In the year 1997, during a single week in December, chaos ensued in Japan. The cause of the pandemonium should be well known to many; it was the week that the infamous Pokémon anime episode "Electric Soldier Porygon", also known as EP038, aired on television, and many Japanese children gained severe ailments, such as seizures, migraines, eye irritation, and vomiting, due to the six or so seconds of rapid red and blue flashing on the screen after Pikachu's thunder attack hit two Rocket bombs.

However, it is said that there was an alternate reason for the chaos, but it was only within a small group of people, namely parents and therapists. Though this was not made as public as the seizures were, a few select children claimed that they did not remember, nor did they even see the red and blue seizure scene, nor did they know anything about the episode plot of the scene. They all claimed to have seen something else on their television screens, something blurry and hazy. This was odd, considering that most of the children who saw this were among the seven hundred children who had ailments.

These children were placed into private therapy by their parents, but none of them could give true information on what was seen, only thoughts like "It was scary to me" or "I didn't know what was happening". One child only said "I'm alone" repeatedly for some reason. A female therapist finally managed to converse with a ten-year-old boy on the matter, whom the mother claims was having a severe vomiting attack in the living room when she went downstairs. Only he could give sensible details on what he had witnessed. He explained everything he could to the therapist, who then made it known only to the families of the children. The following is translated and quoted as accurately as possible from the ten-year-old.

[The boy starts speaking.]

"The actual episode was only fifteen minutes long, not like normal Pokémon episodes. The other fifteen minutes were just a black screen. I'm really sorry, I can't say what everything means. I can only say what I saw. So please don't ask me anything too much, okay?"

[The therapist answers "Yes".]

"When the episode started, the opening was normal. I thought that I would be watching a normal Pokémon episode..."

[Pauses for a second and takes a deep breath.]

"But it wasn't. The first thing I saw was just a blank black screen; I was annoyed at first. My mommy's TV is always messing up. But soon, something came up, even though it was kind of blurry. My mommy wasn't in the room right then; she was in her room sleeping, so she couldn't explain anything to me. On the screen, I saw Ash, the hero of the show, but he was all by himself in the middle of a bunch of green stuff. I guess those were leaves; maybe he was in a forest? I didn't see Brock or Misty, or even Pikachu, just Ash. He was just sitting there like a statue with his head down, like this."

[The boy gestures to show how Ash was sitting; he crosses his legs with his hands resting on his knees, and drops his head down. He returns to his normal state and talks again.]

"I couldn't see his face very well, but I think he was sad about something. For about ten seconds, it was like this. I was confused; did the TV mess up bad this time? I was about to get up and check, then something else came up. From the right side of the screen, I saw Pikachu coming. He sat next to Ash, who petted him on the head slowly. The way he petted Pikachu on the head, he seemed very sad about

something. Pikachu was sad too; I know because its ears were dropped downward. While all this was happening, there was a real quiet hissing noise in the background."

[The child is then asked if he was feeling anxiety or fear during this time.]

"Not really. I was just confused, that's all. Even though my stomach did start to feel funny, I didn't pay any attention to that. The screen cut to black again after he pet Pikachu's head, and it did it for two minutes this time. When the screen came back on, it showed tall buildings everywhere, I think. Nothing happened for a while, but then two people walked past... It looked like Misty and Brock. Ash wasn't there with them; it was just those two. I could only see Brock's mouth, not his eyes. His mouth was in a straight line; he had no pupils in them. They went back and forth; their mouths kept changing from frowns to blank to smiles. They walked faster every time they passed. The screen went black again."

[The child is asked if I was scared by then.]

"Only a little, but that's just because I never saw anything like that in Pokémon before."

[The child gestures by holding his head.]

"I was also a little nervous because my head was feeling all weird, but I still didn't think the show did anything. I thought that it was just how blurry it was. It showed the forest again, but no Ash or Pikachu this time. The hiss was gone, but it sounded like someone was saying something; it sounded like they were saying, "I'm alone" over and over again, like, "I'm alone, I'm alone, I'm alone, I'm alone", like that. It sounded like Ash talking, but there was some scary voice behind it. I was guessing that Brock and Misty had left Ash and Pikachu alone for some reason. The screen started flashing slowly, while Ash, or whoever, kept saying "I'm alone". My head was getting worse. That's when I started getting scared. The flashing went faster, and it was hurting my eyes. Then, the voice said, "all alone," really loud, and the screen went black one more time and stayed that way.

[The child is asked about what happened afterward.]

"My stomach and my head were both hurting so much."

[The child shivers and small tears form in his eyes.]

"I was so scared. I tried to call mommy, but I kept coughing; I think it was the flashing. I started to throw up, and I couldn't stop. Then mommy came downstairs and called the doctor, and when I told her what I saw, she took me here."

[The child stops; that is all he has to say.]

This was not made public by the parents or the therapists; the entire incident was unknown throughout the country. It is only now that it has been stated. And because the episode was permanently banned worldwide, it is impossible to witness again.

Written by cherthesketcher