

# 66 Degrees North

BY MALIN MORRIS

As the wind blew sharp snowflakes at a near horizontal angle, Sigrún Jensdóttir waited patiently in the warm café. A cup of coffee on the table in front of her, she scanned the faces of the handful of people inside before her eyes drifted to the books in the back. Twenty long years she waited. She hoped that the fierce storm raging on the other side of the window wouldn't stop Caleb from coming. In the darkness a figure walked straight past the Eymundsson café with his head down. Sigrún sighed and glanced at her watch as she bounced her leg nervously. It was after 15:30, Caleb was over half an hour late. She sank down in her chair and recalled -- 20 years ago -- when she hastily explained to her husband where to meet her. "Akureyri, Iceland, December 15, 2002. Right down the steps from the Akureyrikirkja, the church, is a café. I'll be waiting at 3:00." Sigrún had then kissed her husband and fled across the sea to her hometown, evading the law of the United States. As she watched a woman exit the café and brace herself for the weather, Sigrún told herself that she would wait until the storm died down before leaving. The weather hadn't been like this very long, perhaps Caleb was stranded on the road. In hindsight, December may have been a bad time for a rendezvous in Iceland, but it was the 23rd anniversary that first night in the bar

The other possibility was that he wasn't coming. There was a strong chance that the FBI had found him not long after Sigrún left. If that was the case, Caleb would never walk through that door. After all they had done, a 20 year sentence would have been nothing. But after all they had gone through, Sigrún yearned to see him again, so she could tell him what she never got to say. Even with her own freedom, and access to the internet, she never looked up Caleb's name. She would rather imagine him in Toronto -- where he promised he would be -- than in some overcrowded prison.

A few minutes passed and Sigrún had finished her coffee. Straightening her coat on the back of the chair, she made sure that the memento of her fondest time with Caleb hadn't fallen out of the pocket. Sigrún rose, returned the cup, and decided to browse the books. She stood in the crime section, reading titles and examining the cover art, yet she couldn't go more than thirty seconds without looking hopefully at the door. Tracing a finger along the covers of the books as she walked around the table, Sigrún abruptly stopped when she saw a familiar phrase. *Cross Country: The Search For Identity*. The Cross Country Killers was the moniker the media had coined for them. Sigrún carefully picked up the book and read the back. Below the glowing reviews was a summarized glimpse at their crime spree. "From 2000-2002, an unidentified man and his female accomplice abducted and killed young men and women they met in bars across the United States. Their battered, lacerated bodies were always left near water soon after their abduction. The cause of death: blood loss. In the fifteen years since the fatal shootout with the FBI, both killers have disappeared. But not without a trace." Sigrún furrowed her

brow as she reread the words. *Unidentified*. They still didn't know, they hadn't caught Caleb! *Not without a trace*. Or maybe they had. Grinning, Sigrún began to flip through the book, stopping on the pages that contained pictures and newspaper articles to look for their names. One particular page, however, caused the book to fall from her hands as she read it.

It was a letter -- written by one of the killers to the police -- swearing that if he found his wife, he would kill her on the spot. *Don't worry*, the letter said, *by 2023 you will only have to worry about catching me*.

Several heads turned when the book hit the ground and Sigrún rushed to pick it up. She replaced it carefully and returned to her chair. She put on her coat, hat, and gloves without taking her eyes off the door. "Takk fyrir," she said to the young woman behind the counter. Drawing a deep breath, Sigrún put her head down and opened the door.

The wind pushed her forward as she rounded the corner to escape its gust. Head down, she started up the steep hill towards home. Leaning against the stone wall of the cafe was a shadowy figure who watched her as she went. Sigrún only saw his boots as she passed but it was enough to make her stop short.

"Sigrún," the man shouted. He approached her from behind, laying a bare hand on her shoulder. She stiffened, recognizing the voice instantly. "I wanted to talk somewhere more private."

Sigrún turned around and smiled. Standing taller than him for once, she clutched the object in her coat pocket. "I know a place. Follow me." Sigrún changed course, crossing the street and starting up the stairs towards the church. Walking side by side, Sigrún and Caleb were mirror images of each other. With their coats zipped up and their hats pulled far over their faces and their hands in their pockets, the two exchanged familiar, rosy-cheeked smiles and began ascending the stairs. As Caleb fell a step behind her, Sigrún opened the switchblade in her pocket and withdrew her hand into the biting wind.