

# How Albinos shrank my iMac

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December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001

Dear Mr Mayes,

If you think that your company is providing quality and service to its customers, please sit down and take a few minutes to read my letter. If you would like to continue thinking everything is fine simply crumble it up and discard it, I wouldn't be at all surprised as it would fit the style of the rest of your staff that I had the misfortune of having to deal with in the past 6 weeks.

On Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> of October my sage iMac DV 450+ broke down, no sign of life. Fortunately it was still under warranty, so nothing more than selecting an Apple Service Provider of my liking and having it repaired. Aiming to avoid a well-known dealer with many shops on Tottenham Court Road I chose your company, Albion Computers, who with their small shop right in the West End inspired confidence. On Monday I rang to ask whether it would be OK to submit the iMac for repair, a reasonable thing to do especially since purchased the computer elsewhere. The friendly gentlemen quite expected replied: "no problem, simply bring the paperwork" and also provided me with your opening hours.

The next day, Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, I arranged for a taxi to take me to Mortimer Street. But the shop assistant refused to accept it, arguing a) I hadn't purchased it at Albion and b) they were very busy with repairs already. I was very irritated and duly responded that I had telephoned the day for that very reason, and to avoid such a situation. I was then asked who I had spoken to on the day before, not knowing that this would be a question that I would hear many times in the course of my contact with your company. I responded that I don't see the need to ask for the names of employees giving out the simplest of information to customers. The iMac was still not accepted. After some more arguing I was suddenly given a repair form<sup>1</sup> with no further comment but "fill that out". On my way out I was told to take keyboard and mouse with me, "because they would just catch dust in our workshop and you will end up with another person's keyboard and mouse". This odd statement was an omen of the things to come...

Over four weeks passed by and after several puzzling telephone calls to Albion ("we're changing the logic board", "we're waiting for the logic board", "we're testing the logic board", "we had to order another logic board" etc.) I was pleased to hear that the iMac was ready for collection, even though it was double the time that I was quoted when I submitted it. I spent the day at MacExpo on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November and, after seeing all the exciting things there, was all pumped up to get my hands back onto my iMac to use OS X. I collected it later that day<sup>2</sup>, but upon my arrival at home I realised that Albion had completely messed up my iMac! What do I mean by that?

- The power switch on the front was so hard to operate that the machine slid on the desk when trying to turn the machine on.
- The amount of installed RAM had decreased from 192MB to only 128MB.
- The size of the hard drive was now 7GB instead of the previous 20GB (and contained another person's information!)

- Above all the iMac was running at 400Mhz instead of the original 450Mhz.

All that was still my original iMac was the outer shell, inside it was a completely different computer! This is particularly serious because with a repair like this the engineer is never meant to touch components like the hard disk, which could raise the suspicion that someone in your company is deliberately “stealth-downgrading” customer’s computers to use the parts for other purposes, hoping that the original owner would not notice the different specification.

I immediately complained to Albion, but as it was approaching 5:30pm not much could be done. The following Monday I again telephoned Albion, this time speaking to Mr Paul Whitton who said that a Mr Brian Bishop, who allegedly deals with collection of machines for repair, would call me back to arrange the pickup. Needless to say, he didn't... until I received a phone call on my mobile. Someone was at my home trying to collect the iMac, but as nothing was arranged of course I nobody was home! A courier then finally came on Wednesday, who looked less than official (no uniform, no forms, no protective packaging etc.). Albion was back.

During another week where the iMac was back at Albion I rang twice. Once I spoke to a lady by the name of Tammy who was apologetic at best, but with an undertone as if to question why I was ringing four working days after the collection. The second time I rang I as put right through to Keith Beeby, apparently Technical Director. It appeared that my case must have at least got some attention from higher management.

Today the iMac returned<sup>3</sup>, with the original specs except a total 640MB RAM. But after turning the computer on I saw that the image displayed on the monitor is not clear. There is some sort of interference or whatever causing the image to blur and to jitter, also the image is distorted in pincushion shape and none of this can be corrected by the Mac OS Monitor control panel settings. The computer is still unusable and obviously nobody in your company has taken the trouble to inspect the finished repair. Worse still is that while the iMac now contains a hard drive of the correct 20GB capacity, this is still not my original hard disk. My data is missing, and the information is now potentially accessed by others. The hard disk contained personal information and work documents, as well as digital video footage from my graduation ceremony that I was editing into a nice film to give my parents for Christmas. It contains also financial information including account numbers and access codes for my bank and stock broker.

While your memory top is noted as a gesture, it is far too little to compensate for the trouble I had and still have.

The computer was sent to GETech Computers in Ipswich, where it was originally purchased. They diagnosed a faulty hard disk and video unit, which had to be replaced out of warranty costing around £500.

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<sup>1</sup> Reference 30Oct01

<sup>2</sup> Job number 36270

<sup>3</sup> Job number 37057