

Five Nights at Freddy's (film)

Five Nights at Freddy's is a 2023 American supernatural horror film based on the video game series of the same name created by Scott Cawthon. Directed by Emma Tammi, who co-wrote the screenplay with Cawthon and Seth Cuddeback, the film stars Josh Hutcherson as a troubled security guard who starts a job at an abandoned pizzeria where he discovers its animatronic mascots are possessed by murdered children. Elizabeth Lail, Piper Rubio, Mary Stuart Masterson, and Matthew Lillard star in supporting roles.

Development of a *Five Nights at Freddy's* film adaptation began in April 2015 under the direction of Warner Bros. Pictures. Roy Lee, David Katzenberg, and Seth Grahame-Smith were set to produce it, with Gil Kenan announced as director and co-writer. After multiple production delays, Kenan resigned from the project, and further development on the film was transferred from Warner Bros. to Jason Blum's Blumhouse Productions. Chris Columbus was hired to direct and co-write, ultimately leaving the project and being replaced by Emma Tammi in October 2022. It was filmed from February to April 2023 in New Orleans and surrounding communities on a budget of \$20 million.

Five Nights at Freddy's was simultaneously released for streaming on <u>Peacock</u> and theatrically in the United States on October 27, 2023, by <u>Universal Pictures</u>. The film received generally negative reviews from critics but was a commercial success, grossing \$297 million and becoming Blumhouse's highest-grossing film worldwide, surpassing <u>Split</u> (2016). A sequel, *Five Nights at Freddy's 2*, is scheduled to be released on December 5, 2025. [5]

Plot

In Freddy Fazbear's Pizza, a once-successful abandoned <u>pizzeria</u>, a scared night security guard attempts to flee from the building but is captured and strapped to a torture device, which kills him.

Sometime later, mall security guard Mike Schmidt is fired for assaulting a negligent father whom he mistook for a kidnapper. Mike's career counselor, Steve Raglan, offers him a job as a night guard at the pizzeria. Though initially reluctant, Mike accepts

Five Nights at Freddy's



Theatrical release poster

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Directed by	Emma Tammi		
Screenplay by	Scott Cawthon		
	Seth Cuddeback		
	Emma Tammi		
Story by	Scott Cawthon		
	Chris Lee Hill		
	Tyler MacIntyre		
Based on	Five Nights at		
	Freddy's		
	by Scott Cawthon		
Produced by	Scott Cawthon		
	Jason Blum		
Starring	Josh Hutcherson		
	Elizabeth Lail		
	Piper Rubio		
	Mary Stuart Masterson		
	Matthew Lillard		

after <u>social services</u> threaten to take custody of his younger sister, Abby, and pass her to their estranged aunt, Jane, who desires the custody's monthly payments.

During his first night on the job, Mike falls asleep and dreams about the kidnapping of his little brother, Garrett. He meets five children who also witnessed the crime, but flee when he approaches them. The following day, Jane hires a gang of vandals, which includes Abby's babysitter, Max, to vandalize the pizzeria to get Mike fired and hasten Jane's custody of Abby. At Mike's shift that night, he meets police officer Vanessa Shelly, who explains that the building closed during the 1980s after children were murdered there. Once Mike's shift ends and he leaves, the vandals break in, but the pizzeria's animatronic mascots—Freddy Fazbear, Bonnie, Chica, Foxy, and Mr. Cupcake—kill the entire group. Max's disappearance forces Mike to bring Abby along on his next shift, in which the animatronics befriend Abby and Mike discovers that they are possessed by the ghosts of the missing children, who consistently mention a "vellow rabbit".

