



## THE WOLF AND THE WATCHMAN: A CIA CHILDHOOD

**Scott Johnson**  
Scribe, \$29.95

WHEN does the father become the son, the son the father? Author Scott Johnson was first confused and then troubled by his father's career as a CIA spy, and his rather creepy success in the dark arts of international espionage. His ambiguity shimmers and blurs as the boy becomes a man. In something of an attempt to atone for, and escape, his complex feelings of his father's work, he becomes a war journalist. Perilous adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq follow, as his father's talent for action makes the genetic leap to his son. Father-son moments are plotted against a backdrop of war and its fraught dramas. Broken shards of a relationship scatter on the floor like bomb debris, are picked up and

pieced together, as fathers and sons do.

Johnson's memoir works on multiple levels. It is a war journo's log; it is a bio of two interesting characters; it is contemporary history; it is a treatise on the culture of father-son relations; it is political philosophy; it is social commentary.

On no level does it fail. Bung notes are very few and the melding together of disparate themes is seamless and beautifully managed.

Johnson's bottom line is that the human element ensures everything is destined for imperfection.

This moving, poetic and deeply meaningful book shines a light into the faltering human condition and its many shadows with unerring skill.

**VERDICT: A BOY'S OWN  
ADVENTURE FOR GROWN-UPS**

**James Rose**

