FADE IN on SUEDE, who's bored.

SUEDE

I'm bored!

A black bag is placed over SUEDE'S head.

SUEDE wakes up with a switch case on his head.

SUEDE

Could've sworn I got assaulted... guess not! What's this?

The Switch case is revealed to be the Pokemon MMO beta.

SUEDE

Are you KIDDING?! Oh this is WORTH not involving the police or asking any questions! Hot DANG!

SUEDE puts the cart in the Switch and begins playing. We shift to CARTOON MODE.

SUEDE

Dang, that's some sweet character creation! I look JUST LIKE my avatar! Nice of them to add my facial hair, JRPGs hardly ever do that!

LINKARA

Yeah, it's kind of weird they went for a Cel-shaded look but it does look more like the show -

SUEDE

AAAH!

LINKARA

AAAH!

SUEDE

Linkara? You got the beta too?

LINKARA

Yeah, it was the weirdest thing-

SUEDE

Black bag that smelled of ether and pixie dust?

LINKARA

... We really need a better self-preservation instinct, don't we?

ADMIN

ATTENTION TRAINERS!

SUEDE

Holy shrimp, what on arceus' green earth is that?

ADMIN

I am the great and powerful ADMIN! Welcome to the International beta test of The Pokemon World MMORPG!

SUEDE

Oh, this is so cool!

ADMIN

SILENCE! Each of you has been handpicked by the almighty Pokemon Company to represent your country in assuring the quality of this product.

SUEDE

Um... You really need someone from New Zealand?

ADMIN

You might as well be from Japan! Same basic size and shape, same ocean, and you're both stereotyped by fans of the media you produce without actually learning about your culture!

SUEDE

I... Well it's still better than when we were only known for sheep!

ADMIN

So for those similarities and the fact that you've made a living researching pokemon, we've called on you to help us smooth out any kinks in the translation!

SUEDE

There's... like hundreds of pokemon research Youtubers with way more influence than me, though.

ADMIN

But none from New Zealand!

SUEDE

Ok, this makes NO sense-

ADMIN

I'M SORRY?

SUEDE

I immediately rescind my comment, master voice person.

ADMIN

And you, Linkara, were chosen to help our story department because of your uncanny ability to point out annoying plot holes and understand how a fan thinks.

LINKARA

Yeah, about that: I'm noticing some pretty big discrepancies in this whole system -

ADMIN

SILENCE! We have prepared for you a new milestone in the Pokemon experience.

SUEDE

SWEET! Endorphins numb my sense of reason!

ADMIN

Behind this wall lies a completely revamped, real time battle system, a truly organic multibranch storyline with the choice of being either a noble League member or part of a sinister team. One-on-one battles, group battles, the all-new six-on-six six way battle royale mode, a contest mode that isn't lame! All this and more await you, if you can but prove yourself to us.

ALL

HUZZAH!

SUEDE

...wait, what was that? Prove ourselves?

LINKARA

Why do we need to prove ourselves if we've already been chosen above others?

ADMIN

Excellent lampshading, Linkara, keep it up! You must prove to us that you aren't just fanboys looking to shout first in the comments! You must prove that you love Pokemon enough to criticise it if required for the greater benefit of the franchise.

SUEDE

And just how do we do that?

ADMIN

By reviewing the Pokemon movies!

LINKARA

Well, that's not so bad...

SUEDE

Yeah, we review Mewtwo strikes back and we're out of here!

LINKARA

Wait...

SUEDE

What?

LINKARA

You did notice the "S" he put at the end of that sentence, right?

SUEDE

No...

LINKARA

It's all of the movies, isn't it?

ADMIN

ALL OF THE MOVIES!

ALL

AAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!!!!!

SUEDE

Have mercy, voice person, I have a child!

ADMIN

Is your child more important than exclusive access to the Pokemon MMO?

SUEDE

. . .

Suede!

SUEDE

Of course not!

ADMIN

Too bad! Behold your first trial: the first movie!

LINKARA

We open on a surprisingly deep opening narration which, if you came into the film knowing the premise of Pokemon as most of us did, does a decent job of setting a mood that 'this isn't just a feature-length episode.'

