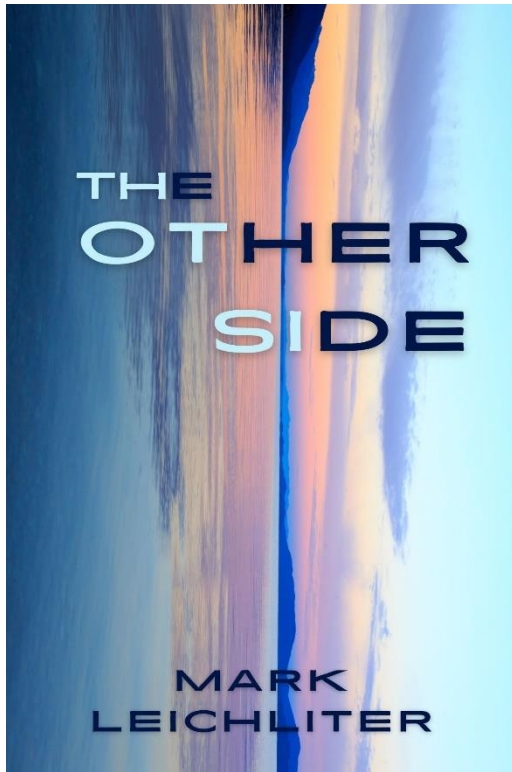


Author Media Kit: Mark Leichter



Even though *The Other Side* is Mark Leichter's crime fiction debut, he's been publishing in literary magazines since 1991. Writing as [Mark Hummel](#), he is the author of the novel *In the Chameleon's Shadow* and the short story collection *Lost and Found*.

Mark taught fiction writing at the University of Northern Colorado for two decades, where he also administrated writing programs and directed a writers' conference. He also taught in an International Baccalaureate curriculum at an independent day school in Jackson, WY and continues to serve on the resident faculty of the [Jackson Hole Writers Conference](#). He frequently teaches workshops on memoir and fiction writing and offers writing coaching through his firm [theWORDwright](#). He is an experienced ghostwriter, guiding several books a year to publication from thought leaders in business, sports, and social change movements. Mark is the

founding and managing editor of the nonfiction literary magazine [bioStories](#). He is a member of Sisters in Crime and Authors of the Flathead.

Mark grew up in Wyoming and his work is influenced by the wildness and beauty of the Mountain West. He writes from his home in Montana's Flathead Valley. When not working, he and his wife can usually be found on the trails of Northwestern Montana, venturing around the world, or travelling to visit their children and grandchildren. Mark is an avid, if slow, trail runner, an aspiring photographer, and an amateur woodworker.



Photo credit: Shawna Benson Photography

Mark is happy to conduct interviews and available to speak with journalists.

BIO (Short): Mark Leichter is the author of the crime fiction novel *The Other Side*. He lives in Montana's Flathead Valley.

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The Other Side

Mark Leichliter

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The Other Side asks the question: How do you start an investigation when you have no evidence a crime has been committed? The novel opens with the abrupt disappearance of a seventeen-year-old girl from a charming NW Montana tourist town. There one day and gone the next, the leads on Brittany Rodgers' case appear as cold as the October waters of Flathead Lake.

Available as: trade paperback and eBook

Distributed through Ingram and available at all independent bookstores, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and through all eBook platforms.

Advance praise for *The Other Side*:

"*The Other Side* is a taut and thrilling tale. Mark Leichliter knows Montana as well as he knows his characters' dark and hidden hearts. Steve Wendell is a masterful creation—a dogged and honest man who can't forget the faces of the victims he serves. I couldn't turn the pages fast enough."—Alyson Hagy, author of *Boleto* and *Scribe*

"*The Other Side* is a haunting procedural propelled by a smartly-developed cast of characters and rich descriptions of unforgettable landscapes. When Detective Steve Wendell tries to find a missing teen-ager, he must navigate the small, tourist-ridden towns of Northwest Montana to discover what happened to her while proving he's a resourceful and conscientious hero with a heart. You won't want to miss this perfect blend of atmosphere, mystery, and a protagonist you won't forget." —Christine Carbo, award-winning, best-selling author of the Glacier Mystery Series

"A chilling story, surprising twists ... everything you'd want in a great crime novel. Pick this one up!" —Catherine McKenzie, bestselling author of *The Good Liar* and *Hidden*

"Sink into a gripping police procedural with solitary, cerebral Detective Steve Wendell as he struggles to find missing seventeen-year-old Brittany Rogers in the uncompromising wilds and beauty of Montana's Flathead Lake. Could she have fled the boredom of her small-town life? Or did she fall prey to a twisted human predator? As her father stokes resentments and burrows into conspiracy theories, Brittany's mother loses more than her daughter. Captivating characters and a landscape that simultaneously entices and menaces lure the reader into a page-turning novel of suspense and discovery."

—Deborah Turrell Atkinson, author of the Storm Kayama suspense series and *Feathers in the Soul: A Guide for Families Struggling with a Child's Addiction*

“Wow. Bravo to Mark Leichliter on his outstanding debut. *The Other Side* has more twists and turns than an alley in Venice, and detective Steve Wendell—committed, unrelenting, true to himself and his job—is exactly the man to uncover the devastating truth hidden below the waters of Montana’s Flathead Lake.” —Peter W. J. Hayes, Silver Falchion and Derringer Nominated author of the Vic Lenoski mysteries.

