

Create Your Own SF/Fantasy TV Series



A Workshop by David Keener

Capclave 2022 | Rockville, MD | Sep 30 – Oct 2

Workshop: Saturday, 2:30 PM, Oct 1

The Problem

- My name is David Keener
 - I'm the Showrunner
- You're my Writing Team
 - You make the magic happen
- We are pitching a new TV Series
 - Just 2 hours from now!

Are We Really...?

Um, not so much...

- This is a Collaborative Writing Exercise
 - We are going to brainstorm a TV series together
- Plus, I don't work in Hollywood...
 - So, nothing is getting greenlit

But, Look Around...

Have you noticed...

- How many authors are writing series?
- How many SF/Fantasy properties are being licensed?
 - Why should Neil Gaiman and J.R.R. Tolkien and Ty Franks have all the glory?
 - Why not us?

Cue the maniacal laughter, and... CUT





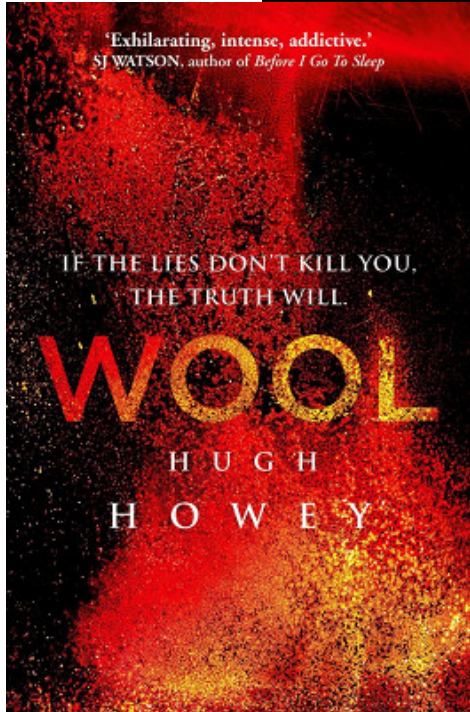


So, Who am I?

- Knew I wanted to be a writer when I was 10
 - Andre Norton was YA before YA was a thing
- Then Life got in the way...
 - Too many Gatekeepers in publishing
 - Too much money in my Day Job
- So I ran role-playing games
 - Lots of world-building
 - Complex storylines, like interactive novels



Then I Met This Guy in 2012...



About Me (2)

- I started writing seriously
 - Found a great Writing Group
 - Ran writing exercises & workshops for them
- Ran first convention workshop: 2014
 - Capclave 2014: Public Speaking for Writers
 - My way of “giving back”
- First anthology appearance: 2015
- First published book: 2017
- First published anthology: 2017



How This Workshop Works

- I'm the "Showrunner"
 - Which basically means I'm the Facilitator
- I will guide you through a series of questions
 - To help us refine our series concept
 - From the basics (genre, "budget," format, etc.)
 - To as far as we can get in two hours
- I'll be taking notes
 - Afterwards I'll write up our "Series Bible"
 - Find it on: www.davidkeener.org

The Basics

- What genre?
 - SF, Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Mystery, etc.
- What budget?
 - Unlimited: Like “The Rings of Power”
 - Expensive: Like “The Expanse”
 - Constrained: Like “Warehouse 13”
 - Cheap: Like old “Doctor Who” and “Neverwhere”

What Format?

- Limited Series (6 – 10 episodes per season)
- Full Series (22 episodes per season)
- Internal Structure...
 - Episodic (Unconnected episodes)
 - Season Arc (plot that stretches across the season)
 - Episodic with Mythology (“The X-Files”)
- Closed/Open
 - Very few locations
 - Lots of locations

What's the Concept?

