



Mike Duffy: Allan Rock's cloud of bad luck



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Remember the Li'l Abner comic strip character Joe Btfsplk, the world's worst jinx? He could never get rid of the rain cloud that followed him everywhere.

Some people here in Ottawa believe that description fits Industry Minister and putative Liberal leadership candidate Allan Rock.

On the surface, Rock appears to have it all: Handsome, bilingual, an accomplished big-time lawyer who left the glitz of Toronto to come to Ottawa to make a difference in our public life!

How many leadership candidates can boast of having hung out in college with Beatle John Lennon?

But beneath the charisma, some Liberals say there is a man with the Midas touch, but in reverse. Too many of Rock's political projects have gone sour.

When he was minister of health, there was the fight over compensation for victims of tainted blood. Jean Chretien and Paul Martin were running the government, but it was Allan Rock who carried the can.

During the anthrax scare Rock tried to buy a generic form of CIPRO even though Bayer held the patent.

In the justice portfolio, he was singled out for having launched the Airbus investigation which ended with Brian Mulroney being paid \$2 million in legal fees.

And now he's taking a share of the blame for the massive overspending on gun registration.

Justice Minister Martin Cauchon and his predecessor Anne MacLellan, are only too happy with sit back and allow Rock to carry the can for this billion dollar boondoggle.

Rock's team is unfazed by this. Unlike some potential leadership candidates, Rock doesn't duck the tough issues. His fans believe his strong defence of liberal values will help him win the hearts of the party's left wing when he runs for the Liberal leadership.

That may well be. But history shows us Liberals put winning ahead of everything else. They want someone with a deft political touch. If Rock's political luck doesn't change soon, he may end up as the best leader the Liberals never had.

Tell me what you think. Does Allan Rock have the right stuff? Does he have what it takes to be the next Liberal leader? Write to me at duffy@ctv.ca

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