

Chopped Liver and Nixon Tapes

Washington

The playing of a White House tape as the highlight of a cocktail party brought a lawyer into federal court yesterday to admit "I made a foolish mistake."

Attorney William Dobrovir said he had dropped in for a drink at the home of a woman friend in Georgetown.

There were seven people seated in front of the fire eating salami and chopped liver, Dobrovir told the court, when he said "I have in my pocket the hottest news item in town."

Dobrovir said that after being asked by several people he played about five minutes, most of which was inaudible.

Dobrovir was summoned into court by U.S. District Judge William B. Jones after the judge heard news accounts of the playing of the tape turned over in connection with the milk fund case.

Dobrovir represents consumer advocate Ralph Nader and others in a civil suit filed against the secretary of agriculture that alleges

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ATTORNEY WILLIAM DOBROVIR
'I made a foolish mistake'

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milk price supports were raised in 1971 after dairy industry promises of campaign contributions to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

Jones said he thought it "only right and proper that the court should make some inquiry" of the tape playing. Dobrovir said the tape of a meeting involving the President, Agriculture Department officials, White House staff and dairy industry representatives was given to him with no conditions or request that any parts be kept secret.

At the White House, presidential counselor Melvin Laird said he was shocked about the tape being played at a cocktail party, adding that he found the incident "rather disgusting."

Laird said he has not talked to Mr. Nixon about the report but that if he were the President, "I

would be very careful" about providing other tapes. "If I were the President . . . I would maybe change my attitude a little," Laird said.

Senate Republican Leader Hugh Scott told newsmen he thought the District of Columbia Bar Association should "look into this matter of highly questionable ethics." Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield called the tape incident "most unfortunate."

Dobrovir said that he told a reporter last weekend that he had received the tape and on Monday received a number of calls asking when it would be released.

Dobrovir said he told newsmen they could not be made public until they were part of the court record.

With the help of a reporter from CBS news, Dobrovir said he copied the tape, making two cassette copies and put one in his coat pocket. En route home, Dobrovir said he dropped in at the party.

ABC reported the incident on its Tuesday night broadcast.

Associated Press