

JOHN J. O'CONNELL
Editor

ROBERT C. ATHERTON
Executive Editor—Art

LEWIS W. GILLENSON
Managing Editor

KATHRYN BOURNE
Fiction Editor

SHIRLEY BARDEN
Copy Editor

ANTHONY C. LA SALA
Layout

ANTHONY D. GUZZARDO, JR.
Production

HARRIET I.A. BARRE
Associate Editors

JAMES H. STREET, JR.

RICHARD E. BERLIN
President

NOVEMBER, 1953 Vol. 135, No. 5

STORIES

- FUN IN THE SUN *William Bruckner* 34
NIGHT FRIGHT *John D. MacDonald* 46
WAIT FOR GEORGE *Robert Abernathy* 52
THE LAST BABY *Ken W. Purdy* 56
LESSON FOR THE DAY *George Bradshaw* 84

ARTICLES

- DEATH NEXT DOOR *Dick Reddy* 14
JACKIE GLEASON—TEN MEN IN ONE *Joe McCarthy* 24
PORTRAIT OF A MILLION-DOLLAR ROGUE *Robert Shaplen* 42
JON WHITCOMB—TALENT SCOUT 60
THE FACTS ABOUT ENJOYING WINE *S. S. Field* 66
HAS SCIENCE FOUND A NEW MIRACLE? *Robert L. Heilbroner* 70
THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SHOW *John Kobler* 78

PICTURE ESSAY

- GODFREY'S MERRY MCGUIRES 122

SERVICE

- WHAT'S NEW IN MEDICINE *Lawrence Galton* 6
PRACTICAL TRAVEL GUIDE *Edward R. Dooling* 22
DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES 76

FEATURES

- WHAT GOES ON AT COSMOPOLITAN 4
LOOKING INTO PEOPLE *Amram Scheinfeld* 8
MOVIE CITATIONS *Louella O. Parsons* 10
THE CHAMP *Robert L. Schwartz* 74
THE COSTUME PARTY *Bob Taylor* 92
THE LAST WORD 132
LOOKING INTO DECEMBER 132

