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A  
H I D D E N   L I F E

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WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
TERRENCE MALICK



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# A H I D D E N L I F E

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WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
**TERRENCE MALICK**

PRODUCED BY  
**GRANT HILL, P.G.A.**  
**DARIO BERGESIO**  
**JOSH JETER**  
**ELISABETH BENTLEY**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS  
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**ADAM MORGAN**

STARRING  
**AUGUST DIEHL**  
**VALERIE PACHNER**  
**MARIA SIMON**  
**TOBIAS MORETTI**  
**BRUNO GANZ**  
**MATTHIAS SCHOENAERTS**  
**KARIN NEUHÄUSER**  
**ULRICH MATTHES**

Based on real events, A HIDDEN LIFE is the story of an unsung hero, Franz Jägerstätter, who refused to fight for the Nazis in World War II. When the Austrian peasant farmer is faced with the threat of execution for treason, it is his unwavering faith and his love for his wife Fani and children that keeps his spirit alive.

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“... for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.”—**George Eliot**

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

*A Hidden Life* follows the real-life story of Austrian peasant farmer Franz Jägerstätter (August Diehl) who refuses to fight for the Nazis in World War II.

Born and bred in the small village of St. Radegund, Jägerstätter is working his land when war breaks out. Married to Franziska (Fani) (Valerie Pachner), the couple are important members of the tight-knit rural community. They live a simple life with the passing years marked by the arrival of the couple's three girls.

Franz is called up to basic training and is away from his beloved wife and children for months. Eventually, when France surrenders and it seems the war might end soon, he is sent back from training. With his mother and sister-in-law Resi, he and his wife farm the land and raise their children amid the mountains and valleys of upper Austria.

As the war goes on, Jägerstätter and the other able-bodied men in the village are called up to fight. Their first requirement is to swear an oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler and the 3rd Reich. Despite the pleas of his neighbors, Jägerstätter refuses. Wrestling with the knowledge that his decision will mean arrest and even death, Jägerstätter finds strength in Fani's love and support. Jägerstätter is taken to prison, first in Enns, then in Berlin and waits months for his trial.

During his time in prison, he and Fani write letters to one another and give each other strength. Fani and their daughters are victims of growing hostility in the village over her husband's decision not to fight. After months of brutal incarceration, his case goes to trial. He is found guilty and sentenced to death.

Despite many opportunities to sign the oath of allegiance, Jägerstätter continues to stand up for his beliefs and is executed by the Third Reich in August 1943, while his wife and three daughters survive.

## ORIGINS

*A Hidden Life* is based on the life of Franz Jägerstätter, an Austrian farmer who refused to take the oath of allegiance to Hitler. In August 1943, he was executed for his defiance in a garage at Berlin's Brandenburg Prison.

The picture draws on his exchange of letters with his wife Franziska, or Fani, edited by Erna Putz and published in English by Orbis Books.

The story was little known outside St. Radegund, and might never have been discovered, were it not for the research of Gordon Zahn, an American, who visited the village in the 1970s.

The title card at the end of the picture comes from the final sentence of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*.

## LOCATIONS

The Jägerstätters lived in St. Radegund, a small village of 500 people in Upper Austria, near Salzburg and the German border—in the same province where Hitler was born and spent his early youth—not far from Berchtesgaden, his mountain retreat during his years as head of the German state.

Shot in eight weeks in July and August of 2016, the production spent 24 days in South Tyrol, the northernmost province of Italy, then moved into Austria itself, shooting for a few days in St. Radegund itself. For the prison scenes, the production spent the last 14 days in Zittau (7) and Berlin (7), Germany.

Supervising art director Steve Summersgill says the locations were carefully selected for their texture, authenticity and visual scope.

“Most importantly we learned that the natural light levels were very much part of the decision-making process as to whether or not a certain location may or may not work,” Summersgill says.

The film shot in churches and cathedrals, farms with real live stock, orchards, up mountains, in fields and along rural pathways. “Nature and the natural environment were part of the subtext and the locations provided us with a foundation to build up from,” says Summersgill.

Production designer Sebastian Krawinkel carried out research on Franz Jägerstätter and the important places in his life, consulting letters and archive materials.

“We scouted some of the locations together a year in advance in order to see them in the right season,” says Krawinkel. “For almost a year I had a weekly dialogue with Terry about which sets he would need and which locations and references he liked.”

The production prepped in spring and shot in the summer. Two seasons were captured with a small splinter unit that came back to the locations later in the year, led by cinematographer and long-time Malick crew member Joerg Widmer.

The historic background of the story required the production to avoid modern buildings and signs of contemporary civilisation.

“We were fortunate to be able to shoot inside a working mill, a working blacksmith’s shop and several real prisons,” notes Krawinkel.

One of the prisons used was Hoheneck, the notorious Stasi prison near Dresden, notorious for its inhumane conditions.

Another shot shows the exterior of Tegel prison as it stood in the Jägerstätter’s day. It is still a working prison, so the production was obliged to shoot the Tegel interiors elsewhere.

A few scenes were shot in the St. Radegund locations where the events depicted actually took place—including certain interiors of the Jägerstätter house, which has over the years become a pilgrimage site, as well as by the Salzach river near St. Radegund and in the woods below the house.

