

What's In a Name (or Bye-Bye to Sitting Bull)

by [Samuel Hux](#) (April 2021)



There's no question mark in this title; it's a declarative statement, as in "What a name means or is meant to imply," or alternatively, should its title be *What's Not in a Name*, "How a name means or is meant to imply nothing at all and is an etymological mystery." Considering briefly, and personally, that alternative: my family name, *Hux*, is not a short form of *Huxley* or *Huxtable* or somesuch, but something both rather curious and common. The common first: imagine that some family bore the name *Master*—as so many names originally derived from profession or social condition, as others did from location (*Hill*) or physical characteristic (*Dark*) or patronymic (*Johnson*, "son of John" that is)—and with time the family members were called "the Masters" until the name became *Masters*. Something similar happened with the name which became *Hux*. Originally *Huch*, it became "the Huchs" and then *Huchs* until transformed through spelling alteration from *Huchs* to

Hux. Now, second, the curious. How in God's name did a German family before immigration have a name suggesting the interjection "Yikes" or "Oops"?

Samuel, on the other hand, has more dignified origins. Not that my Gentile parents, I am quite sure, knew that in Hebrew it meant "the name of God" or "God heard" or a rough Hebrew variant "God has spoken." The simple fact is that my maternal grandfather was *Samuel* Alexander Holland, a respectable if modest owner of a sizeable if modest farm, distinguished enough that "Holland's Road" was an official name on the local county map in North Carolina, which years ago I was stunned to find in a used-book store in Manhattan.

My point is that officially assigned names are seldom, approaching never, meant to be insulting, quite the opposite—the significance of which will become obvious soon enough in these speculations. Etymologically sophisticated parents who name their daughter *Delilah* do not mean to call her "Weak" but rather "Delicate." All Americans and Brits know a *Ken* whether or not they know that *Kenneth* means "Handsome." There are as many *Eds* as there are *Kens* whether or not we know *Edward* means "Guardian"—a properly masculine compliment. Back home down where I come from *Percy* strikes one as a "sissy" name, although it's short for *Percival*, a name which couldn't be more militarily aggressive since it means "one who pierces the valley"—so the association with "sissiness" is a result of cultural retardation. I repeat, then, we don't intentionally assign insulting names unless they're nicknames meant to be insulting, as when I habitually call certain politicians *Something I shouldn't say in public*. But try to imagine the following:

Suppose you were told that someone should not be called *Edward* because an appellation suggesting "Guardian" is insulting to all Edwards. You would rightly think that your leg was being pulled or that the leg-puller was stupid or you would simply be stunned into hopeless and silent confusion . . .

. unless, that is, you were a traditional American sports fan. The reader may grasp where I am heading . . . but I'm not quite there yet.

An old German-Jewish friend of mine, *Rainer* (suggesting a military leader), who luckily spent most of his youth in the U.K. thanks to the *Kindertransport* which saved some young Jews from the Nazis, remained a soccer fan all his life, occasionally breaking out into the cheer "Up Arsenal!"—and although a follower of the Arsenal Football Club of the Islington area of London he never called them "The Gunners" but always just *Arsenal*, just as Leeds is *Leeds* and seldom "The Peacocks." I spent a great deal of time in Spain and never heard Real Madrid referred to as "Los Blancos" but only as *Real Madrid*; the Barcelona team was occasionally called *Barca*, a short version the way Philadelphia is *Philly*. European sports don't seem as hung-up on nicknames as American sports are. It would never occur to me to say I'm a New York rather than a *Yankee* fan, and if that's in part because there are more than one New York baseball team, were I from Pittsburgh I might be a fan not of "Pittsburgh" but of the *Pirates*.

Some teams *sound* as if they were clothing advertisers: the Boston *Red Sox* and on the South side of Chicago the *White Sox*, reminding historically aware fans the city was once represented by the *White Stockings*—as the Cincinnati *Reds* were once the *Red Stockings*. That they're *the Reds* now only indicates the principle color of their uniforms, as was the case with the old St. Louis *Browns*. The name of the other *Browns* may seem to honor team colors but is actually a reminder of the self-advertisement of the monomaniacal original owner of the Cleveland football club. As a kid I followed the Class D *Greenies*, so named for the logical reason they played in Greenville—where I don't recall seeing many robins until the *Greenies* became for no good reason *The Robins* . . . and died within the year for poor attendance. Which

reminds me that other teams have avian names for no apparent reason other than people's love of birds. Is St. Louis known for cardinals as it is for the *Cardinals*? Is Baltimore a particularly notable home for orioles the way it is for the *Orioles*?

