How to reset the password on a Mac

If you forgot the password to your Mac or you...

Written By: Elijah

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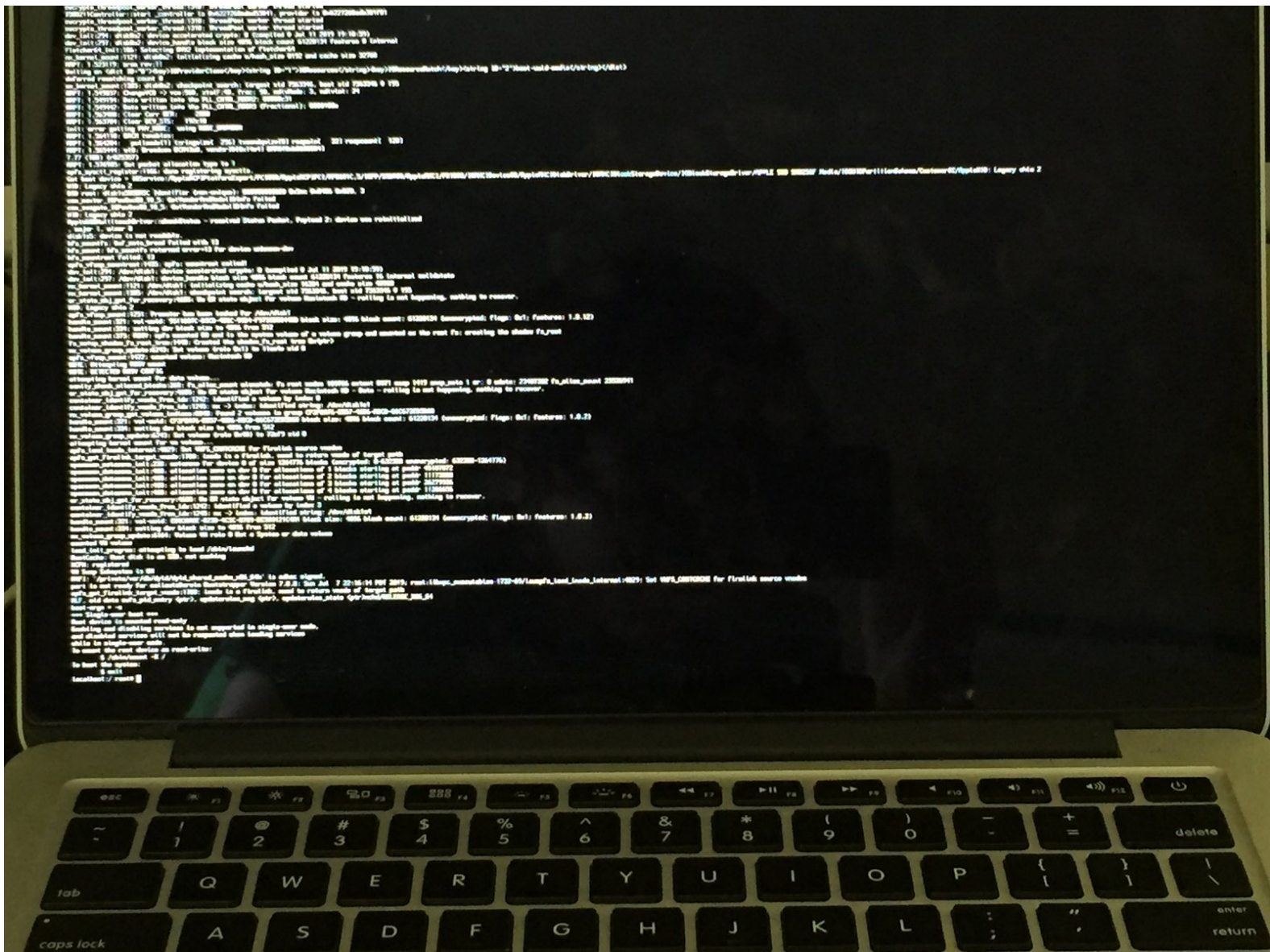
INTRODUCTION

If you forgot the password to your Mac or you need to create a new administrator account but you do not know the password of any administrator user account on the computer, or you just want to see the Setup Assistant again, this guide will show you how to trick your Mac into thinking it has never been set up before without wiping any of your data.

If you have a Firmware Password enabled on your Mac, you must disable it otherwise this guide will not work!

This will NOT work if FileVault is enabled!

The instructions in this guide WILL NOT work on a Mac with an Apple T2 Chip or an Apple Silicon processor (such as the M1).

