

Novelist's Boot Camp

Get it written—Get it done



About your presenter

T.A. (Todd) Stone:

30 years of writing for publication

Multi-Published, multi-award winning author

Close to Home, No Place Like Home,

The Best Defense, Kriegspiel

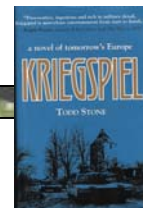
Novelist's Boot Camp (April '06)

Head Writer, **Crime Scene** (www.crimescene.com)

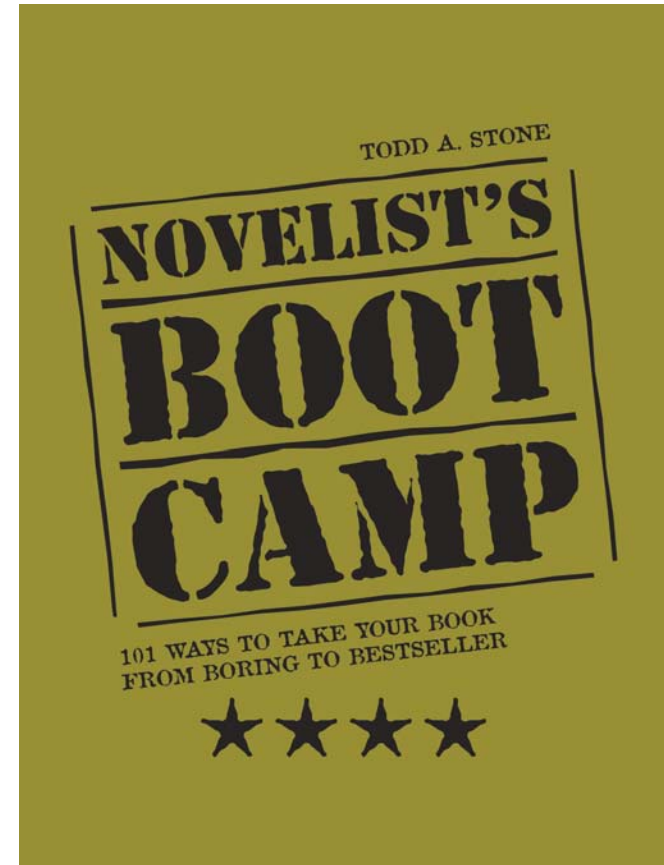
Full-time communications manager

Numerous web and magazine (*Writers Digest*) articles

Presents at writers conferences nationwide



Highlight selected elements from the Novelist's Boot Camp Battle Plan for Writing Your Novel (writing process)



Our mini boot camp

Session 1:

Overview of NBC

Preparation, Invention, and Development—*"must-do's" to set yourself up for success*

Session 2:

Real-world Revision

Session 3

Hands-on workshop



Novelist's Boot Camp Battle Plan Phases

1. Mental Preparation and Mission Planning
2. Invention
3. Development
4. Drafting
5. Revision and Rewriting
6. Editing and Proofreading
7. Staying Battle Ready



RANGER



Why a “phased plan?”

Drives toward completion of the work

Helps improve the “quality” of the work

Makes the writing process more rewarding

**not for everyone*

RANGER

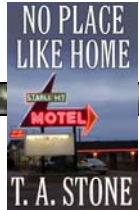
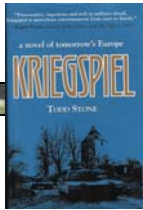




A really, really important idea



“Tools not rules”

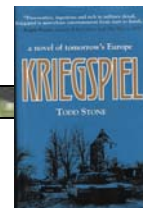


Our agenda--Session 2

Real-world Revision:

How to **triage** your work

The 7 Revision Passes



Real-world Revision

Revision:

Begins after you have a completed draft

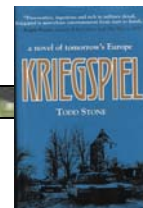
Is one of the powerful tools in writing

Is one of the most misunderstood

Is a place where novelists are likely to flail

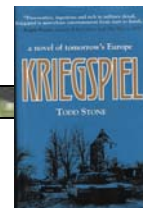
Is where you need a plan

RANGER



Revision the Novelist's Boot Camp way

- Is a by-the-numbers process
- Has **three** steps
 1. Triage your scenes
 2. Perform seven revision passes
 3. Rewrite you draft



Triage your scenes

What is it?

