



It's **spring** home improvement time

By **B. Scott Mohr**
Editor

If you've been using the lousy weather as an excuse not to get started on that long anticipated spring project, you'll have to come up with a new reason real soon as the forecast is calling for sunny weather and highs in the 70s by Sunday.

So if it's a room addition, an updated kitchen or bathroom, a deck or landscaping that you've put on the back burner because you lack the know-how to tackle such an endeavor, there's no need to fret ... an abundance of Southside companies are eager to offer their expertise and talents.

The craftsmanship and reputation of the following individuals and companies should be able to ensure a well-done job.

General contractors

A reliable company is B. Davis Remodeling (317-781-0566), which is owned by Bill Davis. He stresses the importance of checking references and says, "It's the homeowner's responsibility to check on contractors. You are interviewing them for a job. You can check them out on social media," he said, noting that the Better Business Bureau and Angie's List are also excellent resources.

"And make sure your contractor is licensed and bonded in Indianapolis. The city is strict on its requirements, he said, so if a company has those credentials, it is doing good work. "Also make sure the contractor gets a building permit. If they don't, something is wrong."

"We use energy-efficient and topnotch products, but I don't believe in spending someone's money if it doesn't have to be spent. If the job is done right, there will be a profit. A rushed job never gets done well. We are not just a sign-and-build company. We want you happy today, tomorrow and for the next 20 years," said the 1982 Roncalli graduate.

A specialist in bathrooms, kitchens, additions, screened porches, basements, roofing, siding and windows, Davis said he strives for perfection because that ensures the end result is always acceptable. If a company shoots for acceptable, then the finished product is not.

Don Harris Home Improvement (317-787-3250) has done more than 3,750 remodeling projects on homes in Indianapolis, including complete home improvements, siding, roofing, room additions, porches, replacement gutters and windows, hail and wind storm repairs, garage conversions and much more.

The business was started 50 years ago by Don Harris' father, and Don traded in his paper route to help his father with roofing.

"We provide a high level of customer service, and we work to ensure that you're happy with the finished project," Harris said. "If you have an idea of what you want your project to look like, we'll design and build it with high-quality materials and excellent workmanship."

"If you have had storm damage, we'll provide you a competitive estimate for your repairs and work with your insurance company. "No job is too big or too small for us. We'll work with you to bring your home improvement dream to fruition."

You can also find a reputable general contractor in Yoder Construction Services (317-440-8920), which had been owned by Kim Yoder for 10 years.

"We can handle any project out there," he said, "but I really like remodeling bathrooms and kitchens and building pole barns. We do a lot of room additions and decks."

Yoder's company also builds custom closets and garage cabinets and does window treatments (blinds, shades, shutters) and basement build-outs.

"We are honest and fair-minded, and we offer free estimates. We do what we say we're going to do. Our motto is 'Built with integrity and fine craftsmanship.'"

"If you have had storm damage, we'll provide you a competitive estimate for your repairs and work with your insurance company. "No job is too big or too small for us. We'll work with you to bring your home improvement dream to fruition."

"We'll work with you to bring your home improvement dream to fruition."

- Sean Harris
Don Harris
Home Improvement

Roofing

Upton's Roofing & Repair Service (317-634-8416) has been providing exceptional roofing services to central Indiana since 1970.

"We strive to provide highly professional service that you can trust for top quality," said owner Grover Upton, who is also a licensed general contractor.

By offering a variety of services, including complete roof tear-offs, total reroofing, siding replacement and repair, soffit replacement and repair, windows, seamless gutter installation (including gutter guards) and specialized work, Upton's Roofing has built a solid reputation throughout the decades.

"We offer free estimates and guarantee our workmanship," Upton said.

The Midwest gets more than its share of extreme weather, which has a way of wreaking havoc on our homes. With regard to roofing, homeowners should be aware of certain facts whenever a big storm hits.

"Hail can cause the protective granule coating on shingles to loosen and fall off," he said.

In addition, a winter that includes a lot of snow, ice and cold weather may result in a condition known as "ice dam buildup," which is a ridge that forms at the edge of the roof and prevents melting snow from draining off. The water that backs up can leak into insulation and other areas. Upton's can evaluate the problem and offer a cost-effective solution.