The clock visible on the wall of the Jägerstätter living room is the one that Fani was listening to when, at 4 in the afternoon on August 9, 1943, at the very hour of Franz’s execution, she remembered feeling her husband’s presence.

The bedroom is theirs and looks as it did then. Her embroidery still hangs on the walls. Franz and Fani’s three daughters—Maria, Rosalia and Aloisa—live in, or near, St. Radegund. Fani passed away in 2013, aged 100.

Valerie Pachner, the actress who plays Fani, grew up in the same province 40 miles away.

A few scenes were set at the farmhouse of a Jägerstätter friend and neighbor, Eckinger.

Today, the fields around St. Radegund are covered in corn, a crop that was not grown at the time, as well as with power lines and modern houses, some immediately adjacent to the Jägerstätter’s own. As a result, the production was obliged to go higher up into the mountains than where the village itself lies.

The production also filmed the 3rd Reich Berlin court trial scene in Schoenberg in the infamous Kammergericht building. “It was scary to be inside the real courtroom where the Nazis sentenced so many to death,” Krawinkel notes.

When, the following year, Lueben, the principal judge in Franz’s case (played by Bruno Ganz), was asked to condemn three priests from Stettin as he had Franz, he chose instead to commit suicide.

## **LIGHT AND DARK**

The team had to be small, agile and flexible. “Changing lighting conditions required a continuous attention for stop changes to ensure proper exposure,” explains cinematographer Widmer.

Widmer agreed with Malick to use artificial lights only on rare occasions.

For all the other sets, including the prison cells, the team simply used the right time of the day to shoot it until they lost the light.

“The barns were always shot when the openings of the buildings provided sunlight or at least brightness,” says Widmer.

The team only had to change the shooting schedule once: When the weather forecasters said it wasn’t going to be sunny on the day they planned to shoot the interior of the water mill.

“Terry’s dogma was ‘the sun is our gaffer’. Morning shoot towards East, afternoon shoot towards the west. Never look north,” says Krawinkel.

The production was shot digitally on the Red Epic Dragon camera system. The camera was selected for its ability to handle stark contrast within a scene, preserving details in both the highlights and shadows of the image, while still maintaining realistic color.

“We were prepared to keep the camera gear small,” says Widmer. “The lighting gear consisted mostly of bounce boards and blacks.”

## **BEASTS OF BURDEN**

The Jägerstätter’s house sets at the Nauders Bauer location included several of the farm animals in the film.

“We brought goats and pigs and chickens, a cow and donkeys well in advance in order to accustom them to the surroundings and to us,” says Krawinkel.

Working the fields also provided fun on the shoot, aside from one stubborn cow. “Ploughing with a cow was a particular challenge since one cow turned out to be very stubborn and the trained cow we had did not always want to do exactly what we asked her,” Krawinkel says.

## **CASTING CALLS**

August Diehl who plays plays Franz Jägerstätter, says “I remember the first time I read the script I had a lot of talks with Terrence. Terrence was curious about me and who he was going to work with. I remember talking about life and how we see things,” says Diehl. “I grew up in France on a farm without electricity. He was curious about all this, about how I live and what my experiences were.”

Diehl says he treated the letters between the husband and wife almost like another script alongside Malick’s.

Valerie Pachner, who stars opposite Diehl as Fani, Jägerstätter's wife, first spoke to Malick on the telephone.

"When he called me the first time we didn't do any small talk. We immediately talked about the world and life and in that moment, I just felt 'wow, that's where I want to go, this is someone I want to work with.'"

Pachner, who grew up in Austria, felt close to the story. "People relied on each other, and that also meant that you could not break out and be different. You had to toe the line."

Malick sent her a book about women in the first World War working on the farms when the men were away fighting. She also got a present from a friend: A book about scything.

Diehl describes working with Pachner as very special.

"We were actually both very much devoting ourselves to the roles because it has so much to do with trust," he says. "You have to trust somebody very much to make this film and we risked a lot. And with Valerie I felt—from the first moment—that she was willing to do the same, to take the same risks."

For her part, Pachner describes working with Diehl as intense. "The first five or six weeks we were constantly together and constantly working," she says.

## **COSTUME DECISIONS**

In addition to his work as a farmer, Franz Jägerstätter served as a sexton at the local church. He cleaned, rang the bell, and prepared weddings and funerals—without compensation and in addition to his duties as a farmer.

"There is always imagination with costumes. But in this case, the most important part was getting as close to the reality as possible," costume designer Lisy Christl explains. Christl, who is from Bavaria in Southern Germany, said the plethora of little museums in the mountain villages provided good research materials. "We made costumes especially for the characters but there are many original costumes out there. There is a lot of research material about priests in Bavaria and Austria. It was important to find nice, worn, old pieces."

"I have quite a lot of books from this time period. You can still find flea markets with original pictures," says Christl. "When we started to work in South Tyrol, I found a fantastic book about people in the mountains in these rural valleys. It was inspiring and the faces of the people were inspiring, real people working on the fields."

It also required Christl's sharp eye for details. The Wehrmacht German army uniforms that the Austrian recruits wore had one difference.