A revision technique to quickly sort your scenes and prioritize your work

Taken from battlefield method of sorting casualties

Can be mental or “physical”

** update your Master Story Summary



Scene Triage

A scene-by-scene once-over

Cut

Take the scene out of the work

Use a "cuts" or "saved scenes" file

Rework

Need major surgery. Problems with one or more criteria, cutting not practicable, leaving as is will seriously weaken your story

Improve

Scenes that satisfactorily meet your triage criteria



Triage criteria

Who?

Doing what?

Why?



RANGER



Who?

Is/are the:

Main/Protagonist/Lead character present
Y/N?

Sidekick/Window Character present Y/N?

Opponent or villain present Y/N?

Other opposition or minions present Y/N?

“No” to all the above = “Cut” category. “Yes” to
1-3 = Rework. Yes to all 4 = Improve

Note that “present” can mean being talked
about.



Doing what?

Is/are:

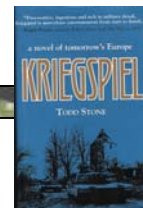
The protagonist, opponent, or minion taking **Action** Y/N?

The protagonist, opponent, or minion having an external **conflict** Y/N?

Two "no" answers = "Cut"

One "no" = rework

Two "yes's" = improve



Why?

Is/are:

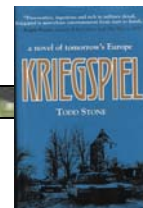
One or more characters pursuing his/their
Story Objectives? Y/N?

One or more characters pursuing his/their
Personal Objectives? Y/N?

"No" to all = "Cut"

"No" to just one = "Rework"

"Yes" to both = "Improve"



Rewrite only as necessary

If:

Combine scenes

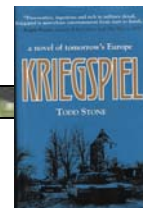
You move scenes

Shift POV

Move information

Add/Delete/change character(s)

Get a brainstorm



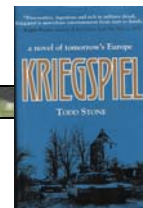
Revising using "Passes"

A **methodical** process for you to evaluate your scenes for critical elements

Each Pass focuses on **one** and **only one** element

Conduct the pass **from 1st scene to last**, then make the next pass the same way

Mark changes now, make them later



NBC's 7 Revision Passes

1. Make a **Character** Pass
2. Make an **Objective** Pass
3. Make a **Dialogue** Pass
4. Make a **Description** and **Narration** Pass
5. Make an **Action** Pass
6. Make a **Logic** Pass
7. Circle Back for a **Miscellaneous** Pass



Rewriting

Make a working copy of your mss.

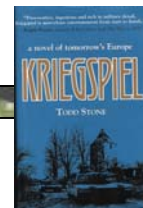
Review Master Story Summary

Make a time plan

Use revision passes notes as a guide

Rewrite a scene at a time

Make it a creative exercise—it's okay to
change your changes



By way of review

Tools not rules

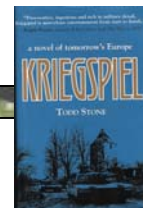
Revision is great opportunity, often wasted

NBC Real World Revision has 3 parts:

Triage: Who—Doing What—Why to Cut, Rework, Improve

7 Revision Passes: (**Character** Pass, **Objective** Pass, **Dialogue** Pass, **Description** and **Narration** Pass, **Action** Pass, **Logic** Pass, **Miscellaneous** Pass)

Rewriting: Use notes as a point of departure



5 "Secrets" to a Higher Quality Draft

1. Thorough preparation, invention, and development
2. Smaller chunks!
3. Everybody is in the here and now
4. Use all the senses to show
5. Be deliberately creative (override the editor)

RANGER



Our agenda--Session 3

Hands-on “boot camp”

- BIC
- Master Scene Summary
- Get control of your calendar

- The 4 paths to *published!*