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Bill Davis,
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SPRING IS HERE!



SOUTHSIDER VOICE PHOTO BY AL STILLEY
American goldfinches are a sign of spring in Indiana. The males (like the one here) are colorful in the spring and summer but lose their brilliance in the winter. The females aren't as bright.

Hardware stores

Menards, 7140 S. Emerson Ave. and 300 S. Marlin Drive, Greenwood, is a full-service home improvement store that provide building products and plans and custom or do-it-yourself home improvement project supplies.

Shoppers will also find a complete line of appliances, home decor, plumbing supplies, outdoor recreation products like camping gear and boating and fishing supplies, tools, hardware products, lighting, patio furniture, landscaping materials and other items too numerous to mention.

For the do-it-yourselfers who don't need a lot of assistance with their projects, they can turn to Cardwell Do-it Best Home Center, 3205 Madison Ave. (317-788-0008), for most of their supplies. Customers will find building materials, painting, roofing, plumbing and electrical supplies, doors and windows, power tools and much more.

Opened in 1945, the business has evolved over the years, but its commitment to serving customers hasn't changed, said owner Jeff Cardwell, who can boast that his store is a premier roofing outlet because of its vast inventory of shingles and roofing supplies.

"Without the support of our customers, we wouldn't be here."

Teaming to build two homes

Missionary work does not have to be in a foreign land; it can take place right here on the Southside.

That's why the Fuller Center for Housing, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the Old Southside Neighborhood Association and Mount Pleasant Christian Church have joined forces to build two homes on East Craven Street.

The future homeowners work alongside volunteers and then repay the costs of materials on terms they can afford, with no interest charged or profit made.

The center's mission statement is: "Fuller homes are a hand up, not a hand out." The center, a faith-driven and Christ-centered organization, also repairs homes to provide adequate shelter for those in need.

Construction begins April 30, and volunteers and donations are still needed. A similar project, billed "The Miracle on Craven," took place in 2015.

Visit www.fullercenter.org/centralindiana or call 317-493-8914 for more information.

Concrete, masonry and asphalt

Bob Meek, who has been in business for more than 30 years, owns Meek & Son Construction (317-514-2405), a foundation-to-chimney company.

He is a firm believer in getting several references and estimates. "Don't be afraid to ask for references, and don't settle for a phone number that the company guy throws at you," he says. "It could be a friend of his. There are a lot of people who do good work, but just a few disreputable companies can give us a bad name. We do good work."

Meek says the quality of his work is evidenced by the amount of referrals he gets. "Our work speaks for itself."

His family-operated business specializes in masonry, interior and exterior painting, gutters and pouring concrete for patios.

If your chimney needs to be cleaned, inspected or repaired, a call to Tracy Gibson (317-294-3566) will take care of all your worries. In addition to cleaning and inspecting most chimneys for \$100, he is an accomplished mason, having been in the trade for years.

Gibson said he offers the lowest prices and fast service. Should you need an asphalt professional, there's Raymond Elkins, who has owned Indy Curb Appeal Asphalt for more than 20 years. Elkins specializes in patching and paving, seal coating, filling cracks and striping lots and can be reached at 317-985-2029 for free estimates.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO
An unidentified child lends a helping hand during the 2015 build.

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Tree removal and topping

While the Southside has been spared the wrath of widespread severe weather the past couple of springs, it may lurk on the horizon. Should high winds send trees crashing onto your home or yard, you'll need someone dependable to pick up the pieces ... and Airborne Tree Service (317-362-9064), owned by Paul Morton since 1983, is one of the companies that you will want to contact for a free estimate.

Morton offers 24-hour emergency service, tree trimming, shaping and/or topping, tree and stump removal and lot clearing. He also sells firewood. His newest piece of equipment is an 83-foot boom that fits through a 42-inch gate. "We can get to a lot of places that other tree companies can't," he said.

"Business has been great this year except for the rain ... we keep losing days because of it."

