

# Video Review

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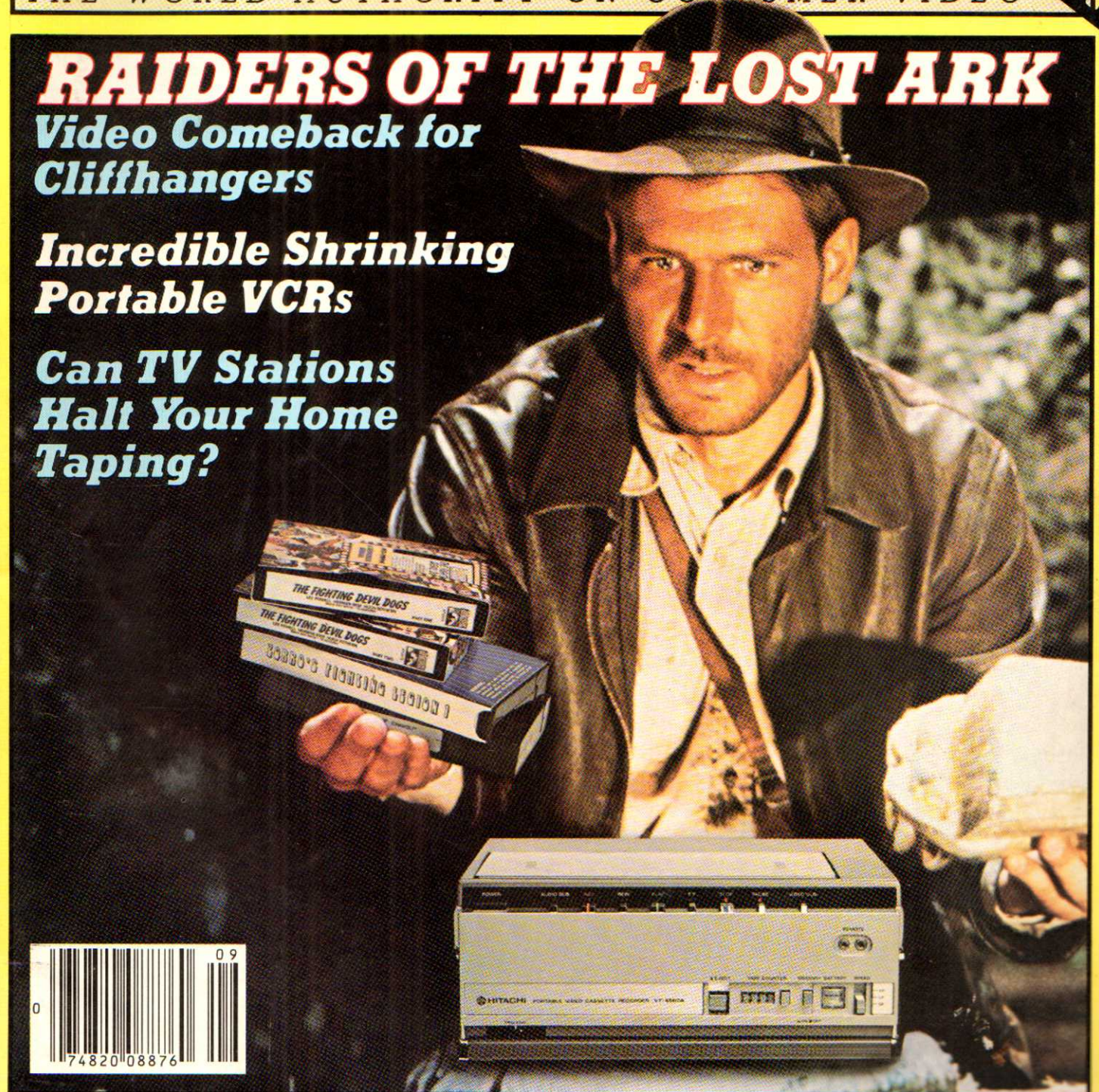
Exclusive Tests  
Of TV Antennas  
plus  
Tape & Disc  
Reviews

## RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

Video Comeback for  
Cliffhangers

Incredible Shrinking  
Portable VCRs

Can TV Stations  
Halt Your Home  
Taping?