"The piping around the shoulder pieces were different—they were light blue for these special units (of the German army). It is very important to get it right but it is what I do in my daily working life."

## MUSIC

The film's composer James Newton Howard says scoring the film was a highly collaborative process.

"One of the early ideas Terry brought to me, was to incorporate sounds he had captured during production such as church bells from the villages, cow and sheep bells, the saw mill, sounds from the prison, and scythes in the fields," says Howard. "I took many of those sounds and processed them into musical elements that are woven throughout the score."

Howard began his process after Malick sent him a series of short clips from the film without any sound or music.

"I wrote very loosely to picture, but we were able to establish the key thematic material and sonic identity of the score. As we moved forward, we chose to work mostly scene by scene where I would write something that he would react to, and then he would often mould the edit to what I had done," Howard explains.

Though the film takes place up against such an important historical backdrop, the film at its core is a human story. "I chose to focus on the emotional journeys and crises of conscience of the characters—writing music to reflect their story."

Howard began while Terry was already editing the film. "After meeting with Terry at my studio in Los Angeles, I flew to Austin and met with his team to watch a cut of the film," he says. "We worked primarily between March and May of 2018 and recorded everything in early June at Abbey Road Studios in London.

"I felt the orchestra was best to reflect the vistas of St. Radegund. The solo violin throughout the film embodies the connection between our two main characters—performed by the violinist James Ehnes."

## WORKING DAY

Joerg Widmer previously worked with Terrence Malick as his Steadicam operator on his previous five films and stepped into the filmmaker's long-time collaborator Emmanuel Lubezki's shoes for *A Hidden Life*.

"Terry tends to avoid conventions and find new ways of storytelling. Actors are fascinated by his way of directing and the amount of freedom to experiment and propose," says Widmer. "Terry and I have a long history of collaboration. As a camera and Steadicam operator on the previous films, I was already involved in Terry's thoughts, which made it easy for me to apply the rules of how to use the camera for framing and movements and how to light and how to deal with daylight."

August Diehl was familiar with Malick's work but never imagined he'd work with him on a film, let alone star in it. "It is so special. I have never experienced shooting a film like this, we're almost constantly in a flow of shooting," says Diehl, describing Malick's method of filming long takes without breaks. "I had the feeling I was acting less and less and less as the shoot went on and was there in the moment. Sometimes they were even shooting me while I was asleep somewhere or sitting in a meadow. It is always the movie."

Valerie Pachner, says in all her years of performing she has never come across a process like the one Malick uses to get the performance out of his cast. "We were really encouraged to create ourselves and I felt Terry trusted me. We were constantly talking about if there was something else that we should do? I really felt like we are doing this together. And that's because of his trust. He trusts the people working with him. It's nice to work that way."

Pachner describes Malick as "very respectful, very humble and kind and also radical. Radical in the way that he's following his thoughts and his way of seeing things all the time."

Pachner didn't want the shoot to stop. "This sort of loving cooperation and collaboration is something that makes me really happy and proud at the same time to have been a part of."

Widmer notes on the final shooting day, "there was a 15 minute long applause from the actors and technicians to show how much they had enjoyed being a part of the crew."

## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

**Excerpts from the introduction by Jim Forest to  
*Franz Jägerstätter: Letters and Writings from Prison*, edited by Erna Putz  
(Reprinted with permission from Orbis Books)**

*Franz Jägerstätter was born on May 20, 1907, in the Austrian village of St. Radegund. His mother was an unmarried farm servant, Rosalia Huber. His father, Franz Bachmeier, was the unmarried son of a farmer from Tarsdorf in the Austrian province of Salzburg; he died in the First World War. After Franz's birth, Rosalia's mother, Elisabeth Huber, a shoemaker's widow, took charge of Franz's care.*

*Franz's formal education was slight and brief. From 1913 to 1921 he attended the one-room school in St. Radegund, where a single teacher taught seven grades. At a given time, there were about fifty to sixty children in all. But one sees from his writing that he was a quick learner with a well-organised and independent mind.*

*Franz's birthplace was as inauspicious as his education. The village of St. Radegund, on the River Salzach, is on the northwestern edge of Austria. The village, with a population of about five hundred, appears only on the most detailed maps of Austria. Mozart's Salzburg is to the south, Linz to the east, Vienna much further east. The closest major German city is Munich. Hitler's birthplace, the Austrian town of Braunau, isn't far from St. Radegund.*

*Franz grew up mainly among farmers. The Jägerstätter farm was one among many in the area. It was a region in which Catholicism was deeply embedded. The idea of not being Catholic was, for nearly everyone Franz knew, as unthinkable as moving to another planet, though he did have a cousin who became a Jehovah's Witness.*

*One reads in the accounts of saints' lives how pious some of them were from the cradle to the grave. The stories local people tell of Franz as a young man go in the opposite direction. In his teens he wasn't hesitant to get involved in fistfights. He enjoyed all the pastimes that his friends enjoyed. Along with all his neighbours, he went to church when everyone else did, but no one would have remarked on his being a saint in the making.*

*In 1930, at age twenty-three, Franz worked for a time in the Austrian mining town of Eisenerz.*

