



# A Life in Twilight: The Final Years of J. Robert Oppenheimer

*Mark Wolverton*

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*A Life in Twilight* reveals the least-known and most enigmatic period of J. Robert Oppenheimer's life, from the public humiliation he endured after the 1954 Atomic Energy Commission's investigation into his alleged communist leanings and connections to his death in 1967. It covers Oppenheimer's continued work as a scientist and philosopher and head of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, his often controversial public appearances, as well as parts of his private life.

What emerges is a portrait of a man who was toppled from the highest echelons of politics and society, had to see his honor and name blackened, but succeeded in maintaining his dignity and rebuilding a shattered life, although he never truly recovered from the McCarthy-inspired persecution he suffered. Previously unpublished FBI files round out the picture and cast a sinister cloud over Oppenheimer's final years, during which he remained under occasional surveillance.

Mark Wolverton has succeeded in presenting an evenhanded and very well-researched account of a life that ended in twilight. It reads like a written version of the acclaimed film *Good Night, and Good Luck*, and indeed Murrow's interview with Oppenheimer is one of the central elements of the story.

*A Life in Twilight* is an important exploration, not only of a prominent scientist and philosopher, but also of an unforgettable era in American history.

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