



Jim Bollenbacher



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MOLLY, MUSHROOMS
& MAYHEM**



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Molly, Mushrooms & Mayhem is a lighthearted, behind the scenes look at the chaos and craziness that occurs at music festivals as told by EMT's and Paramedics who work them. The situations first responders get called to are often funny, unusual, crazy or just plain gross. They are not your typical 911 emergency. Most of our patients probably wish they could forget their experiences, but the EMT's and Paramedics who cared for them remember. For anyone who has ever attended a music festival, or medical professionals curious about what goes on, this book reveals the work of EMS professionals inside, and outside, the medical tent.



"This book will open your eyes! Jim Bollenbacher, a kind, formerly straight-laced attorney and corporate management leader shares his "retirement" as an Event paramedic in jaw-dropping fashion. I laughed out loud in between gasps of astonishment at each story. Do yourself a favor, read about "this side" of the music festival world. You'll laugh at, learn from and feel deeply grateful for Jim and his peers' experiences."



National Registry Paramedic, ACLS,
PALS, PHTLS, ASLS, BLS CPR

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The festival scene is a LIFESTYLE. One that is hard to imagine if you haven't experienced it first hand.

Go behind the scenes to see what the medical professionals deal with.

Festivals are chaotic, and people seem to lose all sense of reason when they are there.

Molly, Mushrooms & Mayhem is a story about how an attorney becomes a paramedic, and the craziness he has been witness to.

TOPICS TO ENGAGE WITH JIM

How to transition from your life-long career to something you love.

What has been the biggest adjustment in your new career?

How have you changed as a result of your new work?

What to be aware of when you allow your children to attend live festivals.

How did you get into music festivals?

Telling of crazy stories Jim witnessed first-hand.

What are some of the challenges of working at music festivals?



I retired and now consider myself a recovering attorney. Tired of chasing ambulances, I decided to ride in them. I became an EMT and later a Paramedic and spend my summers working at music festivals around the country. I love the vibe and energy I see from the mostly young fans even if the music gives me a headache!



"Working EMS at a music festival is an experience unlike any I've had. Hysterical, strange, and crazy real stories make this book a must read." Laura, EMT

"This book is not only going to be an awesome read, but I am absolutely honored to have been part of some of the stories within." Jerone, Paramedic

"You'd be amazed by what we see, how the fans react." Jon, EMT

THE CULTURE OF FESTIVALS

And why the stories make a great book.



According to Billboard magazine, 32 million people attend music festivals every year. In 2017, more than 100,000 people attended each day of Coachella, bringing in over \$100 million to the festival. The daily crowd at Lollapalooza in Chicago is larger than the population of all but five cities in Illinois. Since the inception of the music festival with Woodstock in 1969, such events have become big business. The appeal? A chance to see multiple bands over a long weekend and to party with family, friends, and like-minded strangers.

But there's another group of people who flock to the concerts – just not for the music. Known as “event paramedics,” these people are medical professionals who tend to the many people at these large gatherings.

I know because I am one of them.

Unsurprisingly, the event paramedic industry has also grown into big business. Entire companies now exist to provide medical care at overcrowded events. From bee stings and band-aids to overdoses and violence, the medical professionals play an important, though mostly hidden role.

I wrote this book because when I tell friends and family stories about my experiences as an event paramedic, they're either amazed, disgusted, or amused. Many times, they simply shake their heads in disbelief. These stories highlight what makes festivals both amazing and frightening. They also represent my passage from an inexperienced EMT to a seasoned and confident paramedic. Never would I have imagined myself in some of these situations back in the days when I was a lawyer. My wingtip shoes and Brooks Brothers suits would not have survived.

