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David Schwimmer



David Schwimmer	
<div></div> <div>Schwimmer at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival</div>	
Born	<div>David Lawrence Schwimmer</div> <div>November 2, 1966 (age 48)</div> <div>Flushing, Queens, New York</div>
Alma mater	Northwestern University
Occupation	Actor, voice actor, producer, director, comedian
Years active	1989–present
Television	<i>Friends</i>
Spouse(s)	<div>Zoe Buckman (m. 2010)</div>
Children	1

David Lawrence Schwimmer (born November 2, 1966)^[1] is an American actor, director, producer, voice actor and comedian.

He was born in [New York City](#), and his family moved to [Los Angeles](#) when he was two. He began his acting career performing in school plays at [Beverly Hills High School](#). In 1988, he graduated from [Northwestern University](#) with a [Bachelor of Arts](#) in theater and speech. After graduation, Schwimmer co-founded the [Lookingglass Theatre Company](#). For much of the late 1980s, he lived in Los Angeles as a struggling, unemployed actor.

He starred in the television movie *A Deadly Silence* in 1989 and appeared in a number of television roles, including on *L.A. Law*, *The Wonder Years*, *NYPD Blue*, and *Monty*, in the early 1990s. Schwimmer later gained worldwide recognition for playing [Ross Geller](#) in the sitcom *Friends*. His first leading film role was in *The Pallbearer* (1996), which was followed by roles in *Kissing a Fool* (1998), *Six Days Seven Nights* (1998), *Apt Pupil*, and *Picking Up the Pieces* (2000). He was then cast in the miniseries *Band of Brothers* (2001) as [Herbert Sobel](#). After the series finale of *Friends* in 2004, Schwimmer was cast as the titular character in the 2005 drama *Duane Hopwood*. Other film roles include Melman in the computer animated *Madagascar* films, the dark comedy *Big Nothing* (2006), and the thriller *Nothing But the Truth* (2008). Schwimmer made his [West End](#) stage debut in the leading role in *Some Girl(s)* in 2005. In 2006, he made his [Broadway](#) debut in *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*. Schwimmer made his feature film directorial debut with the 2007 comedy *Run Fatboy Run*. The following year he made his Off-Broadway directorial debut in the 2008 production *Fault Lines*.



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^ Early life



Schwimmer was born in [Flushing, Queens](#),^[2] [New York City](#), to attorneys Arthur and Arlene Colman-Schwimmer.^[3] Arlene was [Elizabeth Taylor](#)'s attorney in her divorce from [Larry Fortensky](#)^[4] and [Roseanne Barr](#)'s attorney in her divorce from Bill Pentland.^[5] He has an older sister named Ellie (born 1965).^[1] His family subsequently moved to Los Angeles, where Schwimmer had his first experiences of acting at the age of 10 when he was cast as the fairy godmother in a Jewish version of *Cinderella*.^[1] In 1979, Schwimmer went to a Shakespeare workshop given by English actor [Ian McKellen](#) in Los Angeles.^[6] He recalls that he was riveted by the experience.^[6] Schwimmer then entered a contest in the Southern California Shakespeare Festival three years in a row, winning two first prizes.^{[6][7]}

Following his mother's successful career as a divorce lawyer, the family moved to [Beverly Hills](#), where Schwimmer attended [Beverly Hills High School](#).^{[6][7]} Schwimmer admitted to being an outsider during his time at the school, recalling, "When I was there I always felt: 'This is not me, I'm surrounded by people with a different value system. And I just wanted to get out of California.'"^[6] He was best at the subjects of science and math and thought he would become a doctor.^[6] Schwimmer enrolled in a drama class, where he appeared in stage productions. Encouraged by his school drama teacher to further his acting, he flew off to [Chicago](#) for an acting workshop. He noted that the experience was both "enlightening and exhilarating".^[3] In 1984, Schwimmer graduated from Beverly Hills High, and wanted to go straight into acting, but his parents insisted he go to college first so he would have something to fall back on.^[6] Schwimmer moved to Chicago to attend [Northwestern University](#), where he had attended a summer drama course when he was 16 years

old.^[6] At the university, he enrolled as a theater major, joining [Delta Tau Delta](#) Fraternity and Arts Alliance.^{[1][3]} After graduating in 1988, with a [Bachelor of Arts](#) degree in theater and speech, Schwimmer co-founded the [Lookingglass Theatre Company](#).^[3] Subsequently, he returned to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career.^{[1][3]}

In 1996, Schwimmer was awarded the honor of "Best Oralist" at the [Harvard Law School Ames Moot Court Competition](#), despite not being a student. ^[8]

