



**EMPIRE
ON SET!**

An ex-gangster (Clive Owen) discovers the truth about his brother's murder.

I'LL SLEEP WHEN I'M DEAD

THE PITCH: Former gangster gone straight probes his brother's murky death

LOCATION: Clapham Road, South London

TALENT: Mike Hodges (director); Clive Owen, Malcolm McDowell, Jonathan Rhys-Meyers

ETA: August 2003

FURIOUS PREPARATIONS for the Christmas rush aside, the Freemans catalogue building standing firm on the Clapham Road has been playing home to some intense drama. For it is here that the production of psychological crime thriller *I'll Sleep When I'm Dead* is under way, with star Clive Owen, his face smothered in a beard, his unblinking eyes locked in a stare, discovering the truth about his brother's death.

"I basically play someone who was very violent in a violent world," begins the actor, who has spent the past week dodging daft rumours that he is about to replace Pierce Brosnan in the James Bond franchise. "He now lives

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Malcolm in the middle... of filming Mike Hodges' latest feature.

a very solitary life in the country and gradually is drawn back to the city. He senses something bad has happened to his brother."

Directed by his Croupier cohort Mike Hodges and co-starring Jonathan Rhys-Meyers and Malcolm McDowell, the story follows the former gangster's return to his old haunts, trying to establish why his brother has been found dead. The truth is nastier than he ever could have imagined.

With hints of *Unforgiven* about it, this is the classic lone avenger riff, but given a spare, off-kilter feel. In no way will it be another bout for the punch-drunk British gangster genre. And any similarities to *Get Carter* are purely incidental.

"This is a totally different film," says Hodges, knowing that the comparisons are inevitable. "I don't really see this as a crime film at all, it's about the loneliness of people. But this is one man against the odds, and it's violent. That is the kind of theme I am drawn to."

IAN NATHAN