On the fourth night, Abby is accidentally injured when she, Mike, and Vanessa are bonding with the animatronics. The next morning, Mike reluctantly gets Jane to babysit a frustrated Abby as he goes back to the pizzeria and takes some sleeping pills. The

Cinematography	Lyn Moncrief		
Edited by	Andrew Wesman		
	William Paley		
Music by	The Newton Brothers		
Production companies	Blumhouse Productions Scott Cawthon		
	Productions		
Distributed by	Universal Pictures		
Release dates	October 25, 2023 (United Kingdom)		
	October 27, 2023 (United States)		
Running time	109 minutes ^[1]		
Country	United States		
Language	English		
Budget	\$20 million ^[2]		
Box office	\$297.2 million ^{[3][4]}		

children appear in his dream again and tell him that he can stay with Garrett forever in exchange for Abby. Mike initially accepts, but when he changes his mind, he is attacked. After being strapped to the torture device that killed the previous guard and narrowly escaping, Mike is cornered and injured. Meanwhile, a damaged yellow Freddy animatronic, possessed by the leader of the children, kills Jane and takes Abby back to the pizzeria.

Vanessa treats Mike's injuries and reveals that she is the daughter of William Afton, the serial killer who kidnapped and murdered Garrett and the other children. He hid their bodies in the animatronics, and now, their souls are under his control. Realizing that the animatronics plan to kill Abby and have her join them in the afterlife, Mike rushes to the pizzeria. The animatronics are defeated but are reactivated by Steve, who arrives wearing the "yellow rabbit" suit, $\frac{[b]}{}$ and reveals himself to be William. Mike tries to incapacitate William, but is easily overpowered. Vanessa also attempts to stop William, but he stabs her with a knife.

Abby remembers that the animatronics like drawings and draws a picture of William murdering the children to free from his influence and make them realize the truth. With Mike's help, Abby shows the drawing to the animatronics, who turn on William. Mr. Cupcake bites off part of William's suit, triggering its internal springlock mechanisms, which fatally wound him. As the animatronics drag William away, Mike and Abby carry Vanessa out of the collapsing pizzeria.

Some time later, Vanessa has fallen into a <u>coma</u> and is hospitalized, while Mike and Abby have reconciled and resume their normal lives. Back at the pizzeria, the leader of the children watches a dying William in the suit before leaving him to his fate.

Cast



Josh Hutcherson (left) and Matthew Lillard (right) respectively play Mike Schmidt and William Afton.

- Josh Hutcherson as Mike Schmidt, a struggling young man who takes a job as the night guard of Freddy Fazbear's Pizza
 - Wyatt Parker as young Mike Schmidt
- Piper Rubio as Abby, Mike's younger sister
- Elizabeth Lail as Vanessa, a local police officer
- Matthew Lillard as Steve Raglan / William Afton, Mike's career counselor
- Mary Stuart Masterson as Aunt Jane, Mike and Abby's aunt
- Kat Conner Sterling as Max, Abby's babysitter
- David Lind as Jeff, the leader of a juvenile gang and Max's brother
- Christian Stokes as Hank, a member of Jeff's gang
- Joseph Poliquin as Carl, a member of Jeff's gang
- Grant Feely as Ghost Kid (Blonde Boy), the murdered child whose soul haunts Golden Freddy
- Asher Colton Spence as Ghost Kid (With Hook), the murdered child whose soul haunts Foxy
- David Huston Doty as Ghost Kid (With Bunny Ears), the murdered child whose soul haunts Bonnie
- Liam Hendrix as Ghost Kid (With Hat), the murdered child whose soul haunts Freddy Fazbear
- Jophielle Love as Ghost Kid (Blue-Eyed Girl), the murdered child whose soul haunts Chica
- Tadasay Young as Dr. Lillian, Abby's therapist
- Michael P. Sullivan as Doug, Jane's lawyer
- Lucas Grant as Garrett, Mike's younger brother who was abducted as a child
- Theodus Crane as Jeremiah, Mike's previous co-worker
- Matthew Patrick as Sparky's Diner waiter
- Cory Williams as a cabbie