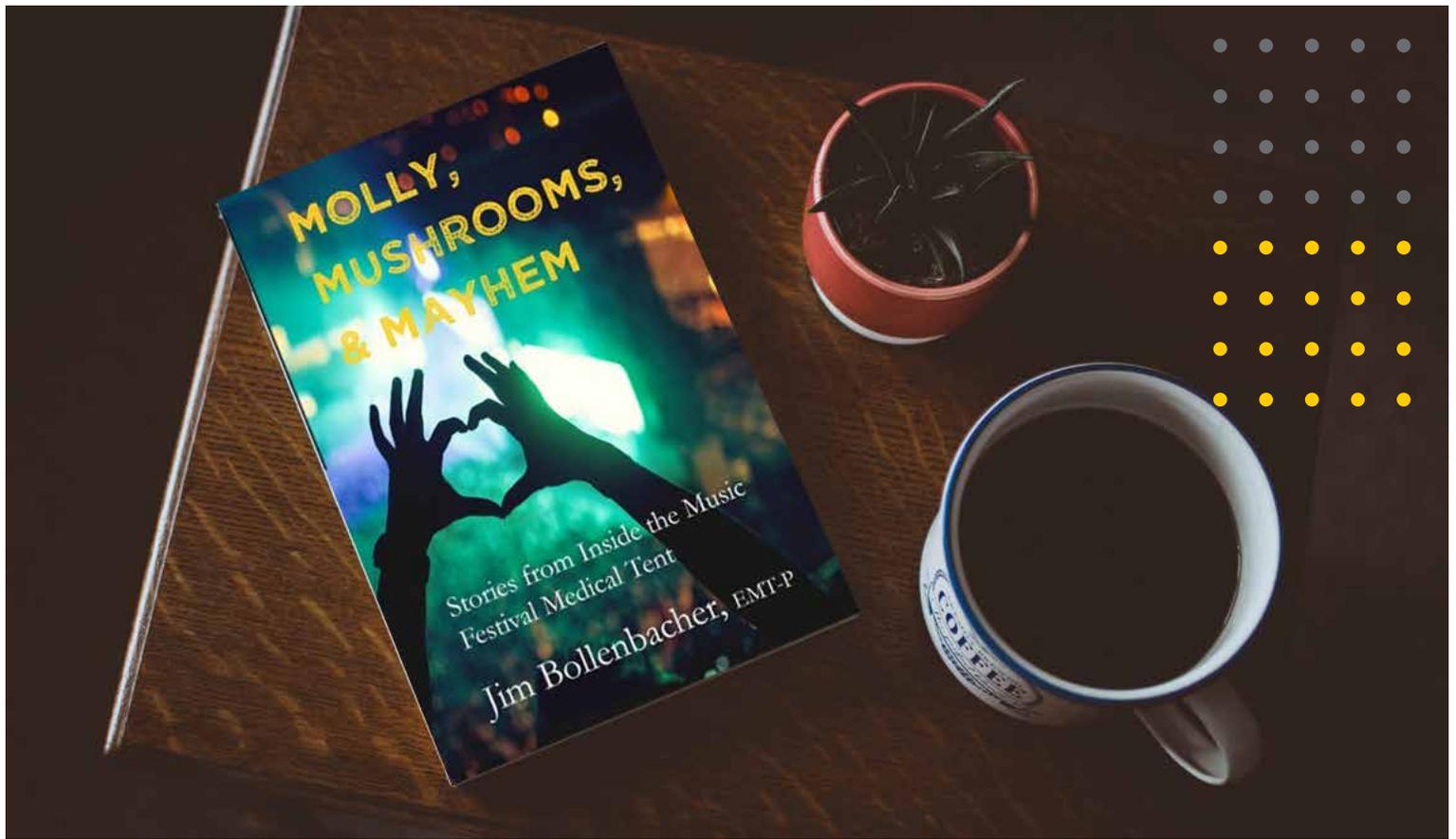
With the benefit of hindsight, I can share the humor and craziness from events that otherwise would have been grim. Of course, it's not my intention to downplay the possible risks involved in taking drugs or having a serious medical incident. In fact, I have worked at several large festivals where young adults have died. The impact of a death on the medical staff is palpable. I can't begin to imagine the effect on the families. Nevertheless, some unusual stuff happens within the medical tent that needs to be shared.

I want people to understand that these large events have dedicated medical professionals to care for anyone who needs help. Often, these professionals are volunteers, and when they are paid, the wages are usually just above minimum wage. They are there because they love what they do and have a passion for service.