^ Career



Early work

After his supporting role debut in the [ABC](#) television movie *A Deadly Silence* (1989),^[9] Schwimmer followed this with roles on the legal drama *L.A. Law* in 1992, and the comedy-drama series *The Wonder Years*.^[6] He made his feature film debut in *Flight of the Intruder* (1991),^[1] had a recurring role as a lawyer-turned-vigilante in *NYPD Blue* before auditioning, unsuccessfully, for a series pilot called *Couples*.^[1] He landed his first regular series role as the liberal son of a conservative talk show host ([Henry Winkler](#)) in the sitcom *Monty*.^[1]

Acting roles

In 1994, Schwimmer was cast as [Ross Geller](#) in [NBC](#)'s situation comedy *Friends*, a series that revolved around a group of friends who live near each other in [Manhattan](#), New York City. He played a hopeless-romantic [paleontologist](#) who works at a museum and later becomes a professor at a university. Schwimmer notes when first approached about the role of Ross, he turned it down, but accepted the role afterwards.^[10] Executive producer [Kevin S. Bright](#) said that he had previously worked with Schwimmer,^[11] the character of Ross was written with him in mind, and he was the first actor cast.^[10] Schwimmer based Ross on [Nicolas Cage](#)'s role of Charlie from the 1986 film *Peggy Sue Got Married*.^[12] The show debuted on September 22, 1994, and was watched by almost 22 million American viewers.^[13] *Friends* quickly

developed a loyal audience, with the show and Schwimmer receiving strong reviews. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* was complimentary of Schwimmer, calling him "terrific".^[14] *Variety*'s television reviewer, said: "All six of the principals, especially (Courteney) Cox and Schwimmer, appear resourceful and display sharp sitcom skills".^[15] For this performance, he earned an *Emmy Award* nomination in the category of *Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series* in 1995.^[16]

Schwimmer starred in his first leading film role in the 1996 romantic comedy film, *The Pallbearer* with *Gwyneth Paltrow*.^[17] In the film, Schwimmer plays a man asked to deliver the eulogy for a high school friend he cannot remember, and begins an affair with the friend's mother. Critics dismissed *The Pallbearer* as a poor imitation of the 1967 film *The Graduate*.^{[18][19]} *Variety*'s film reviewer complimented the actor, writing that he had enjoyed his performance, stating that he displayed "a winning, if rather deadpan, personality along with good comic timing".^[20] It also concluded that Schwimmer had a "promising bigscreen future".^[20] *Janet Maslin* of *The New York Times* cited that his first film "relegates him to a drab role".^[17] When asked why he decided to accept the role, Schwimmer admitted the decision was to "make an effort to find roles that are as far away from the character of Ross as possible".^[6] He was offered a role to star alongside *Tommy Lee Jones* in the 1997 science-fiction comedy *Men in Black*, but turned it down in favor of starring in *The Pallbearer*, explaining, "This is an opportunity to grow rather than go for the quick cash".^[21]

His next film roles in 1998 were *Kissing a Fool*, *Six Days Seven Nights*, and *Apt Pupil*. In *Kissing a Fool*, a romantic comedy, Schwimmer plays Max, a dapper, smart-mouthed ladies' man.^[22] *Mick LaSalle* of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, "Fans of the sitcom *Friends* may be surprised by David Schwimmer in *Kissing a Fool*. [...] Take it from someone who has never seen *Friends* and comes at Schwimmer with no preconceptions: He does just fine. As a TV sports reporter in *Kissing a Fool*, he oozes the command and self-satisfaction of a young, successful man".^[22] The film was critically and financially unsuccessful.^[23] In *Six Days Seven Nights*, he played the boyfriend of *Anne Heche*'s character. In *Apt Pupil*, adapted from a novella of the

same name by [Stephen King](#),^[24] he had a supporting role as a school guidance counselor. "I was scared of the part", Schwimmer said, "but I wanted to be part of the movie". At the time, he noted it was a "little frustrating" that people would typecast him due to his role on *Friends*.^[25] He subsequently appeared opposite [Woody Allen](#) and [Sharon Stone](#) in [Alfonso Arau](#)'s straight-to-cable comedy *Picking Up the Pieces* (2000).

