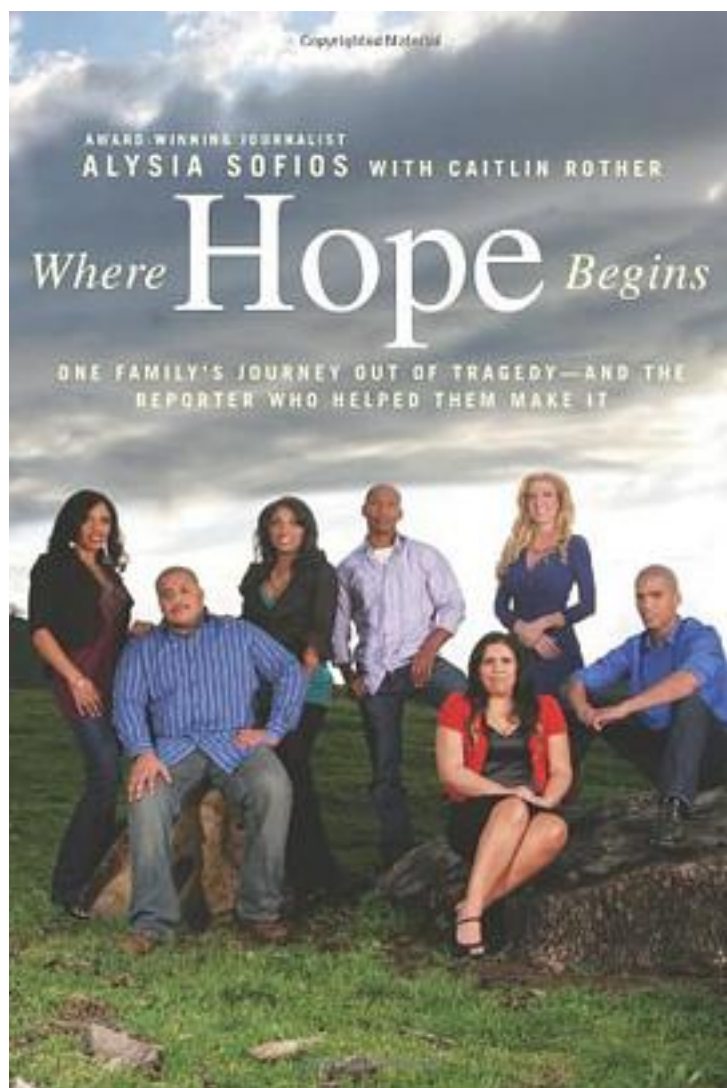


Where Hope Begins



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SURVIVORS OF THE
MARCUS WESSON MURDERS
SPEAK OUT FOR THE FIRST
TIME-IN THIS SHATTERING AND

INSPIRING TRUE STORY. When local television reporter Alysia Sofios was assigned to investigate the worst mass murder in the history of Fresno, California, the breaking news lead soon became something much more -- a hope-filled relationship that changed the lives of both the young reporter and the survivors of an unimaginable crime. FOR DECADES , the family of Marcus Wesson -- his wife, Elizabeth, and seventeen children -- lived sequestered in a social and emotional prison of Wesson's creation. None of the children ever had a childhood; going to school, playing with friends, going on dates -- all were forbidden. Together, they endured his tyrannical reign of physical, sexual, and mental abuse. Then, in 2004, as a family confrontation erupted into a harrowing standoff, with police and SWAT teams descending on the small blue house on West Hammond Avenue, Marcus Wesson murdered nine of his children. The television reporter who got the first tip about Wesson's arrest, Alysia Sofios, would ultimately cover the case through Wesson's trial. She quickly learned that the surviving female family members -- Elizabeth, Rosie, Kiani, and Gypsy -- had nowhere to go but the streets. Torn between journalistic objectivity and her desire to help them, Sofios risked her job and her life by taking them into her home and helping integrate them into society. Here, these brave survivors candidly recount their traumatic past and look to a bright future that now holds plans and dreams they never thought possible -- from college to careers to families of their own. But the connections between Sofios and her newfound family deepened beyond anything anyone could have anticipated -- a bond of mutual caring and healing that was put to the test when Sofios suffered serious injuries in a car accident and found the Wesson women by her side to see her through her recovery. Powerful, riveting, and truly remarkable, Where Hope Begins is a unique and intimate look at the resilience of the human spirit.

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