SUEDE

Even if you didn't know what pokemon was about it's still quite laid back and sets up an epic, almost dark-sounding plot. Whether it goes there or not, we'll have to see. Continuing the opening sequence we see some scientists who want to clone the world's most powerful pokemon because... science. So they're cloning Arceus?

LINKARA

Shh! He doesn't exist yet!

SUEDE

But there's an entire ancient mythology devoted to him in the pokemon world!

LINKARA

Not yet there isn't!

SUEDE

Oh, ok... wait what?

LINKARA

And that's my line! Anyway... The scientists develop a clone of the CURRENT most powerful pokemon, Mew, and name him Mewtwo. Very creative.

SUEDE

Heh, the main scientist looks like he was designed by Osamu tezuka... he actually looks like Dr. Tenma from Astroboy! Hey, you could almost say the situation is a reversal of astroboy, seeing how the creation hates the creator rather than vice versa...

ANYWAY...

SUEDE

Sorry. Wait, did that scientist just mention Mewthree?

CLIP

SUEDE

I KNEW it! Pokegods ARE real!

LINKARA

Mewtwo of course breaks free and wreaks royal havok on the lab because he's upset at being created solely for other's experiments without any regard for his feelings. Then he kills them all.

SUEDE

Oh, you mean he 'sends them to the shadow realm'? or "defeats" them all?

LINKARA

No, he kills them. Cold-blooded murder on a grand scale.

SUEDE

But... but this is Pokemon! It's a kid's show! It was localised by freaking 4kids, they can't-

...

LINKARA

So the opening's pretty dark.

SUEDE

...yeah.

LINKARA

...but not as dark as it was before 4kids changed it.

SUEDE

You're kidding.

LINKARA

I almost wish I was. For starters, the scientist wasn't just trying to clone mewtwo, he was trying to clone HIS DECEASED DAUGHTER.

...

LINKARA

I know! In fact, there's an entire sequence where mewtwo is in a sort of psychic limbo, interacting with the prototype clones of the starter pokemon AND THE CLONE OF THE SCIENTISTS DECEASED DAUGHTER!

SUEDE

...

LINKARA

I know!

SUEDE

Wait, let me look this up... so THEN there's a heartbreaking end to it all, when the earlier clones fail and leave him alone one by one until finally the daughter tells him he's more than just a clone, he's his own person, which explained why he revolted at the lab when he woke up!

LINKARA

- - -

SUEDE

...But that would have been AWESOME!

LINKARA

I KNOW!

SUEDE

So existential dilemmas focused on what you are born into versus what you can become and the heartbreak of losing a loved one is too much for kids to handle, but clear mass murder just because you're angry that no one likes you is a-ok!

LINKARA

Because heaven knows, we never got the pain of losing a loved one or fate versus choice pushed onto us in OUR childhood!

SUEDE

...it still looked cool though, right?

Oh yeah. And who knows, maybe 4kids just wanted to recreate the cinema experience!

SUEDE

Yeah! ...What?

LINKARA

Well in the original release of the film in theaters in Japan, NONE of this was there! No explorers finding an eyelash, no dead daughter conversing with Mewtwo... just the prologue, bubbles and Mewtwo waking up.

SUEDE

Oh yeah, I think I've heard of this, those scenes were added for what was called the kazenban release on VHS, almost like those Special Editions of Star Wars, even including added CGI. That was the version the West got for theatres and that's when they decided to keep the explorer stuff and cut the dead daddy-daughter deal.

LINKARA

Yeah, which is weird considering the new scenes were mainly made for the West's benefit...

SUEDE

Well anyway, so Mewtwo's his own agent now, right? Nope! Post slaughter he's met by the financier of the Mewtwo project, Giovanni, Villain of almost the entire series, two of the games and based on his name, the only Italian in the pokemon universe.

LINKARA

So, the only Italian's a Crime boss.

SUEDE

Eh, it could've been worse, the Japanese aren't exactly known for their sensitive portrayal of italians...

GIOVANNI

Ey, it's a-me, Giovanni! We gonna start some-a serious busyness, you an' me! but first let's have a pit-za pie! Then-a we shout a lot drink red-a wine while you beat-a the livin' ragout outa whoever wanna challenge my-a gym! Pasta! Linguini! Mafia! Ferrari!...

SUEDE

Horrible stereotying aside, that's pretty much exactly what happens. Mewtwo, who had only just finished wiping the blood off his hand-ball-things from slaughtering an island full of scientists for only wanting to use him, agrees to be... used by Giovanni for Giovanni's own ends.

