

Dr. Who and the electronic pirate

Dr. Who, the galaxy-roaming "Time Lord" of Channel 11-WTTW's series, came up against some real science a week ago Sunday night and lost. Somebody with a rare knack for electronics and a strange sense of humor took over WTTW's signal. For 88 seconds—it must have seemed much longer—fans of Dr. Who watched Max Headroom, the high-tech TV caricature, gabbling unintelligibly and being spanked on his bare behind with a fly swatter.

Earlier the same joker had interrupted WGN-Channel 9's highlights of the Bears game with the ghost of Max Headroom. Both stations and the Federal Com-

munications Commission are doing all they can to find this invader of the airwaves and correct him or her, not with a fly swatter.

The meeting of Dr. Who and the electronic pirate is a science-fiction fantasy in itself. To his dotting fans, Dr. Who seems like a real person; to just about everybody, the video invader seems fictional—a weirdo who uses amazing technological skill to perpetrate a silly stunt involving a parody of a parody, and now has technicians busily thinking up new ways to prevent such stunts. Scientific progress does seem to be more fun than it used to be.