

# 5 Years After Finance Official Murdered, Trail Is Stone Cold

By Jerry Elsea  
Gazette Staff Writer

Frederick Leonard Coste was a quiet, well-mannered man who once ran a downtown finance company. That he should become a murder victim was almost unimaginable.

His firm, the Family Finance Corp., was located at 312 1/2 Second avenue SE. That this office should become a murder site on a busy weekday morning also was unthinkable.

But Coste, 47, was murdered and the crime remains unsolved. Today is the fifth anniversary of the crime.

Meanwhile, the Coste murder investigation file in the detective bureau has grown to one-foot-thick.

### Trail Grows Cold

And, even though the murderer's trail has grown colder and colder, police are not giving up.

"The files will remain open until an answer or solution to the murder is found," Detective Capt. John Kuba said Wednesday.

Kuba said the last three years have yielded no leads in the five-year-old case.

"Three years ago we had a slight lead from another state where a similar murder had been committed," Kuba said, "but we checked it out and it wasn't related to this one."

"We still have hopes of clearing up this case. There have been murder cases solved 20 years after the crime was committed."

### Confesses to Crime

"Usually the murderer confesses to an earlier crime as additional information to a current crime."

Although the Coste murder file is bulky and detailed, it was paper thin when police began gathering evidence on the day of the crime.

Oct. 15, 1959, also a Thursday, started out as an ordinary day in downtown Cedar Rapids. By 11:30 a.m. shopping was reaching a peak and restaurants were beginning to fill with noonday luncheon patrons.

Also, at 11:35 a.m., two men walked into the upstairs office of the Family Finance Corp. The men, Thomas McMurrin and Donald McSpadden, found Coste's body on the floor, lying in a pool of blood. They summoned police.

Detectives George Matias (now police chief), Roy Walker and Identification Officer T. C. McDermott investigated the murder scene.

### Stabbed Six Times

Dr. Percy Harris, county medical examiner, concluded that Coste had been stabbed six times in the chest. One of the thrusts punctured the heart.

No murder weapon was found. Subsequent investigation revealed that \$258 had been stolen from the office, obviously by the assailant.

Capt. Kuba speculated that the murder weapon



FREDERICK COSTE  
(World war II photo)

probably was a heavy knife, possibly a hunting knife.

He theorized that the murderer argued with Coste, probably over refusal of a loan, then killed him with a series of stabs.

Kuba said theft of the money probably was secondary to the murder. That is, the murder was a crime of violence, with robbery as an afterthought.

### No Witnesses

Even though hundreds of persons were walking in the 300 block of Second avenue SE at the time of the murder, no one could remember seeing a suspicious person leave the building.

Countless suspects were in-

### Packard To Speak Here

Author of the best-selling "Hidden Persuaders", "The Status Seekers", and "The Waste Makers", will address the Mt. Mercy college benefactors' dinner Nov. 10.

He is Vance Packard, the only author in recent years to have had three books in succession reach the top in non-fiction fields.

Invitations to the benefac-

terrogated in following weeks, but all provided satisfactory alibis for the time of Coste's death.

Police theorized that the murderer may have been a transient worker with no roots in Cedar Rapids. The trail which was cold from the start grew even colder as the months and years began to pass.

Eventually, the investigation came to a standstill.

Meanwhile, Coste's wife and younger daughter moved from their A avenue NE home to Atlanta, Ga., their former home, where Coste was buried.

Coste's murder was the second unsolved murder in 1959, still remembered by police as a year of baffling crimes.

Earlier that year, pretty 17-year-old Marlene Padfield of Lisbon was found dead in farmland south of Cedar Rapids. She had been missing several months.

Although authorities believe Miss Padfield was murdered, pathologists' examination of the skeletal remains revealed no sign of violence.

### Keokuk Republicans

SIGOURNEY — Keokuk county Republicans held their largest fund raising dinner on record Wednesday night in Memorial hall. A total of 500 tickets at \$3 each were sold. Congressman John Kyl spoke.

tors' dinner are being sent to more than 250 Iowa individuals, businesses and industries responsible for more than \$50,000 in contributions last year to Mt. Mercy.

