTI-CHRIST'] in Aramaic? Oh, wait, maybe that Damien. Never mind.

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