The suit performers include Kevin Foster as Freddy Fazbear, [6] the pizzeria's namesake brown bear animatronic; Jade Kindar-Martin as Bonnie, [6] an indigo rabbit animatronic; and Jessica Weiss as Chica, [6] a yellow chicken animatronic. The scatted pirate song that Foxy, a red pirate fox animatronic, sings

Production

Development

In April 2015, <u>Warner Bros. Pictures</u> announced it had acquired the <u>film rights</u> to the <u>Five Nights at Freddy</u>'s video game franchise with <u>Roy Lee</u>, David Katzenberg, and <u>Seth Grahame-Smith</u> set to produce the adaptation. Grahame-Smith stated that they would collaborate with franchise creator <u>Scott Cawthon</u>, who co-wrote the books in collaboration with ghostwriting firm <u>Kevin Anderson and Associates</u> (https://www.ka-writing.com), [8] "to make an insane, terrifying and weirdly adorable movie". [9] In July 2015, <u>Gil Kenan</u> signed to direct the film from a screenplay co-written with Tyler Burton Smith. [10]

In March 2017, Cawthon announced <u>Blumhouse Productions</u> as the film's new production company after Warner Bros. Pictures put the project in <u>turnaround</u>. <u>In May 2017</u>, producer <u>Jason Blum</u> said he was excited and working closely with Cawthon on the film. <u>In June 2017</u>, Kenan said he was no longer directing the film.



Producer Jason Blum in 2018

In February 2018, <u>Chris Columbus</u> was announced as Kenan's replacement as director and writer, besides producing the film alongside Blum and Cawthon. In August 2018, Cawthon revealed that the first draft of the film's script, which he wrote with co-author of the <u>Five Nights at Freddy</u>'s novel trilogy, Kira Breed-Wrisley, was completed, and it would involve the events of the series' <u>first game</u>. That same month, Blum wrote on Twitter that the film was aiming for a 2020 release. In November, Cawthon announced that he scrapped the script, despite being liked by Columbus and Blum, as he "had a different idea for [the story], one that I liked better". It contributed to a further delay to the film, for which Cawthon took full responsibility. In June 2020, during an interview with <u>Fandom</u>, Blum, when asked about the progress of the film, stated:

"It's super active, so I really feel like we have a very good shot at seeing a *Five Nights at Freddy's* movie...I feel like it's really moving forward; it's not stalled or anything else. It's moving forward rapidly. I don't want to put a timeline on it, but soon we'll get a movie. I feel really confident about that." [18]

In September 2021, Blum revealed that Columbus was no longer involved with the project, which was still in active development. In August 2022, Blum announced that Jim Henson's Creature Shop would be working on the animatronic characters for the film. In October, Emma Tammi was announced as Columbus' replacement as director, in addition to co-writing the screenplay alongside Cawthon and Seth Cuddeback. Cuddeback.

Casting

In December 2022, <u>Josh Hutcherson</u> and <u>Matthew Lillard</u> joined the cast in undisclosed roles. *Five Nights at Freddy's*-related <u>YouTuber</u> Dawko later revealed during a <u>livestream</u> that Hutcherson would portray the first game's security guard Mike Schmidt and Lillard would portray the franchise's main villain William Afton. He also revealed that <u>Mary Stuart Masterson</u> and Piper Rubio joined the cast as Mike's aunt Jane, and Mike's younger sister Abby, respectively. *[23]* In March 2023, it was reported that Kat Conner Sterling and <u>Elizabeth Lail</u> were cast in the film. *[24][25]* Lucas Grant and Jessica Blackmore were also cast in undisclosed roles. *[26]*

<u>Mark Fischbach</u>, also known as Markiplier, was contacted to have a role in the film as the security guard that preceded Mike before being murdered at the opening of the film, but turned it down due to scheduling conflicts with his own film *Iron Lung*. [27][28]

Filming

<u>Principal photography</u> was initially set to begin in March 2021. However, due to script issues, filming was delayed. Filming began in New Orleans on February 1, 2023, under the <u>working title</u> *Bad Cupcake*, with an estimated production budget of \$25 million before tax incentives. Filming <u>wrapped</u> on April 3. Lillard began filming his scenes in mid-February.

