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Johann Ingersoll is established as prewar Germany's greatest actor--a master of disguise. In fact, no one, save for his closest intimates, has seen him without his elaborate makeup. In addition to his skill as an actor, Ingersoll is also a dedicated and enthusiastic member of the National Socialist Party--a man who burns with ambition to satisfy Adolf Hitler's every whim. In consequence, he is quick to volunteer when Hitler asks him to enter the United States in secret and await further orders. Ingersoll is told that when the time comes, he will implement a plan which will prevent the United States from entering any future war against Germany.

Francis Scott Keegan, playboy and onetime bootlegger, is dedicated to the single-minded pursuit of his hard-won pleasures. Friends tell him that the Nazis are evil incarnate, they demonstrate that Hitler is intent on war, but Keegan is determined to remain uninvolved. Having survived the carnage of the last war, he refuses to believe that the world could be so stupid again so soon. Then he meets Jenny Gould, a German nightclub singer, and falls desperately and totally in love. Their plans to marry are interrupted when Jenny is arrested and sent to a German concentration camp (she is implicated with a Jewish group engaged in opposing the Nazi regime). Jenny's death changes Keegan's attitude toward Nazi Germany, but so long as his country is neutral his hands are tied. Then he learns of Johann Ingersoll and his ominous mission. As a result, Keegan, under direct orders from the president, searches the country for a man whose very face is a mystery. Meanwhile, Ingersoll is moving to implement Hitler's plan.

William Diehl has issued a book every two years since his first blockbuster, SHARKY'S MACHINE. Although each novel has been within the thriller genre, the locale, the subject, and the issues involved have varied widely. In each and every case, however, the protagonists have been finely drawn and thoroughly believable, the situations taken from the pages of daily papers or, as in this case, the pages of history. Those who like their action fast and furious, with carefully developed plots and settings, will find that Diehl's new novel measures up to his own high standard.

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