

# White House Memo Studied in Appeal

By  
Mike  
Causey



A White House memo describing A. Ernest Fitzgerald as deserving "low marks" in loyalty, and saying that he be allowed to "bleed" for awhile is being studied by the Civil Service Commission, which must decide whether to restore the controversial Air Force aide to his job.

Fitzgerald was fired several years ago after he told a Senate subcommittee about multimillion dollar cost overruns in the C5A aircraft contract.

Fitzgerald claims his firing was to punish him and to warn other potential whistle blowers not to talk out loud about stupid, or criminal financial blunders by the Pentagon.

The Air Force has insisted to the CSC that Fitzgerald was dismissed for economy reasons in what the government calls a reduction-in-force.

In his fight to win back his

high-paying civil service job, Fitzgerald forced CSC to grant him—and now other aggrieved employees—an open hearing on the matter.

Fitzgerald's case has divided the bureaucracy. Many see him as a classic example of the gutsy public servant at his best, willing to put his job on the line to tell the taxpayers what is wrong.

Others contend that while super bright in his work, Fitzgerald is a cantankerous troublemaker more interested in grabbing headlines than in solving problems "within the system."

The new wrinkle in the CSC case came when the Senate Watergate committee made public a White House memo dated Jan. 20, 1970. The memo was from the White House aide Alexander P. Butterfield (now administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration) to H. R. Halderman, then Mr. Nixon's chief of staff.

In the memo, Butterfield wrote of Fitzgerald:

"... Fitzgerald is no doubt a topnotch cost expert but he must be given very low marks in loyalty, and after all, loyalty is the name of the game." Butterfield presumably felt Fitzgerald had been disloyal

to the administration, or the Pentagon when he answered questions put to him by the Senate subcommittee.

His recommendation to Halderman was that: "We should let him bleed, for a while at least... Any rush to pick him (Fitzgerald) up and put him back on the federal payroll will be tantamount to an admission of earlier wrongdoing on our part."

Butterfield was in the headlines recently when he told the Senate Watergate committee that he had been in charge of the apparatus Mr. Nixon used to secretly tape private conversations in The Presidential Offices.

Fitzgerald's attorney asked that the Butterfield memo be admitted as evidence in the job appeal case, to support Fitzgerald's argument that his dismissal was punitive and not for economy reasons. Insiders say CSC is still a month away from a decision on the case.

**Pay Raises:** The Federal Pay Council meets today, hoping to agree on a proposal government and union members can make to the President for white-collar civil service and military pay raises.

A government staff report has recommended boosts of 4.7

per cent. Employee unions want 5.47 per cent effective Oct. 1, plus a one-shot cost of living payment of \$198. Mr. Nixon must submit an alternative plan to Congress by Sept. 1 if he intends to delay the raises, or shave the amount from that recommended by the council. That amount may be agreed upon today.

**Managing Work in America:** That's the theme of an all-day conference Sept. 25 sponsored by the National Civil Service League. Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) will keynote the seminar session at the Sheraton Silver Spring Hotel.

**Civil Service Commissioner** Ludwig J. Andolsek has been voted the distinguished alumni award this year by St. Cloud (Minn.) State College.

**National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees'** executive board wraps up a week-long meeting Saturday, with plans to push agencies to step up opportunity programs.

**Joyce J. Walker** has moved up to be chief of the budget preparation branch at the Office of Management and Budget. She succeeds Raymond J. Clark who has taken a job at Princeton.

**Vacation:** I'll be on a vacation for the next few days.