There's no reason to ask similar questions about certain land animals . . . and some avian. Eagles aren't generally loved, even in the "City of Brotherly Love," but respected for their talons: hence the Philadelphia *Eagles*. Hence Atlanta's *Falcons*. There may be no bears roaming the streets of Chicago or tigers frightening the Detroit population, but the Chicago *Bears* on the football field and the Detroit *Tigers* on the baseball diamond are appropriately named for the tone of aggressiveness (unlike Chicago's *Cubs*, which sounds too cuddly). The athletic teams of North Carolina State University, *The Wolfpack*, have a perfect name, since a team should be a co-operative group of aggressors. I hope there is no team called the *Pussycats*—but who knows what the future holds? I hope it doesn't hold a name change of San Francisco's Golden State *Warriors* to the *Pacifists*. By now at the probable latest the reader knows where I'm going—or have arrived at.

Native Americans have long been honored—yes, *honored!*—in Boston, Milwaukee, and Atlanta, where the *Braves* have resided; in Kansas City where the *Chiefs* play football; in Washington D.C. where the *Redskins* used to play same; and in Cleveland where base-ballers were long called the *Indians*—surely, surely, a superior name to one that preceded, the *Spiders*! Am I missing some teams? Visually physical names aside—*Brownies*, *Reds*, *Sox*, etc.—team nicknames are traditionally marks of admiration ninety-nine times out of a hundred. (That leaves room for *Spiders*.) Are bears being insulted in Chicago, tigers in Detroit, falcons in Atlanta? Of course not! Does any sane person think the Dallas *Cowboys* are an insult to cow-hands? Any *sane* person, I said. So why does

any sane person of normal intelligence or more think Native Americans were or are being insulted by athletics in Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Kansas City, Milwaukee, and Washington? To say nothing of Stanford University and Dartmouth College (neither of which have been *Indians* for years) where some level of intellect should have been expected.

The most famous of the famous recent name controversies involves the Washington *Redskins*—or the late *Redskins*, rather, temporarily known during the 2021 season as—how exciting—the *Footballers*. Demands that the team be renamed had simmered for years, heated by the claim that the name was offensive because racist. How, racist? Well, you see, it promotes the divisive misconception that Amerindians are red and therefore . . . Therefore what? All generalized racial/ethnic physical characterizations are caricatures. I am supposed to be white, but I'm actually a somewhat light beige. Most American Blacks are not really black, but brown or tan instead; our present vice president is so light she could be my sun-tanned sister, yet is famously "Our first Black V.P." Most American brown people (as in "black and brown voters") with names like *Rodriguez* and *Blanco* could be my cousins since they tend to be beige, although pronounced in Spanish "bay-hay."

So what is wrong with Native Americans being called red? So asks this paleface. My friend and hotelier Richard who is half Lakota Sioux (beige, by the way) is not the image the Washingtonians had in mind: rather the Indians before cultural and biological assimilation like Chief Sitting Bull, who—look him up and see—was clearly *reddish* and looked



nothing like me. The “idea”—to give it a name it doesn’t deserve—that *Redskin* is a racist term makes sense only if it’s racist to call a Black black. It is an embarrassing absurdity. Put it this way: any “white person” who thinks *Redskin* an insult must be assuming that it’s a racial insult not to call someone “white”: so who is the racist? I am well aware that some Native Americans are among the offended—not only among college students, who include the silliest people alive—but I refuse to scorn one minority for the foolishness of a few members. Full disclosure: as I write this I am wearing my *Redskin* jersey: I’ve been a fan since the ‘Skins drafted Charlie “Choo Choo” Justice from the Tarheels. Speaking of the Tarheels . . . no, later.

