

“YELLOW”

By

Nathan Shelton

Story By

Ryan Piotrowski & Nathan Shelton

SATO 48  
April 2020

[npatrickshelton@gmail.com](mailto:npatrickshelton@gmail.com)

Darkness.

A woman's frantic breathing...

FADE IN:

**INT. MAIN ROOM - UNDERGROUND BUNKER - PRESENT DAY**

SERIES OF SHOTS WITHIN THE DIMLY LIT BUNKER:

- pale hands frantically tear VHS tapes from their sleeves; one after the other.
- boxes of VHS tapes dumped onto a pile on the floor.
- pale fingers desperately pick at a yellowed label on a well-worn VHS tape, revealing nothing underneath
- tape thrown across the room, smashing into the cold metal of the bunker wall
- another tape's label is peeled back and thrown.
- another.
- another.
- a tape, spilling its long black crinkled film, is slammed on top of a pile of discarded tapes and empty sleeves.
- a woman, YELLOW (37) rocks back and forth hugging her knees and weeping in the catastrophe she has made of the dark room. We do not see her face.

YELLOW (V.O.)

I read a quote not long back. *"The yellow is unsteady. The more I try to capture what it's like now, the less steady it seems. But it's still there, and yellow all right. Perhaps I am trying too hard, and chasing the yellow away."*

ROLL CREDITS

**INT. MAIN ROOM - UNDERGROUND BUNKER - 30 YEARS AGO**

FATHER's smiling face stares at us from a jittery tube television screen.

FATHER (ON TV)

Good morning, my little love. My brilliant yellow ray of sunshine. Today we have so very much to learn and explore together. We are going to read a new book on...

Father's voice trails off as MUSIC FADES UP and YOUNG YELLOW (7), is revealed, sitting in front of a wall of television screens in a much brighter and cleaner bunker.

YELLOW (V.O.)

I don't remember anything before the haven. I don't need to, I guess. My father was always there for me. Or rather, his image was always there for me. And his voice.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Young Yellow reads a book and looks up at her father's face on the screen. He smiles. She giggles.
- Young Yellow mends a torn yellow sock, carefully watching her father demonstrating the method on the television screens.

YELLOW (V.O.)

A quiet and gentle man; my father... guiding, educating, nurturing, warning... protecting.

- ON THE SCREENS: Father's face is stern as he gestures to a chart with a radiation symbol prominently displayed at the top.

FATHER (ON TV)

I wish such precautions were not necessary, my love. But for quite a while they must be strictly adhered to. Now, I know you will have many questions as you learn and grow. I want you to know that everything I have put in place here is for you. To ensure that you will be safe and happy. This world needs more happiness. Don't ya think, my love?

- Young Yellow carefully balances a bowl of cereal as she pushes a tape, labeled "TAPE 114: Alpha Kítrinos: Flora & Fauna"

YELLOW (V.O.)

Through Father's recordings, I learned not only truths about myself and our family, but about the haven he had worked so diligently to

provide, and the harsh new world undergoing terraformation beyond its sheltering walls.

- Young Yellow sits in front of the glowing screens in wide-eyed wonderment, as she eats cereal.

- Young Yellow, now older and sporting a ponytail, lays under a blanket in a chair, sleepily watching her father's lectures on the glowing screens. She yawns and passes out.

YELLOW (V.O.)

Time passed. I knew not day from night. And I found comfort in this. I learned to value the present moment in a way so few back on terra-earth had been able to appreciate, according to Father.

TIME LAPSE: YOUNG YELLOW PERFORMING VARIOUS TASKS AROUND THE ROOM AS LIGHTS SHIFT AND TIME PASSES. SOON SHE IS REPLACED BY ADULT YELLOW, PERFORMING SIMILAR TASKS.

YELLOW (V.O.)

This brave new world would be a paradise after a time. And my father, along with other scientists, were tasked with starting the long and arduous process that would take many lifetimes to complete.

INT. MAIN ROOM - UNDERGROUND BUNKER - 10 YEARS AGO

Yellow (27) wakes on her chair to static hissing on the television sets. She rises and ejects an old worn tape labeled "TAPE 307: Thoughts on Religion & Ethics".

YELLOW (V.O.)

The love and dedication he had for me was second only to that of his work... which inevitably took him from me.

LATER: Yellow sits, eating popcorn, watching her father's face as he talks to her from a jittery image on the screens. Tears roll down her cheeks as she steps to the television sets and touches the cold screen in an attempt to reach him.

YELLOW (V.O.)

He knew Alpha Kítrinos' atmosphere would wreak havoc on his body. But his work would help future generations thrive and prosper here.

For this, he would give his life... And I would give my freedom. Our family's sacrifice was a small price to pay for such noble efforts.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - UNDERGROUND BUNKER - 5 YEARS AGO**

Yellow exercises in the living room as the jittery image of her father lectures on the screen.

YELLOW (V.O.)