*Returning to St. Radegund, Franz surprised his family and neighbours by arriving on a motorcycle he had purchased with money he earned in the city. No one else in the area had a motorcycle.*

*In August 1933, a local farm maidservant, Theresia Auer, gave birth to a daughter, Hildegard. Franz was the child's father. The fact that there had been no marriage before the birth, nor would there be afterward, was attributed locally to the determined opposition of Franz's mother, who seemed to doubt that Franz was in fact Hildegard's father. What is striking is that for the rest of his life, Franz not only provided material support for Hildegard, but remained very close to her, visiting her often. Just before his marriage to Franziska Schwaninger, Franz and his wife-to-be offered to adopt Hildegard, but Hildegard's mother and grandmother (who was raising the child) declined.*

*According to local consensus, the most important single factor attributed to bring about a change in Franz was his marriage to Franziska Schwaninger.*

*Nearly everyone who lived in the area saw this as the main border-crossing event of his adult life. Franz was, neighbours said, "a different man" afterward.*

*Franziska Schwaninger, or Fani, six years younger than Franz, had grown up on a farm in the village of Hochburg, about five miles away from St. Radegund. She came from a deeply religious family; her father and grandmother were both members of the Marian Congregation. Her grandmother belonged to the Third Order of St. Francis. Before Franziska's marriage, she had considered becoming a nun.*

*After a short engagement, the two were married on April 9, 1936. Franz was almost twenty-nine, Franziska twenty-three.*

## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE CONTINUED

*It was a happy marriage. Franz once told his wife, "I could never have imagined that being married could be so wonderful." In one of his letters to Franziska during his period of army training in 1940, he mentions how "fortunate and harmonious" have been their years of marriage.*

*Years after her father's death, the Jägerstätter's eldest daughter, wondering aloud whether she would ever marry, recalls her mother warning her that married couples often fight. Her daughter responded, "But you and daddy didn't fight."*

*The Jägerstätter's had three children, all daughters: Rosalia (Rosi) in 1937, Maria in 1938, and Aloisia (Loisi) in 1940.*

*Theirs was not a marriage out of touch with the world beyond their farm. Franz and Franziska were attentive to what was going on just across the river from St. Radegund in Germany, where Hitler had been German chancellor since 1933.*

*On March 12, 1938, the Eighth Army of the German Wehrmacht crossed the German-Austrian border. Assisted by the local Nazi movement and supported by the vast majority of the Austrian population, German troops quickly took control of Austria then organised a national plebiscite on April 10 to confirm the union with Germany. With few daring to vote against what had already been imposed by military methods, the annexation (Anschluss) of Austria by Germany was even ratified by popular ballot. Austria, now an integral part of the Third Reich, ceased to exist as an independent state. What had been Austria was renamed Ostmark.*

*Well before the Anschluss, Franz had been an anti-Nazi, but the event that brought his aversion to a much deeper level was a remarkable dream he had in January 1938. Perhaps it was triggered by a newspaper article he had read a few days earlier reporting that 150,000 more young people had been accepted into the Hitler Youth movement.*

*In the dream he saw "a wonderful train" coming around a mountain. The gleaming engine and carriages seemed especially attractive to children, who "flowed to this train, and were not held back." Then a voice said to him, "This train is going to hell." He woke Franziska to tell her of his dream and continued to think about it long afterward. The train, he realised, symbolised the glittering Nazi regime with all its spectacles and its associated organisations, Hitler Youth being one of the most important and spiritual corrupting.*

*In St. Radegund it was widely known that Franz, ignoring the advice of his neighbours, had voted against the Anschluss, but, in the reporting of the new regime in Vienna, Franz's solitary vote was left unrecorded. It was seen as endangering the village to put on record that even one person had dared raise a discordant voice. After all, as Franz was painfully aware, even Austria's Catholic hierarchy had advocated a yes vote. Afterward Cardinal Innitzer, principal hierarch of the Catholic Church in Austria, signed a declaration endorsing the Anschluss. The words Heil Hitler! were above his signature.*

*Having become citizens of Germany, every able Austrian was subject to conscription. Franz was called up in June 1940, taking his military vow in Braunau, Hitler's birthplace, but a few days later he was allowed to return to his farm, as farmers were needed no less than soldiers. In October he was called back from training as an army driver, but in April 1941, six months later, he was again allowed to return to his farm.*

*Franz's brief period in the army made him realise that a return to the army was not possible for him. If he were summoned again, even at the cost of his life, he would have to say no.*

*Franz readily talked about his views with anyone who would listen. Most often he was told that his main responsibility was to his family and that it would be better to risk death in the army on their behalf than to take steps that would almost certainly guarantee his death.*

## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE CONTINUED

*While he would certainly do what he could to preserve his life for the sake of his family, Franz noted that self-preservation did not make it permissible to go and murder other people's families. He pointed out that to accept military service also meant leaving his family without any assurance he would return alive.*

*Most of all Franz sought advice from the church's pastors. At the time Fr. Ferdinand Fürthauer was the priest in St. Radegund, filling in for Fr. Josef Karobath, who in 1940 had been jailed for delivering an anti-Nazi sermon and then been banished from the district.*

