



Casing a Promised Land, Expanded Edition: The Autobiography of an Organizational Detective as Cultural Ethnographer

H. L. Goodall

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H. L. Goodall's ground-breaking study of what people do with symbols and what symbols do to people explores the lives led by people in organizations. His narratives take on the form of six detective mysteries in which the narrator figures into the plot of the intrigue and then works out its essential patterns.

In the first mystery, "Notes on a Cultural Evolution: The Remaking of a Software Company," Goodall looks at the transition of a Huntsville regional office of a Boston-based computer software company where the lives and social dramas of the participants reflect the current state of high technology.

The second essay and perhaps the most insightful, "The Way the World Ends: Inside Star Wars," penetrates the various defenses of the Star Wars command office in Huntsville to discover its secrets and surprises. Goodall shows how media, technology, fear of relationships, and symbolic images of the future unite into the day-to-day operations of people who believe they are responsible for the outer limits of our nation's defense.

"Lost in Space: The Layers of Illusion Called Adult Space Camp" illustrates how a supposedly innocent theme park invites participation in rituals and ceremonies designed to influence a future generation of taxpayers.

In "Articles of Faith," Goodall enters a super mall in Huntsville, noting how shopping centers provide consumers with far more than places to purchase goods and services.

"How I Spent My Summer Vacation" finds Goodall back in an academic environment, at a conference of communication scholars, where he demonstrates the difficult task of translating cultural understandings from one context to another.

"The Consultant as Organizational Detective" offers the sobering message that real-life mysteries may surprise even the most accomplished sleuth. A concluding chapter, "Notes on Method," and a new autobiographical afterword round out Goodall's penetrating look at our symbol-making culture.

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