

# The Argyle Case

A Novelization by J. W. McConaughy of the Successful New Play by Harriet Ford, Harvey J. O'Higgins and Detective William J. Burns, in Which Robert Hilliard is Appearing :: ::

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"Come in, come in, Mr. Kayton!" roared the young man in a frenzy. "We've got hold of something at last to give out! She"—his finger stabbed at the girl's shrinking form—"she heard me come back! That ought to satisfy the public—that ought to clear her! Give that out! I can stand it! I didn't come back!"

And he flung himself from the room as Miss Mazurek collapsed in a chair. But as Kayton approached she staggered to her feet and all but fell in his arms.

"Help us, help us!" she implored feverishly. "Don't say he came back here! I was wrong—I am sure I was! He says he didn't come! Please don't tell any one! What have I done? What have I done?"

Kayton took a firm grip on the slender shoulders with his two strong hands, straightened the girl's clinging form and gazed into her face gravely, but kindly.

"I want you to pull yourself together," he ordered in a tone of authority. "I'm going to need you—I'm counting on you. We need—you!"

"Oh, I can't, I can't!" moaned the girl.

"Yes, you can!" he interrupted grimly. "You're not that sort of a girl. You want to clear him, don't you, as much as he wants to clear you?"

"Oh, yes, yes! Oh, I—"

"Well, then, that's all right!" he declared heartily, giving the shoulders a rather vigorous pat as he released them. "You go to your room. I'll let you know when I need you."

He turned abruptly away as if to indicate that the matter was closed for the present, and Miss Mazurek dragged herself slowly, uncertainly to the door. Just before she passed out he called her by name, and she turned miserably toward him. He walked up swiftly and again placed his hands on her shoulders.

"Before you go," he said gravely, "I want you to promise me that you won't worry any more. I can't say definitely as yet who is responsible for all this, but I can tell you this much—I know that neither you nor Bruce had anything to do with it."

It is given to few men to win, with a few mere words, the reward in overwhelming joy and gratitude that leaped to the eyes of the miserable girl.

"You do!" she gasped incredulously. He nodded slowly and smiled.

"I do." "Oh, oh!" There was a rush of sobs. "Thank you, Mr. Kayton." And she was gone. When Manning returned some minutes later he found his chief staring vacantly up the deserted hall. He coughed and gained no attention.

"Hi!" he repeated a little more loudly. "Have you got anything yet I can work on, governor?"

Kayton came back to his job with a start.

"Wh-what?" he demanded, with a frown.

"I say," repeated Manning deliberately, "have you got anything I can work on?"

"Yes," replied Kayton, with a swift change to his wonted alertness. "Call up Willie, Joe."

"Chief Willie, Washington!" exclaimed Manning in surprise.

"Yes," snapped his chief sharply. "Did you think the secret service had moved? 6400 Main."

While Manning was deep in a subdued but heated argument with the long distance operator Kayton busied himself with the finger prints.

"Did you get the woman's thumb prints under the edge here, Joe?" he called out.

"Yes, sir," replied the young man, with his hand over the mouthpiece. "The right hand one came out fine—perfect! Is it the girl?" he added as his chief subjected sheet after sheet to a close scrutiny under his powerful pocket lens.

"No," replied Kayton curtly.

"Is she in the bunch?" inquired Manning after another minute's wait, in which he swore fluently but guardedly at the telephone company, its works, equipment and operating staff.

Kayton dropped the sheets of paper on the table and looked up with a queer light in his eyes.

"Joe," he said, "this woman came from the outside."

Manning whisked into the telephone and hastily clipped his hand over the

mouthpiece again. "Gee," he grunted. "That's a big order. Hello! Is the chief in? Mr. Kayton wants to speak to him. Here he is governor. Just a minute!"

"Cover the doors, Joe!" ordered Kayton, taking the phone. Manning swiftly and quietly opened both doors, peered about, and then stepped out into the hall.

"Hello, chief!" said Kayton distinctly, but in a somewhat guarded tone. "Oh, hard at work! Have you any record of a counterfeit \$100 gold certificate—E973? E-9-7-3—Don't you get it? I can't very well, A. B. C. D. E! Yes, that's it. Series of 1907. Yes, that's it. You haven't? Well, I've got one here that I thought might be bad. No-o, but it's a little light. If it's counterfeit it's the best one I've seen. No. They must must

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"Have you any record of a counterfeit \$100 gold certificate?"

### CHAPTER VIII. "Trail Hurley!"

KAYTON sat examining the bill until Manning returned with the announcement that Mr. Hurley was coming. Kayton slipped the banknote into his pocket.

"Let him in," he said. Mr. Hurley returned more largely patronizing than ever.

