

High Court Agrees to Rule on Nixon Tapes

Washington

The Supreme Court agreed yesterday to decide whether Richard Nixon's privacy would be violated by public distribution of tapes used to convict his closest aides for their part in the Watergate coverup.

Nixon's lawyers have argued that placing the tapes in private hands "to be played at cocktail parties and in satiric productions" would be unfair and violate the former President's privacy.

But the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington has ruled that "the embarrassment Mr. Nixon anticipates is largely that which results whenever misconduct or questionable conduct is exposed."

Because the Supreme Court's argument season is drawing to a close for the current term, the case will not be heard until next fall or winter.

The Nixon tapes, texts of which already are available in bookstores, were sought by the three major broadcast networks, the Public Broadcasting Service, the Radio Television News Directors Association and Warner Communications, Inc., a record manufacturer.

While Nixon's objections are being considered, arrangements have been in progress for mass marketing of the recordings as soon as possible.

U.S. District Judge John Sirica, who held hearings on the issue, was told the National Archives could distribute the tapes to the public for \$3.75 to \$4 per one-hour cassette or \$5 to \$5.75 per one-hour tape reel, including packaging and mailing costs.

The material does not encompass all that was subpoenaed from the White House at the time of the coverup trial — only what was heard in the courtroom.

Former White House aides John Ehrlichman and H.R. Halde- man and former Attorney General John Mitchell have appeals pending before the high court. They were convicted of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and lying to a grand jury.

United Press