In 2001, Schwimmer played [Captain Herbert M. Sobel](#) in [Steven Spielberg](#) and [Tom Hanks](#)' HBO World War II miniseries *Band of Brothers*. The television miniseries is based on the book of the same title written by historian and biographer [Stephen Ambrose](#).^[26] Although *Band of Brothers* was met with largely positive reception,^[27]

Schwimmer's performance was criticized and the [BBC News](#) concluded, "Part of the problem ... may have been the ridiculous fact that *Friends* favourite David Schwimmer plays the hard and cruel Captain Herbert Sobel. The only thing believable about Schwimmer's acting is when he cowers in the face of true battle. His puppy dog eyes make him appear even more pitiful".^[28] Later that year he portrayed [Yitzhak Zuckerman](#) in the war drama *Uprising*, based on the true events of the [Warsaw Ghetto Uprising](#) in 1943.^{[29][30]}

In March 2004, Schwimmer appeared as himself on HBO's comedy series *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.^[31] During the lengthy run of *Friends*, Schwimmer directed ten of the show's episodes.^{[32][33]} The show's tenth and final season ended on May 6, 2004.^[34]

Later career

After *Friends*, Schwimmer starred in the 2005 independent drama *Duane Hopwood*, as the titular character who is an alcoholic whose life is spiraling downward rapidly after a divorce and is looking to turn his life around. The film received ambivalent reviews.^[35] Despite the reception, Schwimmer's performance was favored by critics; [Roger Ebert](#) of the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that the role was Schwimmer's "career-transforming performance".^[36] *Duane Hopwood* was screened at a special presentation at the 2005 [Sundance Film Festival](#).^[37] Furthermore in the same year he voiced [Melman](#), a

hypochondriac giraffe, in the computer animated film *Madagascar* (2005).^[38] *The Washington Post* noted that Schwimmer is particularly appealing as Melman.^[39] Despite the mixed response from critics,^[40] the film was a commercial success, earning US\$532 million worldwide,^[41] making it one of the biggest hits of 2005.^[42]



Schwimmer at the London premiere of *Madagascar* in July 2005

Schwimmer starred on the London stage in May 2005, with Catherine Tate, Lesley Manville, Sara Powell, and Saffron Burrows, in Neil LaBute's *Some Girl(s)* at the Gielgud Theatre.^[43] In the production, he plays a teacher who is ready to settle down and marry, but decides to visit four ex-girlfriends first.^[44] For his performance, Schwimmer received critical reviews. *The Independent* wrote that Schwimmer "is not called upon to extend his range nearly as far as one might have expected in *Some Girl(s)*. [...] Schwimmer remains bland, competent, and boyish—though not fatally boyish in the manner that appears to have turned these women on".^[45] However, Charles Spencer of *The Daily Telegraph* praised Schwimmer, reporting he "proves inspired casting. He takes to the stage with ... his endearing gaucheness seems designed to ensure our continued sympathy. Schwimmer mercilessly lays bare his character's opportunism, casual cruelties, and chronic self-deception".^[45]

In 2006, he made his Broadway debut in Herman Wouk's two-act play *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*.^[46] Schwimmer played the role of Lieutenant Barney Greenwald in the production, which was directed by Jerry Zaks.^[47] In an interview with *New York* magazine, he revealed that

he had wanted to try Broadway, however said "a couple of things came up that just never quite felt right. Either because I liked the play but wasn't hot on the director, or there was another star attached that I wasn't jazzed about working with".^[48] He further added that when showed a copy of Wouk's novel "...I was shocked at how good the writing was".^[48] His next film role was in the 2006 black comedy *Big Nothing*, in which he played a bitter, unemployed scientist.^[49]

Schwimmer made his directorial feature debut in the 2007 British comedy film *Run Fatboy Run*. The film stars [Simon Pegg](#) as a man who signs up for a marathon (he is out of shape) to convince his former fiancée and five-year-old son that he has turned his life around.^[32] When asked why he decided to direct the film, Schwimmer said: "As a director, I was struck by the challenge that I thought the script presented, which was that it was kind of three films in one. You had some great, big physical comedy, and I thought funny dialogue and characters. And then there was some real emotion to it with the relationship between the father and the son and the romance aspect".^[50] *Run Fatboy Run* garnered mixed reception, with the *New York Daily News* rating it one-and-a-half out of five stars and writing, "Most disappointing is how Schwimmer—who spent 10 seasons on a sitcom filled with hyperv verbal characters—manages to bumble 'Fatboy's' tender moments".^[51] *USA Today*, however, was favorable towards Schwimmer, reporting he possesses filmmaking finesse "having wisely chosen strong comic material for his debut behind the camera".^[52] For his directorial work, he was nominated for a [British Independent Film Award](#) in the category of Best Debut Director.^[53]



