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In an Accident, Some Fear a Real Estate Opportunity

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... Down the street, at 301-303 East 50th Street, a sweet gray building with a Beaux-Arts feel, the owners of a restaurant on the ground floor, Crave Ceviche Bar, are fighting in court to insist that the landlord make repairs rather than tear it down in order to build bigger. The restaurant's lawyers are arguing that damage from the crane accident isn't so extensive that it absolves the owners of their obligation to the lease. But the tenants have already been given notice that their lease has been terminated as of June 1.

Given the perverse logic of Manhattan real estate, the crane accident, a symbol of runaway development in New York, may end up paving the way for even more of it. "The landlord has no motivation to do repairs when he could tear a building down and build a highly profitable office tower instead," says **Adam Leitman Bailey**, the lawyer for Crave Ceviche Bar.

So one developer's catastrophe could become another one's boon. But for now, a similar cash-in won't be happening at 954 Second Avenue, where Ms. Tinnerello says she intends to hang on until she's carried out ...