Another well-established company is E. White's Tree Service (317-786-4076), which has been owned by Earl White for more than 30 years. He also offers 24-hour emergency service, trims, tops and fertilizes trees, removes stumps, clears lots, does shrub work and sells firewood. He is fully insured and offers free estimates.

"If you want some free wood chips, just call us for free delivery," White said.

Also dependable is TLC Tree Service, which was launched by David and Tracy Chupp in 1987, the same year they were married. They trim trees, remove stumps, hedges and fences and sell all types of firewood, with delivery service available.

"We're a small family business that wants to keep our customers happy," said Tracy, who added that they enjoy their work, even though it does get a little hot in the summer. "But we work in the heat when it is necessary."

Another reliable tree guy is Danny White, who owns Danny's Tree Service. "The business has been in our family for four generations, and we do it all when it comes to trees. We top, trim, remove and feed them, grind stumps and sell firewood. We also cable forked trees ... that's where the forks are connected by cables so they can't split away from the tree and cause damage to nearby property. This provides homeowners with peace of mind."

White also treats ash trees that have been infested by emerald ash borers. "There's a 50-50 chance that a tree can survive, if it's treated soon enough. But you have to treat it annually."

White, who offers 24-hour emergency service and free estimates, is confident that he provides professional work at reasonable prices. "That's why 85 percent of my business comes from word-of-mouth. "I offer free estimates and discounts to senior citizens."

Contrary to popular belief, spring and fall aren't the only times to trim trees, according to an arborist, who added that most trees can be pruned anytime. However, there is a plus to having trees cut back in early spring and late fall ... there are no leaves to clean up. And some companies will work for a discount when business is slow during the winter.

Landscaping, lawn care and hauling

If you are looking for a top-notch, full-service landscaping company, you can't go wrong with Kenny Albers Landscaping (317-319-2617). Kenny Albers has been in the business 40 years,

and he got his start with his dad, Charles Albers, who started the family-owned business in 1950.

"I do everything except lawn care," Kenny said. "I install and remove trees and shrubs, and I pour concrete for sidewalks, patios, driveways and ponds. I deliver top soil, and I can resolve drainage issues. I can pretty much do anything when it comes to landscaping."

A leader in lawn care is Cragen's Lawn Service (317-507-3767). It was established in 1998 by Bob Cragen as a spin-off of his grandfather's company, Cragen Lawn Care, which has been chemically treating lawns since 1977.

Cragen might be the most educated man running a lawn care business as he has a bachelor's degree from the University of Indianapolis and a master's from Ball State. He has taught at Chatard, Central Nine Career Center and Perry Meridian High School and currently teaches business in Wayne Township.

Bob's boys, Blake, 15, Brock, 14, and wife Stacy play a key role in his business. "Our family enjoys meeting people within the community and helping out" Cragen said.

Cragen offers spring and fall cleanups, landscape design and installation, mulch refreshing, aeration, lawn seeding and tree and shrub planting in addition to mowing.

A visit to www.cragenlawn.green will showcase all of his services.

The Turf Touch (317-445-3811) has been owned by Bryan Hendricks and his wife, Margaret, since 1994.

"As a family-owned business, we've spent years fine-tuning our processes to provide the best service possible to our customers," said Bryan, who offers free estimates. "Most of our customers have found that six applications per year give them the best results, but we will work with you to tailor our tried and true program to fit the needs of your lawn."

"Our primary goal is to work with you to bring your lawn to life. We take pride in our work and would like the opportunity to be your lawn care provider."

A complete list of the company's services, which include mowing, mulching and aerating, can be found at www.theturftouch.com.

Fred & Sons' Hauling & Tree Removal Service (317-626-5973)



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Paul Morton, who owns Airborne Tree Service, has an 83-foot boom that can fit through a 42-inch gate when its legs are contracted.

was launched in 2002 by Don Burns, a lifelong Southsider who enjoys servicing metro Indianapolis. He started his company as a side job but has hired a few full-time employees.

