

“(Un)Civilized”

The Dark Side of Opulence

The Story

London, 1813 was a living paradox: a privileged world of elegant balls and extravagant luxury juxtaposed with streets so thick with waste, street sweepers were hired to scape paths in front of pedestrians. Vast economic gaps and behavioral double standards existed between the rich and the poor; the powerful and the weak; the East India Company and a rogue adventurer like James Delaney.

But a common thread united the city. From the Duke of Devonshire to a denizen of a crime-infested rookery, a Londoner's place in life was determined at birth by his family's financial and social status. Escape lay only across the ocean, where the shackles of civilization could be exchanged for the savage freedom of the colonies, where fortunes could be made as easily as enemies and where dangerous taboos cried out to be broken.

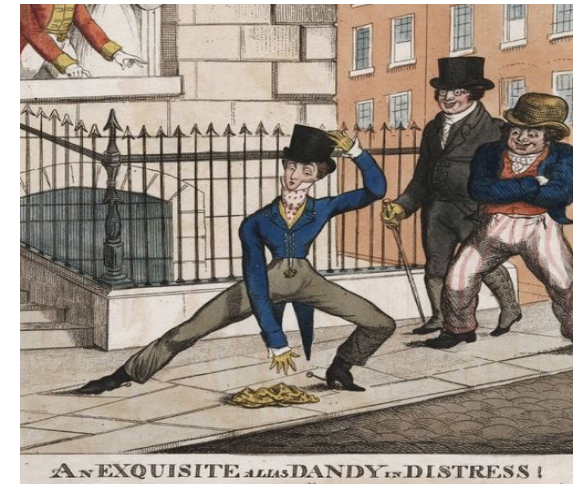
This is the backdrop of “Taboo”—and the setting that WP BrandStudio will bring to life through a dynamic custom content program. We’ll break open the contradictions to investigate the real meaning of civilization—all the while interweaving references to the show and to Delaney’s story that will tantalize readers and generate anticipation for the premiere.

By exposing the dark corners behind the elegant façade of Regency London, we’ll reveal provocative modern-world parallels that will resonate with *The Washington Post*’s readers and remind them how our own cultural identity was forged in a bitter struggle against economic, social and political dictatorship.

How We'll Tell It

We'll bring this story to life through an **innovative, split-screen rich-media experience** that is visually compelling, imbued with cultural context and full of surprising insights.

- A split screen shows two dovetailing narratives that unspool vertically according to readers' interaction
 - Both sides can move independently but one side is pinned while the reader moves through the other
 - The **left-side narrative** is copy driven; comprised of a rich-media article that explores the opulence of Regency London
 - The **right-side narrative** is visually driven; comprised of elements that evoke the darkness of the period, such as archival images, sourced photograph, historical artifacts like newspaper clippings, graphics and maps
- Additional **mini-executions** and **copy call-outs** appear intermittently throughout the running narratives and could appear as horizontal interruptors.
 - Program will include organic references to the show as well as a trailer and strong call to action



Period cartoon illustrating the difficulty of a gentleman walking London's less-than-pristine streets.

Split-Screen Rich-Media Experience

Left-Side Narrative: *Opulence*

A rich narrative describes London at the point in history when it started to become the modern city it is today. There was a dramatic population increase, advances were made in the arts and technology, landmarks were built and traditions like drinking tea and going to coffee shops were established.

We'll explore the social structure (including the *ton*) and look at life in the fashionable West End where homes featured Chinese-inspired wallpaper (courtesy of the East India Company) and lavish banquets of multicourse meals were lit by costly beeswax candles that were custom-designed to indicate the anticipated duration of the event.

Right-Side Narrative: *Darkness*

Evocative visuals and descriptive captions will present the flip-side of London's opulence: opium dens, cemeteries plagued by grave-robbers, amusements such as dog fighting and cockfighting, men conscripted to fight in the ongoing Napoleonic War or shipped off to Washington, DC (which was on fire, thanks to the East India Company). Piped-in hot water was an unheard-of luxury, mass-produced soap was a recent innovation, shampoo was a mystery of the Far East; deodorant and toothpaste were non-existent (when teeth decayed, the rich had them replaced with fresh ones plucked from corpses).

Additional points of contrast: During those lavish banquets, guests would even have eaten the head of a chicken and sucked the eyes and brain out through the beak; regular Londoners lit their homes with foul-smelling tallow candles.

Mini-Execution Ideas

Postcard Slider: *Forbidden Ground*

The ultimate rebellion against strict social stratification is the breaking of inviolable taboos. We'll pique readers' interest in Delaney's involvement in a dark and dangerous world through imagery and captions depicting the strange taboos of the cultures that the East India Company was exposing Londoners to at the time—feeding the fascination that the ultra-civilized upper class had with “primitive”, uncivilized societies.

Interactive Map: *Monopoly*

Before 1814, East India company enjoyed a trade monopoly from East Coast of Africa to West Coast of America. Map of trade routes. We'll show what this looked like with a clickable graphic.

Data Visualization: *The Haves and Have-Nots*

Income comparison: Duke (4,000 pounds/ year); shop keeper (100 pounds/ year); day laborer (25 pounds/ year)

Copy Call-outs

The Ultimate unCivilization: The most isolated tribe in the world is the Sentinelese, a group that's lived in a remote corner of the Andaman Islands for the past 60,000 years. They want no part of the outside world: when an aid helicopter flew overhead after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, a man rushed out of his hut and aimed an arrow at it.

Status Quo: There were strict social and economic hierarchies in both “civilized” London and its shady underbelly—and it was equally difficult for people in both worlds to break free from the niche they were born into. We'll compare:

- *Non-criminal hierarchy:* monarchy, royalty, peers, gentry, middle class, trade, servants, laboring poor, paupers
- *Criminal hierarchy:* Rusher, nipper, natty lad, lifter, knuckles

London Lexicon

From conger to quail-pipe, a guide 1813 London vocabulary. Tip: A wedding isn't what you'd think.

