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THE RELIABLE SOURCE

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James Woods, Hollywood EOB

Contrary to popular opinion, not all Hollywood Democrats are outraged at President Clinton's impeachment. At least one believes it's long overdue.

Actor James Woods -- best known for his screen portrayals of lying, scheming, rotten and generally evil types -- thinks that the president deserved impeachment and, furthermore, that the Senate will end up removing Clinton from office.

Says Woods, 51, who litters his opinions with colorful but unprintable language, "He's a certified liar, a card-carrying liar, and lying is the cancer at the base of the spine of every crime ever committed."

The actor doesn't agree that the pursuit of Clinton is politically motivated, reports The Post's Sharon Waxman.

"Political?" he bellows into the phone. "It's absolutely political suicide." He means for Republicans. "I don't even like Republicans by and large, but if they're doing this, maybe they're doing it because they believe in it."

Woods is actually angrier at Clinton for giving China access to militarily sensitive technology, but says that the impeachment is like "getting Al Capone for income tax evasion."

Woods admits to being flawed himself. "When I lie, I'm wrong," he says. "I'm not a perfect person, but I have perfect ideals. This guy is a [expletive] sociopath. I'm ashamed to be a Democrat."

NOW YOU KNOW

What are some U.S. servicemen and women getting for Christmas? A visit from Secretary of Defense William Cohen and his wife, Janet. They are to leave this morning on a three-day visit with troops still on alert in the Persian Gulf. Going along to provide musical cheer are singers Mary Chapin Carpenter, David Ball and Carole King (perhaps she'll dedicate "I Feel the Earth Move" to Saddam Hussein).

Troops in Bosnia are getting something nearly as good: Chicago **pizzas**, frozen cheesecakes, candy, magazines and videos.

Now the woman behind "The Mind" (ne "The Body") is having a crisis of confidence.

"I'm worried about how I'll do a lot more than how he'll do," said Terry Ventura, wife of Minnesota Gov.-elect Jesse Ventura. "I'll be picking up the wrong fork. I'll be the one tripping down the stairs in her formal gown." She told "Dateline NBC" that, on first blush, she was dismayed at her rasslin' husband's election.

"When I saw the big check mark on the TV screen, at one point I went and sat in my mom's lap and cried. I was afraid that I just don't know how to do this. I don't know how -- what -- to be. My mom said, 'Just be

who you are.' "

Denny Hastert's Bipartisan Past

How many more shocks can we stand?!?

Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.), the latest House speaker-in-waiting, has been involved in a long-term relationship that will surprise Republicans and Democrats alike.

It turns out that he's good friends with Democratic political consultant Tony Podesta and Tony's kid brother John, who happens to be President Clinton's chief of staff. The elder Podesta even hosts an annual fundraiser for Hastert.

"Denny is a voluble, interesting human being who enjoys people, enjoys politics and enjoys food, which is also true of me," Tony Podesta told The Post's Lloyd Grove yesterday. "From the very beginning, we always enjoyed each other's company."

The elder Podesta and Hastert have been friends since they were active in campus politics in Illinois 33 years ago -- Tony with the College Democrats and Denny with the College Republicans. After Hastert came to Washington as a newly elected House member in 1987, Tony introduced him to John. A demon chef, the younger Podesta has since whipped up dinner for Hastert, and the two men got to know each other better last year when they were seatmates on Air Force One during a presidential trip to Latin America.

Could it be that after months of partisan acrimony, a new day is dawning? "I think that they have a relationship of mutual respect and mutual trust, along with political opposition," Tony said. "Having a history between them is certainly going to be helpful to both of them."

Possibly skittish over how this bombshell will be received, Hastert and John Podesta did not return our phone calls. James Woods, holding forth. So far, so good: Jesse Ventura, right, and his wife, Terry, meet Jay Leno in November. Hastert, top, and John Podesta: Pals, of all things.

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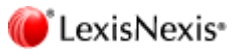
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