The business, which caters to home owners and real estate professionals and provides quality work at an affordable price, specializes in hauling services, removing junk, cleaning up properties, demolition work, tree topping, trimming and removal and lawn mowing. "The top five items that we haul away are brush piles, books, clothes, couches and old TVs. If you are in violation of a health code, we can help you comply," Burns said. "The tree that we remove most often are the pines. Due to the emerald ash borer, we are seeing an increase in the removal of infested ash trees."

The company has won many Super Service Awards from Angie's List and is a member of ITEX, a nationwide barter network.

Jeff George, who has owned Jeff's Lawn & Landscaping (317-523-7921) for four years and has more than 24 years' experience in the business, having worked with his dad and brother for 20 years.

"I mow, aerate and overseed lawns and trim bushes; now's the perfect time to aerate you lawn, said George, who explained that aerating involves perforating the soil with small holes to allow air, water and nutrients to penetrate to the grass roots. This helps the roots grow deeply and produce a stronger, more vigorous lawn. The main reason for aerating is to alleviate soil compaction.

George said he also edges driveways and sidewalks, cleans brush and weeds out of fences and does small landscaping jobs.

Garage doors

When it comes to installing garage doors, openers and springs, Garage Doors by John Walke (317-670-8037) is known for its excellent work.

A 30-plus year veteran in the business, John Walke founded his company in 2006 and offers next-day service when repairing doors. The installation of a door with an opener can take up to a week since the door has to be ordered.

Cloypay doors and Liftmaster openers are the brands that he uses because of their reliability. "There are a lot of products out there, but I stay away from the junk," said Walke, adding that keyless entries are becoming popular because people don't have to take their keys with them when they go for a walk.

The bulk of his business is residential, but he has some commercial jobs and occasionally hangs barn doors for country folks.

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It's time to landscape, plant, swim and cook out

Flowers and plants

In the market for colorful bedding flowers, hearty vegetable plants or breath-taking geraniums?

Then head to Heidenreich Greenhouses, 502 National Ave. (317-786-1528), where the Heidenreich family puts a little love and sweat into everything it grows and sells.

Bill and Pat Heidenreich launched the business in 1956, with son Bill at the helm now. "While the greenhouse business has changed drastically over the past 30 years, one thing has remained constant: the quality of plants and flowers that we sell," said the younger Bill, who is proud of everything he sells. "Our geraniums are our pride and joy."

"We have a multitude of tomato and pepper plants. We also have cucumber and berry plants, ferns, trumpet vines, tropical plants, clematises, Baltic ivy, hanging baskets, New Guinea impatiens, 75 varieties of potted perennials, onion sets and 25 kinds of vegetable seeds," said Heidenreich, who is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays.

"When customers come here they find better quality than what is available at the big-box stores. I tell my customers that we don't have the best, but we sure don't have junk. If you don't find what you are looking for here, stop by the other family-owned shops on the Southside; chances are they might have it. I always contend that locally grown plants always prove best."

Another prominent retailer of bedding flowers, vegetable plants, hanging baskets, planters, perennials and flowering shrubs is Gary Greenhouse, 4706 Bluff Road (317-786-0917), which opened in 1947 and is operated by the third-generation owners of Scott and Melinda Gary.

The husband-and-wife team is hosting its annual open house from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday and will treat guests to free hot dogs and beverages. There will also be drawings each day for a \$50 gift certificate and free plants. The Garys will be open from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. weekdays beginning Monday (they close at 5 p.m. now). Weekend hours will remain the same.

Butler's Flowers & Plants, 2401 W. Morris St. (317-634-6067), owned by retired fireman Sam Butler, is known for its abundant supply of beautiful flowers and plants, including herbs, tropical plants, shrubs, hostas and hanging baskets.

"My great-grandfather started gardening on this land 107 years ago," Butler said.

"We carry tons of stuff. I think we have more flowers and plants than anyone in Indianapolis. We have 62,000 square feet under plastic. That's a lot to heat. We are burning through some gas. The weather is killing us; we are about three weeks behind schedule, but



SOUTHSIDER VOICE PHOTO BY BRETT SAWYERS

Billy Heidenreich, who owns Heidenreich Greenhouses, 502 E. National Ave., has an outstanding variety of hanging baskets, bedding flowers and vegetable plants, etc.



