

# The Miles And Miles of Bigtime Scandal

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WHEN PENN CENTRAL collapsed with an awful roar of mismanagement and shady dealing in 1970, government and press investigators began picking through the conglomerate debris for something called corruption, one of which

### Too Much

IN 1968, A. Ernest Fitzgerald, an Air Force deputy for management systems (whatever that means), established himself as perhaps the most unusual Pentagon witness ever to appear before the Joint Economic Committee.

He told the whole truth: the C-5A Galaxy, the largest cargo plane in the world, was going to cost at least \$2 billion more than its manufacturer, Lockheed, and the Air Force pretended it would cost — making it the most scandalously mispriced piece of equipment for which the Pentagon had ever signed a contract.

Follow-up disclosures in Congress and the press indicated that there had been considerable collusion between the Air Force and Lockheed to hide just what a lousy plane and what a

lousy job of bookkeeping were being supported by the taxpayer.

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SOME of the evidence that floated to the top of the muck indicated that one reason the Pentagon covered up for Lockheed was to protect stock prices. An investigation by the Securities Exchange Commission showed that while the market was being protected with false information, some Lockheed officials sold their stock.

As for the quality of the C-5A, it wasn't the highest. One wing had a serious structural defect; and when, on the plane's maiden flight, one wheel fell off, an ABC network announcer gave a common appraisal: "There goes a plane no hijacker would want to take over."

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FEW DEFENSE scandals have equaled it. Miles of type have been consumed in the telling of it.

Fitzgerald, the truth-teller, got fired almost immediately and still is trying to be reinstated at the Pentagon. Lockheed, far from being punished for its farcical engineering and management, got a government-guaranteed loan of 250 million and preferential treatment that keeps it No. 1 among defense contractors.

Remember all the public outrage that resulted? You don't?