

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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## Action, plot twists, fun never end in rambunctious 'Batman' movie

### The Facts

**Movie:** "Batman Forever"  
**Director:** Joel Schumacher  
**Stars:** Val Kilmer, Jim Carrey, Nicole Kidman, Tommy Lee Jones, Chris O'Donnell  
**Rating:** PG-13  
**Grade:** B+  
**Five Words:** Caped Crusader flies high again

**By Gerry Beltz**  
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At last, a Batman with a chin.

After a not-so-private split between Michael Keaton and Warner Bros., Val Kilmer steps into the Dark Knight's boots.

To say that he fills them is an understatement.

Don't get me wrong; I thoroughly enjoyed both "Batman" flicks while Keaton was in the cowl. However, he just wasn't the "Batman" type.

Kilmer, on the other hand, is chin and shoulders above Keaton (because Kilmer HAS a chin and shoulders) and the fact it is more believable that he possesses a dark side.

Unfortunately, with as much traffic as there is going on around Kilmer, it's difficult to notice how well he is doing.

Director Joel Schumacher ("The Lost Boys") had some of the best talent available in this flick, and he tried to use it all.

It didn't work.

Too many cooks spoil the pot, and in this case, too many plotlines sour the movie.

Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones) is trying to kill Batman, while the Riddler (Jim Carrey) wants to destroy Bruce Wayne, and Dick Grayson (Chris O'Donnell) wants to kill Two-Face, who killed Dick's parents.

Batman/Bruce Wayne is dealing with nightmares concerning the deaths of his parents, and Doctor Chase Meridian (Nicole Kidman) is running around in bosom-revealing clothing trying to seduce Batman.

In a comic series, this would work well. However, in a two-hour movie, it causes problems.

Schumacher does all right with as much as he tries to do, but falls short.

A great deal of the trouble centers on the character of Two-Face. First, Schumacher virtually wastes the talents of Tommy Lee Jones.

Jones has a very impressive opening soliloquy, but then he is shoved to the side to make room for other characters. Two-Face never receives the character development like the rest of the cast.

However, what Schumacher does with Two-Face is wise: he doesn't

have any grand schemes to kill Batman, he just uses boatloads of bullets to perforate the Caped Crusader.

It also gives Batman a chance to show us all the cool stuff he has in his utility belt and in his car.

(By the way, does anybody else out there remember that Billy Dee Williams played Harvey Dent (aka Two-Face) in the first "Batman" flick? I guess money and names are what talk here).

Also, Two-Face is obsessed with sets of two, and after the first couple of stints, we don't see that obsession again (but if you look carefully, you do see the double baby carriage).

The rest of the film rocks.

Again, Kilmer is great as Batman and Bruce Wayne. He has a physique that is closer to what Batman would need to be, plus he has that ruggedly handsome look for Bruce Wayne.

Chris O'Donnell and Nicole Kidman are good in their respective roles, and special recognition should be given to both of them; Kidman for receiving dialogue coaching to ditch her accent, and O'Donnell for some impressive martial arts work.

The prize goes to Carrey for not doing an Ace Ventura imitation for the Riddler. He is quite believable as a villain, and is sure to please the crowds, but may shock a few people at

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