Wait, what?

SUEDE

Well, to be fair, Giovanni does say he wants mewtwo as a valuable ally rather than just a weapon or as an experiment...

LINKARA

Yeah, but Mewtwo's PSYCHIC! Shouldn't he be able to see past Givanni's deceipt?

SUEDE

Hmm... good point... Unless Giovanni has psychic powers too!

ALL

OOOHHHH!!!... No.

LINKARA

Mind you, you don't need to be psychic to see where all this is going. Mewtwo fights for giovanni for a while, wearing one of the coolest armour suits I've ever seen, helping the grunts catch their pokemon and generally being... well, a puppet, let's be serious. However, Mewtwo in all his infinite intelligence doesn't figure this out until Giovanni comes out and says it FOR NO REASON!

CLIP, photoshop giovanni's head exploding

SUEDE

Dude, that never happened!

LINKARA

Well, it should have! What, he kills a lab full of scientists who want to at least use him for SCIENCE, and this clod out and out says he's just using him for his body and he just gets a slap on the wrist?

SUEDE

Hey, Mewtwo did destroy the facility, though...

LINKARA

Yeah but for a man of his money that pretty much is just a slap on the wrist, isn't it?

SUEDE

Yeah...I guess in the crossover episode of the anime Giovanni did seem more mildly put out than devastated.

GIOVANNI

Dang it! I left the stove on!

SUEDE

So Mewtwo heads back to the island of his origin and birthplace of the indestructable picture frame and swears vengeance on... everyone.

CLIP OF MEWTWO SAYING HE MUST FIND A PURPOSE, AND PURGE THE PLANET OF ALL WHO OPPOSE HIM

LINKARA

Hey, that's a purpose!

SUEDE

Well, apparently he didn't add the whole genocide angle in Japanese, there it's more "I'll show them all" rather than "I'll slaughter them all" Which I feel makes him just a liiitle more sympathetic, that might be just me, though. But now, FINALLY, we meet the protagonists of our story, Ash Ketchum, the Forever Young hero, Brock... Brock, the mother figure,

LINKARA

With youngbloods, I might add! ...oh crap it's spreading!

SUEDE

And, of course, the feminine touch with a knack for reckless endangerment, Misty. They're enjoying their lunch on a table and beach umbrella that seemingly appeared out of ash's magical bottomless backpack when he's challenged by a pirate trainer! Nice to know the race announcer from the Laramie ranch is striking out on his own, good for him!

... Hey, that's cheating! Multiple opposing pokemon won't show up until the orange islands!

LINKARA

And of course the battle ends with pikachu giving one of his mighty thunder attacks, defeating all three pokemon at once. This is odd considering Golem is part ground type so electric attacks shouldn't affect him. But of course all pokemon fans have come to accept that ash's pikachu fires the thunderbolts of Zeus.

SUEDE

In Japanese, he seems so upset about it that he needs to do his troll 2 impression to calm himself down!

Wait, actually, was that a Jojo's reference?

Fun fact, that's actually an american voicing him, Raymond Johnson. Living the dream, man! But wait, who's this watching our heroes?

ALL

(joyfully)

IT'S TEAM ROCKET!

SUEDE

Yes, it's probably one of the most lovable group of villains ever committed to animation. They're watching the twerps with an eye out to steal pikachu for no satisfyingly given reason as per usual. Pikachu is pretty much Moby Dick for team rocket, huh...

LINKARA

"I'll chase him round Palette Town, and round the Seafoam Islands, and round the Whirl Island Maelstrom, and round perdition's flames before I give him up!"

SUEDE

(quoting littlekuriboh) 'With this frying pan that I keep clenched between my buttocks!'

LINKARA

It appears Mewtwo has been watching them through a hidden camera attached to a fearow, although I'm not entirely sure how he's getting those side shots, maybe a sends ash a message to come to his secluded island for a tournament.

SUEDE

Unlimited hologram technology and they still have to tick a yes or no box! Half expecting Mewtwo to ask them if they like him! So they set off immediately to the island only to find that the ferries are closed because Mewtwo has been controlling the weather!

LINKARA

Why would he want to do that if he wanted to test out the battle ability of the pokemon?

