



# Unlikely Angel : The Untold Story of the Atlanta Hostage Hero

*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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