

SEChronicle DEC 16 1975

Court May Soon Change Miranda Rule

Washington

The Supreme Court accepted for review yestersay an appeal suggesting that the controversial "miranda rules" on police interrogation be scrapped in favor of a more relaxed standard.

The justices could use the case from Iowa as a vehicle for replacing the miranda standards, or could rule on narrower grounds that the defendant voluntarily waived his rights.

Iowa officials argued that federal courts erred in reversing the conviction of Robert Anthony Williams for the 1968 Christmas Eve sex slaying of a ten-year-old girl in Des Moines.

State attorney Gerald Richard C. Turner said Williams voluntarily led police to a culvert where the girl's body was found. Williams claimed that after he had said he would make no statement, he was coerced by questioning and police comments about the sorrow of the victim's parents.

The U.S. Court of Appeals in St. Louis ruled that Williams was entitled to a new trial on grounds the seemingly casual conversation about the crime was a "subtle form of interrogation" and that Williams did not voluntarily surrender his rights.

The Miranda rules, which require police to advise a suspect of his right to silence and the presence of a lawyer, were handed down by the Supreme Court in 1966. Only one justice who voted in favor of the opinion — William J. Brennan Jr. — is still on the court.

Last Tuesday, in another Miranda case, Brennan and Thurgood Marshall predicted the Supreme Court soon would abandon the Miranda standards entirely.

United Press