SUEDE

All I know is Rayquaza's going to be ticked! Also, this kind of out of left field fairy tale the lady mentions here was a dub only version.

In Japanese she just talks about how the storm is really really bad, worse than she's ever seen and that it'd be a really bad idea. It kind of makes sense that the dub put the story in there so later events don't just come out of nowhere but let's be honest, it still pretty much comes out of nowhere.

Stop at once or I'll...throw my handcuffs at you!

SUEDE

You hear that, kids? Reckless endangerment is okay as long as you're following your heart!

LINKARA

It looks like ash and company won't be able to make it, until...

SUEDE

So a chartered ferry is unable to make it through this storm, but a canoe manned by three rejects from 'How To Train Your Dragonite' can?

LINKARA

You know, it might have been corny but I tell you, my theater loved that line. Then the remake went and turned it into a freaking advertisement...

SUEDE

Well, after finally making it onto the island, they are met by a mysterious woman!

Clip featuring SAURONS MOUTH

SUEDE

Well, give him some credit he doesn't have any eyes!... That we know of yet!

LINKARA

The trainers then meet up with the others that made it, who for trainers, don't seem to know their pokemon very well...

CLIP WHERE TRAINER REFERS TO PIDGEOT AND PIDGEOTTO

ALL

PIDGEOT!

LINKARA

Sometimes you wonder if they're even trying...AND NIDOQUEEN AIN'T NO WATER TYPE!

SUEDE

Well, you know, it can use Surf, right?

Oh, excuse me! Of course! Guess I'd better open my electric-type gym made entirely of Smeargle then!

SUEDE

Okay, fine, I get it... Wait, where's the Fearow girl?

LINKARA

The who?

SUEDE

You know, the girl who took off on a fearow to reach the island and was never seen again?

LINKARA

Well that's dark. Speaking of which, now it's time to meet the big bad...

LINKARA

(as mewtwo) YO.

SUEDE (AS MEWTWO)

I find your lack of faith disturbing.

SUEDE

You'd think he would just kill them, but I guess that wouldn't be sportsmanlike.

SUEDE

We then cut to team rocket exploring in the background. Is it just me or is this scene a rip off from star wars?

LINKARA

I wouldn't know about that, but I'd actually like to know who did the art direction on this movie!

SUEDE

What do you mean?

LINKARA

Well, look at the castle design, it's got this whole living organism thing going for it. With the robotic arms and everything it looks very Giger-esque and very un-pokemon.

Well after reviewing a ton of the show I might be able to help you out there. See, the writer of this movie, Takeshi Shudo, was also the head writer and general showrunner of pokemon all the way up to Johto. He's well known in the community for having a distinct style that permeated all the episodes he personally wrote. He loved going as dark as possible like killing a child in his previous series and making things seem intimidating and other-worldy, which I personally think helped pokemon stand out. It was probably his influence that caused the director (and director of EVERY SINGLE pokemon film until recently) Kunihiko Yuyama and the art director, Katsuyoshi Kanemura, to go so crazy with the designs.

LINKARA

Well that's good to know, I always - wait he killed off a child in his last series?

SUEDE

Yep, the main character, 17 episodes before the series ended. Hey, What on earth are those tubes doing?

CLIP OF TUBES 'GIVING BIRTH' TO THE CLONES

ALL

AAAUUUGGHH!!!

LINKARA

It looks like a Rhydon giving birth!!

SUEDE

Did Mewtwo design these things? That's pretty gross! Mind you I guess a clone would have some pretty twisted ideas about birth.

LINKARA

Back where the action is, Mewtwo has decided to challenge the trainers to a match in his HUGE STADIUM using his newly born clones, and generally being really inconsistent. "I don't want humans to rule over pokemon, so I'm going to destroy the world and kill them all!

CLIP OF MEWTWO SAYING POKEMON WON'T BE SPARED AS THEY SUBJECTED THEMSELVES TO HUMANS

SUEDE

Well, I guess that puts you on the top of your own list, mr. big shot! You were pretty well subjected yourself! So after a battle with mewtwo's clones goes about as well as could be expected, Mewtwo does what should be called his crowning glory of hypocrisy, and CATCHES THE TRAINERS POKEMON IN HIS OWN POKEBALLS.

You know, in a weird way this actually makes sense.

