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## Imperial Food Products Fire

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Twenty-five food workers, trapped behind pad-locked doors, lost their lives when a fire ripped through the Imperial Food Processing Plant in Hamlett, North Carolina. Aware of the limited assets and insurance available to Imperial, the plaintiffs' counsel identified every conceivable material that could have been a source of fuel or toxic gasses. While some suits were initially filed in the decedents' home states of North and South Carolina, a creative consortium of some of the best known plaintiffs' lawyers in America filed suit in state court in Beaumont, Texas.

Fearing the plaintiff-oriented forum of Beaumont and taking advantage of the bankruptcy of Imperial, defendants removed the case to U.S. District Court in Beaumont, Texas and later were successful in transferring the case to federal court in North Carolina. The U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ultimately reversed and sent the case back to federal court in Texas, where we ultimately obtained dismissal of the claims against our clients.

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