

Channel 5 unamused by Max Headroom gag

BY GORDON WALKER
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An encore appearance of a video pirate parodying Max Headroom was only a joke by WMAQ-TV Channel 5 sportscaster Mark Giangreco, the station said Wednesday.

The Max Headroom clone had made uninvited appearances on two Chicago television stations Monday.

Then on Tuesday night, he appeared to make another appearance during a sports segment of Channel 5's news program. But it turned out to be a joke cooked up by Giangreco, who intercut news tape

from the pirate Headroom transmissions the previous night with his regular sports shorts.

About 40 viewers called the station, complaining of déjà vu.

"But most people realized it was a joke," said Channel 5 spokesman Nick Aronson.

However, station management was not amused. Giangreco, said Aronson, didn't consult with his bosses before playing the joke.

"I suspect we would have preferred at the end of it that he made it obvious it was a prank," Aronson said. "I suspect management would rather know about that before it happens."

Even so, no disciplinary action against Giangreco, who occasionally wears shorts while broadcasting his sports shorts, had been taken as of Wednesday, said Aronson.

A video pirate Monday night interrupted the signals of WGN-TV Channel 9 and WTTW-TV Channel 11 with transmissions of a character dressed up like the TV character Max Headroom. Law enforcement authorities are attempting to learn how the culprit got on the air.