Beautiful succulents and pansies from Butler's Greenhouse.



SOUTHSIDER VOICE PHOTOS BY ALEX SMITH

the forecast is favorable."

Butler's flats contain 36 to 48 plants and cost \$16. "You can mix and match them any way you want, and that includes vegetables. You can easily spend several hours looking at our flowers and plants."

Butler is known for robust plants at low prices. You can check out his merchandise from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sundays.

Pools, fireplaces, grills and more

People who assume that Pool City, 940 Fry Road, Greenwood (317-888-3933), only carries pool-related merchandise are badly mistaken.

In addition to specializing in Fiberglas and vinyl liner in-ground pools, replacement liners, heaters, pumps, automatic covers, the company also sells fireplace inserts, gas logs, wood-burning and gas stoves, grills, smokers, spas and chemicals.

"Our priority is making sure our customers receive the best value for their money," said owners Chris and Lynn Newett. "We take pride in offering quality products and exemplary service."

"As a family business, we understand families. Pool City has more than 40 years of experience building in-ground pools. Given our strong family ties, we understand the importance of spending quality family time together. What better way to spend family time than around a new in-ground pool."



Gary Greenhouse, 4706 Bluff Road, will host an open house from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Excavating services

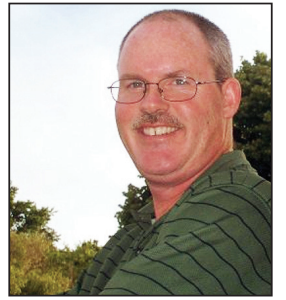
If it's a topnotch excavating company that you're looking for, English Excavating (317-888-2282) has been satisfying its clients since being founded by Lowell English in 1958.

Now operated by his sons, Mark and Mick English, the company remains committed to the late Lowell English's belief of providing the highest standard of quality and service in the industry.

"We specialize in sewer/water lines and installing and repairing septic systems," said Mick. "We mainly do one-day projects and small commercial jobs. Our goal is to provide our clients with a strong responsive excavation team that knows how to get the done correctly, on time, within budget and with pride."

"We provide our clients with the best value for their dollar. And it does not stop when the construction project is complete. Service afterward has always been a part of our tradition and commitment."

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Home improvements

Sale at Karen Mercers Interiors

Karen Mercer, who owns Karen Mercer Interiors & Other Fabulous Finds, 2220 E. Southport Road (317-786-2828), is holding a retirement sale. She is offering 40 percent off all store-owned accessories and 25 percent off all new accessories, and there is a clearance sale on furniture. Hours are 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

"Please stop in and say hi as we celebrate 31 1/2 years in Southport," Mercer said. "We will continue to accept consignment and will not take additional markdowns on your items until the standard 30 days. The split is still 50-50."

"Thank you for all of your support."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A retirement sale is underway at Karen Mercer Interiors & Other Fabulous Finds, 2220 E. Southport Road.

Karen Mercer Interiors & Other Fabulous Finds

2220 E. Southport Road • Indianapolis, IN 46227

40% OFF Retirement Sale

After 31-1/2 years we have listed our building and hope to retire in 2018.

Please come help us celebrate.

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Flooring

A leader in flooring products and services is Flooring by Stretch Rite (317-784-1768), which was started by Paul Hornaday in 1966 and is well-known for its motto of "You'll love us under your feet."

He was joined in the trade by son Dan in 1980, and the duo has built a successful business, one that carries luxurious carpet, fashionable porcelain tiles and durable hardwood laminate and vinyl.

While Paul has retired, Dan's daughter, Samantha Kren, is the third generation to join the company. With a strong background in decorating, she provides invaluable service when it comes to helping customers select the right flooring.

Although Flooring by Stretch Rite, 4030 Madison Ave., is a small company, Dan says customers are continually amazed by their reasonable prices. "We belong to a large buying group out of Chicago, and that allows us to be competitive with everyone. We employ our installers, who provide unbeatable service and installation."

Drywalling, painting

Dave Nunn, who owns Nunn's Drywall & Painting (317-717-9322), said he takes great pride in his work, and that workmanship is evident in the amount of referrals received during his nearly 25 years in business.

