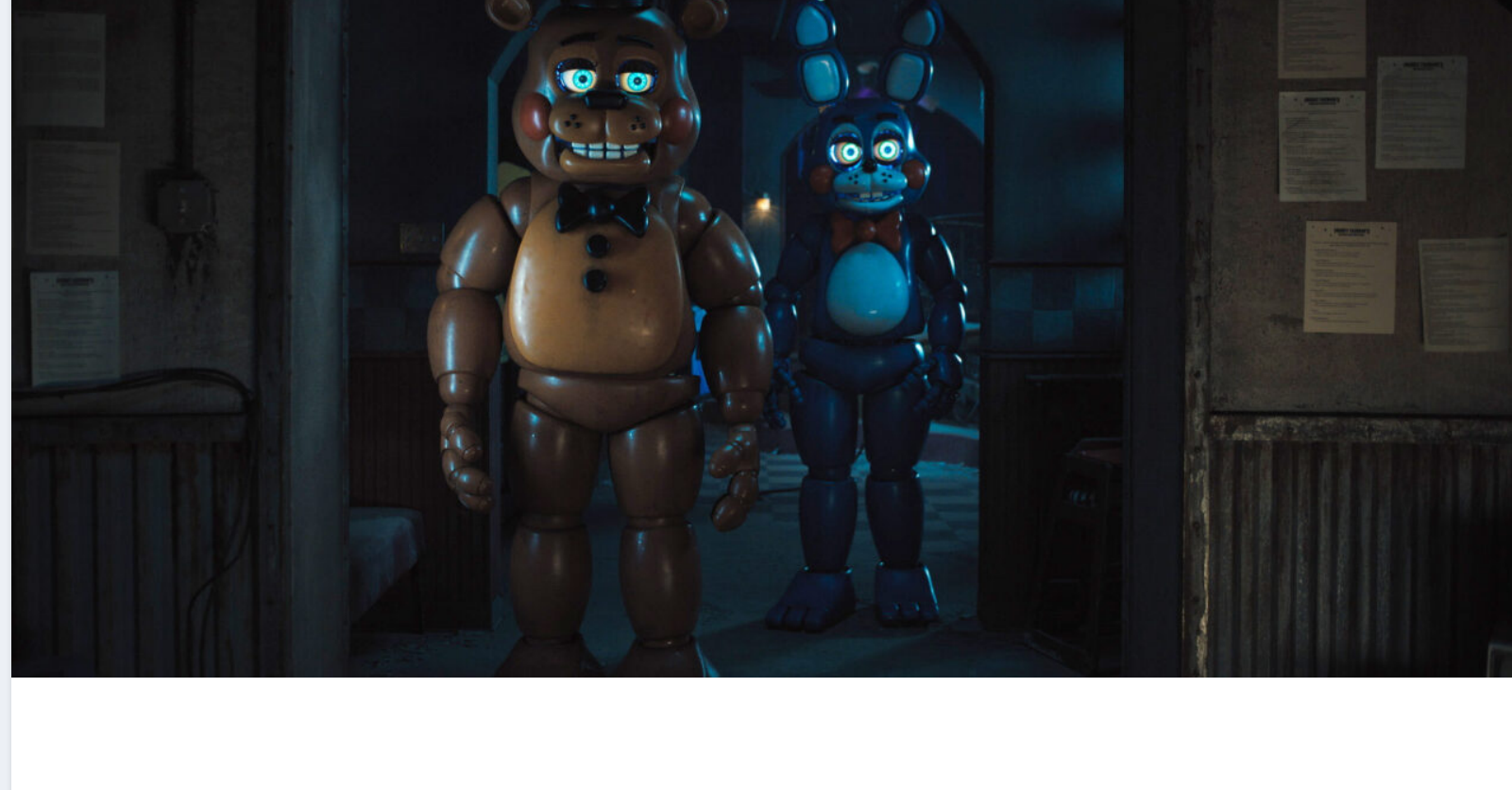


## "Five Nights at Freddy's 2" Goes Bigger, But At The Cost Of Better

Posted by [Murjani Rawls](#) | Dec 19, 2025 | [Film Reviews](#), [Reviews](#) | 0



Just a bit of housekeeping, I didn't find the animatronic Chuck E. Cheese characters all that frightening when I was younger. However, I get why the Five Nights at Freddy's survivor horror franchise would be an enduring hit. Who doesn't love to get scared by possessed, homicidal robots with the faces of various animals? It's also why the 2023 film adaptation was a \$297 million success – "Five Nights At Freddy's" gave nods to the game lore as well as acting as a dialed-down Goosebumps-like fright fest. It was replete with typical jump scares, a ghostly redemption story, and a murderer that the protagonists have to stop.

"Five Nights at Freddy's 2," which sees director Emma Tammi and the franchise's writer/creator, Scott Cawthon, infuses the sequel with more (the film is so concerned with more setpieces and easter eggs) that it leaves the cupboard bare in terms of what the characters are supposed to do. The survivors from the first film are often left running in circles – waiting for the next thing to happen or heading to head off the next disaster. You forget the film's theme: grief. Even so, Five Nights 2 doesn't tackle it with confidence; instead, it overexplains emotions the audience can derive from what they see.



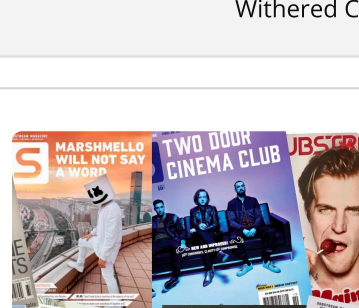
(from left) Abby (Piper Rubio), Mike (Josh Hutcherson), and Vanessa (Elizabeth Lail) in Five Nights at Freddy's 2, directed by Emma Tammi.

