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## **ARTICLES OF FAITH**

*By Robert L. Rodin*  
*271 pp. St. Martin's*

In an author's afterword to this debut novel, architect Robert L. Rodin says that his father was an OSS agent and assassin whose W.W.II record was later altered by the C.I.A. Apparently faced with two literary alternatives--writing a factual account that might be held to a tough standard of proof or penning a novel with at best workmanlike gifts--Mr. Rodin offers the fictionalized tale of Danny Maguire, whose father calls suddenly after 30 years' absence to reveal he's part of "a collision of past and present, a cosmic train wreck...old deadly secrets coming out." Maguire Sr.'s OSS unit had helped smuggle stolen Nazi treasures and priceless religious icons (including what might be Judas Iscariot's dagger and remnants of the lost Ark of the Covenant), had laundered stolen Nazi gold and helped war criminals escape. Now, Swiss bankers, the Vatican and the C.I.A. want the past kept secret, inquisitive senators turn up dead, and Danny's father may die next. Aided by a tainted rabbi, an NYPD detective fluent in Hebrew and Armenian and even the President of the United States, the Maguires engage a former C.I.A. director in lethal battle. Abundantly employing hackneyed devices, cliches, melodrama and hyperbole while lifting ideas from sources as diverse as Dave Barry and "Dirty Harry," Rodin nevertheless manages to keep this well-worn plot moving swiftly. The stakes high, the issues grave, the action deadly, Mr. Rodin might have done well to go straight to alternative #3: writing the filmscript.