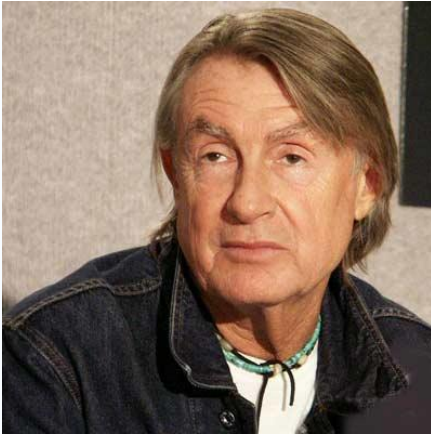


## Biography: Joel Schumacher

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**Joel Schumacher** (born August 29, 1939) is an American film director, writer and producer. Many of his films have been designed to be stylish and 'slick' Hollywood fare.

Schumacher was born in New York City and studied at the Parsons School of Design. First working in the fashion industry, he began his media work as a costume designer and developed his skills with television work. He wrote the screenplay for the 1976 low-budget hit *Car Wash* and a number of other minor successes. He also wrote 1978's *The Wiz*. His film directorial debut was *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* in 1981, which starred Lily Tomlin, and he quickly made more successful films, including three "brat pack" works.

Schumacher would later replace Tim Burton as the director of the Batman franchise. He directed *Batman Forever* in 1995, which was a major summer success despite receiving mixed reviews. He later directed *Batman & Robin*, which was both a huge commercial flop and a critical disappointment. The film prompted Warner Brothers to place the series of movies on indefinite hiatus and leave it there for seven years (only then reappearing in the form of the much darker *Batman Begins*, in a comprehensive reboot of the franchise). *Batman & Robin* had a detrimental effect on Schumacher's reputation, forcing him to take on less ambitious projects. Schumacher has openly admitted and acknowledged that the Batman film franchise went south under his watch and, in his audio commentary for the fourth film, he flat out apologizes for the film. Schumacher had always expressed interest in directing another Batman film that would be dark and stay true to the comic book roots. A constant rumor on the internet was that Joel Schumacher would be attached to direct the *Batman Begins* sequel. That rumor, however, turned out to be unconfirmed and baseless and was most likely started to shock and disgust devoted Batman fans.

Since *Batman & Robin*, Schumacher went on to direct a few lower budget films (stepping down from \$100 million budget films) like *8MM* with Nicolas Cage, and *Flawless* with Robert De Niro; neither were big hits, and reviews were mostly negative.

Schumacher started making his way up again in *Bad Company* with Anthony Hopkins and Chris Rock. He reclaimed his reputation as a good director after the critically acclaimed *Phone Booth* opened, and was viewed as a star-making vehicle for Colin Farrell. *Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Phantom of the Opera* was seen as Joel's comeback in 2004 after doing fairly well at the box office and was generally well received by critics.

Schumacher has also directed two adaptations of the books of John Grisham, the second as the personal choice of the author.

The director is currently working on *The Number 23*, which stars Jim Carrey and is set for release sometime in 2006.

Schumacher has been openly gay through most of his career, and was subtly criticized by Vito Russeo in his book *The Celluloid Closet* for contributing to the negative Hollywood image of gay people.

## Parodies

In *Legends of the Dark Knight*, an episode of The New Batman Adventures, three teenagers discuss their ideas about what Batman is really like. They briefly meet an effeminate youth called *Joel* (in front of a *Shoemaker's* shop, no less) whose idea of Batman consists mainly of a fascination with the tight rubber suits and a Batmobile that can drive up walls (as seen in *Batman Forever*). The other three kids treat Joel's ideas with utter disdain.

## Filmography



- *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* (1981)
- *D.C. Cab* (aka *Street Fleet*) (1983)
- *St. Elmo's Fire* (1985)
- *The Lost Boys* (1987)
- *Cousins* (1989)
- *Flatliners* (1990)
- *Dying Young* (1991)
- *Falling Down* (1993)
- *The Client* (1994)
- *Batman Forever* (aka *Forever*) (1995)
- *A Time to Kill* (1996)
- *Batman and Robin* (1997)

- *8mm* (1999)
- *Flawless* (1999)
- *Tigerland* (2000)
- *Bad Company* (2002)
- *Phone Booth* (2002)
- *Veronica Guerin* (2003)
- *Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Phantom of the Opera* (2004)
- *The Number 23* (2006)