*Far from encouraging Franz, Fr. Fürthauer – a young man who felt unprepared for such a situation – wondered if refusing military service, given that execution was the almost certain penalty, was not the same as committing the mortal sin of suicide. In later years Fr. Fürthauer wrote to Franziska, "I wanted to save his life, but he did not want any pretence and rejected all falsehood."*

*Franz turned for guidance to his former pastor, Fr. Karobath. "We met in the Bavarian town of Tittmoning," Karobath recalls. "I wanted to talk him out of it [Franz's decision to refuse further military service], but he defeated me again and again with words from the scriptures."*

*Franz even managed to meet with the bishop of Linz, Joseph Fliesser. Franziska was in the adjacent waiting room. When Franz came out of the bishop's consulting room, Franziska recalls that he "was very sad and said to me: 'They don't dare commit themselves or it will be their turn next.'" Franz had the impression that the bishop didn't discuss his questions because it was possible that his visitor might be a Gestapo spy.*

*Having gone through his training, nearly two years went by without Franz's receiving a summons to return to the army.*

*Throughout that period, each time mail was delivered to the Jägerstätter farm, both husband and wife were in dread. Finally on February 23, 1943, the fateful letter arrived. "Now I've signed my death sentence," Franz remarked while putting his signature on the postal receipt. He was ordered to report to a military base in Enns, near Linz, two days later.*

*The same day he wrote to Fr. Karobath, whom he still regarded as his pastor even though the priest had been sent to another parish, "I must tell you that soon you may be losing one of your parishioners.... Today I received my conscription orders.... As no one can give me a dispensation for the danger to the salvation of my soul that joining this movement [the Nazis] would bring, I just can't alter my resolve, as you know.... It's always said that one shouldn't do what I am doing because of the risk to one's life, but I take the view that those others who are joining in the fighting aren't exactly out of life-threatening danger themselves. This parting will surely be a hard one."*

*It was indeed a hard parting. At the station in Tittmoning, Franz and Franziska could not let go of each other until the train's movement forced them out to separate. The conductor was furious.*

*Even as he boarded the train, Franz was already two days late for his appointment at Enns. But, after all, there was no need to arrive on time—once he reached Enns, he and Franziska had every reason to think, it might be only days or weeks before his execution. His late arrival could not make the punishment any worse.*

*Arriving at Enns the next morning, March 1, even then Franz took his time, attending Mass in the local church before reporting to the barracks.*

*The following day, having announced his refusal to serve, Franz was placed under arrest and transported to the military remand prison in nearby Linz. Franz's stay in Linz lasted three months. Though many others were tried and sentenced at Linz (a Catholic priest who visited prisoners there recalled having accompanied thirty-eight men to their executions), Franz was not one among those tried.*

## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE CONTINUED

*No one knew better than Franziska how carefully thought out was the position Franz was taking.... Even so, it was impossible for her not to encourage him occasionally to search for some alternate path that might not violate his conscience but perhaps would save his life.*

*She wrote to him while he was in Linz, "One does God's will even when not understanding it." Even so, she confessed that she nurtured "the small hope that you would change your decision... because you have compassion for me."*

*"I want to save my life but not through lies," wrote Franz to his wife. "In [the army base at] Enns people wanted to trap me by means of trick questions and so as to make me once again into a soldier. It was not easy to keep my conviction. It may become even more difficult."*

*Without warning, on May 4 Franz was taken by train to the prison at Tegel, a suburb of Berlin. It had been decided that Franz's was "a more serious case" requiring a Reich Court Martial in the capital rather than a provincial trial. Here Franz would spend the last three months of his life in solitary confinement.*

*On July 6 a brief trial occurred. Franz was convicted of "undermining military morale" by "inciting the refusal to perform the required service in the German army." This was a capital offence. Franz was sentenced to death. From this point on, he was kept in handcuffs.*

*In a final effort to save Franz's life, his court-assigned lawyer, Friedrich Leo Feldmann, arranged a visit by Franziska and the priest of St. Radegund, Fr. Fürthauer, in the hope they could convince his client to change his mind. Were he to do so, Feldmann was confident the court would withdraw its sentence.*

*Their twenty-minute meeting was Franz and Franziska's last. It happened on July 9 in the presence of armed guards. Not to their surprise, the visitors found that Franz saw no honorable alternative but to continue with his refusal of military service.*

*Back in St. Radegund, Franziska wrote to Fr. Karobath to report on the meeting with Franz in Berlin, commenting with bitterness, "They [the military officials] could easily have assigned him to the medical corps, but they were naturally too proud for that, for it might have looked like a compromise on their part."*

*On July 14, Franz's death sentence was confirmed by the Reich's War Court. On August 9, Franz was taken to Brandenburg/Havel where, at about 4:00 p.m., he was killed by guillotine.*

*The priest who accompanied Franz to his execution, Fr. Albert Jochmann, standing in that day for the chaplain at Brandenburg, later told a community of Austrian nuns about Franz's final hours. In the early 1960s, one of them, Sister Georgia, having learned that Gordon Zahn was at work on a biography of Franz Jägerstätter, wrote to Zahn to relate what the chaplain had said. Visiting Franz shortly after midnight on August 9, he noticed on a small table in Franz's cell a document that, should Franz sign it, would allow him to leave prison and return to the army. When Fr. Jochmann pointed it out, Franz pushed it aside, saying, "I cannot and may not take an oath in favour of a government that is fighting an unjust war."*