While the *Redskin* controversy is the most famous, it doesn’t stand alone. Kansas City’s *Chiefs* name is an anomaly, since the team after moving from Dallas (where they were the *Texans*) chose to honor the KC mayor whose nickname was “Chief” (should we shame his memory?). But no doubt we’ll hear more from the ready-to-be offended, since *Chief* does not evoke images of *Chef* or *Commander in Chief*. So far the Atlanta *Braves* have resisted the ridiculous, But who knows? After all, how can *Braves* survive if *Indians* itself cannot? What could possibly be wrong with *Indians*? Are fans (wrong word!) bothered by the inappropriate since not all or any of the players are Native American? Silly thought. Does anyone require that all forwards, centers, and guards on the Boston *Celtics* be Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish, Manx, or Breton?

For what reason should the Cleveland *Indians* have been forced or shamed into a name change? As I write there is no replacement yet—which says something about a phony urgency. One would think there would be some compelling competition before one turned the page. Note that I haven’t even said *good* reason.

Note that even when the Cleveland team was the *Spiders*

fans popularly called then *Indians*, legend has it because of the popularity of the tragic Penobscot Lou Sockalexis (“tragic” because he drank himself out of baseball). *Spiders* ended when the team became the *Naps* in honor of Hall-of-Famer-to-be player-manager Napoleon Lajoie. When Lajoie left for Philadelphia, the Cleveland fans voted for the name which became their tradition. I have never met a Cleveland fan who preferred anything to *Indians*. That’s not a survey, but a generalization approaching a certainty. But . . . the *fans* . . . who cares about *them*, about what *they* prefer? Who the hell are *they*?

But, again, how could the Cleveland *Indians* any more than the Atlanta *Braves* constitute an insult to or disrespect of Native Americans? Oh . . . is it that Indians are being disrespected by being associated with something as lowly as baseball or football? Come on, give me a break! After all, sports teams, like individual competitive athletes, like to win the game or event: no one says, “Let’s go mates, let’s play for a tie game!” Nor does any fan, any *aficionado* anywhere in the world, encourage them to do so. Tying is better than losing—and sometimes a tie is a moral victory for the underdog—but the psychology of the tie is usually “We’ll get them next time.” Baseball, basketball, whatever, is what football so obviously is: *War*. . . and not merely metaphorically so. So correct and appropriate that San Francisco’s hoopsters should be the *Warriors*!

Just as Chief Sitting Bull and his lieutenant, Crazy Horse, were: *Warriors*. You don’t want a team of *Pacifists* for the simple and obvious reason that then you don’t have a game! To call a team the *Braves* or *Indians* or *Redskins* or *Chiefs* is an act of respect both for the team and sport they represent and for their namesakes! Just as you respect the *Tigers* and tigers, without loving the latter . . . and love pussycats without “respecting” them. Is that the problem? Indians are being associated with animals? Give me another break! A human

being who cannot work a metaphor or limited simile is a very unintelligent sort of animal.

People who think Indians are being insulted by mental association with Warriors are foolish. But there are plenty of fools about—double fools, you might call them, for they think that what they think is wisdom. They cannot imagine that saying someone is (metaphor) or is like (simile) a warrior is a compliment. If confronted with the fact of the Michigan State University *Spartans* and encouraged to think, they would “think” not that Spartans are/were noted for bravery, but rather that whoever chose the name for Michigan State athletes had to be an admirer of undemocratic authoritarian states.

What I am arguing is that given the obvious fact that sports team nicknames are marks of admiration and respect and sometimes even love, the *supposedly* Indian-friendly complaints are actually in effect evidence of *distrust of the warrior*. Some heavy generalizing must follow, supported only by observation, not statistics.

I cannot say Americans, or most, or half, but only many, are hypocritical about the warrior, whom they think of *not* as a protector but as an aggressive sicko. This is not apparent in times of great crisis, as for instance on January 6, 2021, when a sigh of national relief by Independents, Democrats, and Republicans occurred when the National Guard arrived at the capitol. But the National Guard is not and is not generally considered to be a warrior force (except when mobilized during wartime), not professional soldiers but the guys next door with occasional training during the year for whatever reason moves them. I, glued to the TV, was certainly glad to see them arrive; but not many people, I don't think, were echoing my thoughts: “I wish the Pentagon would send in the Marines with orders to fire.”

There was a time when military service carried a certain celebrity or respect at least. Consider the following.

