

J.P. - Iceland is an inspiring place, very atmospheric which you get across really well in the books. Is that what inspires you?

**A.I. - I think it's just something that is in me. It's not something that I am very conscious of; it just lands on the page. I'm not thinking now I'm going to write something about the Icelandic nature, or write something about the Icelandic weather and put it in a book, it all just becomes part of the story and I have no plans for having Iceland especially expressed in the books, it's just part of me and it's there.**

J.P. - So what's your writing routine like?

**A.I. - I'm a family man, and whilst our children have grown up and flown the nest, as a family man you have to be organised. Originally I was working two jobs and was just finding the time to write. Now I have the luxury of the whole day before me where I can do some writing and it's great. I try to use it, of course it's not just the writing, it's the e-mails, the phone calls, it's just a day at the office, but I always like to put words down.**

J.P. - And your writing space?

**A.I. - It's just an office downstairs, so it's not very private. There are no doors, it's just an office space.**

J.P. - When you finish a book, do you sit back and reflect or just get your head down and dive right into the next one?

**A.I. - I do a great deal of re-writes, it's always very nice when you close the thing, because you never know when you're going to finish it. It's a great thing to write the last sentence, after that is when the work begins. You may go back to it again, and again, and again and again. After each re-write I try to make changes, just tighten the screws and that takes two or three months, then it's off to publicists, and come September it must be done, because it's always published in November.**

J.P. - Is there an extra workload associated with having your novels translated, edits for an English editor, as well as your Icelandic one?

**A.I. - No, it's just one thing, it's just the Icelandic, and it's the only thing I have in mind. I can't think about what the English, or the Norwegians, or the Spanish might like, it's just for the Icelanders.**

J.P. - 'Strange Shores' had a fabulously ambiguous ending.

**A.I. - Yes, absolutely, I wanted to have it like this**

J.P. - So it was deliberately planned that way?

**A.I. - I planned a few endings, I checked out things, in one of the versions, there was a funeral of Erlendur in Reykjavik, they found a body and they put him in a casket, there was a very small gathering in a church, but it was too final, so I found a way to make it somehow more fitting, connecting the whole series in a few sentences; all the lost, all the missing, all the guilty and this is what came out.**

J.P. - In 'Reykjavik Nights', one of the great parts is the realism behind Erlendur's everyday life as a policeman. Did you spend any time with the police researching this?

**A.I. - No, not at all, I've never done anything like talking to a policeman, as it is going back to a very much more simple time and maybe more innocent time. It is in a period I remember very well, the years when I was thirteen or fourteen and everything was much bigger, and whiter, and in the beginning they have this pond and there was a body there, and this pond was in my youth. We used to play there all the time, so this part of Reykjavik is part of my youth, so it's going back for Erlendur, but also going back for me in time.**

J.P. - We get to know more of Erlendur's colleague, Marion Briem in 'Oblivion', but we never find out the characters gender. Was this a conscious decision?

**A.I. - Absolutely, because some people always want more women in their books, or say there are too many men in that book. What is the quota for the women and how are they described, and what is the quota for the men and how are they described? It's a different outlook on literature and I wanted to take this out with this character. Sometimes you think it's a man, sometimes you think it's a woman and that's OK.**

J.P. - In 'Outrage' and 'Black Skies', you gave Elinborg and Sigoardur Oli their own stories, have you considered expanding these characters further?

A.I. - No, Maybe someday, but I haven't really thought about it. The whole series is on hold for the time being as I am writing other things, I have no idea what might happen.

J.P. - You've said you would never take Erlendur outside of Iceland, given the difficulties between Icelanders and Americans at the time of young Erlendur. Have you ever considered bringing an American into his world?

**A.I. - No, but in the new series I'm writing now, taking place in the Second World War. One is a guy from Reykjavik, the other is from Canada, a West Icelander as we call them, as his parents immigrated to Canada in the 1900's. So when the war starts he comes to Iceland and becomes an interpreter because he speaks Icelandic and they begin to work together liaising with the Icelandic police, and that's the foreigner I'm bringing in. But I'll leave the rest for you to see...**

J.P. - I find your books to be very succinct at getting the story across, and yet they still have the feel that they are part of a greater saga.

**A.I. - What I found out when I became a writer was that it was just very much fun to make up something, some curiosity to lead the reader on. It doesn't have to be much or very suspenseful or anything, it just has to connect to the reader or to the character of the book. It was something I found fun to do. But the influence from the sagas is maybe the style, because they don't use many words to say big things, and I'm always trying to use fewer words in the books to express feeling, and that's my influence from the sagas, just to keep on with the story, keep it concise and to the point.**

**My publisher has asked me for longer books, but every story has its book. It could be 200 pages, 100 pages or 400 pages, but it's not about counting the pages, it's about writing the story. If it ends in 100 pages that's the story, if it ends in 200 pages that's the story.**