*Sister Georgia continued: "Later he was to witness the calm and composed manner in which he [Franz Jägerstätter] walked to the scaffold." He told the sisters, themselves Austrian, "I can only congratulate you on this countryman of yours who lived as a saint and has now died a hero. I can say with certainty that this simple man is the only saint that I have ever met in my lifetime."*

*During his time in Berlin, Franz was permitted to write only one letter to Franziska each month, plus a fourth that was written on the day of his execution. The four letters bear witness to his extraordinary calm, conviction, and even happiness.*

## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE CONTINUED

*Part of the happiness he experienced was thanks to the support he found in the Catholic chaplain Fr. Heinrich Kreuzberg. It was a great consolation for Franz to hear from him that a priest, Fr. Franz Reinisch, had, just a year earlier, been in the same prison and died a similar death for similar reasons.*

*After Franz's death, Fr. Kreuzberg wrote a long letter to Franziska in which he noted, "I have seen no more fortunate man in prison than your husband after my few words about Franz Reinisch."*

*Franz's final letter home was written the morning of his execution.*

*Franz Jägerstätter was a solitary witness. He died with no expectation that his sacrifice would make any difference to anyone. He knew that, for his neighbours, the refusal of army service was incomprehensible – an act of folly, a sin against his family, his community, and even his church, which had called on no one to refuse military service.*

*Franz knew that, beyond his family and community, his death would go entirely unnoticed and have no impact on the Nazi movement or hasten the end of the war. He would soon be forgotten. Who would remember or care about the anti-Nazi gesture of an uneducated farmer? He would be just one more filed-away name among many thousands who were tried and executed with bureaucratic indifference during the Nazi era.*

—**Jim Forest**, *Introduction to Franz Jägerstätter: Letters and Writings from Prison*,  
Edited by Erna Putz (Orbis Books)

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### August Diehl (Franz Jägerstätter)

August Diehl made his debut in *23*, which garnered him a Bavarian Film Award for Best Young Actor and a German Film Award for Best Actor. Best known for his role in the Academy Award-winning *The Counterfeiters* and *IngLOURIOUS BASTERDS*, Diehl's additional credits include *The Ninth Day* with Academy Award winning director Volker Schlöndorff, *Slumming* (Berlinale Competition 2006), *Dr. Alemán*, a German-Colombia Coproduction and *If not us, who* (Berlinale competition 2011).

### Valerie Pachner (Fani Jägerstätter)

Born in Wels, Upper Austria, Valerie Pachner trained at the famous Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna. She moved to Munich after completing her studies. At the beginning of the 2013/2014 season she became part of the permanent ensemble at the Residenztheater. In addition to her stage work, Pachner also took on movie roles, among them Maria Schrader's *Vor Der Morgenröte* in 2016 and *Egon Schiele: Death and the Maiden*, a part for which she was awarded the Austrian Film Prize. Pachner played the lead in *The Ground Beneath My Feet* which received its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2019.

### Maria Simon (Resie, Fani's sister)

Maria Simon was born 1976 in East Germany, Leipzig. She studied at the Academy of Performing Arts, Ernst Busch, in Berlin. Maria's breakthrough performance was for her first feature film, *Zornige Küsse* (2000), for which she garnered a best actress award at the Moscow International Film Festival. Thereafter, she was awarded the best young actress award at the Max-Ophuls-Preis for her performance in *Erste Ehe* (2002). In the same year, Maria celebrated the release of both *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2001) and *Lichter* (2002). In February 2016 Maria was awarded the Goldene Kamera for her performance in *Silvia S. Blinde Wut* (2016).

## CAST BIOGRAPHIES CONTINUED

### **Tobias Moretti (Fr. Ferdinand Fürthauer)**

Tobias Moretti was born on July 11, 1959 in Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria as Tobias Bloéb. He is best known for his performances in *Kommissar Rex* (1994), *Das finstere Tal* (2014) and *The Return of the Dancing Master* (2004).

### **Bruno Ganz (Judge Lueben)**

Bruno Ganz had a long and extensive career in German language films and TV and had his onscreen breakthrough in *Sommergäste* (1976). Ganz worked with directors including Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Francis Ford Coppola, Ridley Scott and Lars von Trier. He is best known for portraying an angel in *Wings of Desire* and a defeated Adolf Hitler in *Der Untergang (Downfall)*. Ganz received a lifetime achievement award in 2010 from the European Film Academy. Ganz passed away in February 2019.

### **Matthias Schoenaerts (Captain Herder)**

Matthias Schoenaerts began acting as a child, playing opposite his father Julien Schoenaerts on stage in *The Little Prince*. At 15, he made his screen debut in the film *Daens*. After graduating from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in Antwerp in 2002, Schoenaerts performed in a number of stage productions and starred in multiple shorts and feature films, including *Loft*, *Any Way The Wind Blows* and *My Queen Karo*. Most recently, Schoenaerts starred in *The Mustang*, *A Bigger Splash*, *Red Sparrow*, *Racer and the Jailbird*, and *Our Souls at Night*. Schoenaerts lives in Antwerp, Belgium.