Schwimmer at the premiere of *Run Fatboy Run* at the Walter Reade

On November 8, 2007, Schwimmer made a guest appearance in the [second season](#) of the television series [30 Rock](#), where he played Greenzo, an NBC environmental mascot.^[54] The following year, he was part of an [ensemble cast](#) that included [Kate Beckinsale](#), [Matt Dillon](#), [Alan Alda](#), [Angela Bassett](#), and [Noah Wyle](#) in the thriller [Nothing But the Truth](#) (2008).^[55] The movie received generally favorable reviews.^[56] The success of *Madagascar* led Schwimmer to return to the role of Melman in the 2008 sequel, [Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa](#). The film earned US\$603 million at the international box office.^[57] Schwimmer took part in directing in-studio segments for [Little Britain USA](#), an American spinoff of the British [BBC](#) television series [Little Britain](#).^[58] In regard to this, he commented that he had "a good time directing episodes" for the show.^[59]

In October 2008, Schwimmer made his Off-Broadway directorial debut in *Fault Lines* at the [Cherry Lane Theatre](#) in New York.^[60] The production won a mixed review from the [Los Angeles Times](#), which wrote: "Based on *Fault Lines* ... we can't really tell whether Schwimmer has much talent as a director. We're surprised he didn't try something more challenging for his debut. If not much else, Schwimmer has encouraged his actors to intense their energy levels and comic timing at all costs".^[60] The [New York Post](#), however, noted that Schwimmer "knows a thing or two about freewheeling banter ... and for a good while the play crackles with terrific dialogue, expertly delivered".^[61] In February 2009, he returned to theater in a Chicago production of [Thornton Wilder's](#) three-act play [Our Town](#) as George Gibbs at the [Lookingglass Theatre](#).^{[62][63]} "Schwimmer ... turns in a poignant, richly textured and demonstrably heartfelt performance as George Gibbs. I've seen a fair bit of Schwimmer's post-*Friends* stage work in London and New York, and I've never seen him better", commented the [Chicago Tribune](#).^[62]

On August 2, 2009, Schwimmer played himself in the [sixth season](#) of the [HBO](#) television series, [Entourage](#). In the episode, [Ari Gold's](#) ([Jeremy Piven](#)) agency tries to steer his career back to television.^[64] Schwimmer directed his second feature, [Trust](#), starring [Clive Owen](#) and [Catherine](#)

[Keener](#). The film, a drama, is about a family whose teenage daughter becomes victim of an online sexual predator.^{[65][66]} *Trust* premiered at the [2010 Toronto International Film Festival](#).^[67] On January 1, 2011, Schwimmer guest-starred on the British comedy series *[Come Fly With Me](#)* starring [Matt Lucas](#) and [David Walliams](#), whom he directed in *Little Britain USA*.^[68]

Schwimmer has been cast as the lead in the ABC comedy pilot *Irreversible*. He will play "one half of a somewhat eccentric, self-absorbed couple" in his first comedic television role since *Friends* finished in 2004.^{[69][70]}

^ Personal life



In the early 2000s, Schwimmer dated Australian pop singer [Natalie Imbruglia](#),^[71] Israeli actress [Mili Avital](#),^[72] and American actress Rochelle Ovitt. In 2007, Schwimmer and English part-time photographer Zoe Buckman began a relationship.^[73] In March 2010, Schwimmer announced their engagement^[74] and married Buckman in a small private ceremony that June.^{[75][76]} On May 8, 2011, the couple had a daughter, Cleo Buckman Schwimmer.^[77]

In June 2006, Schwimmer won a US\$400,000 [defamation](#) lawsuit against Aaron Tonken, a former charity fundraiser. Tonken claimed Schwimmer had demanded [Rolex](#) watches in order to appear at his own charity event, a claim that Schwimmer had denied.^[78] Schwimmer is an active director of the Rape Treatment Center in Santa Monica, which specializes in helping victims of date rape and child rape.^[7] He has also campaigned for legislation to ban drugs such as [Rohypnol](#) and [GHB](#).^[7] In November 2011, he gave the Scottish charity [Children 1st](#) permission to screen his film *[Trust](#)* to commemorate World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse and Violence against Children.^[79] In 2012 he rebutted two longstanding rumors: one that he appeared as a soldier on a train in *[Biloxi Blues](#)* (1988), saying, "No. I don't know why that's on [IMDb](#), but I never was in that", and the other that he is related to dancer [Lacey Schwimmer](#), saying, "No, not at all. Please set the record straight. I guess it's a natural assumption because we have the same last name,

but no. I've never even met her".^[2]

