

The Miami Herald

Posted on Sat, Nov. 07, 2009

Suddenly, skies are cloudy for Charlie Crist

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The press release from the Florida Democratic Party called Thursday ``**Charlie Crist's** Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day."

The description also applied to Wednesday. And Tuesday. And Monday. And to the week before that. And to the entire month of October.

Let's be clear: The governor/would-be U.S. senator from Florida known for his groundbreaking fundraising is stuck in a record-shattering slump.

The only way things could get worse is if **Gennifer Flowers**, the Rev. **Jeremiah Wright** and the guy who videotaped former Virginia Sen. **George Allen** making an ethnic slur all showed up at his doorstep in Tallahassee.

It's hard to feel sorry for someone who has all of the powers of incumbency, a small fortune in campaign donations and a double-digit lead in the polls over his Senate rival, former House Speaker **Marco Rubio** of Miami. Especially when so many of Crist's problems are of his own making.

Like the other night on CNN, when he made the astounding claim that he didn't ``endorse" President **Barack Obama's** economic stimulus package. Or a couple of weeks ago when he told reporters that he didn't know Obama was visiting his own state. At this point, the only way for Crist to truly distance himself from the president would be to shout ``You lie!" at the next Rose Garden ceremony. Or to join the ``birther" movement and publicly question the president's American citizenship.

Crist will do almost anything to erase the endless television footage of him and the president touting the administration's stimulus plan while sharing a stage and a smile in Fort Myers.

Since then, the governor has endured an unbelievable string of setbacks. The straw polls he lost at about a dozen local Republican party meetings around the state. The slaps in the face from conservative interest groups like The Cato Institute, the Club for Growth and the Family Research Council. And this latest indignity: His mother's book club in St. Petersburg unanimously voted to read Rubio's *100 Innovative Ideas for Florida's Future* in the month of November.

To make matters worse, three of Crist's top campaign fundraisers -- Palm Beach County businessman **Harry Sargeant**, Hollywood eye doctor **Alan Mendelsohn** and most recently, Fort Lauderdale attorney **Scott Rothstein** -- have had embarrassing run-ins with the law in the past year. A politician used to be able to trust someone who could raise obscene

amounts of cash. The way Crist's luck is going, his accountant gave all of his campaign checks to Uncle Billy from *It's A Wonderful Life* for safekeeping.

Remember when Crist was like **Jerry Seinfeld's** happy-go-lucky television character, who cruises through life while his friends are constantly falling into misadventures? While Florida was bleeding jobs, leading the nation in foreclosures and racked by an insurance crisis, Crist's job approval ratings managed to stay buoyant. "You know, one of these days, something terrible is going to happen to you. It has to!" Elaine muttered to Jerry in one memorable episode. He replied: "No, I'll be fine."

Maybe Crist will be fine, too. He has nine months until the August primary to turn this thing around, an eternity in politics.

For now, the best strategy may be for him to contract flu-like symptoms and stay home. Crist could use a few days to sip chicken soup, sleep in and completely reinvent his public image and recent history.

Well, at least he has his hair.

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