SUEDE

What do you mean? Mewtwo is totally inconsistent and often hypocritical! It seems like all he wants to do is enact these massive schemes with no real end goal out of some twisted sense of purpose!

LINKARA

Suede... how old is Mewtwo?

SUEDE

What? Why does that matter? He's acting like a - oh. Oh wow. He's just a kid, isn't he?

LINKARA

Yeah. A kid born with a genetic abnormality, no peers, a crappy, abusive parent, and no sense of why he even exists. He's ACTING OUT. (emo teen voice) "Life sucks, humans are killing the world, the pokemon are part of the system, maaan, let's just restart all of society!" Except he actually has the immense power to accomplish it!

SUEDE

Wow this actually makes a whole lot of sense, especially when you compare the Japanese version. In the dub, mewtwo's all "Humanity is the worst and pokemon are no better for serving them, so I'm going to destroy the world and make my OWN master race!" Which is pretty angsty in itself but in Japan it's even more pretentious and evocative of a teenage mindset. There it's more "Humans suck, they shouldn't be ruling the world. But Pokemon suck too because they let themselves be used, so they shouldn't be dominant either. Ngh, I'm confused, let's just see who wins in a fight! I bet it's the ones I created!"

LINKARA

Yeah, and think about that too - Mewtwo didn't have any peers so he MADE HIS OWN. How messed up is that?

SUEDE

Yeah, what kind of psycho forms a group of peers based on himself?

Yeah, you can-

[PREGNANT PAUSE]

...You can almost see what's going through his head at every point in the movie if you look at it from the point of view of a traumatised, abused child with the ability to do whatever it wanted. He doesn't want to be alone, he wants a purpose, and he doesn't want the world to be so mean anymore. It's almost heartbreaking.

SUEDE

Speaking of heartbreaking though, does anyone else remember this scene where Meowth is caught by the machine and you see his entire life play across his face because he thinks he's going to die?

LINKARA

Good grief, Meowth going for the oscar there! Too bad they have to ruin it with this infamous screw up right afterwards.

ALL

SCYTHER!

SUEDE

You know, I'm aware that the commentary for this scene states that they actually did this on purpose to make team rocket seem dumb and the kids watching feel smart for getting it when they didn't, but honestly I'm pretty sure they just got it wriong. If you squint, it really does look a bit like Alakazam. The wings look like the ears, the scythes kind of look like spoons, you know?

LINKARA

I guess, but 4kids really doesn't come out of this looking good in either situation, though.

SUEDE

But whatever, now that Mewtwo has his clone army and Ash has rescued the originals, it's time for the epic confrontation!

LINKARA

I'm still wondering why Mewtwo doesn't just mindcrush everyone and take their pokemon...

SUEDE

Well, he has to make a point!

LINKARA

...and then wipe their memories?

...hmm.

LINKARA

Well, the big battle finally gets underway, but not before Mewtwo finally meets his match!

CLIP MONTAGE

LINKARA

Yeah, yeah, the obligatory "It's what's inside that counts" speech... It's so contrived...

SUEDE

Oh, is it?

LINKARA

What?

SUEDE

Well, in the Japanese version, Mew is actually saying something quite different. Some fan translations have him saying that all clones are inferior and must perish!

LINKARA

. . .

SUEDE

LUCKILY, this has now been widely disproven and instead he just says the the clones are inferior and would never beat the originals.

LINKARA

... So he's still racist, he's just not GENOCIDALLY racist.

SUEDE

Yeah, he's basically a Mllkshake Mew, such a shame... but enough about that! It's time for the tragic battlefield scene!

LINKARA

Begun, this clone war has... man I hate this scene

SUEDE

Why's that?

Well, it's stupid! How is this fighting somehow wrong when they were just doing it 5 minutes ago!?

SUEDE

Ah, maybe it's because their powers have been suppressed, so it's more physical and mean-spirited...

LINKARA

HITMONLEE IS A FRIGGIN' FIGHTING TYPE POKEMON!

SUEDE

Yeah, I get you. Besides, what message does that send? it's ok to fight, as long as you use external powers? Like what, GUNS? By the way, guess what?

LINKARA

(tired) Not in the Japanese?

