



Paper Trail: Common Sense in Uncommon Times

Ellen Goodman

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In this rich and savvy collection of commentaries on the events, people and issues that shape and define our world, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and *New York Times* bestselling author Ellen Goodman cuts to the heart of the stories and controversies that helped to define our times.

For over twenty-five years, nationally syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman has been training her lens on contemporary American life. A marvelously direct writer with keen insight into what makes the average American tick, laugh and occasionally boil with rage, Goodman takes her measure of the national psyche in a voice that is at once perceptive, witty and deeply humane.

Paper Trail, her first collection in more than ten years, journeys through an era that has been golden in its advances and bleak in its disappointments. In a voice both reasoned and impassioned, she makes sense of the cultural debates that have captured our attention and sometimes become national obsessions. She wrestles with the close-to-the-bone issues of abortion, working mothers and gay marriage, the struggles for civil liberties and equal rights, and the moral complexity of assisted suicide and biotech babies. As she wends through the era of the Clinton scandals and the "amBushing" of America, the dot-com boom and bust, the horrors of September 11 and the War on Terrorism, Goodman pauses to celebrate some of our lost icons, including Jackie Onassis, Princess Diana and Doctor Spock. She reminds us as well of the fleeting fame of such instant celebrities as Elian Gonzalez and Lorena Bobbitt.

The lines that separate public and private life dissolve under Goodman's scrutiny as she shows us how Washington politics, Silicon Valley technology and the national media culture infiltrate our jobs, relationships and minds. With the trademark clarity that readers count on, she walks us through the dilemmas posed by new technologies that range from cloning to cell phones and makes us laugh at the vagaries of Viagra and Botox and unreality TV. And in a world that sometimes seems to be stuck on fast forward, she holds on to values as timeless as a family Thanksgiving and a summer porch in Maine.

Including more than 160 of Ellen Goodman's lively and stylish columns, this timely collection walks us along the paper trail in a voice that is both crystal clear and original.

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