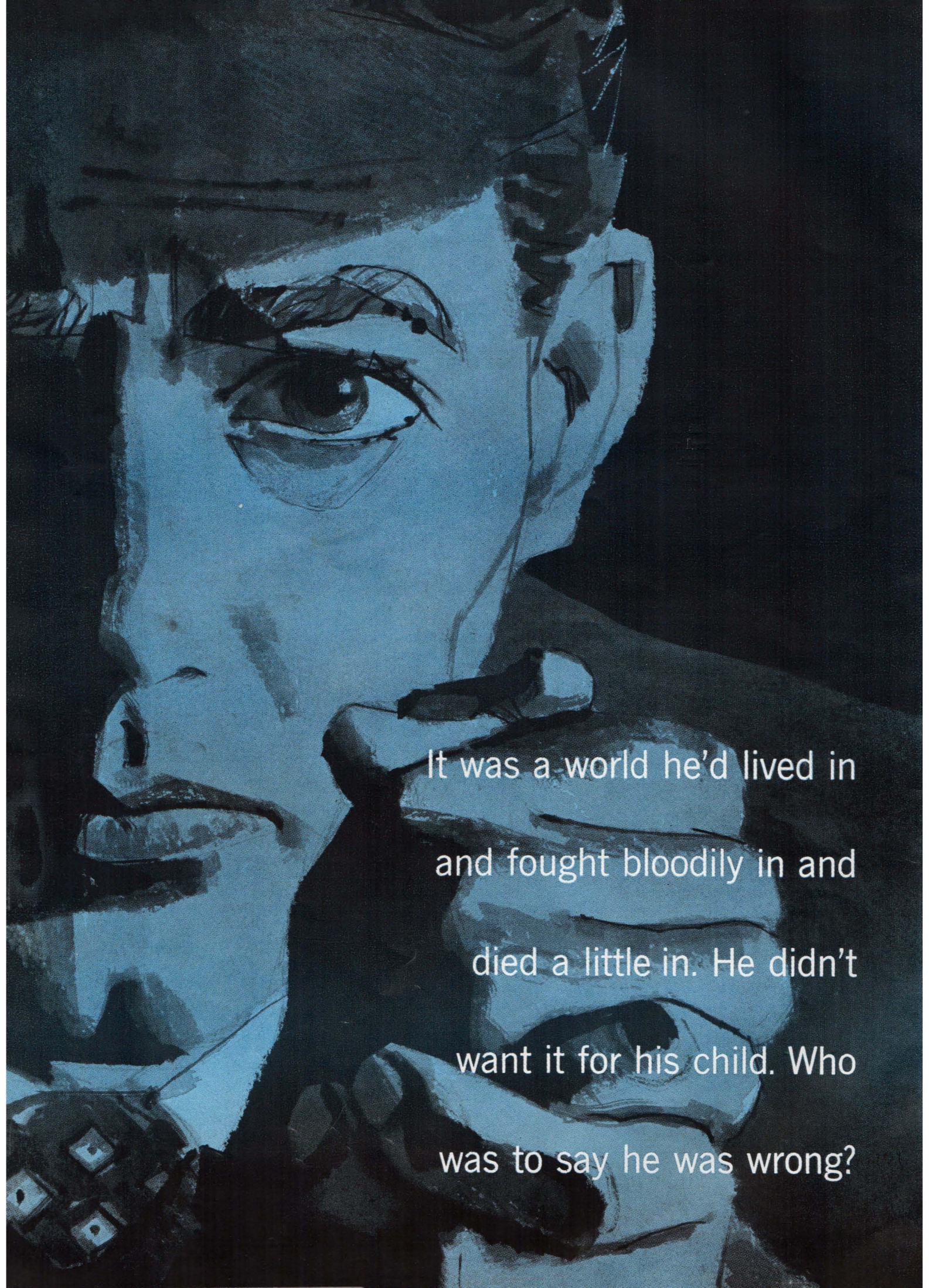
COMPLETE MYSTERY NOVEL

- MURDER BY LAW *Robert Kyle* 94

COVER Jackie Gleason, the "A-waay we go" boy of television, has proved to be CBS's champion rival-destroyer (see the article beginning on page 24). He has the happy distinction of having thoroughly squelched Milton Berle—an achievement much like smothering an atomic explosion with an army blanket. The cover photo is by Erwin Blumenfeld.



PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE HEARST CORPORATION, 57TH STREET AT EIGHTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 19, N.Y. YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION PRICE IN UNITED STATES AND POSSESSIONS, AND CANADA, \$4.20. RE-ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER, MARCH 25, 1952, AT THE POST OFFICE, NEW YORK, N.Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879. AUTHORIZED AS SECOND-CLASS MAIL, POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, OTTAWA, CANADA. COPYRIGHT 1953, BY THE HEARST CORPORATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED UNDER TERMS OF THE FOURTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF ARTISTIC AND LITERARY COPYRIGHT.



It was a world he'd lived in
and fought bloodily in and
died a little in. He didn't
want it for his child. Who
was to say he was wrong?



THE LAST BABY

BY KEN W. PURDY ILLUSTRATED BY ALEX ROSS

Jack Crosby walked down the long hospital corridor toward the door. He was very tired, and that was all he could think about. He was tired right down to the floor.

He let the hospital door sigh quietly shut behind him. It was five o'clock, and the sky over the woods across the town was beginning to pink. He could hear a car coming up the hill. That would be the old man. The old man was one of those people you could count on.

Young Crosby grinned in spite of himself as the beat-up car shuddered to a stop at the hospital steps. The old man had a heavy foot. He opened the door and got in. His father had a pipe going, and the car reeked with the pungent stuff he smoked.

"Let me be the first of the five hundred

who'll say it," the old man said, grinning. "How does it feel to be a father?"

Jack shook his head. He didn't answer. Crosby senior looked at him for a minute, then shoved the car into gear.

"Let's go get some coffee," he said. "You look like you could use it, and I know I could."

"You made good time coming up."

"I did at that, didn't I? I kicked it right along." He grinned. "I sure like to drive on empty roads. I opened the cutout and tromped down on the gas, and the old boiler came right along. Showed seventy, once."

"There's a place on the next corner. Where that sign is."

They drank their coffee, and the old man ordered wheatcakes and sausage.

"You ought to eat something, Jack," he



"I know what's gnawing on you," the old man said.
 "You're wondering when some joker will push the
 wrong button and blow the whole thing to a cinder."

said solicitously. "Keep your strength up." He spilled more sugar in his coffee and stirred it energetically. "Since I retired, I eat more than ever. Hunting and fishing all the time, way I do, liable to sap a fellow's vitality." He drank noisily. "I went out with old Martinson yesterday. He had his new dog along, and he bragged about him all the way to Bell's Woods. So five minutes after we put him to work, he cut a rabbit trail, and it took Marty an hour to catch him. Time he came back, I had two cocks and a hen. Can't think when I enjoyed myself more."

Jack didn't smile.

"You haven't answered my question yet, you know," his father said. "Remember? I asked you how you felt about it all."

Jack smiled slowly. "I didn't answer because I didn't know," he said. "Of course, I was thinking mostly about Helen last night. I didn't think much about myself, or even about the baby."

"Odd it happened that way, when everything had been so fine all along," the senior Crosby said.

"Everything was just the way it should be, up till midnight. It happened just at midnight, and until two in the morning, it was fifty-fifty whether Helen would live, or the baby, either. Of course, they're both all right now, but it sure was close."

"Well, you ought to be happy about the whole thing, Jack," the old man said. "You have a son. Say it over to yourself a couple of times. 'I have a son.' Surprising, what it will come to mean to you. Having a son is one of the happiest things that ever come a man's way."

