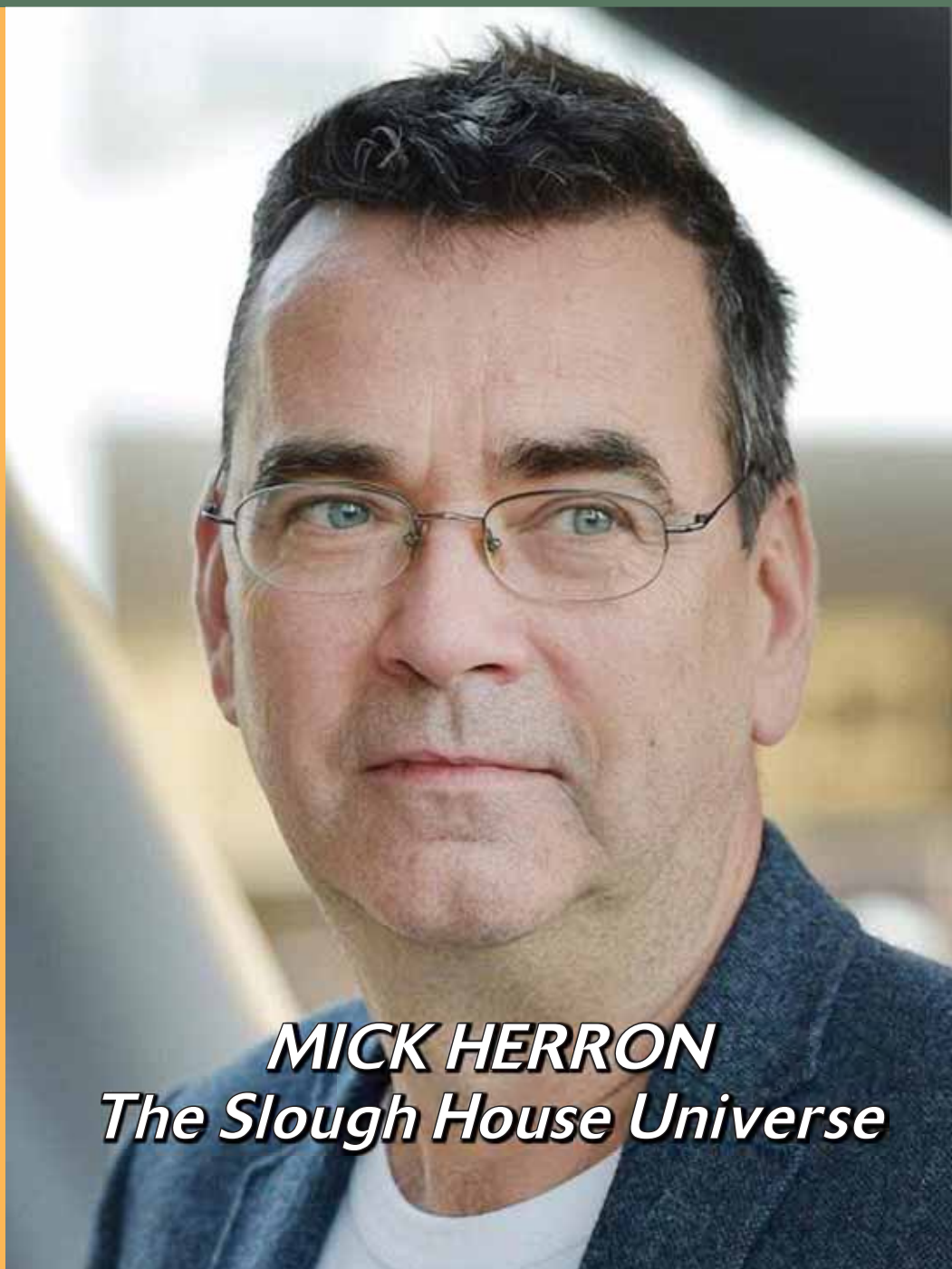
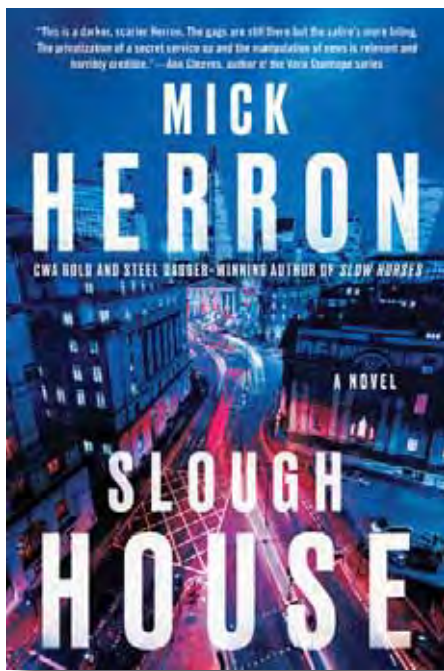


