

An excerpt from "Now There Are No Limits"

Then Quincy struck again. His mom bought him a Master System to compliment his NES, and he brought it over to the house one day, along with the handful of games he'd received with it. Finally, I was going to be able to see this thing in action. I examined it as he took it out of his travel bag and hooked it up to our TV. It looked nothing like the NES, with its red and black color scheme, elongated shape and—what's this? The Pause button is **on** the **console**? I looked at the controllers. Sure enough, no buttons beside buttons 1 and 2, which I guess corresponded to the NES controller's A and B buttons. So how would you start a game? Closer inspection revealed the word START printed above one of the buttons. Okay, I guess.

Then Quincy pulled the Light Phaser out of the bag, and my interest went up a notch. This light gun looked futuristic, all sleek lines and made of black plastic. It made Nintendo's Zapper look like a kid's toy. Quincy plugged in a controller and the Light Phaser, then turned the power on. I realized that he hadn't plugged a game in, and I panicked.

"You forgot to put a game in!" I shouted. Quincy just grinned.

Then the opening Sega Master System logo appeared on the screen, accompanied by a short fanfare. Then it was replaced with a game select screen. I was astonished. This thing had games **built into it**. One was called *Hang-On*; the other, *Safari Hunt*. Quincy started up *Hang-On*, and we were off.

Over the next couple hours, we went through his small selection of games. Among those was a game called *Alex Kidd in Miracle World*, which seemed to me to be Sega's answer to *Super Mario Bros.*, except with all sorts of additions, like vehicles that Alex could use. I was instantly hooked. Another was named *Kenseiden*, which immediately grabbed my attention. It was set in feudal Japan and starred a samurai warrior. The game's atmosphere was dark and foreboding. I watched, fascinated, as Quincy hacked his way through legions of ghosts, demons and skeletons. He didn't last very long, but I'd seen enough. It was at that point that I decided that someday I'd have to get a Master System of my own.

That Christmas season, all of us took a trip to Toys 'R Us. Quincy had received some money from a relative, and he wanted to buy a new Master System game. I paid a lot more attention to the Master System section this time, suggesting titles for him to get. Ultimately, he chose a game called *Zillion II: The Tri Formation*. With that decision made, we headed for the register. Quincy put his game up on the conveyor belt, and the cashier rang it up. She read off the price, and Quincy reached for his wallet. He pulled out the cash he had and handed it to the cashier.

"Sir, I'm afraid you're five dollars short," she said. Quincy did a double-take and checked his wallet. He had no more money.

"Do you have any cash?" he asked me. I shook my head. "Maybe we can go ask your mom," he continued. Before he could move, though, an arm came from behind us and deposited a five dollar bill in the cashier's hand. We both turned at the same time, completely surprised. Had Mom or Dad come to find us and seen what was wrong? That was the only explanation I could come up with.

Behind us was an elderly couple we'd never seen before. They smiled at us. The man turned to Quincy.

"Merry Christmas," he said as his wife beamed. "Enjoy your toy."

"Thank you so much!" Quincy practically shouted as the cashier bagged his game and handed him the receipt. I was amazed.

"Thank you! Merry Christmas!" I added as we began to walk away. They waved goodbye as we headed out the doors.



Zillion II: The Tri Formation (Sega Master System, 1987)

I would continue to play Quincy's Master System over the next year, alternating between it and the NES whenever Ryan and I would go over to his house. I played a lot of *Zillion II*, *Kenseiden*, *Alex Kidd* and a game called *Wonder Boy*, which, besides the games built into the console, were the only games he had. He couldn't even rent games for the Master System like he could the NES, because no video stores carried it. Because of this, he ended up having a much larger library of NES games than Master System games.

Written by Rob Strangman. This excerpt from the book *Memoirs of a Virtual Caveman: The Final Edition* is © 2024 SCAR Productions. Please do not distribute without the author's permission. Direct all inquiries to Rob Strangman at [gradiusone \[at\] yahoo \[dot\] com](mailto:gradiusone@yahoo.com).