

CALL ME THURSDAY

by Daryl Henry

FADE IN:

Ghostly first light. A cold, lingering fog clings to the black surface of a glassy sea, enveloping a towering--

EXT. OIL-DRILLING PLATFORM - DAWN

Looming above the cold ocean on barnacled stilts, its lower catwalks dripping seaweed. No landmarks, no idea where we are.

OPENING CREDITS BEGIN OVER as, between us and the oil rig, the glassy veneer of the sea is pierced by the bulbous prow of a SUBMARINE. White water cascades from its sonar dome, its long smooth foredeck, its aerodynamic sail, as 300 feet of sinewy vessel silently breaks the surface. On the--

SUBMARINE

an oversize hatch opens, black-clad SAILORS spill out, dragging a rubber boat. Well-rehearsed, no talking. They load a menacing, stainless steel CANISTER, the size of an oil drum, aboard the dinghy. Supervising from the--

BRIDGE

is the CAPTAIN, fog condensing on his flaxen beard. He is accompanied by a LOOKOUT armed with a nightscoped RIFLE who scans the brightly-lit rig, warily.

EXT. OIL PLATFORM GALLERY - DAWN

A narrow balcony surrounding the upper deck.

EXT. SUBMARINE - DAWN

The Lookout directs the Captain's attention to the gallery, alarmed. The Captain glances quickly up to see--

EXT. OIL PLATFORM GALLERY - DAWN

A CREWMAN exits the command center, leans over the rail, staring off. Should he lower his gaze he would see everything, including the--

RUBBER BOAT

gliding toward the massive Rig Support Columns where the sailors unload the canister.

ON THE RIG

The crewman eventually yawns, stretches, goes back inside.

ON THE SUBMARINE

The lookout silently lowers his rifle. The captain returns his attention to the--

SUPPORT STRUCTURE

As the sailors make the canister fast to the lowest cross beam in the belly of the rig, then paddle back to the--

SUBMARINE

clambering aboard, hauling their boat after them. One SAILOR slips climbing the conning tower, making a racket. The Captain cuffs him on the ear. The last sailor down the hatch closes it soundlessly. Now the sub sinks out of sight. A few bubbles, then no trace. OPENING CREDITS END.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA - EAST BEACH - DAY

The dawn sun climbs slowly above the majestic Santa Ynez Mountains, gliding down the canyons one by one, bathing them in amber. The muted light gradually spreads across the city toward the sea, melting the fog, casting the shadows of tall palms across the beach like bars on an adobe wall.

The beach is deserted. At first all we hear is the surf gently nuzzling the shore, then gradually, the creaking SOUND of a much-used three-speed BICYCLE approaching along the BIKE PATH, ridden serenely by a--

TALL YOUNG WOMAN

Early twenties, not much jewelry, less makeup, wearing a long skirt to conceal her legs, which she believes are too muscular, and a loose sweater to conceal her breasts, which she believes are too large. Her name is THURSDAY HOLT.

EXT. STATE STREET - DAY

At Jim Bottoms' DOLPHIN FOUNTAIN, Thursday turns away from the ocean, starts up Santa Barbara's main thoroughfare, the burgeoning sun now painting her handsome face in bronze.

Behind her stretches STEARNS WHARF. Beyond the wharf, receding into the haze, are the primordial CHANNEL ISLANDS. Interceding between the islands and the city is a baleful phalanx of DRILLING RIGS, like space stations come to earth.

EXT. DE LA GUERRA PLAZA - DAY

Thursday enters a downtown patch of lush green lawn surrounded by white walls and red roofs, including CITY HALL and the Santa Barbara NEWS-PRESS building. She steers toward an--

ANTIQUUE SHOP

with a rented OFFICE above it. She parks her bike, approaches the foot of the STAIRS, pauses to look at a small tarnished brass nameplate that reads:

GRIFFITH WYATT INVESTIGATIONS

Thursday makes a vain attempt to wipe away the smudges, then starts up the stairs to--

INT. WYATT'S OFFICE - DAY

It's a mess-- stacks of newspapers, unfiled paperwork, empty whiskey bottles and full ashtrays. On one wall, a frayed map of Santa Barbara, on another, a Private Investigator's license in a dusty frame.

Stretched out on a recumbent exercise bike like on a chaise longue is GRIFF WYATT, mid-forties, scuffed cowboy boots, reading the morning paper, listening to a cassette of the *Best of Brubeck*. He glances up as Thursday enters.

GRIFF

Mornin', Thursday.

Disgusted, Thursday steps over some cardboard file boxes, takes down a can of brass polish and a handful of paper towels from a sagging shelf, stops, looks at him hard.

THURSDAY

I don't think this is going to work out, Wyatt.

GRIFF

Hey, I thought you were tired of hittin' the books. I thought you wanted some real-world experience.

THURSDAY

And I thought you were a real detective, like in *Chinatown*.

Griff grins, sympathetic.

THURSDAY (CONT'D)

Instead you lie around. You don't even *pedal* that thing.

GRIFF

It squeaks.

THURSDAY

When does the housekeeping end? When do I get to answer the phone?

GRIFF

When it rings. Pass me my smokes, will you?

Thursday does. *American Spirits*. He smiles appreciatively. She scowls, exits.