

Prologue — Incident Log: Missing Children

The first report is clean.

Too clean.

Five children.

Five separate dates.

Same location.

Freddy Fazbear's Pizza.

No bodies.

No signs of struggle.

No forced entry.

No exit.

The initial police summary is a model of procedural calm:

<blockquote>

"Likely abduction cases. Investigation ongoing."

</blockquote> It is not ongoing.

It stopped eight years ago.

The second layer is messier.

Witness statements. Fragmented. Contradictory.

A mother:

<blockquote>

"He said he was going to meet the bear."

</blockquote>

An employee:

<blockquote>

"We checked every room. Every room."

</blockquote>

A child, recorded on a handheld device, voice thin with static:

<blockquote>

“They don’t go home. They stay after the show.”

</blockquote>

Camera logs are incomplete.

Not corrupted — incomplete.

Segments exist where continuity should be.

Children entering the hallway behind the stage.

No footage of them leaving.

Not cut.

Not erased.

Just... not there.

Foundation interest is triggered when cross-referencing a dormant surveillance node.

The building is flagged as inactive.

Utilities disconnected.

Ownership dissolved.

Condemned.

Yet the node reports intermittent visual data.

Timestamped.

Recent.

The first retrieved frame shows the main dining area.

Tables overturned. Dust layered thick across every surface.

Stage curtains drawn.

Three figures visible in silhouette behind the fabric.

The second frame is identical.

Except the curtains are open.

The third frame is identical.

Except one of the figures is closer.

No motion is recorded between frames.

No transitional data exists.

Final annotation, appended by an automated system that should not be running:

<blockquote>

“Stage integrity maintained.”

</blockquote>

The building has been closed for eight years.

The feed is still live.

Chapter 1 — Closed, But Not Empty

The parking lot is cracked asphalt and weeds.

No signage remains intact. The name is still barely readable above the entrance, sun-bleached into a ghost of itself.

Freddy Fazbear’s Pizza.

Ace stops three meters from the door.

She doesn’t reach for her blades. Not yet.

Her head tilts slightly, violet catching something that isn’t visible.

“Not empty.”

Mai doesn’t respond immediately. She’s already mapping.

Entrances. Sightlines. Structural stress points. The building should be inert — a dead shell with

predictable geometry.

It isn't.

"Layout doesn't match the exterior footprint," she says finally. "We're missing internal volume."

Shammy stands behind them, one hand resting lightly against the metal doorframe.

The air shifts.

Not a breeze. Not temperature.

Pressure.

Like a room that's been holding its breath too long.

"This place is waiting," she says quietly.

The door opens without resistance.

No lock.

No alarm.

No sound beyond the soft grind of metal against warped hinges.

Inside, the silence is wrong.

Dust should absorb sound. Dead spaces should feel flat, predictable.

This space isn't flat.

It has depth.

Tables sit where they were left, chairs tipped over mid-motion as if something interrupted the room and never let it finish collapsing.

Party banners hang in strips, colors drained but not entirely gone.

A balloon drifts near the ceiling.

Not rising. Not falling.

Suspended.

Mai steps forward first.

She counts unconsciously. Distances between objects. Angles. Relationships.

The numbers don't hold.

"This room is too long," she says. "By at least—"

She stops.

Recalculates.

Gets a different answer.

Ace moves past her.

Direct.

Unhesitating.

The stage draws her.

It always does — anything that looks like a focal point, a place where things converge.

Curtains hang half-open.

Behind them:

Freddy.

Bonnie.

Chica.

Still. Lifeless. Exactly as expected.

Ace watches.

Not for long.

Just enough to confirm.

"No movement."

A light flickers overhead.

Once.

Then steadies.

Mai turns toward it immediately.

“There’s no power grid,” she says.

Shammy doesn’t look up.

Her attention is elsewhere.

Every surface.

Every corner.

Every gap between things.

The air tightens slightly, like static building before a storm.

“It doesn’t need power,” she says.

Ace steps onto the stage.

Wood creaks under her weight — a normal sound, finally something that behaves the way it should.

She stands directly in front of Freddy.

Close enough to see the fine cracks in the plastic shell.

The empty black of the eyes.

Nothing happens.

She turns away.

Satisfied.

Behind her—

something shifts.

Not a sound.

Not movement.

Just—

wrongness.

Mai's voice cuts through it, sharp.

"Ace."

Ace turns back.

Freddy is still there.

Same position.

Same posture.

Same distance.

But something doesn't line up.

Mai steps closer, eyes narrowing.

"I need you to describe what you saw," she says.

Ace frowns slightly. Not confusion — irritation at the question.

"Static. Inactive. Forward-facing."

Mai nods once.

Then steps to the side.

Changes angle.

Her breath catches.

Not fear.

Recognition.

“That’s not what I’m seeing now.”

Shammy exhales slowly.

The air responds.

A faint ripple, almost imperceptible.

“They didn’t move,” she says.

A pause.

“They changed because we thought we understood them.”

The light flickers again.

Somewhere deeper in the building—

a door closes.

None of them touched it.

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