The stories contained herein come not only from me, but from EMTs and paramedics from around the country with many years of experience working at these kinds of events. They remain unnamed out of respect for the event producers and the events themselves. I firmly believe that event producers go to great lengths to keep their events safe and the attendees healthy. If I thought otherwise, I would not continue to work for them, nor would many of my colleagues.

I hope as you read this book, you will recognize and honor the role of first responders, many of whom are caring for victims of the COVID-19 pandemic today. They deserve our respect and support.

All profits from the sale of this book will go to charities supporting first responders.



ENDORSEMENTS

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“Interesting tales of his experiences...covering the craziness of music festivals from the EMS perspective...funny stories that ring true...an enjoyable read about a little known aspect of the EMS experience.”

Peter Canning, author of *Paramedic: On the Front Lines of Medicine, and Rescue 471: A Paramedics Stories.*

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Molly, Mushrooms, & Mayhem is a must-read for anyone considering a medical career. Author Jim Bollenbacher flawlessly compiled stories from fellow first responders that showcase the unpredictability of working in the field and display a remarkable sense of compassion for patients. Packed with hilarity, reflections of personal growth, off-the-wall encounters, and medical/EMS tidbits, this is one book that won't disappoint.

Kerry Hamm, author of the series *Real Stories of a Small-Town ER*

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MEET JIM



Jim Bollenbacher

I had always been curious about medical issues. I was the guy who slowed down passing a car accident, resisting the urge to jump out to help, and I loved watching reality medical shows on TV. My mom was a nurse, but I never had an interest in medicine when I was young. Science just wasn't my thing. I wanted to be an FBI agent until I met one who was a monumental jerk. Subsequently, I chose law school instead. What I liked most about being a lawyer was the adrenaline rush of being in the courtroom, not the tedium of law office work.

When I retired early, I came across an EMT class at our local community college and took it just for fun. My instructor was an amazing educator, who I'm certain I drove crazy with my incessant questions. He showed me the practical aspects of physiology and how the body works. His enthusiasm and knowledge unlocked something in me that made me excited about the possibility of a new career.

After I graduated, I took jobs in a local hospital emergency room and with a music and sports event company. I enjoyed being an EMT and was able to see a lot in the ER, but my skills and knowledge were too limited to allow me to really do much. After a year, I decided that if I was going to pursue this, I needed the skills to work at a higher level. So, at age 60, I became one of the world's oldest paramedic students.

I went through the paramedic program at Northwest Community Hospital, which has the distinction of being the first paramedic program in Illinois. The head of the program was legendary for her knowledge and commitment to EMS teaching and our comprehensive course was 40 hours a week for the better part of 10 months. That included over 200 hours in the hospital and almost 700 hours on an ambulance. The absolute highlight of my training was getting to deliver a baby while working in Labor and Delivery. The doctor was right there with me, but the baby came into this world in my hands. It's hard to describe how amazing that felt. And seeing a cesarean section performed gave me newfound respect for both doctors and my wife.

I've discovered that the people in this profession are amazing. They are not just "ambulance drivers." They have life-saving skills and knowledge. I have also learned about the music festival culture, which was completely foreign to me.



Working at music festivals keeps me young. It's down and dirty, and it's an adrenaline rush. Every call can provide the tension and challenge of a Supreme Court argument, even if I eventually find out that the "emergency" is a naked man in the wrong camp. I love the chaos, the challenge, and the people. I love that I get dirty and sweaty instead of sitting behind a desk in an office. And I love that this work calls for the same kind of analysis and problem solving that being a lawyer or business leader required, only faster. People's lives are literally in your hands.

I was at the point in my life where I was ready to give back, to do something I felt really good about without worrying about the paycheck. I've been blessed to work with some really special people, but my EMT and paramedic colleagues are unequalled. Their skill and dedication at these festivals, and elsewhere, is remarkable, and I am in awe of them.

