



Source: Ian Fisher and Steven Erlanger, '[Israelis batter Gaza and seize Hamas officials](#)', *New York Times* in *International Herald Tribune* online, 29/06/06.

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Along with questions concerning the appropriate Riedel glass for Zinfandel, and whether or not to serve food needing forks if guests are not to be seated, the lexical challenges posed by gay couples continue to rattle the drink-trays of the civilized world.

A recent dinner party involving the Music faculty of a university that shall remain nameless provides a somewhat typical example.

The trigger for general uproar was, in fact, a pause.

'This is...Sam's...friend'.

If we rewind, however, we can hear that the professor actually pauses twice.

'This is [PAUSE] Sam's [PAUSE] friend'.

Given that the professor often had to be reminded which kind of zither he was lecturing on (they had blurred somewhat after 3 definitive monographs and 2 operations for cirrhosis of the liver), it seems obvious, in retrospect, that the main problem was, actually, he had forgotten the name.

The subtleties of this first pause were, however, lost amid cries of 'Godfrey!'

'Godfrey!'

'Godfrey!'

'Godfrey!'

The first 'Godfrey!'—wide-mouthed from an avant-garde flautist, keen to impress upon the company that she was more than her embouchure. 'Godfrey! Please! Partner!'

'Oh that's equally hideous!'—the second 'Godfrey!'—a reader in Romantic chromaticism. 'It makes it sound as though it's a business arrangement!'

'Sexual partner?', suggested an electronic composer who had neither noticed the pause nor called out 'Godfrey!'. As it was unclear, however, whether he was being ironic or simply pathologically obtuse, he was ignored. The ethnomusicologist, who had also been somewhere else during the previous discussion, took the opportunity to suggest there was a word in Navaho that captured the relationship. A respectful pause for the ancient wisdom of the first peoples was cut short by Haydn's biographer.

'What in the name of buggery is wrong with boyfriend?

You're boys and you're friends!'

'Oh, dear Lord!' Haydn and Romantic chromaticism had gone out for 3 months in 1971 and the whispered intimacies of their lost spring continued, a familiar strain in faculty meetings. 'Do they look like boys?', she dropped a snarling tritone.

'Then, defactos!' A wink and a perfect II-IV-V.

'God Almighty!'—she rose to a full 5 foot 2—'They're LOVERS!'

Naturally, Haydn swore; the flautist, wishing she'd thought of this, accidentally puckered; and Godfrey, in turn, thought of dessert. (The electronic composer and ethnomusicologist had long since stopped paying attention).

It was at this point that the third 'Godfrey!'—a tutor in popular music and fully in the groove of recent debates about 'Identity' and 'Performance'—flicked his rocker's fringe back over a receding hairline. 'What do you two guys call each other?'

We looked at each other.

Weirdly, the first thing I thought of was Silo and Roy, then that made me think of Siegfried and Roy, then Pierre et Gilles, and Deleuze and Guattari (though I don't know about Guattari), and the Guermantes' butler and the Baron de Charlus, and bloody evil little Bosie, and Dahoum dying, and Elagabalus and Hierocles, and the beautiful vein in his temple, and Joe Orton and Kenneth Halliwell, and Jeffrey Dahmer, and Leopold and Loeb, and Brandon and Phillip, and Elmer Fudd and Bugs, and Cary Grant and Randolph Scott, and Hoover and Clyde Tolson, and Maclean and Burgess, and his lips, and Pears and Britten and poor old Auden, and Divine and John Waters, and his strangled high little laugh, and the Baron de Charlus again, and Bert and Ernie, and Anaïs Nin and Gore Vidal.

'I call him Alcibiades'.

'And I call him an absolute wanker'.

Everybody laughed, of course, and Godfrey's wife brought out a Tiramisu, of course, and I bored everyone talking about Barber and Menotti, as my 'guy' got drunker and drunker.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Sam Williams.*