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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

DOW JONES

News Corp.

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TUESDAY, JULY 16, 2013 ~ VOL. CCLXII NO. 13

WSJ.com

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### Tired of Superheroes and Zombies? This Summer Movie Stars Auditors

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A Lawyer Becomes an Accidental Mogul  
Of Training Videos; Character Motivation

BY REED ALBERGOTTI

Duncan Wiggetts has produced three successful films, but his latest may be his masterpiece.

"A Price Worth Paying?" stars Phil Davis as the chairman of an embattled company that bets its future on a fast-talking, risk-taking chief executive played by Nigel Whitmey of the movie "Saving Private Ryan."

The movie won't appear in any theaters and can't be streamed on Netflix. And Mr. Wiggetts, 45 years old, isn't a Hollywood big shot. He is a partner at international law firm Dechert LLP.

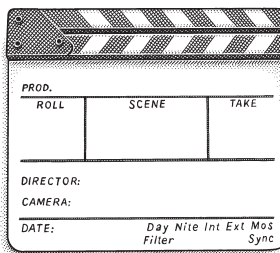
The half-hour picture, which cost more than \$100,000 to

make—more than the budgets of "The Blair Witch Project" and "Clerks" combined—might just be one of the most professional, star-studded examples of an underappreciated genre: The corporate training video.

Mr. Wiggetts, whose high-school teachers chided him for lacking any "discernible artistic talent," has managed to become a master of corporate filmmaking. "It feels quite surreal," he says. "This is absolutely nothing I ever set out to do."

Corporate employees have long been shown training videos that dissect issues such as sexual harassment and ethics. John Cleese, of Monty Python fame,

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## Tired of Superheroes? This Summer Film Stars Auditors

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created a successful franchise of humorous films in the 1970s aimed at improving management style. Mr. Wiggetts' films cover corporate topics meant to spark thought and debate.

His films have a cult following among corporate board members. At a recent screening, Mr. Wiggetts says he was asked by one director when he is going to come out with a box set of his films. "I was like, I've actually got followers here," he says.

Ian Lee, chairman of Ricardo PLC's audit committee, has seen all of Mr. Wiggetts' films and watched him develop as a director. "He got more sophisticated, shall we say. More refined," he says. "You can almost see yourself in Duncan's films. You would hope you didn't, but there but for the grace of God go I."

Donald Brydon, chairman of Royal Mail Group and Smiths Group, PLC, first saw one of Mr. Wiggetts' films five years ago and says he "was hugely skeptical." Now, he has become one of his biggest fans. "You have the sense it's the sort of thing you could be

watching on HBO."

The idea to make a film came to Mr. Wiggetts about eight years ago when he was a senior counsel at the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. He thought it would be an effective way of teaching the company's auditors to be more aggressive with corporate boards. He wrote a screenplay about a chemical company whose chief financial officer defrauds the company.

A few months later, Mr. Wiggetts' boss threw a DVD onto his desk. The screenplay had been turned into a film, "The Crisis." Mr. Wiggetts says he cringes when he thinks about the quality of that first effort. But it was a hit with its intended audience. Soon, Mr. Wiggetts was working on his next project.

"Risking It All," which premiered in 2007, portrayed a company facing allegations of bribery. Outside auditors investigate but fail to ask the right questions. Regulators issue a hefty fine.

Screenings were held in 125 countries. Mr. Wiggetts went on a world-wide tour and won a legal innovation award.

In 2011, Mr. Wiggetts' filmmaking ability caught the eye of Dechert, his current firm. His contract, which may be the first of its kind in the legal profession, required him to make a film within 12 months.

He wanted his fourth film to be his best, he says, with better acting, higher production values and a gripping plot that would wow board members. In the spring of 2012, he found the man for the job: Nick White, a young director who had been nominated for a British Academy of Film and Television Arts award for a short film called "Incorporated."

Mr. White, at first, had little interest. He said he had a somewhat jaded view of the corporate world, which he described as "oppressive." His films highlight corporate ills. "Incorporated," for instance, takes place in the dystopian world of a soulless company where no one is accountable for its sins.

But Mr. Wiggetts was persistent. He convinced Mr. White to show up at Dechert's office and interview for the job. Mr. White, a slender man with a scruffy beard



An on-location shoot for a training film took place at a London law office.

and glasses, put on a suit and tie for the first time in roughly a decade, he says, and agreed to do the film, mainly because he thought it might have a positive impact in the corporate world.

He got Dechert to pay for movie-grade cameras and build a set, using dollies and tracks so the cameras could be smoothly rolled around the office, creating crisp, Hollywood-level shots.

Mr. Wiggetts was ecstatic and began to work on the script, focusing on topic areas like executive compensation, antibribery

legislation, foreign acquisitions and hostile takeover bids.

Meanwhile, Mr. White was recruiting actors, and he nailed a big one: Mr. Davis, star of cult classic "Quadrophenia" and the British series "Whitechapel" and "Silk." Daniel Day-Lewis, after winning his third best actor Oscar for "Lincoln," wrote an article in Port Magazine, citing Mr. Davis as a major acting influence.

Simon Rouse, a star on the British police drama "The Bill," Mr. Whitmey, who was in "Saving Private Ryan," and Juliet Howland

of movies such as "V for Vendetta" were also cast.

Messrs. Wiggetts and White held individual meetings with each actor for a crash course in corporate governance so they would understand exactly what was going on in the story and what was motivating their characters. Shooting commenced last August and went on for five days. Conference rooms were converted to dressing rooms and employees had to walk around almost a million dollars' worth of rented camera equipment and step over metal tracks.

The film made its official debut at the London Stock Exchange in May in front of packed crowd of about 150 corporate board members. It is making its U.S. debut at a similar event at the Nasdaq on July 23.

Watch a Video»

Scan this code to see a video about Mr. Wiggetts' films or watch at WSJ.com/PageOne.