SEPTEMBER 1981  
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# Video Review



## SPECIAL REPORT

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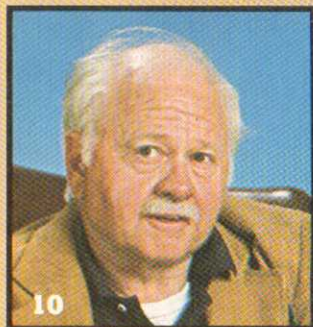
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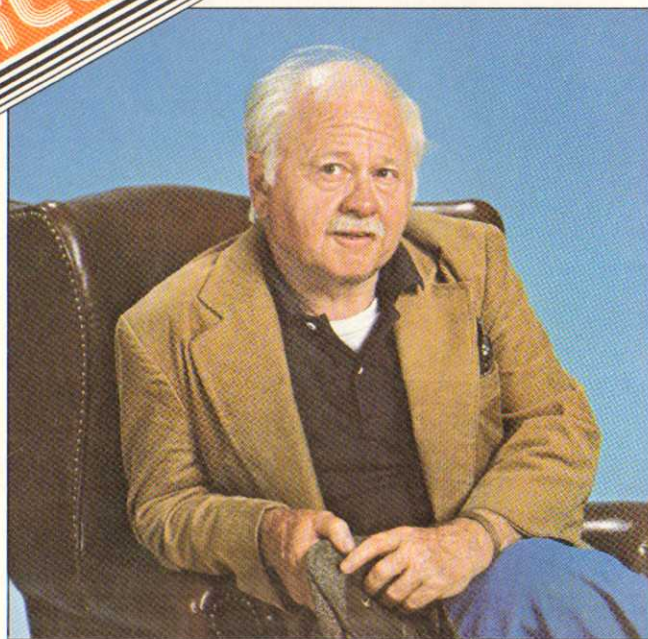
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# A lighthearted look at video people & events



## Andy Hardy vs. Hollywood

"I am sick and tired of switching on a television and watching one of my old films being used by TV to sell shoes, toothpaste, furniture and groceries." So spoke Mickey Rooney at a recent press conference, the occasion for announcing a Rooney-led class-action suit against eight Hollywood studios.

Under agreements worked out between the Screen Actors Guild and the movie companies in 1967, performers currently receive residuals for TV reruns of their movies made after February, 1960, but nothing for reruns of pictures made earlier. Even the residuals for those post-1960 movies aren't so hot, claims Rooney. Scandal in point: \$181 for a rerun of *Ambush Boy*.

Of his 200 motion pictures, Rooney says 150 were made before 1960. And a lot of other late-show

heroes are in the mix residual fix, too. Other plaintiffs in the suit, says Rooney, include Rock Hudson, Paul Newman, Glenn Ford, Lana Turner and Van Johnson.

No dollar figure was mentioned in the legal filing, but Rooney and company claim "hundreds of millions of dollars" are at stake. If the suit is successful, it could bring a windfall to the actors, and the networks may be forced to cut back on "milkman matinee" airings because of added costs. If that happens, VCR tapers would suffer significantly. Obviously, the case bears watching.

Incidentally, President Reagan was not asked to join the suit "out of respect for his high office." □

## Piggy Bank Invaders

Last spring some parents in Irvington, New York, raised a stink over how much time and money their children were spending on

video arcade games. The complaints centered on three machines in This 'n' That, a deli across the street from the town's junior high. During the school week, said the parents, a lot of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders were spending their lunch money on Space Invaders instead of pastrami.

The wild PTA meetings caught the attention of the media. Mayor Reginald F. Marra appeared on a few radio talk shows. *The New York Times* ran a feature piece. And "Freeze Frames" made a note to do a follow-up story.

"Are you talking about the video-game mess?" Norman Autero, This 'n' That deli counterman, asked us. "Sure I can fill you in. The town decided to cash in on the game craze. They're limiting the number of machines a store can have to three. Any kid can play. And they're going to impose a licensing fee on the stores—100 bucks per video game."

We quickly called the village clerk's office and asked in what direction the new-found video licensing

money will flow. Back into the school budget?

"Why, no," replied the clerk. "It'll go into the town's general fund." □

## Self-Serving Idea

Baseball notwithstanding, one of the great American pastimes is kicking trouble-



some vending machines with a little bit of *that*.

