

Scene-by-Scene Summary of the “1984” Macintosh Commercial

1. Endless line of workers marching in a long, circular tunnel. The sound of marching feet and the words “information purification” are audible in the background.
2. Cut to a woman running, carrying a long-handled hammer. Her entrance is heralded by two electronic notes, a high D, followed by another one octave lower.
3. Close-up of the workers’ faces as they march by. Their heads are shaved, and a few are wearing gas masks.
4. A brief shot of guards dressed in black riot gear with rifles in their hands.
5. Shots of the workers marching in the tunnel past television monitors, which are attached to the walls.
6. The camera cuts to a close-up of their feet, marching in lockstep.
7. After a quick glimpse of the woman running, a long shot shows a huge hall filled with workers already seated as others march in. An enormous computer screen on the wall is filled by the talking head of an elderly man in glasses. As he speaks, his words appear in white typeface on the screen below his mouth.
8. The woman runs down a corridor chased by a cadre of guards in riot gear.
9. The camera cuts to a panning shot of the seated workers staring at the computer screen.
10. The camera cuts to a full shot of the computer screen which shows the tyrant’s face filling most of the frame.
11. Cut to the runner stopping and beginning to spin with the great hammer. The guards can be seen approaching in the background. The runner makes her final windup and releases the hammer with a loud cry.
12. In slow motion, the hammer flies through the air towards the screen as the man’s image says “We Shall Prevail.”
13. The hammer explodes the screen in a blinding flash. A synthetic chorus of wordless cries is heard, behind which is a sound like rushing wind.
14. The camera pans over the workers, flooded with white light, their mouths opened in awe, hands gripping the benches beneath them, uniforms blown back against them.
15. Black typeface text appears on screen, read by a voice-over: “On January 24th, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you will see why 1984 won’t be like “1984.”
16. The text is followed by the rainbow-striped Apple logo.