"Well, how is the mystery getting along, Mr. Kayton?" he inquired, accepting a cigar the detective offered him and puffing it happily.

Kayton paused, lighted match in hand, and looked up at him with a little smile of surprise.

"Mystery?" he exclaimed. "Why there's no such thing as a mystery if you use a little common sense, Mr. Hurley. You know, in an affair of this sort, you're confronted by a long line of facts, and you hammer away until you break through somewhere." He lit his cigar and took a puff.

"Mr. Hurley, when you first met Mr. Argyle—By the way, how did you meet Mr. Argyle?"

Mr. Hurley carefully brushed the ashes off his cigar and examined the end of it critically.

"Well, now, Mr. Kayton, I'll tell you about that," he said slowly. "I had a western proposition in which I wanted to interest him, and I went to his office, and he proved to be a very approachable man. I laid the matter before him in the usual way. He took it up, investigated it, found it was what I had said it was, and we got together on it. I suppose that gave him confidence in me. Are you through here?" he inquired as Kayton picked up his hat and slipped on a light overcoat.

"Yes," replied the detective. "Call me up in the morning if I can be of any help to you," offered the lawyer, also making ready to leave.

"I'll be in Pittsburgh," said Kayton briefly.

"Oh! You are going away?" Mr. Hurley was interested.

"Yes, for the day. My operatives have just rounded up a case there, and I've got to see the man and pull him across. Expect to take the night train back."

"I'll see you the day after tomorrow, then," said the lawyer with a nod of farewell as he walked slowly out.

"Yes, do," said Kayton. The detective buttoned his overcoat, ran his eye about the room again as if to make sure he had overlooked nothing and then turned to his assistant with a brief command:

"Joe, trail Hurley!" Manning was not an easily surprised young man, but now his jaw almost dropped with amazement.

"Wh-what?" he exclaimed. "Hurley?" Kayton chewed his cigar, and an amused gleam came to the corners of his eyes as he surveyed his assistant.

"Haven't you been listening to him?" he asked.

"No, not particularly," Manning admitted.

"Well, you should have," commented his chief grimly. "That's your business. He's way off from normal. When a man says 'Now I'll tell you about that' it's one safe bet he's lying. Trail him!"

Ten seconds later the lawyer had an ever invisible but ever present shadow. Contrary to the copy book wisdom on the subject, swift action is not a habit. Persons who habitually hurry are merely fussy. They seldom accomplish much beyond an appearance of activity which is deceiving to the unversed, and they also succeed in getting real workmen nervous and irritated. Such people are worse than useless in a crisis. It is the even tempered man who conserves his energy

and never hurries until it is absolutely necessary, who delivers the swift thunderbolts of action that dazzle the world.

And Kayton's specialty was conserving and concentrating his energies. When he returned from Pittsburgh he did not know who had killed Mr. Argyle. He strongly suspected that Mr. Hurley knew more than he was telling, and his plans had been laid with a view to eliminating the lawyer or fastening guilt upon him. He did not know which would result. He was not guessing. He had not made up his mind that the lawyer was in the mesh of the true crime. So he had to make certain just where this figure stood in the game before he could proceed along new lines with certainty.

He was expected at his office the second morning after his departure for Pittsburgh, and the newspapers confirmed the report of his return. They confirmed it by telling in seven column headlines what he had done in Pittsburgh.

Leischmann, the manager, and Nash, a veteran aid of the great detective, who was allowed all sorts of privileges, were awaiting him in the private office and discussing the news from Pittsburgh when Kayton arrived.

The chief carried a little grip and also some few signs of two successive nights in a sleeping car, but he seemed as calmly energetic as ever.

"Hello, boys," he said, with a nod.

"Morning, governor," responded his aids. Kayton stripped off overcoat and gloves, hung his hat and turned to his desk, rubbing his hands to get the morning chill out of the fingers.

"Is Cortwright out there?" he inquired without further formality.

"Yes." "Send him in."

Leischmann disappeared and there came presently into the office a man of about forty who might have been cashier of a reliable bank. He was well dressed. His face was round and honest. His eyes were bright and his speech and gaze were direct and straightforward.

"Good morning, governor," he said pleasantly, but respectfully.

"Good morning, Cortwright," returned his chief, looking up with a cheerful smile. "Tell me about this report on the Argyle case." His hand fell on a mass of typewritten manuscript.

"Well, we've run out all the inside servants," said Cortwright, "and the cook and the chauffeur. Nothing



"We know Hurley's back better than his face."

wrong there at all. We've found the policeman that was on the beat. He has nothing. We looked up some of the discharged servants—a coachman. Nothing to that."

"All right. That's all," he nodded, and Cortwright withdrew.

Kayton picked up the receiver of a desk phone. "Send Joe in here," he ordered, and presently Manning walked in with a broad, red scratch like a birthmark on his cheek.