We start at the main location of Freddy Fazbear's Pizza in 1982, where a young Charlotte (Audrey Lynn Marie) eagerly awaits the arrival of the Marionette. This darker, Tim Burton-esque puppet completely sticks out like a sore thumb. It's out of the corner of her eye that she notices a child being abducted by William Afton (Matthew Lillard). Time is of the essence, and for some reason, the surrounding parents couldn't care less about Charlotte being in a panic. So, she takes matters into her own hands and saves the kid. Unfortunately, poor Charlotte doesn't survive the ordeal, and this sets the stage for present-day issues.

The trio of Vanessa (Elizabeth Lail), Mike (Josh Hutcherson), and his younger sister Abby (Piper Rubio) are all in various stages of mourning. For Vanessa, it's coming to grips with who her father was. Abby misses her five ghostly friends, who were set free in the previous film. She believes that they are still out there and has an inkling that the original Fazbear's Pizza holds the answer. Abby finds something akin to a Freddy's electronic decoder device. Jackpot! There's the connection. Well, not so fast. As it turns out, Charlotte's ghost has inhabited the Marionette animatronic and can control the others. Charlotte has revenge on her mind, and there has to be a device through which she can inflict it on the entire town.



Withered Chica in Five Nights at Freddy's 2, directed by Emma Tammi.



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"Five Nights " looks to widen the lens beyond the old, falling-apart indoor amusement park of yesterday and venture into the neighborhood. But it's not as if ghosts bound to one location can walk across the street. A group of amateur YouTube paranormal hunters (headed by McKenna Grace) goes exploring based on a tip from a security guard (Freddy Carter), and let's say, there will be no new episodes forthcoming. In the spirit of bigger, the sequel introduces a new location and even goes to Abby's school for a science competition, yet it confines itself. The exploration of the new Flagstaff Freddy's is limited to a select few rooms, diluting the first film's attempt to instill its brand of PG-13 scariness. The intrigue is left to Vanessa's dream sequences, as she is still plagued by guilt and regret. While they are particularly well-staged, the scenes serve as a misdirect for a third-act reveal.

The sequel serves almost like a pseudo "Scream" reunion, even though the actors in question don't interact with one another. Skeet Ulrich is Henry, Charlotte's father, whose appearance serves as an expositional dump to what could be going on with his late daughter. Lillard's appearances are limited to flashbacks and nightmares. His presence hangs over the film, showing that the sequel's antagonist is inferior. The Marionette's spirit manifestation serves to keep the robots present in the story and tease a third film. It's precisely why there's no move toward definite answers: the film is meant to be a vehicle for a possible final showdown among many of the elements it presents.

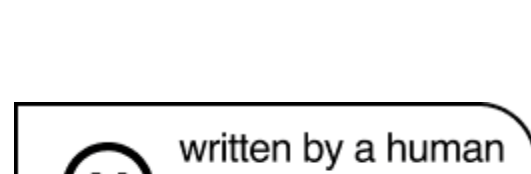
It's odd because this film feels like the person at the bar who doesn't want to hear last call. There's so much in terms of themes and Easter eggs presented, but it amounts to little because of "Five Nights" uncanny confidence that it will have another two-hour span to tell more story. Build excitement for what's ahead while giving your audience something substantial to anticipate. If "Five Nights at Freddy's 2" were an animatronic robot, it would be lacking both the parts and the power supply to get where it needs to go.

### Five Nights at Freddy's 2 | Official Trailer 2

Universal Pictures



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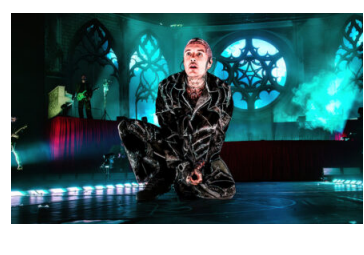


#### Murjani Rawls

Murjani is the senior writer, editor, and lead critic at Substream Magazine with a decade of expertise focusing on music, film, television, pop culture, and sports. He is also a food and culture reporter for NJ.com/The Star Ledger. Previously, Murjani was the inaugural culture editor at DraftKings Network/Vox Media, staff writer at The Root, and senior writer/editor at The Pop Break. He's also a photographer, podcast producer, and five-time self-published author. His advocacy has been featured in Time Magazine, Poynter, and Axios. He is a member of the Critics Choice Association and WGA East.



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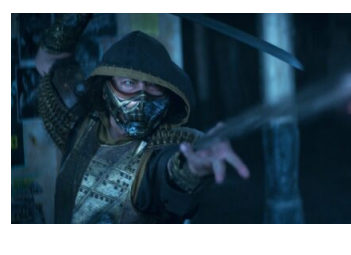
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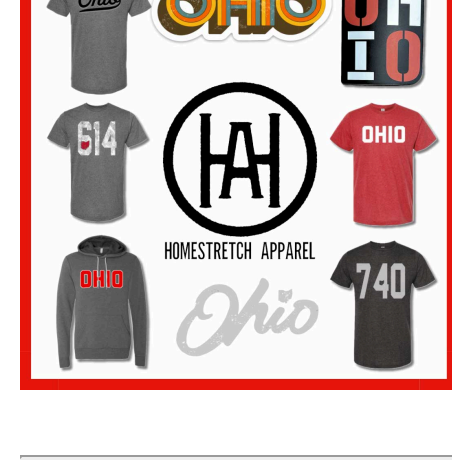
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