

# New Documentary on a Little-known Video Game Success Story Behind the Iron Curtain

*The untold story of the Hungarian games software outfit that dodged the limelight and led the world. Outfoxed Nintendo, surprised Commodore engineers and more.*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- A new documentary titled Moleman 4 – Longplay recounts a little-known success story in the history of video game development.

In 1983 video game development began in Hungary on an industrial scale still under the Soviet influence. While in the Western nations at that time we can only speak of handfuls of bedroom developers in Hungary on behalf of Novotrade already more than 150 people were developing games for Commodore 64, ZX Spectrum and other types of computers. Due to the Iron Curtain the computers used for developing several times had to be smuggled in through the borders. Despite the difficulties posed by the circumstances as early as 1983 the Hungarian developers evinced such a high level of technical brilliance that even Jack Tramiel, the legendary leader of Commodore, decided to pay a visit to Hungary to meet with them.



As far back as 1984 the British newspaper The Times reported that "Western computer stores are clearing room on their shelves for Hungarian products..." Hungarian developers released such world-famous games as the 'Scarabeus' ('Invaders of the Lost Tomb') for instance which probably was the very first 3D image-tear free, first person labyrinth game to appear on C64. Or there was the 'Impossible Mission II'.

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I was touched by it.  
It was fascinating and it lifted my spirits.”  
*Louis Castle, co-founder of Westwood Studios*

And as it turns out the Hungarians are to be thanked for the creation of the 'The Last Ninja' too. Eidos' later president, Ian Livingstone, too, started to develop his first video game with the help of Hungarians. What's more, it's quite possible that the first video game developed in Europe and released in Japan as well was the Hungarian 'Traffic' which Sony released for MSX in 1986.

Hungarians developed games for Nintendo's console as well with no official development kit at their disposal that no one in the world, let alone Nintendo, could comprehend how they actually managed to pull off. The Hungarian games were released by companies such as Activision, Epyx, Commodore, Konami, Virgin, Sony, etc.

The link between the international publishers and the Hungarian video game company Novotrade was Robert Stein of the Andromeda Software who fled to England from Hungary in '56. Incidentally, it is

thanks to Robert Stein that Tetris got introduced to the West. He talks about this in this video:

<https://vimeo.com/227896090>

According to SEGA in the middle of the 90s Novotrade running under the new name of Appaloosa Interactive became the biggest independent studio for game development at the time. During these years Hungarian developers have produced such world-famous games as 'Ecco the Dolphin', 'Adventures of Batman & Robin', 'Star Trek: Deep Space Nine - Crossroads of Time', 'Contra: Legacy of War,' 'Lost World: Jurassic Park', etc.

The film has been shown to renowned video game developers (like Ian Livingstone, Louis Castle, Chris Taylor, etc.) who were quite impressed by it and readily shared their thoughts about it which you can watch recapped in a video here: <https://vimeo.com/227404196>

If you would like to find out how a video game developing company of worldwide success could come into being at the beginning of the 80s behind the Iron Curtain and what may have been the secret behind the success watch the documentary Moleman 4—Longplay.

The Deluxe Edition of the film with lots of video extras is available now on Vimeo and Steam.

Vimeo on Demand: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/moleman4/>

Steam: [http://store.steampowered.com/app/720590/Moleman\\_4\\_Longplay\\_Deluxe\\_Edition/](http://store.steampowered.com/app/720590/Moleman_4_Longplay_Deluxe_Edition/)

Educational edition and the film's website: <https://moleman4.com/>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/227403435>

Behind the Scenes video: <https://vimeo.com/227408408>

Intro animation: <https://vimeo.com/227405511>

Anyone who registers for free with their email address on moleman4.com and become a Moleman Fellow can win special gifts signed by such big names as Ian Livingstone as well as gain the opportunity to appear in the next Moleman episode itself.

Details: <https://moleman4.com/fellowship/>

## Short Synopsis

It is the year 2546. An agent is on a secret mission to explore the untold stories of the past. He discovers a strange but exciting world, where computers were smuggled through the Iron Curtain and serious engineers started developing video games. Hungary was still under Soviet pressure when a group of people managed to set up one of the first video game development studios in the world, and western computer stores started clearing room on their shelves for Hungarian products. Follow the agent and discover the untold stories behind games like The Last Ninja, Eureka!, Impossible Mission II, Scarabaeus, Ecco the Dolphin, Imperium Galactica and more.



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