Kayton grinned at him. "Hello, Joe. Marked for identification?"

Manning slowly raised both hands to his face—one to feel tenderly of the wound on his cheek and the other to entry to his teeth the apple he was eating.

"Picked that up trailing Hurley," he mumbled cheerily, his mouth full of fruit. "A fresh copy tried to follow me, and I fell down a fire escape."

"How about Hurley?"

Manning shook his head dolefully. "Nothing doing," he said. "Haven't been able to line him up with anything. We know Hurley's back better than his face. We take him out in the morning and trail him around from one office to another. He don't go into court. Nothing busy in his office but his telephone. We take him home and put him to bed at night—do everything but bear his prayers."

"Well, don't lose him. How about that fake personal?"

"It's planted in the morning paper," Manning fished one out of his overcoat pocket and opened it and gazed at it.

"Sure you got it right?" demanded his chief.

"Information wanted regarding 'N. M.' Beneficiary Argyle estate. Tolworthy & Mead, St. Paul building," read Manning.

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ed in some more mystery about a new murder-clew and a missing heir to the Argyle estate.

Kayton nodded happily. "Well, if she doesn't see the personal that stuff ought to reach her." The desk phone rang, and the attendant at the outer door informed him that Mr. Hurley was asking for Mr. Kayton. The detective's eyes gleamed, and he made a gesture to Manning. "Hurley? Send him right in. Here, Joe, take these telegrams"—he handed a number of yellow sheets—"they're all mixed up with a half dozen allases for each counterfeiter. Pick out the information and make me a sort of record of past performances. Sit over there at the desk"—he pointed to one in a corner and added meaningfully—"and keep an ear this way for Hurley."

Manning took off his coat and hat and placed himself as ordered. Kayton took out a box of cigars, lit one and leaned back in his chair, puffing contentedly as the massive form of the lawyer pushed through the door.

"I just wanted to speak to you for a moment, Mr. Kayton," said the lawyer pleasantly, advancing to the desk and shaking hands.

"Glad to see you any time, Mr. Hurley," returned Kayton cordially, offering the box of cigars. "I expect to get a good deal of assistance from you."

"I don't know about that," laughed Mr. Hurley, selecting a cigar and availing himself of the lighted match the detective held out. "But, of course, I'll be glad to do anything I can."

Kayton nodded, and his visitor took a chair, facing him.

"By the way," resumed Mr. Hurley, puffing with a smoker's appreciation of a treat, "in line with your theory that it was an old servant who was blackmailing, it occurred to me that they used to have a coachman who may have a grievance because the chauffeur supplanted him."

The detective was impressed. "Do you remember his name?" he inquired, picking up a pencil.

"No, but I suppose the family would have it."

"Thanks. I'll look him up."

"I saw the Tolworthy & Mead personal in the morning paper," remarked Hurley, "and I thought it might be a new clew, but they say not. They referred me to you."

"Yes," Kayton nodded frankly. "They consulted me. You see, it appears that in Mr. Argyle's will, drawn up by the old head of the firm, there was a legacy to a Miss Nellie Marsh. There's no knowledge now in that office of Nellie Marsh. The information evidently rested only with old Mr. Tolworthy and Mr. Argyle. The firm asked me how to locate her, thinking there might be some scandal."

"Yes, yes," chimed in Mr. Hurley, betraying a hasty concealed eagerness. "And for that reason," continued Kayton, apparently without noticing the other's manner, "we used only the initials. Did you ever hear Mr. Argyle refer to a Miss Marsh?"

Mr. Hurley stroked his chin.

"Well, now, I'll tell you about that," he said reflectively. "When we were discussing the new will we didn't get to the lesser legatees."

"Oh, it's too large a sum to have been simply a bequest to an old servant!" protested Kayton. "It runs well up in the thousands."

"Well, in that case," said Mr. Hurley without interest, "the person will probably be expecting to be remembered by Mr. Argyle and show up."

"Oh, yes," agreed Kayton. "The whole thing may be perfectly innocent, but to avoid anything unpleasant for the family the lawyers thought they had better be on the safe side. By the way, Mr. Hurley, you understand, of course, that this is strictly confidential?"

"Oh, of course—of course!" exclaimed the lawyer hastily. The telephone bell rang, and as Kayton turned to the instrument Mr. Hurley rose.

"Well, I won't take up any more of your time," he said.

"Going so soon? Well, come in again, Mr. Hurley," invited the detective.

"Thank you, I will," declared the lawyer. "I shall be interested to hear if there's any new development in the case."

"I'll keep you posted," Kayton assured him, and with a nod Mr. Hurley withdrew.

"Ask Mr. Colt to come right in," said Kayton into the phone.

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