“Mark Leichliter’s writing is clean, crisp, entertaining at all times. The characters fascinate, the plot charges ahead, he makes the reader think without hammering a point of view into your head. He is a writer to be savored.” —Tim Sandlin, author of *Rowdy in Paris* and *Jimi Hendrix Turns Eighty*

Small town secrets and hidden lives turn deadly in Mark Leichliter’s *The Other Side*. Richly drawn characters and vivid settings are reminiscent of Gillian Flynn’s *Sharp Objects* and will pull the reader into an intricately plotted thrill ride.—James L’Etoile, author of *At What Cost*, *Bury the Past*, and *Black Label*

Sample Interview Questions:

- ▶ What was your inspiration for *The Other Side*?

The book is born of the place and its weather. Western Montana is heart-achingly beautiful but defiant; you can't pin it down. Its weather is in constant flux. And these Montana valleys are filled with lakes and big rivers and surrounded by high mountains that create lots of mist and fog and winter-cloudy days, and that all makes for some mystical woods where it would be easy to commit a crime or hide a body. Weather here has emotion and whimsy, and I want to think the book not only uses that, it echoes it even in the story it tells.

It's also a place, like a lot of American, where rich and poor live in close proximity to one another. On the surface, they all seem to get along—Montana is an extraordinarily friendly and polite place, but people may be slow to form deeper relationships with those they haven't known for most of their lives. Tensions seldom reach a high boil, but they can be present at a low simmer all the time. The novel tries, quietly I hope, to inhabit some of that reality too.

Finally, I wanted to write a mystery, in the spirit of those other crime fiction writers I love most, people like Tana French and Laura McHugh, that treats crimes and people realistically. I wanted to write a book that didn't just reveal the intrigue of an investigation surrounding a missing teenager, but one that also reveals the pain and fear felt by those who love her. I don't want readers to ever forget that criminal acts change lives and have lasting repercussions.

- ▶ Do you write full-time? If so, what's your work day like? Describe your writing routine.

Yes, and no. I do truly write full-time, but I split my days between working as a fiction writer and essayist and writing for other people. My "day" job is working as a ghostwriter, editor, and writing coach. I typically have about four books going, and that's in addition to my own. So I work on "my" projects from the time I get out of bed until late morning when I take a break to work-out. Then it's a shower, lunch, and I jump into whatever book or books has/have the most pressing deadline with its editor. In the late afternoon, I move to editing or writing coaching projects, which is always about trying to help other writers find their stories, improve their craft, or ready their material for publication. That means reading submissions for the magazine I edit, "Zooming" with writers on a critique follow-up, or getting knee-deep inside a manuscript. Late in the evening I return to the work I've done on my own projects to read the day's output and stimulate energy for the following day. Typically, I have a question to ask or a problem to solve, and sometimes I awaken with insights. I finish my day with the reading I want to be doing, whether that's a book I have promised to read for a colleague or the

“pleasure” reading I’m doing at the moment. I put “pleasure” in quotations marks because while reading really is one of the great joys of life, I’m always trying to learn by reading as a writer and studying technique and style.

The most frequent question I am asked by those who know me well is: “How do you keep from getting all the books you’re working with mixed up?” I don’t have a real answer for that because I simply don’t find it a problem. It’s kind of like being a parent, while a few aspects of parenting draw from the same base philosophies, you also know your child as well as you can know another human being, so knowing what will work for one is often different for what will work for another and you are unlikely to get them confused. Beyond that, when you are awake to the world and really paying attention, it can seem a serendipitous place, one where an answer for one project often comes while researching or writing another project. The thought-leaders with whom I work on ghostwriting projects are energetic, innovative, smart, stimulating people, so that fuels creative energy. Still, I have to be extremely diligent in preparation and organization and scheduling, and I have to be particularly diligent about sticking to routine and not sacrificing the time I devote to my own creative work.

I also make it a habit to write in layers, so that I’m re-reading and rewriting the previous day’s (or days’) material all the time. Immediately the editing pen kicks in, then I’m quickly rewriting or adding, and that naturally flows into the development of what’s next in a scene. I write very consciously in scenes, and I always employ the old Hemingway trick of stopping a writing day mid-sentence so that I am compelled to complete that sentence the next day.

► What are some words that describe you and some that you wish didn’t?

Resilient; you can’t survive as a writer if you can’t respond to nearly constant rejection by rolling up your sleeves and getting back to work. Optimistic; this might seem an unexpected word for a crime writer, where you spend a lot of time considering the worst parts of human nature, yet my core self is optimistic, not only about a future better than the present but a belief that there is more likely good in people than there is bad.

Naïve; a really bad trait in a crime writer, but in real life I tend to accept what people tell me and am terrible about spotting those with hidden agenda; it’s simply foreign to my way of thinking. Proud; too often I let pride get in the way of vulnerability; as a result, sometimes I fail to open doors to opportunities.

► What exciting story are you working on next?

I’ve got two book projects going at the moment. The first is literary/historical fiction. A young woman, feeling isolated by her little family’s current economic situation and

raising an infant while trying to work from home during the COVID pandemic finds the old files and notes from a former owner of the home she and her husband rent. Those documents begin to reveal the life a woman, Lillian, who worked in the diplomatic corps in hotspots like Sri Lanka, Kabul, and in Saigon during the worst years of the war in Vietnam. We learn that she may have been recruited along the course of her career as an intelligence operative. Learning Lillian's remarkable story of adventure, independence, and sacrifice inspires this young graphic artist and mother to take more chances of her own.

The other book, mostly in the research and notetaking stages, picks up the detectives from *The Other Side* and places them in the clandestine world of human trafficking when a young Native American girl disappears. The story reveals that the pipeline for smuggling young women into the sex trade comes through an unlikely and highly trusted source, one that crosses international borders.