Music

<u>The Newton Brothers</u> composed the film's score, while the fan-made song "<u>Five Nights at Freddy's</u>" by the <u>Living Tombstone</u> was featured in the end credits. "<u>Talking in Your Sleep</u>" by the <u>Romantics</u> is featured in multiple scenes where the song is performed by the animatronics.

Release

Five Nights at Freddy's was released simultaneously in theaters and on <u>Peacock</u> in the United States by <u>Universal Pictures</u> on October 27, 2023. [37][38] It was released two days earlier on October 25, 2023, in the United Kingdom. The film was also released on Amazon Prime Video on March 5th after its removal on Peacock.

Marketing

In October 2023, the film's animatronics were put on display for <u>Universal's Halloween Horror Nights</u> at the <u>Universal Studios Hollywood</u> theme park, with a pop-up location also being built at <u>Sunset Boulevard</u>, both of which are located in Los Angeles, California. The latter is described as being decorated similarly to the Freddy Fazbear's Pizza location as seen in the film. A <u>making-of</u> book titled *The Art and Making of Five Nights at Freddy's: The Movie* is scheduled for release on August 20, 2024. A novelization of the film was released on December 26, 2023.

Home media

Five Nights at Freddy's was released on digital platforms on November 28, followed by a <u>Blu-ray</u>, <u>DVD</u>, and 4K UHD release on December 12. [44]

Reception

Box office

Five Nights at Freddy's grossed \$137.3 million in the United States and Canada, and \$159.9 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$297.2 million. $\underline{^{[3][4]}}$ <u>Deadline Hollywood</u> calculated the net profit of the film to be \$161 million. $\underline{^{[45]}}$

In the United States and Canada, *Five Nights at Freddy*'s was released alongside *Freelance* and *After Death*, and was initially projected to gross around \$50 million from 3,550 theaters in its opening weekend. [2] After making \$39.4 million on its first day (including \$10.3 million from Thursday night previews, the biggest-ever for a film with a simultaneous streaming release), estimates were raised to \$78 million. It ended up debuting to \$80 million, topping the box office. The film had the second-best <u>day and date</u> opening weekend ever (behind *Black Widow*'s \$80.3 million in 2021), the best opening weekend for a horror film in 2023, the best opening from Blumhouse, topping *Halloween*'s \$76.2 million, and the second highest opening for a video game film behind *The Super Mario Bros. Movie*'s \$146.4 million the previous April. [46][47][48] The film remained in first place the following weekend with \$19.4 million, though the 76% drop was one of the largest of all time. [49][50] On its seventh weekend, the film surpassed *Split* (\$278 million) to become Blumhouse's highest-grossing release worldwide. [51] *Five Nights at Freddy's* completed its theatrical run in the United States and Canada on December 21, 2023. [52]

Critical response

Five Nights at Freddy's received generally negative reviews from critics. [53] On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 32% of 212 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 4.6/10. The website's consensus reads: "Loaded with Easter eggs, Five Nights at Freddy's may be fun to watch for fans of the game, but most viewers of any other persuasion will find this adaptation muddled and decidedly unscary." [54] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 33 out of 100, based on 38 critics, indicating "generally unfavorable" reviews. [55] Audiences surveyed by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "A-" on an A+ to F scale, while those polled at PostTrak gave it a 77% overall positive score. [46]

Murtada Elfadl of <u>Variety</u> felt the animatronic characters were underutilized, with the film instead focusing on "a baffling plot and backstory for their protagonist". He also criticized a perceived lack of effective jump scares and concluded, "In trying to adapt the game for the screen, they forgot what makes the original special, wringing unintentional laughter from its bizarre story instead of entertaining audiences". Dylan Roth of <u>The New York Observer</u> gave the film a score of one out of five and wrote, "There are jump scares, but no real thrills. There are jokes, but no genuine laughs".