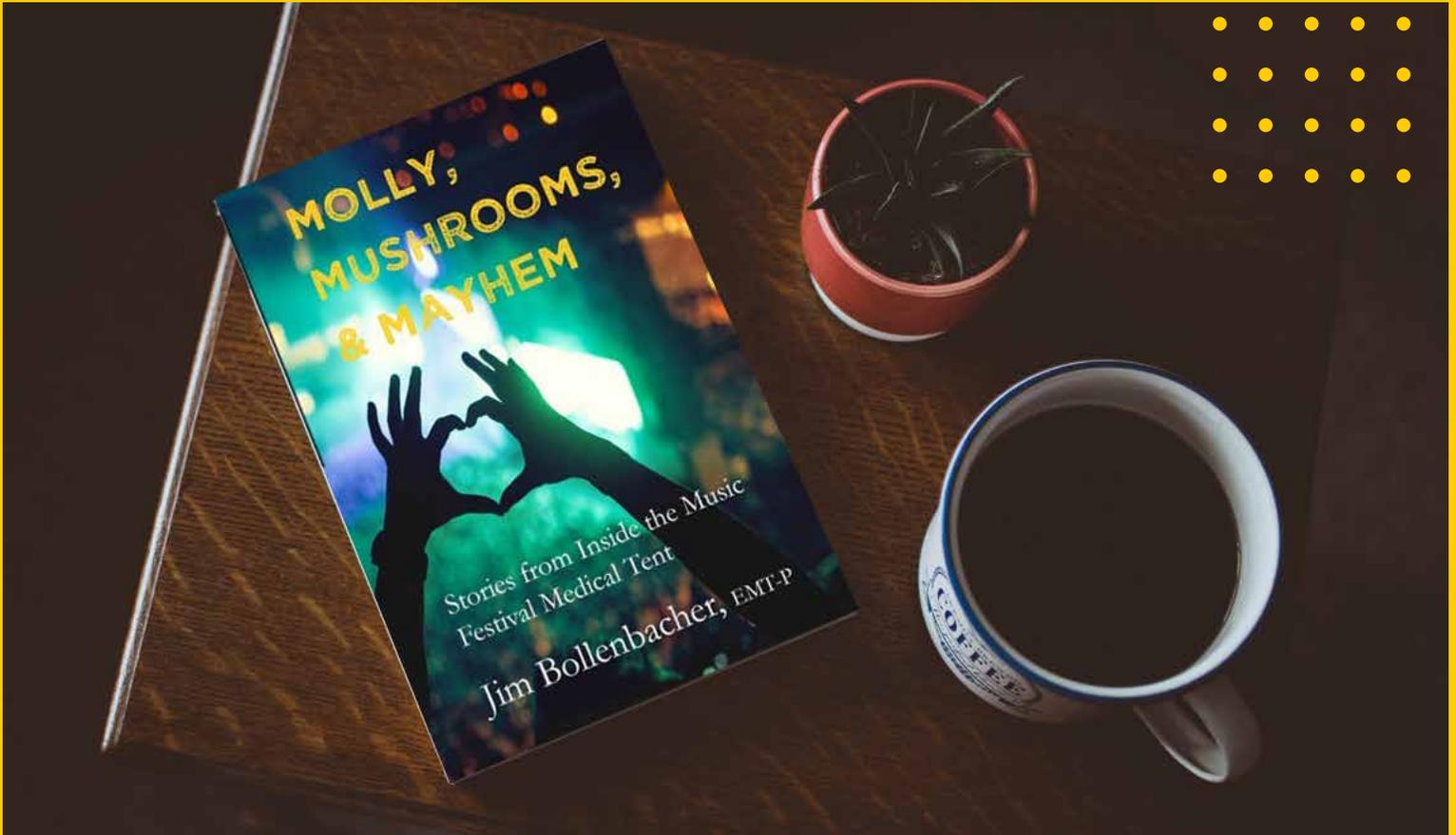
I grew up in a conservative, blue-collar home in western Pennsylvania where drugs and alcohol were definitely not an acceptable choice. My views on drug use were also heavily influenced by the hippie era. Only "those people" used drugs and were seen as ne'er-do-wells. It had also been a time when rumors of Vietnam veterans returning from war addicted to drugs like heroin flourished. No thanks, I thought.

Working at music festivals has softened me and my attitudes. These days, I don't advocate the use of illegal drugs, but neither do I condemn the way these young adults choose to live and have fun.

YOLO (You Only Live Once), right?

MOLLY, MUSHROOMS & MAYHEM AVAILABLE SOON ON AMAZON!

Jim B. available to chat & speak to your organization today!



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