

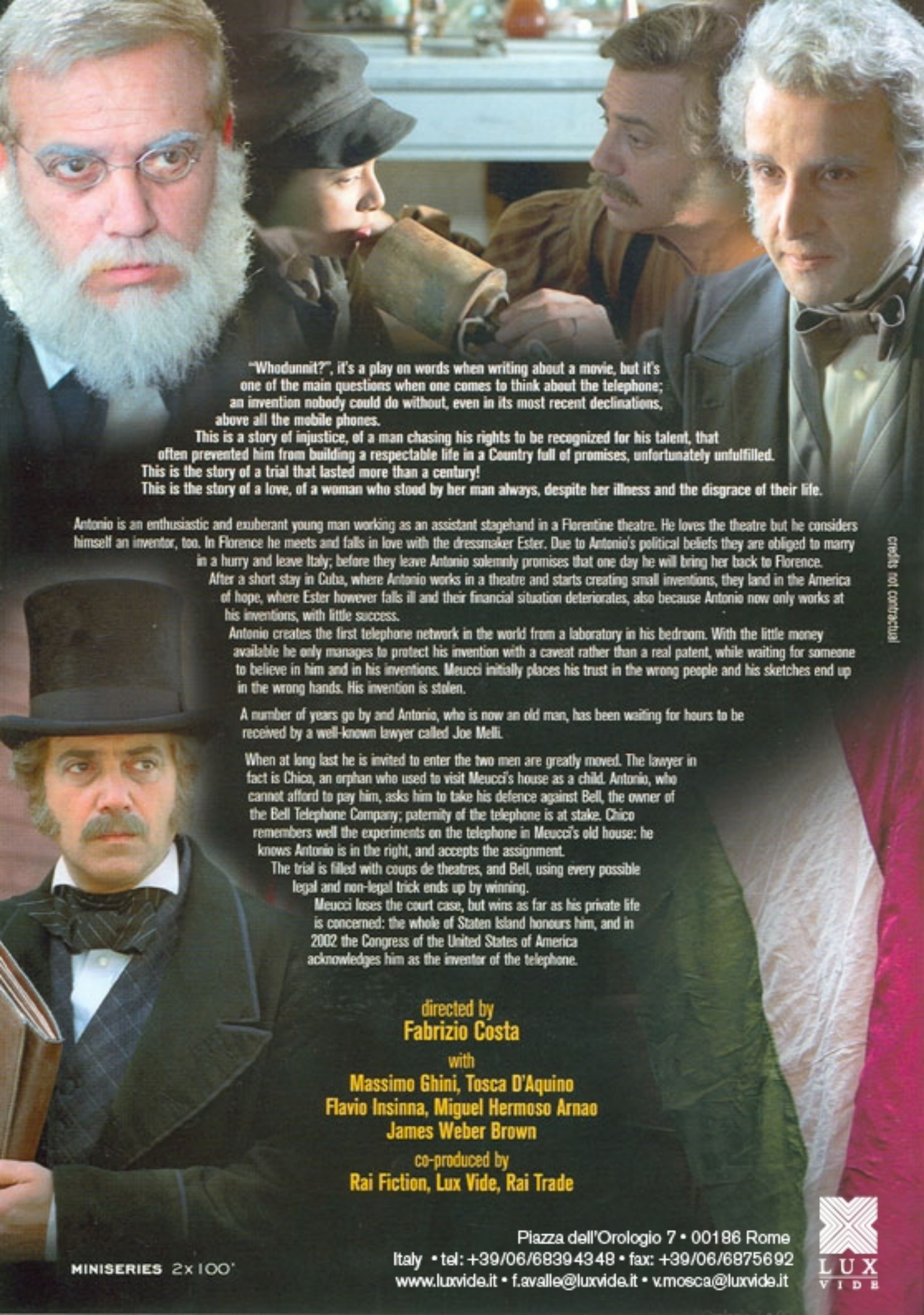


the stolen dream

the story of the real inventor of the telephone

directed by fabrizio costa





"Whodunnit?", it's a play on words when writing about a movie, but it's one of the main questions when one comes to think about the telephone; an invention nobody could do without, even in its most recent declinations, above all the mobile phones.

This is a story of injustice, of a man chasing his rights to be recognized for his talent, that often prevented him from building a respectable life in a Country full of promises, unfortunately unfulfilled. This is the story of a trial that lasted more than a century!

This is the story of a love, of a woman who stood by her man always, despite her illness and the disgrace of their life.

Antonio is an enthusiastic and exuberant young man working as an assistant stagehand in a Florentine theatre. He loves the theatre but he considers himself an inventor, too. In Florence he meets and falls in love with the dressmaker Ester. Due to Antonio's political beliefs they are obliged to marry in a hurry and leave Italy; before they leave Antonio solemnly promises that one day he will bring her back to Florence.

After a short stay in Cuba, where Antonio works in a theatre and starts creating small inventions, they land in the America of hope, where Ester however falls ill and their financial situation deteriorates, also because Antonio now only works at his inventions, with little success.

Antonio creates the first telephone network in the world from a laboratory in his bedroom. With the little money available he only manages to protect his invention with a caveat rather than a real patent, while waiting for someone to believe in him and in his inventions. Meucci initially places his trust in the wrong people and his sketches end up in the wrong hands. His invention is stolen.

A number of years go by and Antonio, who is now an old man, has been waiting for hours to be received by a well-known lawyer called Joe Melli.

When at long last he is invited to enter the two men are greatly moved. The lawyer in fact is Chico, an orphan who used to visit Meucci's house as a child. Antonio, who cannot afford to pay him, asks him to take his defence against Bell, the owner of the Bell Telephone Company; paternity of the telephone is at stake. Chico remembers well the experiments on the telephone in Meucci's old house: he knows Antonio is in the right, and accepts the assignment.

The trial is filled with coups de theatres, and Bell, using every possible legal and non-legal trick ends up by winning.

Meucci loses the court case, but wins as far as his private life is concerned: the whole of Staten Island honours him, and in 2002 the Congress of the United States of America acknowledges him as the inventor of the telephone.

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