And now, thanks to Vertz Inc., video fans will soon get their shots at the beasts. The California-based merchandising company plans to offer a self-service tape dispenser to retailers around the country beginning next Christmas. You pay your money to a cashier, he presses an electronic button and ping!—out drops a videocassette.



# Play TV: Cable for the fun and games of it



Phil Wiswell

Whether they already own video-game consoles or are thinking of buying them, a lot of people complain about the high cost of electronic games—particularly those games requiring not only a main

console but also game cartridges. However, there is a new alternative to buying an expensive library of cartridges, called Play Cable.

A joint venture between Play Cable, Inc. and Mattel Electronics, the innovative game plan is essentially a monthly premium service offering games to cable-TV subscribers for a fee. To subscribe to Play Cable there are four things to consider: (1) You must live in the right area of the country; (2) You need the Intellivision Master Component; (3) You must purchase an adaptor for the Intellivision; (4) You have to pay a \$10 to \$12 Play Cable fee per month. If you meet those requirements, you get a choice of 15 games that you can call up electronically and just like ordinary game cartridges.

## Playing Favorites

Play Cable may not make Intellivision Master Components much more popular, but obviously Intellivision owners will benefit most from the system. Yet even they must have access to the right cable systems, and although more than 17 million Americans now subscribe to cable TV (an increase of 50% since 1975),

a large part of the country is still without access to cable television.

"We have a monthly library of 15 different Intellivision programs," says Jim Wiesenberg, director of marketing for Play Cable. "Some of those change every month. But we usually have 10 or 11 continuing favorites—rotated as popularity dictates—to keep subscribers interested."

## How Cartridges Compare

The games on Play Cable are identical to those on the cartridges made by Mattel for the Intellivision. So far, Mattel has introduced 26 cartridges (including the seven new ones: "Adventure," "PBA Bowling,"

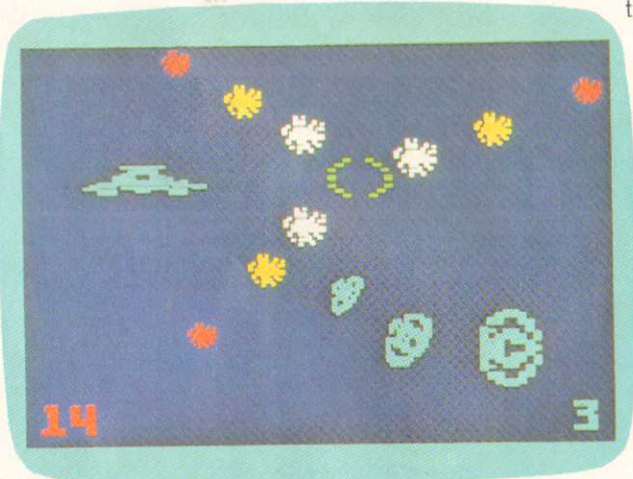
"Boxing," "Arcade," "Snafu," "Space Armada" and "Astrosmash"). Although Play Cable has not released the full list of 15 games it will offer this year, I imagine that the most popular Intellivision games, such as "Space Battle," "Baseball," "Football," "Basketball" and others are sure to make the list. In the future, all 26 of Mattel's games, as well as any developed later, will be available on Play Cable, according to Mattel.

So far, four "dry runs" have been held to test Play Cable with Mattel Intellivision fans in Jackson, MS, Moline, IL, Boise, ID and Santa Clara, CA reaching homes through major cable operators. The trials have all been successful, with very few cancellations reported. A "major push" in Play Cable availability will come this year and next. By then, says Jim Wiesenberg, "we hope it will be available through most major cable systems."

## Sampler

It sounds like a good deal—if you can get it. And Play Cable is probably the best product sampler available to video gamers. Obviously, many subscribers will probably want to own some of their favorite games in cartridge form. But to buy all 26 Mattel games available this year would cost nearly \$800!

That \$800 would allow you to subscribe to Play Cable for seven years, during which time each of the 27 cartridges would be available to you at some point. Don't forget that as Mattel dreams up new games, Play Cable will eventually pick them all up for subscribers to be able to play each one for less than a dollar a month. □



"Space Armada" and "Baseball":  
Every Mattel game coming on cable.