And after all, he had provided all I could ever want down here in the haven. Even if I had ever wanted to leave this sanctuary... I had not been given the key. He had never provided it; only a warning that an inescapable death awaited on the other side of that hatch.

Yellow stops working out and wipes her head. She peers across the room at the hatch in the ceiling.

The hatch stares back at her; cold and unflinching.

She smiles in quiet resignation and continues her workout.

YELLOW (V.O.)

And besides... I had never wanted to find a key anyway. Father's commandments were for my protection after all. I would never question such a loving and wise man who gave so much to keep me as close as he could and provide for me while building a brighter dawn for all of mankind. I was proud of Father. I was honored to be his child; to live this life given me, in gratitude.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - UNDERGROUND BUNKER - THIS MORNING**

Yellow reads from an old book while one of her father's tapes plays.

FATHER (ON TV)

... And that, my love, is it for today. You go ahead and sleep now. Dream well. I'll see you on the next tape in the morning.

The tape fades to black. Yellow starts up from the chair, when her book drops from her lap. She bends to pick it up.

Suddenly the tape jumps and flicks back on.

ON SCREEN- Father, in a lab coat, holds a clipboard in his hand and is remarkably well groomed compared to any recordings we have seen.

The tape is very rough with multiple glitches and jumps.

Yellow stops and stands upright in confusion. Father now speaks with a British dialect.

FATHER (ON TV)

... now entering phase two of Operation Yellow. As documented in phase one, the subject's original familial unit had been financially compensated and the child removed, given high doses of mind-altering chemical enhancers, focusing primarily on long term memory functions. New narratives were then imprinted deep within the subject's consciousness, allowing her to trust in the belief that I was her f--

The tape glitches, shuts off, and is ejected roughly from the VCR. It's label reads "TAPE 3: READING FUNDAMENTALS"

YELLOW (V.O.)

*"All seems infected that the infected spy, As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye."*

Horrified, Yellow rushes to the player and pulls the VHS tape out. Long strands of film stream from it into the player.

YELLOW (V.O.)

Wait. No. No no NO! What?!!! It can't be-

Yellow stops.

ON THE TAPE- the label is slightly peeled up revealing another label beneath.

Yellow picks at the label, peeling it back.

THE ORIGINAL LABEL READS- "Operation Yellow: P2-351B"

Yellow looks around, wild eyed. She starts breathing heavily as she runs out of the room.

Yellow rushes in with boxes of VHS tapes that she throws onto the floor. Some of the tapes fall from the boxes.

She crouches down and begins ripping tapes from their sleeves.

Static screeches loudly as white snow illuminates the screens, distorting Yellow's frantically searching shadow into monstrous forms on the walls of the bunker.

Yellow's pale hands rip through tape after tape before finding one labeled "TAPE 161: THEOLOGY 101". The label is slightly peeled in one corner.

She peels it up to reveal another label, "Operation Yellow: P2-623R"

She rushes to the VCR and shoves the tape into the player. She fast-forwards through Father's discussion.

Tears stream down her cheeks. She wipes them away.

The tape goes black, but she keeps fast forwarding. Suddenly Father appears in his lab coat again. She presses play.

FATHER (ON TV)  
(British Dialect)  
... utilizing a fabricated scenario involving the terraformation of a distant alien landscape and added deterrent of an inhospitable corrosive atmosphere-

The tape glitches badly.

YELLOW (V.O.)  
NO! No.

She fumbles with the VCR, fast-forwarding until the tape is clear again.

FATHER (ON TV)  
...ize that due to lack of interaction with outside forces and a deep seeded trust in the parental relationship, the subject will continue to limit their perception of the greater reality, embracing instead the limited iteration created within their own consciousness. It will be fascinating to discov-

The tape snaps out and ejects.

Yellow steps away from the screens slowly. She looks around the room.

Her tiny world has literally come crashing down around her and now lays in shambles at her feet.

**INT. DARKENED CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

FROM A BLACK AND WHITE MONITOR: we see Yellow standing in the ruins of her bunker. She slowly looks right up AT US.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - UNDERGROUND BUNKER - CONTINUOUS**

Yellow stares up at a smoke detector high up in the corner of the room with a blinking red light.

**INT. DARKENED CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

ON THE BLACK AND WHITE MONITOR: Yellow stares up AT US and screams at the top her lungs.

A CLICK of a button and the monitor snaps out.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - UNDERGROUND BUNKER - CONTINUOUS**

The red light in the smoke detector stops blinking. Yellow pants heavily. She slowly looks over to the hatch.

The hatch stares back at her warmly.

She smiles with the fire of determination and rushes toward it.

She quickly climbs the latter and pauses at the hatch.

The hatch is inviting and warm.

Without turning any mechanism or unlocking any lock, she gently pushes the hatch open easily.

Yellow's eyes widen and she smiles, as she is overcome with a brilliant warm yellow glow.

FADE TO WHITE

THE END