### **Karin Neuhäuser (Rosalia Jägerstätter)**

Karin Neuhäuser (born 1955) has been on screen since the 1980s. She has worked with directors including Roberto Ciulli, Christoph Marthaler and Luk Perceval in the theatres of Berlin, Zürich and others. In 2009 she became a member of the Thalia Theater in Hamburg. She has received several awards in honour of her stage work, most recently the German theatre best actress award for *Faust* in 2017. Her recent cinematic roles include *In the Fade (Aus Dem Nichts)* and *O Beautiful Night*.

### **Ulrich Matthes (Lorenz Schwaninger, Fani's father)**

Berlin born Ulrich Matthes studied acting in the early 1980s under Else Bongers while pursuing a degree in German and English literature in his city of birth. His first theatrical engagements were at the United City Stages of Krefeld and Mönchengladbach, Düsseldorf's Playhouse and the Bavarian State Theatre. In 1988 Matthes joined Munich's Kammerspiele and from 1992 onwards he was a leading actor at the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz in Berlin. Since the 2004/2005 season Matthes has been a member of the Deutsches Theater ensemble. Matthes has appeared in numerous films, including Tom Tykwer's *Winter Sleepers* and Volker Schlöndorff's *The Ninth Day*. Since 2012 he has been the director of the Performing Arts Section of the Academy of Arts, Berlin.

### **Martin Wuttke (Major Kiel)**

Actor and director Martin Wuttke began his actor training at the college theater in Bochum before switching to the Westfälische Schauspielschule Bochum (now Schauspielschule Bochum). He has played on numerous stages across Germany including Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz Berlin, Berliner Ensemble, the Thalia Theater of Hamburg and the Stuttgart State Theatre. He has had screen roles in *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), *Cloud Atlas* (2012) and *Hanna* (2011).

## SELECTED CREW BIOGRAPHIES

### **Terrence Malick (writer, director)**

Terrence Malick was born in Ottawa, Illinois, and grew up in Texas and Oklahoma. He worked for Newsweek, Life and The New Yorker, and taught philosophy at MIT before attending the American Film Institute. He is the writer and director of *Badlands*, *Days of Heaven*, *The Thin Red Line*, *The New World*, *The Tree of Life*, *To the Wonder*, *Knight of Cups*, *Song to Song* and *Voyage of Time*.

### **Grant Hill (producer)**

Born in Australia, Grant Hill is an L.A. based producer. He began working with Terrence Malick after meeting the filmmaker in Los Angeles to discuss shooting *The Thin Red Line* in Australia. He has produced all Malick's subsequent films including *The Tree of Life* (2011) and the documentary *Voyage of Time* (2016). He is twice Oscar nominated for his work on Malick's films. Hill's producer credits also include being co-producer on James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997), executive producer for *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003) and *The Matrix Revolutions* as well as producer on *Ninja Assassin*, directed by James McTeigue (2009) and *Cloud Atlas* (2012), brought to the screen by Tom Tykwer and Lana and Lilly Wachowski.

### **Dario Bergesio (producer)**

Dario Bergesio is an international film producer & distributor working in the industry for almost three decades. Bergesio has established multinational companies which cooperate with independent and major film studios, distributing over fifty award winning motion pictures. Among them: *The Lives of Others*, Michael Moore's *Capitalism*, *The Woman in Black* and Ron Howard's *Rush*. Bergesio started his career at Miramax in 1992 and worked as an actor in *The Talented Mr Ripley* directed by the late Anthony Minghella. He lives in Hong Kong and Los Angeles, California.

### **Josh Jeter (producer)**

Josh Jeter was born in Turlock, California. Prior to *A Hidden Life*, Josh worked with Terrence Malick on *Voyage of Time*. Before film, Josh practiced law in San Francisco and Chennai, India.

### **Elisabeth Bentley (producer)**

Elisabeth Bentley began working to bring the story of Franz Jägerstätter to the screen in 2006. Previous films include *Beautiful Darling* (2010) about Warhol superstar Candy Darling, and *Nanking* (2008). Bentley has been nominated for a WGA Award and shortlisted for the Documentary Oscar. In 2019 Bentley founded Marginalia Pictures to bring the visions of non legacy filmmakers to the center.

### **Marcus Loges (executive producer)**

Marcus Loges started his international film production career with *Enemy at the Gates*, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud in 2001. Based in Berlin, he has worked as a production manager on several films including Paul Greengrass' *The Bourne Supremacy*, *V for Vendetta* and *Speed Racer*, directed by the Wachowskis. He has been a producer on diverse films including *The Cut*, directed by Faith Akin, Roland Emmerich's *Anonymous*, *Cloud Atlas* and *A Hologram For The King* from filmmaker Tom Tykwer as well as the Netflix series *Sense8*. He is currently producing the hit international German TV series *Babylon Berlin*.

### **Adam Morgan (executive producer)**

Adam is an entrepreneur and musician living in Austin, TX.

