

# SECRET OF SUCCESS

By Jim Gustafson

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**CAST:** GUMBLE, GIMBLE, and GAMBLE

***AT RISE: Three men sitting at desks, chomping on cigars and talking on phones.***

GUMBLE: Gimble, Gamble and Gumble...Investments, joint ventures, leveraged buy outs and downsizing. Speak to me...

***(GIMBLE picks up phone)***

GIMBLE: That's right...You heard me...I said "Evict 'em"...I don't care if it is Christmas Eve...So what? You borrow money from Gimble, Gamble and Gumble and you have certain obligations...You want money, you come here...You want charity...You go to "Sisters Of The Poor." Put their possessions on the curb...I got new tenants moving in this afternoon.

***(HE slams down the phone as GAMBLE picks up another...)***

GAMBLE: NO!...No!...No!...Have a nice day...Oh, lordy, I love that kind of call. NO!...The most beautiful word in the English language. NOOOOOO....It just rolls off the tongue.

GUMBLE: ***(Picks up another phone...)*** That's what I said!...Close the plant...Lay 'em all off...Severance pay? Why?...Oh, I see...Families and mortgages, you say...Ah, you've touched my heart...Yes, yes, they deserve severance pay...Tell them I'll pay every employee through the end of...end of...THE DAY! ***(demonic laugh)***

***(HE slams phone down, shuffles papers...All three look up and notice the audience...)***

GUMBLE: So what are you looking at?

GIMBLE: Haven't you ever seen big business in action before?...

***(All three get up and walk in a figure eight pattern, weaving past one another.)***

GAMBLE: Hey, we didn't get to be the richest men on Wall Street by being Mr. Nice Guys...Geez...Compared to us, Ol' Joe Kennedy looked like Mother Theresa!

GIMBLE: You gotta break some eggs to make an omelet...

GUMBLE: And you gotta break some butts to make a fortune.

GIMBLE: But nowadays you don't have to break a sweat...

GAMBLE: Not today's tycoon...

BUMBLE: Not with Power Pandering – 1990's style...

GIMBLE: Why soil your hands...

***(They stop their weaving and step to the edge of the stage.)***

GUMBLE: When you can sell your soul...

GIMBLE: If you don't let ethics get in the way of ambition...

GAMBLE: The sky's the limit...

GUMBLE: All you gotta do is shuffle some stocks...

GIMBLE: Barter a few bonds...

GUMBLE: Apply a little leverage...And you got yourself a buyout!

***(All three come to center stage.)***

GIMBLE: A hostile takeover...Listen to that..."Hostile takeover"...

GAMBLE: It's like poetry...Like music...

***(As they deliver the next section, they form a straight line. As each says his line, HE leans left or right of the others... Or they do knee bends so the speaker can be seen. The lines are delivered very fast with a lot of choreographed motion.)***

GAMBLE: And it's easier than you'd think...IF you remember the 15 "shuns" of business...

GIMBLE: Persuasion...

GAMBLE: Deception...

GUMBLE: Collusion...

***(They speak faster and faster with every word.)***

GIMBLE: Litigation...

GAMBLE: Aggravation...

GUMBLE: Accusation...

GAMBLE: Manipulation...

GIMBLE: Intimidation...

GUMBLE: Altercation...

GAMBLE: Humiliation...

GIMBLE: Insinuation...

GAMBLE: Alienation...

GIMBLE: Recrimination...

***(They stop bobbing around and stand side by side.)***

GUMBLE: Keep using “shuns” ‘til they’re on a dead run...So all that is left is....Ca-pit-u-la-tion...

GAMBLE: ***(with relish)*** Or extermination.

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