The figure includes approximately \$30,000 contributed by Cedar Rapids' firms and corporations.

Packard's latest book is "The Pyramid Climbers".

### El Kahir Shrine Plans Series of 'Music' Parties

A series of fall weekend "live music" parties is being planned at the Embassy club for members of the El Kahir Shrine Temple, Potentate T. H. DeWees announced Thursday.

Bob Preston and his orchestra will play for Friday night's festivities while the Soft Tones will play Saturday night.

The first special event of the fall will be a Halloween party Oct. 24.

"It will be held in conjunction with the Homecoming at the University of Iowa," DeWees said. "A chartered bus will take Shriners to and from the game. Dinner will be served at the Embassy club following the game."

The Halloween event will not be a costume affair but will call for sportswear since many Shriners will be going directly to the dinner and party from the game, DeWees said.

### 5-Woman Panel To Appear at Mercy College

A "Know-Your-Neighbor" panel from Des Moines will address a public meeting at 7:45 p.m. Tuesday in the Mt. Mercy college auditorium.

The panel, comprised of five women, will discuss better understanding among all races, religious groups and social levels.

The meeting will be sponsored by the Council on Human Relations of Cedar Rapids and Marion; the United Nations Assn.; Catholic Daughters of America; United Church Women; Sisterhood of Temple Judah, Baha'i Assembly, and National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People.

A social hour and coffee will follow the panel presentation.

Mary disrupts entire Stone household when she analyzes their reaction to her homecoming on DONNA REED SHOW 7 Thurs, night, Ch. 9!

### Pro and Con Expressed On the CV Expressway

Manufacturers bureau of the Chamber of Commerce announced Thursday it has gone on record in favor of the proposed Cedar Valley road.

And a Democratic candidate for the state legislature said if elected he will propose a law requiring a popular vote on any such project.

Announcement of the Manufacturers bureau stand was made by Chairman L. P. Boudreaux, who pointed out that firms belonging to the bureau employ more than 20,000 people in Cedar Rapids.

He said the bureau favors the cross-town expressway because it would make it easier for workers to get to and from their places of employment, would improve the flow of in and out bound trucks and would help in expansion of existing industries and acquisition of new ones.

He added that the bureau's stand will be read into the record at the public hearing on the project next Wednesday at 7 p.m. in Memorial coliseum.

The legislative candidate who favors taking approval of such projects out of the hands of city councils is Walter L. McNamara, candidate for state representative from Linn county.

He said if elected he would sponsor and introduce in the next general assembly a bill which would require voter approval of projects of the magnitude and cost of the Cedar Valley road.

McNamara said the existing law, which calls for decision by the city council alone, is "undemocratic, promotes abuse and allows a minority faction of the electorate to foster and promote policies and programs not in keeping with the concept of majority rule."

He said that when voter approval of schools, swimming pools and other such projects is required, the law should require nothing less for projects such as the expressway.

He concluded: "If the democratic process is to continue, the voice of the people should be paramount. The true test of the feelings of a community are manifested when legislation requires a mandatory vote by the people."

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### Tama Man Injured in Mishap with Loader

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE  
TAMA — Leslie Metz, city water commissioner, suffered a mangled left hand in an accident with a crawler-loader machine at the Tama city dump Wednesday afternoon.

He suffered crushed fingers and multiple bone fractures of the hand. He was taken to Evangelical hospital in Marshalltown.

Metz was operating the city's TD-9 crawler with loader, building a dike at the city dump to prevent high water from the river from floating the refuse away from the dump. There was a diesel leak on the injector.

Metz was blocking the hydraulic system on the loader to work on the diesel leak. Something slipped and his left hand was crushed between the arm of the loader and the piece of metal he was using to block it.

Paving Complete  
TAMA—Paving of the 2.8 miles on the Columbia stub road from the Tama airport to the Lenhart corner has been completed.

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