^ Filmography



Films

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1991	<i>Flight of the Intruder</i>	Duty Officer	
1992	<i>Crossing the Bridge</i>	John Anderson	
1993	<i>Twenty Bucks</i>	Neil Campbell	
1994	<i>Wolf</i>	Cop	
1996	<i>The Pallbearer</i>	Tom Thompson	
1997	<i>Breast Men</i>	Dr. Kevin Saunders	
1998	<i>The Thin Pink Line</i>	Kelly Goodish/J.T.	
1998	<i>Kissing a Fool</i>	Max Abbitt	
1998	<i>Six Days Seven Nights</i>	Frank Martin	
1998	<i>Apt Pupil</i>	Edward French	
1999	<i>It's the Rage</i>	Chris	
2000	<i>Love & Sex</i>	Jehovah's Witness	Uncredited
2000	<i>Picking Up the Pieces</i>	Father Leo Jerome	
2001	<i>Hotel</i>	Jonathan Danderfine	
2005	<i>Duane Hopwood</i>	Duane Hopwood	
2005	<i>Madagascar</i>	Melman	Voice
2006	<i>Big Nothing</i>	Charlie	
2007	<i>Run Fatboy Run</i>		Director
2008	<i>Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa</i>	Melman	Voice
2008	<i>Nothing But the Truth</i>	Ray Armstrong	
2010	<i>Trust</i>		Director

2012	<i>John Carter</i>	Young Thark Warrior	
2012	<i>Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted</i>	Melman	Voice
2013	<i>Madly Madagascar</i>	Melman	Voice
2013	<i>The Iceman</i>	Josh Rosenthal	

Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1991–1992	<i>The Wonder Years</i>	Michael	4 episodes
1992–1993	<i>L.A. Law</i>	Dana Romney	5 episodes
1993	<i>NYPD Blue</i>	Josh '4B' Goldstein	4 episodes
1993	<i>Blossom</i>	Sonny Catalano	2 episodes
1994	<i>Monty</i>	Greg Richardson	
1994–2004	<i>Friends</i>	Ross Geller	236 episodes, directed 10 episodes
1995	<i>The Single Guy</i>	Ross Geller	Episode: "Neighbors"
1996	<i>ER</i>	Dr. Karubian	Uncredited Voice Only Episode: " Doctor Carter, I Presume "
1998	<i>Since You've Been Gone</i>	Robert S. Levitt	ABC television film
2001	<i>Band of Brothers</i>	Captain Herbert Sobel	HBO Miniseries 3 episodes
2001	<i>Uprising</i>	Yitzhak Zuckerman	NBC television film
2002-2003	<i>The Jamie Kennedy</i>	Himself	2 episodes

	<i>Experiment</i>		
2004	<i>Curb Your Enthusiasm</i>	Himself	3 episodes
2004–2006	<i>Joey</i>		Directed various episodes
2006	<i>Sports Medicine</i>	Dr. Brock Roy	
2007	<i>30 Rock</i>	Greenzo/Jared	Episode: " Greenzo "
2008	<i>Little Britain USA</i>		Director
2009	<i>Entourage</i>	Himself	Episode: "Running on E"
2009	<i>Merry Madagascar</i>	Melman	Voice
2011	<i>Come Fly With Me</i>	Himself	Episode 2
2012	<i>Web Therapy</i>	Newell Miller	4 episodes
2014	<i>Growing Up Fisher</i>		Director "Pilot"

^ Awards and nominations



Year	Award	Category	Series	Result
1995	Emmy Award	Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated
1996	American Comedy Awards	Funniest Supporting Male Performer in a TV Series	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated
	Screen Actors Guild Awards	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series	<i>Friends</i>	Won
1999	Blockbuster Entertainment Award	Favorite Supporting Actor in a Comedy/Romance	<i>Six Days, Seven Nights</i>	Nominated
	Screen Actors Guild Awards	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated

		Comedy Series		
2000	Screen Actors Guild Awards	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated
	<i>TV Guide Awards</i>	Editor's Choice	<i>Friends</i>	Won
2001	Screen Actors Guild Awards	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated
2002	Satellite Awards	Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Series, Miniseries or a Motion Picture Made for Television	<i>Band of Brothers</i>	Won
	Screen Actors Guild Awards	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated
2003	Screen Actors Guild Awards	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated
2004	Screen Actors Guild Awards	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated
2006	TV Land Award	Most Memorable Kiss	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated
2007	British Independent Film Awards	Douglas Hickox Award	<i>Run Fatboy Run</i>	Nominated
	TV Land Awards	Break Up That Was So Bad It Was Good	<i>Friends</i>	Nominated

^ See also



- [Back Stage West Garland Awards](#), for his Lookingglass Theatre Company, production of *Arabian Nights*

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