DARK BULLION: Quick Reference Guide

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Episode List

1. **A Portal to Oblivion** (14 min) - Ouidah 1685, Tree of Oblivion, European slave trading powers
2. **West African Peoples** (10 min) - Diversity of cultures: Yoruba, Fon, Mandé, Akan, and others
3. **Captive Markets** (15 min) - Mechanics of trade, methods of capture, witchcraft, Ganvié
4. **Paper Bulls** (13 min) - Religious justifications, Curse of Ham, church complicity, Vodou traditions
5. **Women of West Africa** (22 min) - Warriors, remarkable women leaders, woman marriage
6. **Inventory** (23 min) - Barracoons, systematic assessment, financial infrastructure, gold/slave parallels
7. **Meanwhile in Europe** (30 min) - Democratization of the trade: Dutch Republic, France, Britain; mass investment, supporting industries, Enlightenment contradictions
8. **Atlantic — Part 1: Outward Bound** (18 min) - Gamble's logbook, wartime preparations on the Thames, voyage south to West African coast
9. **Atlantic — Part 2: On the Coast** (18 min) - Months on the Rio Núñez, crew devastated by disease, coastal trading mechanics, French privateer threat
10. **Atlantic — Part 3: The Crossing** (20 min) - Loading captives, insurrection, Middle Passage, desertion at Barbados, sale in Kingston

Total Runtime: 183 minutes

Important Figures & Context

Episode 1: A Portal to Oblivion (October 1685)

1. **King James II of England** - Governor and chief stockholder of Royal African Company; previously branded enslaved people with "D-O-Y" as Duke of York
2. **Captain Henry Clarke** - Slave trader captain commanding the ship Prosperous for the Royal African Company
3. **King Louis XIV of France** - Established the Code Noir (Black Code), defining enslaved people as movable property

Episode 2: West African Peoples (17th Century)

1. **The Yoruba people** - Cultural/linguistic group from southwestern Nigeria with complex spiritual systems and art forms
2. **The Fon people** - Dominant ethnic group of Dahomey, traders and warriors of coastal kingdoms
3. **The Mandé peoples** - Merchants and scholars, descendants of Mali Empire; resisted European enslavement longer than coastal groups

Episode 3: Captive Markets (17th Century)

1. **The Tofinu people** - Built Ganvié water village on stilts since the 16th century to escape Fon slave raids (name means "we survived")
2. **African female merchants** - Present at markets, belonging to powerful trading families controlling flow of captives
3. **Victims of witchcraft accusations** - False accusations became a primary method of condemning people to slavery

Episode 4: Paper Bulls (15th–21st Centuries)

1. **Pope Innocent VIII** (late 15th century) - Received enslaved Africans as gift from Spanish monarchy, distributed among Cardinals
2. **Pope Alexander VI** (late 15th century) - His Papal Bulls validated colonization and lifelong bondage in the Americas
3. **Mawu-Lisa** - Dual-gendered creator deity in Fon Vodou belief; inspired gender equality in precolonial Dahomey

Episode 5: Women of West Africa (17th–18th Centuries)

1. **Queen Nzinga Mbande** (17th century) - Leader of Ndongo/Matamba who diplomatically and militarily resisted Portuguese colonization for decades; took title "King"
2. **Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita** (1684–1706) - Founded Antonianism movement proclaiming Jesus and saints were African; condemned enslavement of Congolese; burned at stake age 22
3. **Queen Agontimé** (late 17th–early 18th century) - Captured from Mahi people, became Dahomey queen, mother of King Ghezo; later enslaved and sent to Brazil where she became renowned Candomblé priestess

Episode 6: Inventory (1685 & 18th Century)

1. **Alexander Falconbridge** (late 18th century) - British surgeon who served on slaving voyages; documented brutal assessment practices and conditions in barracoons
2. **Cape Coast Castle** - Major British fortress on Gold Coast (Ghana); dungeons redesigned to hold thousands; exemplifies transition from gold trading to human trafficking
3. **Bank of England** (founded 1694) - Provided commercial facilities for Atlantic slave trade; owned plantations as loan collateral; governors included slavers and plantation owners

Episode 7: Meanwhile in Europe (17th–18th Centuries)

1. **Dutch West India Company** (chartered 1621) - Enabled ordinary citizens (clerks, shopkeepers, widows) to purchase shares in the slave trade; Dutch merchants in Curaçao brokered sale of hundreds of thousands of captives
2. **Antoine Crozat & the Montaudouin family** - Crozat, wealthiest man in France, directed the Compagnie de Guinée; built a home that became the Palais de l'Élysée. The Montaudoins outfitted 357 slave ships from Nantes

3. **Liverpool, Birmingham & Manchester** - Liverpool became Britain's dominant slave port after the RAC monopoly broke (1698); Birmingham produced shackles, chains, and firearms; Manchester's mills processed slave-grown cotton into cloth traded for more captives

Episode 8: Atlantic (1793–1794)

1. **Captain Samuel Gamble** - Commander of the slave ship Sandown; kept a meticulous logbook from London to West Africa to Jamaica. Recorded provisions, weather, deaths, and cargo counts with equal matter-of-factness. His log is preserved at the Royal Museums Greenwich
2. **Dr James Walker** - Resident slave trader on the Rio Núñez for over 30 years; essential intermediary between visiting ship captains and interior trading networks controlled by the Fula people. His post was known locally as "Walkeria"
3. **The Fula (Peul) people** - Controlled the slave paths from the interior; no captives reached the coast without their validation. Their price disputes could halt trade for months, as Gamble experienced
4. **Renaud** - French privateer who seized British vessels and repeatedly threatened to capture or destroy the Sandown; offered 10 slaves for a pilot willing to guide him to Gamble's position
5. **Prof. Bruce L. Mouser** - American historian whose painstaking transcription of Gamble's logbook made this primary source accessible to researchers and, through Dark Bullion, to a wider audience

Key EP08 concepts: the "bar" (iron bar as unit of account), the Dolben Act (1788), crew impressment, barricado, coastal trading infrastructure, Isles de Los, parallel mortality of crew and captives, "by God's permission"

Resources

Full Study Guide includes: Episode descriptions with key terms • Quiz questions with episode references • Discussion points • Essay questions • Detailed timeline • Complete glossary • Character biographies • Maps

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