<u>The Guardian</u>'s Benjamin Lee gave a two out of five rating, arguing "The low-stakes, late-night thrill we expect from the material never arrives, held back by a mixture of indecisive restraint and misplaced self-importance. *Five Nights at Freddy's* is somehow a slog to get through and will be promptly forgotten by morning". <u>[58] The New York Times</u>'s Natalia Winkelmann expressed similar criticisms: "...[Although] *Five Nights at Freddy's*, based on a popular video game franchise, reaches for horror-comedy flair, this dreary,

mild adaptation never achieves the hybrid pleasures of a movie like $\underline{M3GAN}$. You may chuckle, but it's hard to tell if the movie is laughing with you". $\underline{^{[59]}}$ RogerEbert.com's Simon Abrams, giving a two out of four rating, was also negative: "*Five Nights at Freddy's* has most of the right elements for a good post-Amblin kiddy fright-fest, except maybe good dialogue and distinct characters. Watching the movie, one gets the sense that the games' morbid personality has been sanded down to its most generic jump-scares and banal revelations." $\underline{^{[60]}}$

Meagan Navarro of <u>Bloody Disgusting</u> gave a score of three out of five and wrote, "It's the type of handsomely made, charming creature feature that'll play well at slumber parties or rowdy theaters full of obsessed fans, which is precisely its target audience. *Five Nights at Freddy's* won't scare the pants off of seasoned horror fans; the animatronic denizens of Freddy Fazbear's Pizzeria will likely make you want to hug them instead". [61] <u>Total Film</u>'s Neil Smith scored the film a two out of five and ended his review, "With robot heads containing flesh-mangling chainsaws, faces resembling that of battle-scarred <u>Terminators</u>, and the lumbering gait of <u>Romero</u> zombies, Freddy Fazbear and his pals would seem precision-tooled for terror. Sadly, though, they are about as scary as <u>Barney</u> the purple dinosaur in what is ultimately a ploddingly predictable, gore-lite yawner". [39]

Mark Kennedy of the <u>Associated Press</u> stated: "Caught between PG and R, as well as lost at the crossroads of inadvertent comedy and horror, the PG-13 *Five Nights at Freddy's* has to go down as one of the poorest films in any genre this year". [62] Similarly, the <u>Chicago Tribune</u>'s Michael Phillips condemned "the film's attempt to be a cuddly version of <u>Saw</u>, with faces getting sliced open by a robo-critter's whirring saw blades", going on to say "To keep the PG-13 rating intact, the camera and editor cut away just before the splurch, nearly every time... The premise, meantime, of *Five Nights at Freddy's*... very likely would've made more sense as a straight-up R-rated splatterfest." [63]

Accolades

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
People's Choice Awards	February 18, 2024	The Drama Movie of the Year	Five Nights at Freddy's	Nominated	[64]
Golden Raspberry Awards	March 9, 2024	Worst Supporting Actress	Mary Stuart Masterson	Nominated	[65][66][67][68]

Future

Sequels

In August 2018, Cawthon said that if the first film were to be successful, there could be a second film that follows the events of the second game. In January 2023, in an interview on the podcast WeeklyMTG, Lillard revealed that he signed a three-picture deal with the studios. In January 2024, despite Blumhouse's vice president of feature film development Ryan Turek claiming a sequel was not yet greenlit, Hutcherson revealed the sequel was in development. In April 2024, Blumhouse officially

confirmed the sequel, which is set for release in the fall of 2025, [71] and that <u>Jim Henson's Creature Shop</u> would return to design animatronics for the film. Filming for the sequel will reportedly start in the fall of 2024. The sequel, *Five Nights at Freddy's 2*, is set to be released on December 5, 2025.

See also

- List of films based on video games
- Willy's Wonderland
- The Banana Splits Movie

Notes

- a. Identified off-screen as Golden Freddy.
- b. Known in the games as Spring Bonnie.

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