While drywall and painting are his specialties, Nunn also builds decks to suit the ever-diverse needs of his clients. "I also seal decks," he said. "I do a lot of handyman work... set door frames, do framing and replace exterior trim. When I'm painting I often discover that the trim is bad, so I've replaced a lot of trim."

"We're really busy right now. Everybody is trying to get a jump on summer," said Nunn, who offers free estimates and emphasized that he does quality work at reasonable prices.

Plumbing

If you are looking for a dependable plumber, Bob and Steve Starks will say look no further than Starks Plumbing Service (317-767-7512), which was founded by their grandfather, Wayne Starks, and his father, Robert L. Starks, and passed down through the family.

The Starks brothers attended St. Mark Grade School and Perry Meridian High.

Their forte is residential installation and repair work. Services include installing water heaters and softeners, garbage disposals, sinks, faucets, toilets, etc.

"We are an established company that you can depend on," they said. "We strive to treat our customers with respect and leave a positive impression before we leave their homes. We install the same brands and quality products that we have in our homes and stand behind our workmanship long after the standard one-year period. We feel fortunate to be in a trade that we enjoy and find rewarding."

Rental equipment and party needs

You can depend on Indy Rents, 3016 W. Southport Road, for all your equipment and party rental needs. Owner Kelley Bowling carries a variety of small and large equipment, ensuring that she'll have something to suit your needs. All you need is a major credit card and a current Indiana driver's license.

"Whether you need to do some work around your house or are a contractor who has a job to complete, we have what you need," she said. "It is our goal to constantly deliver customer satisfaction, which we ensure by having the finest equipment at the best prices."

Among the items available for rent are pressure washers, air compressors, plumbing tools, log splitters, forklifts, generators, scaffolding, saws, chippers, backhoes, stump grinders, pumps, floor care machines, fans, tents, tables, chairs, concession machines and bounce houses.

"We can help you throw the perfect backyard party," said Bowling, who can be reached at 317-859-859 for information about rates and her complete line of equipment.

Air conditioning and heating

With summer just around the corner – at least that's what the meteorologists keep saying – and the possibility that Mother Nature might deliver a torrid blast, you might want to add the phone number of Lamping/Huser Heating & Cooling (317-782-1524) to your speed dial just in case your air conditioner goes on the blink. But with the extended winter we're having, you may be more concerned about your furnace.

Regardless of your concern, Jim and Chris Huser take pride in providing quality service and installation at a fair price. Before teaming in 1990 to form their business, they worked independently. The two reasoned that by pooling their resources they could provide a service that was second to none. They work with Armstrong equipment, which is made in the United States. Sixty percent of their business comes from the residential sector, with the rest being business accounts.

"We really value our longtime customers and appreciate all the leads they have given us," they said. "Word-of-mouth is the best form of advertising."

Blind sales, cleaning

Indy Shades (317-888-2334), established more than 23 years ago by Steve Cambridge, sells Hunter Douglas and Lafayette

Interior Fashion blinds and is known for its expertise in the ultrasonic cleaning of venetian, vertical and soft shades.

"This process will make your window treatments look brand new," said Cambridge, whose shop is located at 360 Market Plaza, Suite 1, Greenwood. "With our specially formulated detergents, we also lubricate the gears and protect the cords. We can accommodate quick turnaround times, and we are very reasonable."

Why ultrasonics? With ultrasound, the blinds are thoroughly and inexpensively cleaned with high-frequency sound waves, which create millions of tiny bubbles that implode and scour the surface.

Good luck
with all of
your spring
home
improvement
needs!

SPRING CLEANING ON EARTH DAY



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Rosa Parks Elementary School teacher Whitney Van Cleave (left) and some of her second-grade students cleaned up Bluff Park on Earth Day, April 22.

She is seen with (front, from left) Aubrie Crose, Elora Swan, EmaKate Fox, Emma Moore, Jaden Porter, Suyash Shrivastava, Leah Elsner; (back) Liam Fikes, Gus Zupan, Landon Mennel, Cruz Duncan, Alyvia Webb and Charisma Lowe.



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