"That's the thing. . . . I don't feel happy about it. Now that it's over, now that they're both out of danger and I should feel great about everything . . . well, I just don't, that's all."

The old man waved his pipe impatiently. "Oh, that'll pass," he said. "You're just wrought up some, that's all. You're still shocked by the bad time you had last night. Almost losing Helen, and all, naturally you wouldn't be yourself right away."

Jack shook his head. "No, it isn't that. Sure, when they told me what had happened and how things might turn out, I was scared stiff. I wished to God we'd never decided to have a baby. But there was nothing I could do then, and it turned out all right, anyway."

Crosby senior put another match to his pipe. "Look, son," he said, "I wouldn't want this to come as a blow to you, but you aren't the first man to go through labor. And you aren't the first to feel let down afterward. You aren't even in the first billion. So, relax." He looked around for the waiter. "Where in blazes are those wheatcakes?" he muttered. "I'm sitting

here starving to death. Ah, here they come! About time. too."

The waiter set the heavy white dish before him piled up with six big flapjacks and put the platter of sausage beside it. The old man sniffed ecstatically.

"Waiter," he said, "bring another order of these, more sausage, too, and two more cups of coffee. My son here wants some, too."

"No, thanks, Dad, I'm not hungry, honest."

"You will be," the old man said. "Go ahead, waiter, bring another order." He doused syrup over the wheatcakes and reached for the butter.

"It just came over me, Jack," he said, "that I know what's gnawing on you. Like you say, it isn't the business last night. That's just in the ordinary way of things. What's got you down is this: you've been thinking that it's a hell of a world to bring a child into. You've been wondering if a man has a right to bring another baby into a world that's all fouled up with the atom bomb, and the Russians and us making faces at each other, and people shooting each other up in places you can't pronounce—just like they always have—and everybody wondering when some big-domed joker in a white coat will press the wrong button and blow the whole thing into a cinder. That's what's got you down, now isn't it?"

Jack Crosby nodded. "I guess so," he said. "Something like that. I never thought I'd feel that way. I remember Shorty McDonald—he was on the *Sara* with me, a good guy, too—he used to talk like that. He was never going to have any kids, he said. He said the human race should resign and let the insects take a crack at running the world."

"I wonder what he'd say now," the old man replied.

"He isn't around now," Jack told him. "He didn't quite make it back from a strike at Rabaul."

The old man sighed philosophically. "Too bad," he said. "Too bad." He looked up. "But you never felt that way, did you?"

"Not me. I was all for getting back, marrying Helen, and having five kids in a row."

"Sure. And now, just because a few long-hairs have discovered that uranium, or balonium, or whatever, makes more noise than TNT, you're ready to quit and resign from the human race."

Jack Crosby shook his head feebly. "It isn't just the damned atom bomb," he said. "That's just part of it. Everything is loused up—but everything. Look around. Where does it look good?"

"Looks good right here to me," the old man told him. "Nothing looks better to me than two wheatcakes about ready

to join four more inside me. They can blow it up when ready, as far as I'm concerned—only I'll tell you something, and this is a real secret, Jack: they aren't going to blow it up. That joker in the white coat *isn't* going to press the wrong button and turn all this real estate into a piece of burnt toast."

Jack Crosby grinned at his father. "Where do you get your dope?" he asked.

"Out of my head," the old man told him. "Where you ought to get yours. Don't mistake me, now. I'm not saying the atom bomb is a firecracker, something for boys to play with. I'm not saying that. I can read. I know what another war would be like, and I don't want any part of it. But I'm not going to hold my breath waiting for the first bomb. I got other things to do: birds to shoot, for one, and fish to catch, and sky to look at. And grandsons to see." He looked up. "Here's our friend with your wheatcakes. Here, you can have the rest of my butter. They need a lot of butter."

He watched his son eat for a bit. "You know, Jack," he said, "I was thinking: you've had a pretty fair time for thirty-six years, haven't you?"

"Sure. I've got no kicks coming. Why?"

"And you'd live those thirty-six years over again, wouldn't you? You'd just as

soon go back over that ground: the first fish you caught, the time you snagged that pass in the Dartmouth game, your first girl, the first time you found out how good a good book can be, and all the rest of it? You wouldn't want anybody to take that away from you?"

"I certainly wouldn't."

"Of course, you wouldn't, and nobody has the right—including you. You haven't the right to take it away from anybody else. You see what I mean?"

"I see what you mean," Jack said. "I get it."

"Feel better now?"

"Sure, I feel okay now. I guess I was stretched out a little thin before."

"Wheatcakes taste all right?"

"Sure, they taste fine. Just right."

"The fact that you were born on April 6, 1917, the day we went into World War I—that doesn't spoil the taste any? Doesn't make it seem kind of futile to eat 'em?" The old man was grinning now.

Jack grinned back. "Strange," he said. "but it doesn't seem to have any effect on the way they taste. They're still good."

The old man reached for the check. "Finish 'em up, then," he said, "and let's go back to the hospital. I want to get a look at that kid myself." THE END