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New Jersey family sought $20,000 to name baby girl

Tom Wright-Piersanti The Star-Ledger Religion News Service | Jan. 27, 2014
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It's cheaper than a Super Bowl ad and may have more impact: A New Jersey family tried to sell the right to name their baby.

The post on the Central Jersey Craigslist, which appeared Jan. 23, said a Jewish family had just given birth to their ninth daughter, and they were taking bids on the new name, starting at $20,000.

"This is an excellent opportunity for someone who did not have children, or someone looking to honor a relative, or even to honor someone who was killed in the Holocaust," read the ad, which has since been removed for violating the site's terms of service.

Though no personal details are given in the ad, the man who posted it reached out to Jewish news service JTA.org to verify that it was a real offer. He identified himself as a schoolteacher in Lakewood and sent the site a picture of a hospital band dated Jan. 22, 2014, according to the report.

On Monday, JTA reported that the family had chosen a name -- Rina, which is Hebrew for joy -- independent of the Craigslist add. The father told JTA that the family had received four offers.

The family was asking for a Jewish name and a secular name to put on the birth certificate, the ad said. They were hoping for something biblical, and would not accept wacky names -- for instance, the man said, they will not name the girl "Box."

The girl's father said they used family names for their eight daughters, but are now out of namesake relatives and saw the opportunity to make some money to help support their growing family (they also have one boy).

The winning bidder was to be invited to the girl's bat mitzvah, graduation, wedding and other major life ceremonies,

"Whoever would do this, we would consider them like family," the father told JTA.

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