

## EMT

205

By James Collins

In the early 1980s my brother-in-law, Owen McKeon, was an accountant with a major corporation in midtown Manhattan. He lived in Waldwick New Jersey, which was an easy commute and had a great school system. Small towns in New Jersey do not have much money and try to keep their taxes low, so many of the inhabitants volunteered their time and effort to support the various volunteer organizations. There was a complete volunteer fire department and Owen was involved with the volunteer ambulance service. Owen and several of his friends took various shifts to keep this critical service in operation.

On this particular day in the middle of the week, Owen was on call and the phone rang at about 2:30 in the morning. Owen had to rush to the ambulance service in the center of town next to the police station. There he met his neighbor Alan who was also on duty and they drove the town ambulance to the call address. There, the family was excited and highly emotional. Luigi, the 80-year-old patriarch of the family had a heart attack and was in desperate condition. They pulled out the gurney, and loaded Luigi into the ambulance to rush to the hospital. On the way to the hospital Luigi died.

As they pulled into the hospital emergency area they went to pull out the gurney but were stopped by the hospital doctor on duty who rushed out to the ambulance to meet them.

"You say he died on the way here?"

"Yeah, when we picked him up, he was still alive but we don't get a reading anymore so we bought him right here."

"I'm sorry we can't accept this individual in the hospital. If he is already dead, we cannot accept because this lowers our statistics and we can't afford that.

Hearing this, Owen rushed back into the rear of the ambulance and came rushing out all excited yelling "I got a pulse. I got a pulse. We got to get him inside right now." Then the two EMTs grabbed the gurney and took off at high-speed from the back of the ambulance. As they were running the gurney down the hall, Allen turned to Owen and said, "Did you really get a pulse?"

"Not on your life; he is dead as a door nail."

"Then why did you claim you got a pulse?"

"What are we gonna do? It's 4 o'clock in the morning. Do you want to go back to the house and say, "*Luigi is back. You may have to put him on ice.*" Luigi's dead; we can't just

**drop him off on his porch. His people suffered enough but the hospital doesn't care except about their statistics."**

**They pulled the gurney out, rolled it into the hospital Emergency Entrance, and rushed it into the emergency room. With that Owen said to his buddy, "Let's go we just got another call." They turned around, grabbed another empty gurney and physically ran out the door and into the ambulance. Then they drove back to Waldwick, went home and prepared to go to work.**

**THE END**