- Concepts are High-Level
 - Five Year Mission to explore new worlds
 - Keeping the worlds safe from dangerous magical artifacts
- Focus will be on...
 - Ensemble Cast (“Law and Order”)
 - One Major Star (“Murder She Wrote”)
 - Half-Way (“Crossing Jordan”)

Break

More Discussion Points

- Who are the Regular Characters?
- Who are the Bad Guys?
 - Specific (“Khan!”)
 - General (Klingons, Nazis, etc.)
- Worldbuilding
 - High-Level background details
- Why should we care about the Regulars?
 - Without them, _____.

What? You're Still Here?

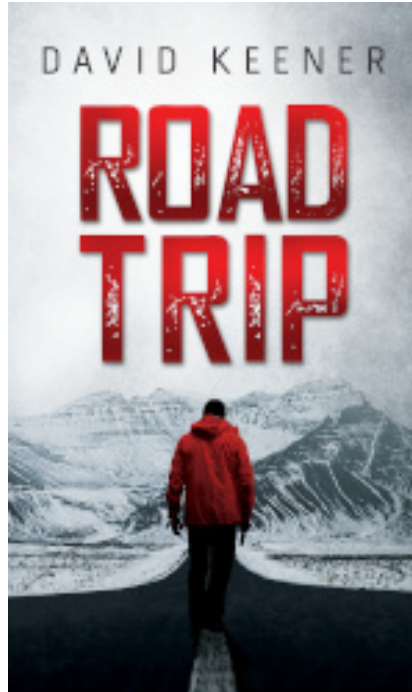
Well, there's still more stuff to work on...

- Pilot Episode
 - So, how's it start?
- Other episode ideas
 - Major events for the season
 - Self-contained episodes? (“Hustle,” the wager ep)
- Progression of Character Arcs
 - How do the characters change over time?

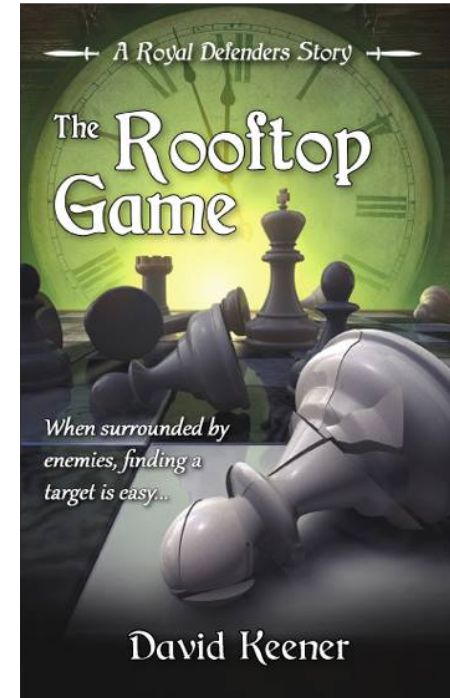
Shameless Plug



A futuristic heist
behind enemy
lines



What happens when
a retired Marine
accidentally buys a
Magic Road?



“Die Hard” on the
roof of a castle
tower...

Another Shameless Plug!



Heroes defending
the innocent from
magical threats



Detectives solving
crimes in fantasy
settings

Questions

<http://www.davidkeener.org>



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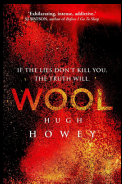
Credits



Artwork licensed from Deposit Photos, with some additional Photoshop Changes.



Cover art for Andre Norton's *Star Born*, one of the key books that made me realize at an early age that I wanted to be a writer. Art by Dean Ellis. Believed to be in the public domain.



One of the numerous covers for Hugh Howey's breakout indie-published bestseller, *Wool*.



Hugh Howey and I at dinner at an Irish pub during the 2012 Worldcon in Chicago. He'd just changed my life by educating me about indie publishing.



A brilliant picture of me taken by Edmond Joe in May 2015 at the District 29 Toastmasters Spring Conference. I was running A/V for the conference. This is near the end of the day, all is well, and I'm watching the show. Pretty much the same feeling I have when a successful workshop is over.