

# WHEN THEY ARE RIGHT

**LOGLINE:** In the chaos between World Wars, an innovative economist battles orthodoxy and establishment thinking to prevent economic disaster, while learning that the true value of money lies not in gold, but in human trust and potential.

**INTRODUCTION** Like Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer," this film shows how ideas can reshape the world. Through parallel narratives - brilliant economist John Maynard Keynes in the corridors of power, and Sarah Longwell, a war widow building a flower business - we see how abstract economic theories translate into human terms. Opening not in a lecture hall but with a German U-boat sinking a gold shipment, the film traces the transformation from a world built on gold to one built on human trust and cooperation.

## THEMES

- The battle between rigid systems and human needs
- The cost of being right too soon
- Trust versus physical value in economics and life
- The human price of orthodox thinking

**KEY CHARACTERS JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES** (36-62): At 6'7", physically towers over rooms just as his intellect dominates economic discourse. Sacred flaw: belief that pure rationality and orthodox systems can solve human problems. His journey from establishment figure to revolutionary thinker parallels his personal evolution through relationship with Russian ballerina Lydia Lopokova.

**SARAH LONGWELL** (30s-50s): War widow whose flower business becomes our lens into economic policies' human impact. Sharp, observant, dignified. Her friendship with fellow widow Mary shows how economic forces both build and break communities. Through her, abstract theories become visceral reality.

**SIR WILLIAM ASHWORTH**: Composite character representing orthodox economic thinking. Oxford-educated, perfect manners masking rigid views. Sees self as guardian of economic tradition. Primary antagonist embodying resistance to change.

**ACT ONE: THE DEATH OF GOLD (1917-1919)** Opening sequence: German U-boat stalking gold shipment. Traditional systems failing as war disrupts everything. Keynes, brilliant Treasury official, discovers innovative solution inspired by Sarah's street-level economic wisdom - replacing physical gold movement with trust-based bookkeeping. Personal stakes established through Sarah's struggle to build business and Keynes's growing awareness of human costs.

**ACT TWO: POWER AND PEACE (1919-1925)** At Versailles, Keynes watches in horror as victorious nations impose impossible reparations on Germany. His warnings ignored, he resigns and publishes devastating critique. Meanwhile, Sarah builds successful flower business through community trust network, demonstrating alternative to rigid banking system. Keynes meets Lydia, whose artistic understanding of movement and flexibility challenges his rigid thinking.

**ACT THREE: GOLDEN FETTERS (1925-1931)** Britain's return to Gold Standard triggers economic crisis. Keynes fights lonely battle against orthodoxy while Sarah struggles to keep business alive. Growing tension between human needs and system requirements. Culminates in Britain's forced abandonment of gold, proving Keynes right but at terrible cost to ordinary people.

**ACT FOUR: DEPRESSION AND REDEMPTION (1931-1941)** Keynes's ideas gain traction in America under Roosevelt. Sarah and Mary reunite in soup kitchen lines, showing human cost of delayed action. Ironically, it takes World War II to prove Keynes right - government spending can revive economy. Sarah's business transforms to serve war effort, demonstrating both triumph and tragedy of Keynes's vindication.

**ACT FIVE: NEW WORLD ORDER (1944)** At Bretton Woods, Keynes helps design new economic system built on human cooperation rather than rigid rules. Personal cost evident in his failing health. Sarah's daughter studying economics represents hope for future. Final image: Sarah visiting war memorial, laying flowers on husband's name, while Keynes attends opera with King - suggesting both the cost and triumph of transformation.

## VISUAL APPROACH

- Film moves between institutional grandeur (Treasury, Versailles) and street-level intimacy (Sarah's flower stand).
- Written word becomes visual element - economic statistics transform into human consequences.
- Gold motif evolves from physical bars to abstract trust.
- Three distinct visual languages: institutional power (formal composition), human intimacy (handheld camera), and written word as active element (floating text, transforming statistics).

The story demonstrates how ideas shape reality, and how the greatest changes come not from rigid systems but from human understanding and cooperation. Through Keynes and Sarah's parallel journeys, we see the cost and necessity of standing by one's convictions when they challenge orthodox thinking.