



Unlikely Angel : The Untold Story of the Atlanta Hostage Hero

By Ashley Smith, Stacy Mattingly

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In March 2005, Ashley Smith made headlines around the globe when she miraculously talked her way out of the hands of alleged courthouse killer Brian Nichols after he took her hostage for seven hours in her suburban Atlanta apartment. In this moving, inspirational account, the 27-year-old widowed mother of a six-year-old girl shares for the first time the little-known details of her traumatic ordeal, and expands on how her faith and the bestselling book *The Purpose-Driven Life* helped her survive and bring the killer's murderous rampage to a peaceful end. Like her captor, Smith too, has faced darkness and despair. Yet even during the most desolate times of her life, she yearned for something better. Seeking a new life, she moved to Atlanta, got a job, enrolled in a medical assistant training program, and was beginning to find her way to becoming the kind of mom she wanted her little girl to have. Then Brian Nichols took her hostage. Just hours earlier, he'd allegedly shot to death a judge, a court reporter, a deputy, and a federal agent, and escaped in a stolen vehicle. Ashley had paid only passing attention to media coverage of the unfolding manhunt. Now she found herself face to face with Nichols, a desperate, heavily armed man with nothing left to lose. *Unlikely Angel* is Ashley's gripping, powerful account of how this nightmare scenario developed into a remarkable connection between a man wanted for multiple murders and a single mother struggling to make a fresh beginning from her checkered and tragic past. Juxtaposing the minute-by-minute tale of her experience with the never-before-told tragedies and triumphs of her own life, *Unlikely Angel* is a story that will leave no reader untouched.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This is less the story of a woman being held hostage in her apartment than an inspirational tract that could serve as a companion volume to *The Purpose-Driven Life* and become required reading in rehab clinics. Smith had been weaning herself off of speed, pot and Xanax when, after having been up the previous night snorting "ice" (methamphetamines, or "those drugs," as she frequently says) and setting up her new apartment, Brian Nichols held her hostage after killing several people while escaping from an Atlanta courthouse. Over the next seven hours, Smith convinced herself that God sent Nichols to straighten her out, and, between her cutting lines of speed for him to snort off her bathroom counter, showing him pictures of her daughter and family, reading him passages of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, helping him ditch a truck he'd stolen, telling him about her murdered husband and cooking Nichols a pancake breakfast, she persuaded him to turn himself in. The pedestrian writing and Smith's moment-by-moment analysis of what's happening make for a frustrating read, but those looking for a simple story about overcoming addiction and persevering in the face of adversity will find this worthwhile. (Sept. 27)

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Review

"...a newly minted author and celebrity." -- *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"...a remarkable tale of redemption." -- *Augusta Chronicle*

"...could serve as a companion volume to *The Purpose-Driven Life*. -- *Publishers Weekly*

"...required reading." -- *Publishers Weekly*

"Smith leads the reader through the long, dangerous night, minute-by-minute." -- *The Sunday Oklahoman*

"Smith's revelations offer a new wrinkle to a story that...captivated the country." -- *Newsweek*

Review

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