

FORMER *STYLE* CONTRIBUTOR'S OPEN MARRIAGE BECOMES MEMOIR

When a publisher from Seal Press contacted Jenny Block and asked her to write a book about marriage, she thought it was an elaborate April Fools' joke cooked up by her dad. Now she thinks the publisher had her finger on the pulse of American sexuality. The publisher hoped that this was the way the wind would rise, and Block says she happened to be on the right board.

"You know when you buy a Volkswagen, all you see are Volkswagens?" asks Block. "I think this is different. You just weren't reading about polyamorous open marriages a year ago."

Although it's yet to be officially released, Block's memoir, "Open: Love, Sex, and Life in an Open Marriage," is already No. 52 in the sex book category on Amazon.com and she's been contacted by a literary agent about rights to the movie.

A former Virginia Commonwealth University graduate student, Block taught composition at VCU, University of Richmond and Strayer University and wrote for *Style Weekly*, interviewing local artists and writers. She moved to the Midwest in 2005 when her husband accepted a job in IT management. This May, they celebrated their 11-year wedding anniversary. She's also been seeing another woman on and off for the last five years.

"I'm seeing him and her and that's it," says Block. "I probably see her as much as you see your best friend; there's just a sexual element." Although her girlfriend doesn't live with them, she's almost part of the family. "[My husband] usually sets the table for four," Block says, "because he just expects Jamma [not her real name — probably not anybody's real name] to join us." By "us," Block refers to herself, her husband and their 9-year-old daughter.

"I definitely feel like I'm breaking some rules," says Block of the unofficial memoir rule in which people wait five years before writing about a major life event. "I don't speak to the future and this is not a prescription for everyone. It would be very different if I was 70 looking back. This is just me now."

"Open" is scheduled for publication in June. Visit Block on the Web at www.jennyonthepage.com. — VALLEY HAGGARD



Block