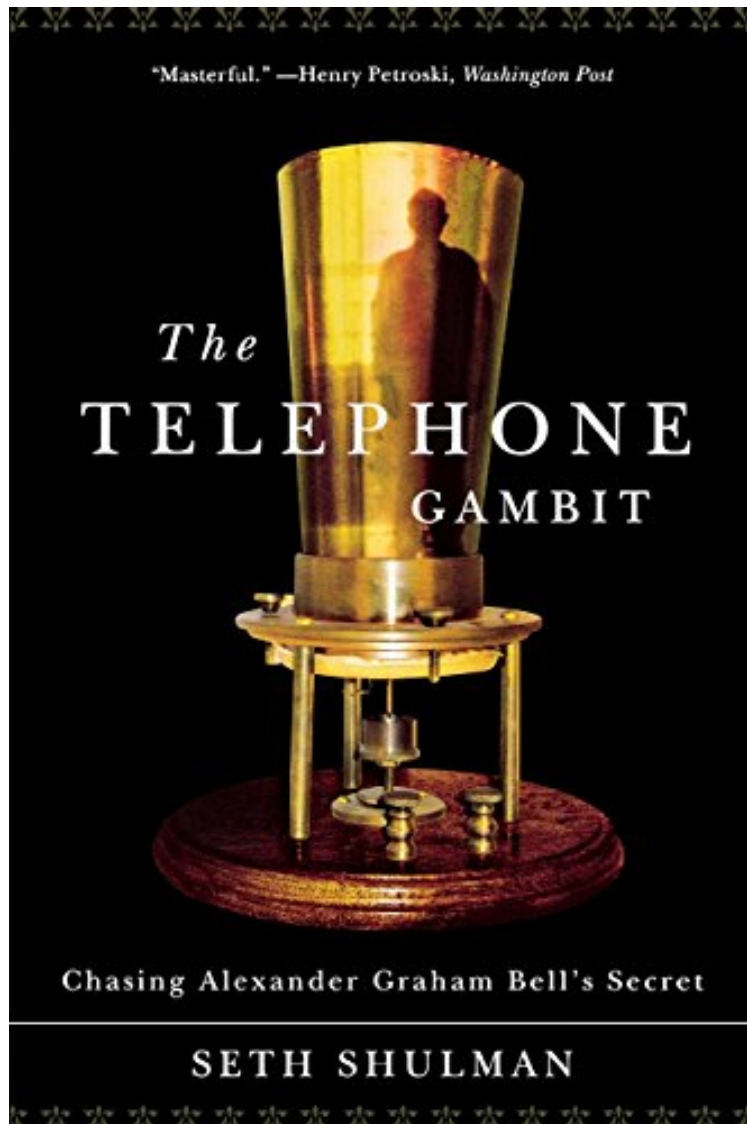


(Ebook pdf) The Telephone Gambit: Chasing Alexander Graham Bell's Secret

# The Telephone Gambit: Chasing Alexander Graham Bell's Secret

Seth Shulman

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**Seth Shulman : The Telephone Gambit: Chasing Alexander Graham Bell's Secret** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Telephone Gambit: Chasing Alexander Graham Bell's Secret:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An entertaining journey of personal discovery, though written as real discoveriesBy ILAN VARDIThis entertaining book ends up being somewhat disappointing, mostly due to the author's lack of understanding of the ways of the world, in particular, the prevalence of "pseudo-history" in science. He doesn't

