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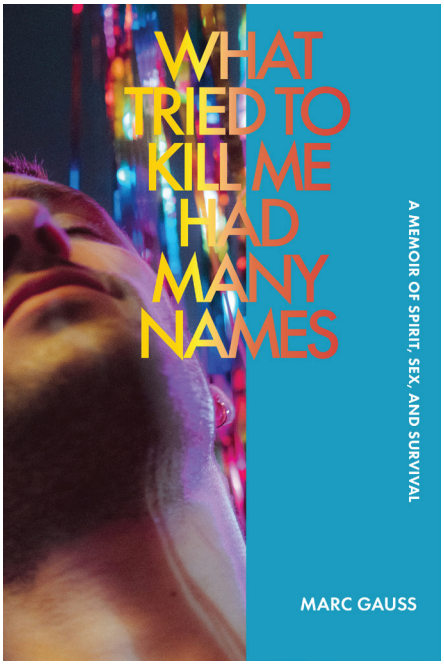
WHAT TRIED TO KILL ME HAD MANY NAMES



Author: Marc Gauss (www.marcgauss.com)
ISBN: 978-1-943977-96-3
Library of Congress Control Number: 2026942132
Retail Price: $25.00
Publication Date: September 15, 2026
Memoir; 6 x 9" Paperback; 260 Pages
Distributed by Ingram and Sibling Rivalry Press
Review copies available / Digital ARCs on Edelweiss as of 6/1/26
Author is available for appearances and interviews
Publisher Contact: info@siblingrivalrypress.com
Trade, library, and educational discounts available
Desk copies available for educators
Keywords: Memoir, Religious Trauma, Overcoming Sexual Shame
Homosexuality, Sex Work, Adult Film Industry,
Self-Affirmation, Pride, Relationships, Palm Springs

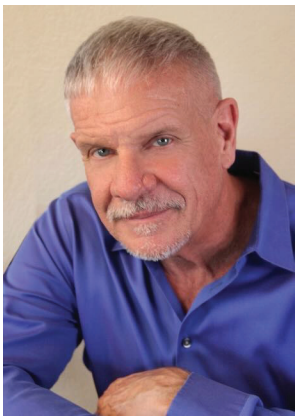
A MEMOIR OF SPIRIT, SEX, AND SURVIVAL

SYNOPSIS

What Tried to Kill Me Had Many Names is a fearless memoir of spirit, sex, and survival. Raised in a strict Christian home where every desire was measured against sin, Marc Gauss grew up believing that love—especially the kind he felt for other men—was something that had to be hidden, prayed away, or punished. As he moves from small-town boyhood to college campuses, locker rooms, churches, and the neon freedom of gay nightlife, Gauss confronts the contradictions between the life he was taught to live and the truth of who he is. Along the way he encounters cruelty, rejection, ecstatic freedom, and moments of devastating despair—including the kind of spiritual shame that nearly costs him his life. Told with disarming candor, humor, desire, and vulnerability, *What Tried to Kill Me Had Many Names* is the story of a man who survived religious judgment, sexual awakening, and the many identities others tried to force upon him. It is a memoir about reclaiming joy, owning one's body, and learning—finally—to live without apology.

BIOGRAPHY

MARC GAUSS lives in the Palm Springs, California area, where he co-facilitates workshops and retreats centered on sex positivity and authentic self-expression. An outspoken advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and sex workers' rights, he is committed to dismantling shame and redefining what it means to live freely. Marc is also an ordained Phallocentric High Priest.



PRAISE FOR

WHAT TRIED TO KILL ME HAD MANY NAMES

"*What Tried to Kill Me Had Many Names* is a wild ride over six decades of gay struggle and freedom. From the religious abuse and oppression of Jerry Falwell, to the out-of-control partying of the eighties, to the depths of barely surviving the AIDS epidemic, to the power of transforming his life with queer liberation and marriage equality, Gauss's sensitive and compassionate narrative gives hope and humor to anyone who might have gotten stuck along the way."

— DR. JALLEN RIX —

— author of *Ex-Gay No Way: Survival and Recovery from Religious Abuse*

"With rare honesty, Marc Gauss traces the long and often messy journey from what we are taught to who we become. The result is a story of remarkable bravery—not the kind found in grand gestures, but the quiet, powerful courage of learning to be generous with oneself. An extraordinary accomplishment."

— JASON ARMSTRONG —

— author of *Solosexual: Portrait of a Masturbator*

ABOUT THE PRESS: Founded in 2010 by poet Bryan Borland, Sibling Rivalry Press has become one of the most influential independent literary publishers championing bold, diverse, and transformative voices. Inspired by Adrienne Rich's vision of poetry as "a field of energy" that "disturbs and enraptures," SRP has published groundbreaking writers including Ocean Vuong, Saeed Jones, and Kaveh Akbar, while also reclaiming overlooked LGBTQ literary pioneers and amplifying voices from outside traditional publishing centers. Sibling Rivalry Press authors have gone on to receive the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, the MacArthur Genius Grant, the Whiting Award, the Yale Younger Poets Prize, and numerous Lambda Literary Awards and Publishing Triangle honors. Committed to fearless, electric literature, Sibling Rivalry Press welcomes work from all writers regardless of identity or background.



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