Since World War II there have been 14 U.S. presidents. Of the first seven of them, six were military veterans. Of the second seven of them, two were military veterans, one of the two having served in peacetime National Guard, two of the winners having handily defeated wounded war heroes, one of those two winners a well-documented draft dodger. Clearly, having served in the military, having been wounded in combat, and having even been a prisoner of war for several years, gives one no political advantage any more, not in more than 30 years, the U.S. being at war the last 20. To think this meaningless I would only have to stop thinking. Too anecdotal, this? So be it; observation invites anecdote.

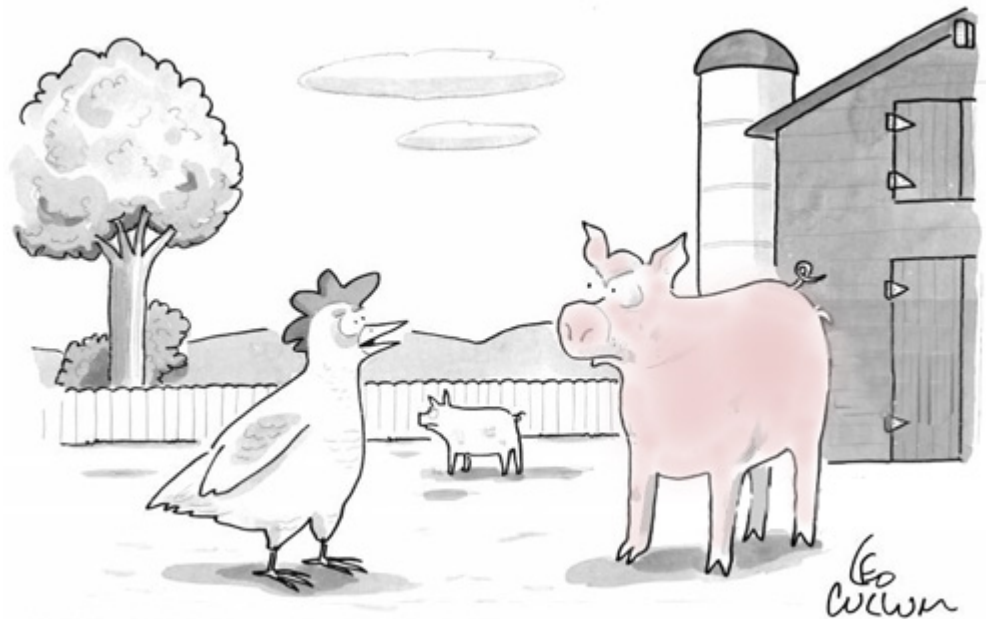
After one year of college including Air Force ROTC, during a time of national emergency, I volunteered for the U. S. Army at age 19, with the vague motivation "This is what a fellow ought to do." End of enlistment approaching, I briefly considered "re-upping" with the promise of helicopter training, but decided to return to higher education, assuming, perhaps mistakenly, that an eventual Professorship was superior to being a Warrant Officer. All during my academic career I would occasionally be asked incredulously—although obviously never by a fellow vet and less obviously never by a conservative—"You *joined* the army? My God, why?" For years, foolishly to avoid being thought a sucker, I'd lie "To get the GI Bill." "Oh. I see." Not incidentally, most of the period of my academic career coincided with the decline of ROTC, its absence from campus widely endorsed by faculty. I've been thinking about the warrior ethos ever since. ([See](#) for instance "Where Have You Gone, Vinegar Joe?: Thoughts on the Profession of Arms")

My service was never found bizarre by a conservative, I have said. There is no doubt in my mind that suspicion of the military as a warrior class is a habit of American liberalism. *As a warrior class I repeat.* The very way liberals show their "affection" for soldiers tells us as much. All

during our campaigns against the lethal varieties of Islam liberals have shown their affection by demanding/pleading that the *boys*—sometimes the *kids*—*be brought home out of harm's way*, in spite of the fact that in a very real sense “harm's way” is the natural location for the military. After all, to the liberal mentality Soldiers and Marines, Air-personnel and Sailors, are not the Profession of Arms but a kind of social-security organization for some and technical job training service for others. *Support our troops by bringing the boys home!*

My point—with some heavy generalizations: My experience tells me that people who devalue the military, the professional warrior class, share much with those people I have characterized as “the *supposedly* Indian-friendly.” In fact, I think, they are largely the same people. That is: (1) they are ideological liberals, or (2) those who without any deep ideological commitment still are pleased to profess a vaguely liberal view of things they don't think of as “liberalism” per se so much as obviously *moral* and that's that, and (3) they are educated professionals. It does not constitute a research survey, but for the last few months I've started conversations, as safely as possible during a pandemic, loaded conversations obviously, and while a *few* of the professionals do not object to “Redskins” and such, not a single, not one, *bartender, waiter, or clerk* (people from the social environment the military draws upon, that is) has been an objector. One of them, a native of D.C. by the way, suggested in disgust that the Washington *Footballers* re-christen themselves the *Pussies*.