understand that a bit of historical research leads to understanding that the common view is wrong, and that those who have done that work have realized it all along. I can imagine him writing a similar book about Steve Jobs when, after doing enough research, he is disillusioned to discover that Jobs did not invent the personal computer nor the windows interface. Of course, any nerd knows that Steve Jobs' contributions were not personal technical invention. Similarly in this book, the author highlights "his" discoveries leading to uncontested proof that Bell's first telephone communication was directly lifted from Elisha Gray's caveat and that this mischief was either done directly by Bell or by his lawyers. While his gradual insight makes for entertaining reading, it seems that every single piece of evidence was not only known beforehand but was presented in testimony at trials regarding the validity of Bell's priority claim. The author simply comes to the conclusion which is inevitable to anyone having studied the evidence. One can cite numerous other examples where most people, including most scientists, believe something is true but which historians know is false. My own personal discovery was finding out that Copernicus was not the first to propose that the Earth went around the Sun, that his model was inferior to Ptolemy's and that it set Kepler back in his search for laws of planetary motion. The recent book "Celestial Mechanics, The Waltz of the Planets" is the most recent work I've read which gets almost every detail wrong in recounting the pseudo-history. The book is also disappointing due to the author's lack of culture. He fails to cite the movie "The Story of Alexander Graham Bell", which is probably the most well known source for the telephone patent controversy, that was my first exposure to it, and it made Don Ameche famous, apparently the telephone was even called "The Ameche" in American slang for some years. Basically, when I read a book about some narrow subject I hardly know, I shouldn't know some fact that the author missed. He also says the heroine of G.B. Shaw's Pygmalion is "Liza", which makes you wonder if he's ever seen the play, the movie, or even My Fair lady. In the end, it's a worthwhile read, because it appears to present the necessary facts pointing to the real story behind the telephone controversy. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Stirs the pot, but adds no new ingredients. By Reviewer AJP The best thing about this book is that it has sufficient mass-market appeal to interest readers in this fascinating topic to the point where they might then go and read one of the vastly superior prior works on the same topic. Shulman's "smoking gun" premise is a canard - the Bell notebook sketch and its ostensible similarity to the drawing in Gray's caveat are already discussed in detail in Burton Baker's lovingly researched 2001 book "The Gray Matter," which Shulman acknowledges as a source, albeit not as to this point (or perhaps I am not giving Shulman enough credit for the brilliant irony at work here). I am among those that believes that Gray was indeed schemed out of his invention by Bell's backers, but Shulman never really grasps the more relevant points that support that conclusion. Baker's 2001 work is the most thoroughly researched that I have found on the topic, but ultimately he too fails to connect the dots convincingly and reaches conclusions not supported by the impressive trove of evidence that he uncovered. The best book on this topic - by far - is Evenson's 2001 book "The Telephone Patent Conspiracy of 1876: The Elisha Gray-Alexander Bell Controversy and Its Many Players." Unlike Baker, who goes in the wrong direction, and certainly unlike Shulman, whose understanding of Baker's and Evenson's prior research is superficial at best, Evenson goes where the evidence leads him, and the result is a far more damning indictment of the early Bell monopoly and its Patent Office antics than either Baker or Shulman can muster, all the more so because Evenson does not push a point of view and is relatively even-handed in his consideration of the evidence. Coming eight years after Baker and Evenson, Shulman's book is most remarkable for its utter lack of either new evidence or novel analysis. But if it leads you to the more serious works on this topic, it is worth reading. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good read about the real history of the telephone. By Oliver Nicholson Good read about the real history of the telephone - Bell had politics on his side

"A stellar example of historical investigation at its probing best." Chuck Leddy, Boston Globe Throughout his career, Alexander Graham Bell, one of the world's most famous inventors, was plagued by a secret: he stole the key idea behind the invention of the telephone. While researching at MIT, science journalist Seth Shulman scrutinized Bell's journals and within them found the smoking gun: a hint of deeply buried historical deception. Delving further into Bell's life, Shulman unearthed the surprising story behind the telephone, a tale of romance, corruption, and unchecked ambition.

.com Best of the Month, January 2008: Seth Shulman closely examines the race to build the first telephone and uncovers potential bombshells with *The Telephone Gambit*. Although Alexander Graham Bell is widely accepted as the father of the telephone (despite the fact that rival inventor Elisha Gray submitted a similar claim the same day Bell filed his patent), Schulman provides intriguing evidence questioning if the scales were deliberately tipped in Alexander's favor. Was the venerable inventor party to theft from Gray's own research? Or are such accusations merely sour grapes from a bitterly contested legal battle? Fraught with controversy, conspiracy, and possible chicanery, Shulman spins real-life Da Vinci Code drama around one of the most influential inventions of the modern era. --Dave Callanan From *Bookmarks Magazine* In *Unlocking the Sky* (2003), Seth Shulman showed his knack for historical detection by making credible claims that aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss deserves the same accolades for his work as the Wright brothers for theirs. In *The Telephone Gambit*, Shulman, who researched the book while a resident

scholar in MIT's Dibner Institute, sets his sights on Alexander Graham Bell. He comes away with a stunning and plausible conclusion as he discredits Bells claim to the worlds most valuable patent. Drawing on research from Bells own notebooks and other sources, Shulman combines deft sleuthing and a nose for a good story with what every critic except the reviewer for the Los Angeles Times deems lively, compact prose. The Telephone Gambit is a necessary addendum to textbook history. Copyright 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc. "Best of 2008 (Sci/Tech)" --Booklist "Best of 2008 (Nonfiction)" --Christian Science Monitor "Best of 2008 (Science)" --Washington Post