# *Deadly Pleasures* *Mystery Magazine*



***MICK HERRON***  
***The Slough House Universe***



away in the background. This time, however, it seems that she has gone too far in accepting the help of arch-manipulator Peter Judd in mounting a retaliatory attack against the Russians in response to their Novichok poisonings in the U.K.

As with the previous books in the series, the plotting is superb, and Herron adroitly brings together his various strands in a clever and idiosyncratic manner. There are the requisite twists and turns, and there is probably a higher level of suspense and action than in the previous books. He moves the plot along with some urgency and the story builds to a thudding conclusion.

As always, the dialogue sparkles and Lamb is in brilliant witty form, albeit always politically incorrect, especially during his encounter with a gay dwarf. The characterisations are nicely nuanced and described with a razor sharp wit. Lamb is perhaps becoming too much of a caricature of himself, although in couple of scenes Herron skillfully reminds us that Lamb still has the tough street smarts of a good agent. Regular readers of the series will also enjoy the return, although sometimes very briefly, of characters from earlier books.

In all, a very enjoyable read that also effectively uses its pre-COVID Brexit background to make some astute reflections on the state of society, especially in

Britain.

**George Easter's Take on SLOUGH HOUSE:** Every book in this series is a gem and **SLOUGH HOUSE** is no exception. Not only will I continue to avidly read this series, but I will treat each new Slow Horses novel as I do a new Michael Connelly novel and devour it within two days of receipt. **SLOUGH HOUSE** left us a bit of a cliffhanger regarding River Cartwright and Sid Baker, so that will make anticipation of the next in the series that much more tense. **Rating: A**

**Steele Curry's Take on SLOUGH HOUSE:** The seventh novel in the author's Slough House series roars along with wit, deft characterization and a timely plot. Picking up on the actual attempted poisoning by Russian spies of a former Russian intelligent agent and his daughter in the U.K. in 2018, **SLOUGH HOUSE** chronicles what happens back in the U.K. when MI5 retaliates in Russia by killing one of the spies responsible for this poisoning. Unfortunately, the members of Slough House are the ones who must bear the consequences of this retaliation.

**SLOUGH HOUSE** once again demonstrates that Herron is an outstanding storyteller who makes every word count with a unique writing style. His Slough House novels are marked by sparkling dialogue, an acute sense of place, and a colorful cast of characters,



Olivia Cooke as  
Sid Baker

highlighted by the incorrigible Jackson Lamb (the head of Slough House) and the treacherous Diana Taverner (the head of MI5). Throughout the series, Lamb's perverse mode of leadership

somehow enables the members of the lowly Slough House department of MI5 to survive, or at least most of them.

This is one of those rare novels where you inadvertently slow down your pace of reading to make your reading pleasure last longer. Plus, no sooner had I finished reading **SLOUGH HOUSE**, I felt compelled to immediately read it a second time. This is a truly brilliant novel in every possible respect. **Rating: A+**

## Why Are the Books So Popular?

The popularity of the Slow Horses series did not happen overnight. In fact, it started off quite slowly. In England, Constable published **SLOW HORSES** to underwhelming sales and decided to not publish any subsequent novels in the series. It wasn't until 2014 that publisher John Murray stepped in and recommenced the publication of the series in the U.K.

In America, Soho Press had greater faith in the Slow Horses and has published all seven novels to increasing sales with each one. In this age when most publishers demand instant gratification and don't want to invest money to build readership of a series over time, Soho Press should be commended for their initial patience with and belief in this series.

Crime fiction (spy fiction) experts were in tune from the very beginning as witnessed by how many awards the novels have won and been shortlisted for.

The novels are not easy, facile reads, especially at the beginning. Mick Herron makes the readers work a bit and figure certain things out for themselves. I think this may have had something to do with the series slow start. But word-of-mouth recommendations are a wonderful thing and I'm certain that a reader is willing to put in the effort if the promised payoff is great. If you haven't read this series previously, consider this a word-of-mouth alert. It is essential to start at the beginning with **SLOW HORSES**.

So why are these book so popular