So, according to my experience, which includes newspaper reading and television listening, those happy and fulfilled that the *Redskins* and *Indians* are the past are members of the



"HE CALLED YOU A NAME BUT AT LEAST IT WASN'T A BARNYARD EPITHET."

professional and chattering classes—even in the realm of sports journalists and broadcasters with intellectual pretensions, among whom you'll find the moralistically obnoxious Bob Costas prominent.

Something else obnoxious is the fact that the objectors, the *supposedly* Indian-friendly, are popularly accounted an arm of the civil rights revolution, hence so appealing to the liberal. But proper revolutionaries should be graced with relevant knowledge. And it isn't very knowing to assume that Native American civil rights are being protected by protesting that Indians are being insulted when their name is associated with warriors, by not knowing, that is, that this is like not naming a kid *Edward* because the name means "Guardian!" But since the protest is a part of the "revolution," not only Native Americans are being "protected," but other minorities as well. Hence sensitivities about associating African-Americans with certain birds.

That is, Chicago's professional hockey team, the *Black Hawks* or *Blackhawks* in different periods in its NHL history, has been met with the wrath of the "*supposedly* Afro-American-

Friendly" let us call them. First, I cannot imagine what is insulting of Black people by imagining black hawks, since (1) *Hawks* is one of those appropriate names like *Eagles* and *Falcons*, and (2) only an idiot or paranoid could think the suggestion is that black people are hawkish, whatever that could mean. But in any case, those offended are laboring under a deficiency of knowledge. The team was named in honor of the First World War 86th Division, known as the "Blackhawk Division" (here we go with warriors again!), and the 86th was itself nicknamed in honor of a Sauk chieftain in Illinois, "Black Hawk" (here we go with Indians again!).

Will these people never give up? What's next on their list? It's probably a lack of concern for theological-and-such considerations that keeps their eyes off the Wake Forest University *Demon Deacons* (What's demonic about a church official?!) and the Duke University *Blue Devils* (Blue's a pretty color but why prettify the satanic, and what's admirable about Satan in the first place?!). I hope I'm not giving these fools ideas, but this is fun. The University of Virginia *Cavaliers* (Is the slave-owning class being idolized?). The Washington and Lee *Generals* (But one was a Confederate general!). The Ole Miss *Rebels* (No, no, no!) The East Carolina *Pirates* (This is the celebration of sea gangsters!). The Florida State *Seminoles* (Why single out this tribe for disrespect?)

And what of my own alma mater, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill? Teams, and students as well, at Carolina (as we call it, ignoring that there's a South Carolina as well) are called *Tarheels* the way Indianans are called *Hoosiers* (a story in itself). No matter what scientific and historical explanation you might read, the following is what North Carolinians are brought up believing. The soil of at least the eastern half of the state contains a considerable tar-like ingredient. (My home town is cut in half by the Tar River, with the blackest water I've ever seen.) If you walked

about barefooted the bottoms of your feet would be discolored . . . or, rather, *colored*.

But now I'm going to get in the mood and spirit of the time and analyze the implication of Carolinians being *Tarheels*. If one's heels are to be blackened one needs to be white (or beige) in the first place. If one is black one's heels, being colored already, cannot be visibly darkened sufficiently, so no Black can be a Tarheel and therefore cannot be a real North Carolinian. So *Tarheel* in its way is as offensive as *Redskin*, and has to go. As for Native Americans being true Carolinians, I cannot say, never having examined an Indian foot. My half Lakota Sioux friend Richard (whose father is a *Redskin* loyalist, by the way), a proper hotelier, doesn't walk about the inn barefoot, and an examination of his heels would prove nothing anyway since he's beige like me.

I trust the paragraph above achieved the necessary level of stupidity.

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