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Sixth Avenue Telephone Exchange

In 1980 a fire erupted in the large telephone exchange building on Wall Street. The fire burned largely out of control; approximately 17,000 pounds of wire insulation were consumed. The plume of acrid smoke was visible as far away as Boston. Over 200,000 phones in the greater Wall Street area were disconnected, some for many days. The potential damage claims were enormous.

More than 750 firefighters fought the blaze with little success. Many were overcome by acrid smoke and hospitalized. They filed suit to recover for personal injuries and to set a new legal standard for potential firefighter claims across the country.

We appeared at the first trial in Brooklyn for AT&T, Bell Labs and Nextel as special trial counsel in the lead case. It was satisfactorily resolved six weeks later and, as a result, no additional lawsuits followed.

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