SUEDE

Yep! In the original they just agree not to use their special abilities so it's a pure strength contest, so it makes even less sense that they frame it as bad. Oh, and it was Mew's idea. Superior non-cloned genes and all that...

LINKARA

Wow, Mew's kind of a jerk!

CLIP OF NURSE JOY SAYING 'NOT LIKE THIS'

LINKARA

(mock crying)
NOT LIKE THIS!

SUEDE

Despite all the mocking here, I do get it. This isn't a friendly competition, it's a fight for your life and the fate of your species. It's just that the way they present it is so broad that they make it look like all fighting is wrong, which is of course a laughable message in Pokemon. Although I do like this part where pikachu is beating himself up. It could be taken very symbolically...

SUBTITLES

Of course, talk is cheap, but ash is the only one to actually do something about it.

SUEDE

Oh no, he's dead etc. Though fun fact: Takeshi Shudo said that Ash didn't actually die here.

LINKARA

Oh, well that makes it WAY better! "Don't worry kids! Ash isn't dead! He's just stuck in a living shell of humanity, doomed to a prison of his own mind until the darkness takes him! If it's good enough for my little Pony, it's good enough for pokemon!"

SUEDE

CLEAR!

LINKARA

LIVE, DANG YOU, LIIIVE!!!

SUEDE

No, Pikachu, electric isn't effective against rock! Get squirtle!

CLIP OF TEARS BRINGING ASH BACK TO LIFE

LINKARA

... That was stupid.

SUEDE

Yep. Plkachu crying over ash is heartbreaking and iconic for a reason, but everything after that... oof. Arceus ex Machina at it's finest.

LINKARA

...and if what you said was true, suede, it came even more out of left field in Japanese where there wasn't even a vague fairy tale to explain it.

SUEDE

I know, and it could have been so much better...

LINKARA

How do you mean?

Well, I'm pretty sure Mewtwo's near-limitless power could have healed Ash. I mean they could have kept the crying in, but how about making it so that seeing all the pokemon cry on behalf of this mere human finally convinces mewtwo of the error of his ways, and MEWTWO restores ash back to life. It would have made sense and tied everything up with no confusion!

LINKARA

Well regardless of how stupidly it happens, Mewtwo does see the error of his ways and takes Mew and the other clones away to where they can live in peace. And of course, Mewtwo wipes everyone's mind so that they learn NOTHING.

SUEDE

CUE AWKARDLY CRAMMED IN POP SONGS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PLOT!

SUEDE

Well okay, "if only tears could bring you back", that's kind of clever, but anyway! So that's Pokemon: the first movie! Was it good?

ALL

NO!!!

SUEDE

Did we enjoy watching it?

ALL

YES!!!

LINKARA

Although the morals are hopelessly confused, Mewtwo can be frustrating in the wrong ways and there are plot holes and contrivances the size of china...

SUEDE

Not to mention Pikachu's a wuss for fighting everyone except himself...

LINKARA

For a pokemon fan, it's still cool enough to keep you going and the nostalgic value alone is worth the price of admission.

The fights are epic, the designs are cool, the animation is just gorgeous and when you consider Mewtwo's situation it can actully be emotionally involving and even heartbreaking at points. Not to mention it can also be darn funny for it's so-bad-it's-good qualities!

So I'd say overall we agree that if you're not a pokemon fan, well, unfortunately there's not much here for you unless you have a group of friends around to riff on it. But if you are a pokemon fan it's definitely worth a watch, especially with other pokefans.

ADMIN

Excellent! You have certainly proved your worth in the first trial. You may now prepare for the next trial. Return here when you are ready for Pokemon 2000!

SUEDE

Wait, I haven't done Thoughts or Trivia yet! It's kind of my thing!

ADMIN

What are you talking about? Your thoughts on the film were pretty clear throughout, same with any interesting facts! Why would you need any more time?

SUEDE

...True, It actually reminds me of how I used to do reviews, weird... well, I need to at least give it a rating! I give it an Ultra Ball. Flawed but just so pretty and effortlessly memorable.

LINKARA

And I say that this movie doesn't suck. Well I'm down for reviewing a couple more, but what's stopping us from just watching the good movies and then just quitting?

SUEDE

Yeah! we're not just 4kids' lap dogs! We're in control of our own destiny!

ADMIN

Well, do you want to beta test this MMO or not?

ALL

... CRAP!!!!