### **Bill Pohlad (executive producer)**

Academy Award-nominated filmmaker and founder and CEO of River Road Entertainment, Bill Pohlad has been making films for over two decades. Starting as a writer/director in the late 1980's, Pohlad spent most of the following years producing. His credits include the Academy Award-winning Best Picture *12 Years A Slave*, directed by Steve McQueen, and Terrence Malick's *The Tree Of Life*. In addition, Pohlad produced Sean Penn's *Into The Wild*, Jean Marc Vallée's *Wild*, and Doug Liman's *Fair Game*. Pohlad also served as executive producer on numerous films including Ang Lee's Academy Award-winning epic *Brokeback Mountain*, Robert Altman's *Prairie Home Companion*, J.A. Bayona's *A Monster Calls* and numerous feature documentaries. In 2014, Pohlad returned to the director's chair with *Love & Mercy*, which was released to critical acclaim, receiving two Golden Globe nominations and topping numerous critics' lists for 2015.

### **Yi Wei (executive producer)**

Yi Wei is a financial professional previously working with Citibank China and a partner at Nasser Capital Private Equity with a focus in Asia commodities. Recently partner and contributor in New Work Media Hong Kong agency for intergovernmental relations with China. Ms Wei is a graduate from Westminster School and University College London.

### **Charlie Woebcken (executive producer)**

Charlie Woebcken is CEO of Studio Babelsberg and managing director of Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures and Babelsberg Film. Studio Babelsberg, founded in 1912, is the world's oldest large-scale studio complex and one of Europe's leading service providers for feature films and TV productions.

Woebcken's co-producer credits include *V for Vendetta*, *Casino Royale*, *The Counterfeiters*, *Valkyrie*, *The International*, *The Reader*, *Inglourious Basterds*, *The Ghost Writer*, *Anonymous*, *Hanna*, *The Monuments Men*, *Bridge Of Spies*, and *A Cure for Wellness*. Woebcken's further credits as associate and executive producer include *Aeon Flux*, *Black Book*, as well as Wes Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.

### **Christoph Fisser (executive producer)**

Christoph Fisser is COO of Studio Babelsberg and managing director of Traumfabrik Babelsberg and Babelsberg Film. Fisser's co-producer credits include *The Counterfeiters*, *The International*, *The Reader*, *Inglourious Basterds*, *Anonymous*, *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters*, *Unknown*, and *The Book Thief*. Most recently, he served as co-producer on *Bridge Of Spies*, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay*, *Captain America: Civil War*, *The Girl in the Spider's Web* as well as Elizabeth Banks' upcoming *Charlie's Angels*. His further credits as executive producer include *Men & Chicken*, *The Voices*, and Wes Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. He is currently producing the German feature film *Traumfabrik*.

### **Henning Molfenter (executive producer)**

Henning Molfenter is managing director of Studio Babelsberg Motion Pictures and the production company Babelsberg Film. He started in Babelsberg in 2001 as executive producer of Roman Polanski's award-winning film *The Pianist*. Before his appointment in Babelsberg Molfenter had worked in the U.S. film industry on titles including *Man On The Moon* and *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, directed by Milos Forman. Molfenter's credits include *The Constant Gardener*, *The Counterfeiters*, *V for Vendetta*, *The Bourne Supremacy*, *The Bourne Ultimatum*, *Valkyrie*, *The Reader*, *The Ghost Writer*, *Unknown*, *Casino Royale*, *Aeon Flux*, *Ninja Assassin*, *The Monuments Men*, *A Cure For Wellness*, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay*, *Captain America: Civil War*, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *The Girl In The Spider's Web* as well as Elizabeth Banks' upcoming *Charlie's Angels*.

## CREDITS\*

An Elizabeth Bay Productions Presentation In Association with Aceway and Mister Smith.  
A Studio Babelsberg Production.

**Written and Directed by** Terrence Malick

**Producers** Grant Hill, P.G.A.  
Dario Bergesio  
Josh Jeter  
Elisabeth Bentley

**Executive Producers** Marcus Loges  
Adam Morgan  
Bill Pohlad  
Yi Wei  
Christoph Fisser  
Henning Molfenter  
Charlie Wuebcken

**Starring** August Diehl  
Valerie Pachner  
Maria Simon  
Tobias Moretti  
Bruno Ganz  
Matthias Schoenaerts  
Karin Neuhäuser  
Ulrich Matthes

**Director of Photography** Jörg Widmer

**Production Designer** Sebastian T. Krawinkel

**Edited by** Rehman Nizar Ali  
Joe Gleason  
Sebastian Jones

**Music by** James Newton Howard

**Costume Designer** Lisy Christl

**Casting Director** Anja Dührberg

**Co-Producer** Jini Durr

**Associate Producers** Matt Bilski  
Colton Williamson

**Country of Origin** Germany/USA

*\* CREDITS NOT CONTRACTUAL*



Franz Jägerstätter  
(May 9, 1907-August 9, 1943)



Franziska Jägerstätter  
(March 4, 1913-March 16, 2013)



Married, 1936



Franz Jägerstätter with motorcycle.



Franz Jägerstätter's mother, Rosalia, wife Franziska, and three daughters, Maria, Aloisia and Rosalia.



"Dear father come soon!"