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## Step 1 — Start your Mac in Single-User Mode
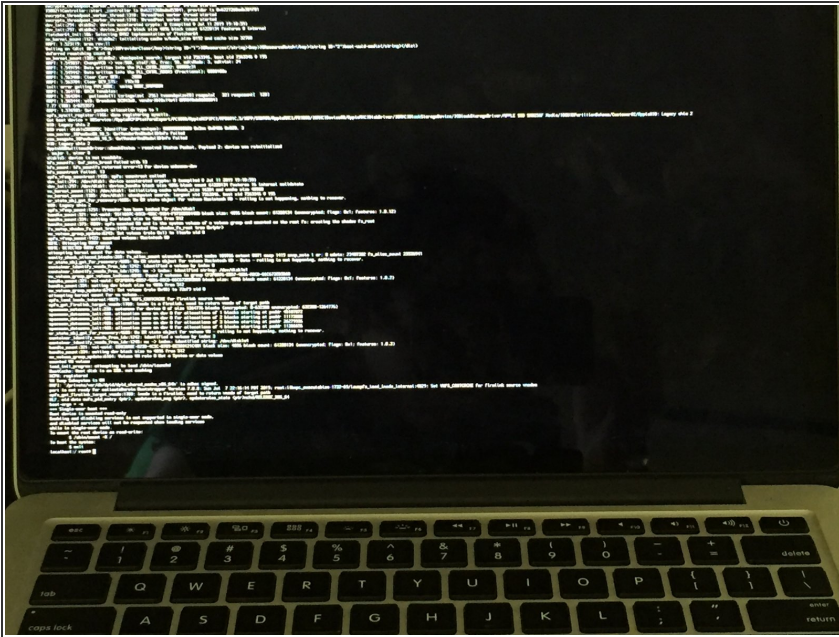
- Shut down your Mac

- Press and hold the Command + S keys while pressing the power button to turn on your Mac.

- It is best to start holding the keys before the screen turns on or you hear the startup chime. If you see the Apple logo, then you need to shut down and to do this step over. Except on a Mac with a T2 chip, the Apple logo will always appear the second the computer turns on.

- You should see a black screen with white text.

Step 2 — Mount root device as read-write
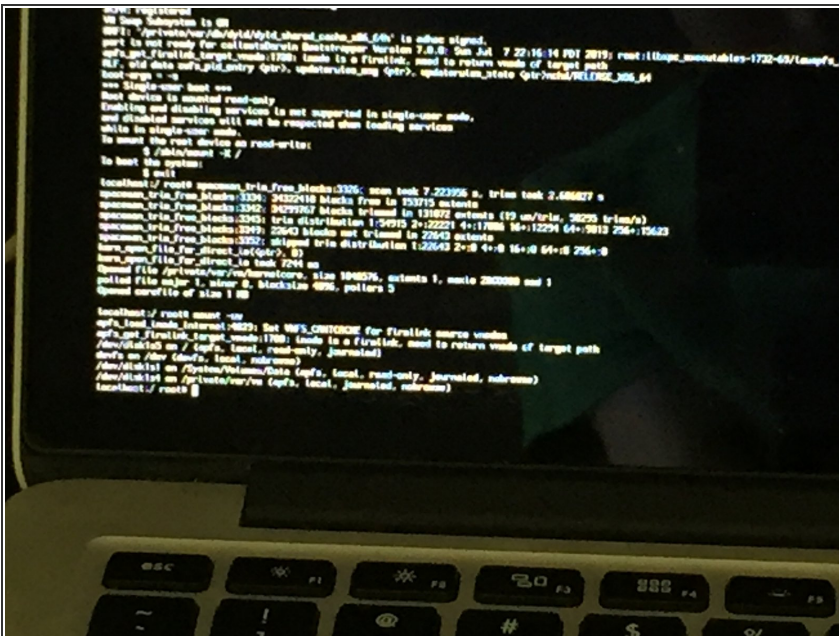
- When the text stops, you should see a line that says "localhost:/ root#" at the bottom. If you don't see "localhost:/ root#", press enter.

- Type in "mount -uw"

- Some more text will appear on the screen. when you see the "localhost:/ root#"at the bottom, continue to the next step

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Step 3 — Remove the .AppleSetupDone file
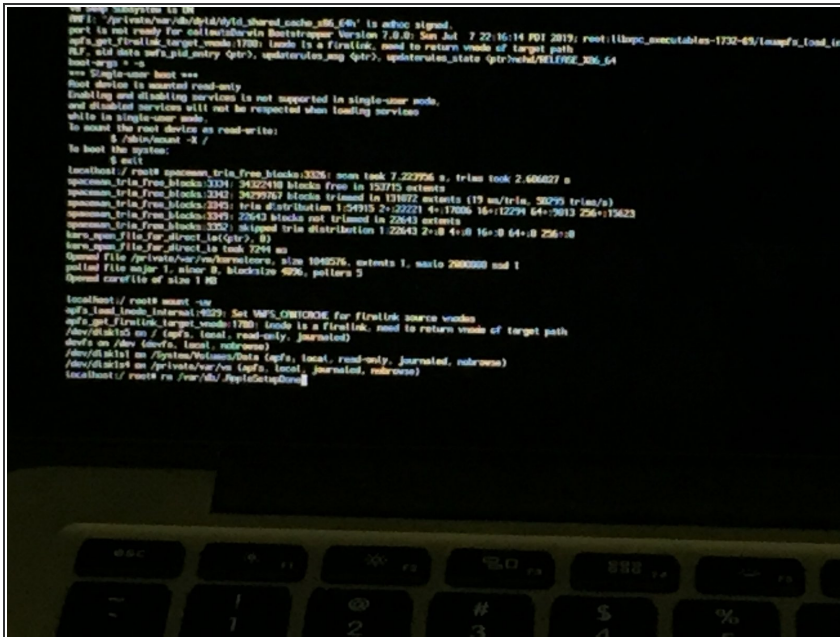
- Type in, "rm /var/db/.AppleSetupDone" and press enter/ return

⚠ This is case sensitive!

⚠ There must be a space in between the rm and / otherwise you will get a "no such file or directory" error

⚠ This method WILL NOT work if FileVault is enabled on the startup disk.

Step 4 — Override root/wheel for /var/db/.AppleSetupDone
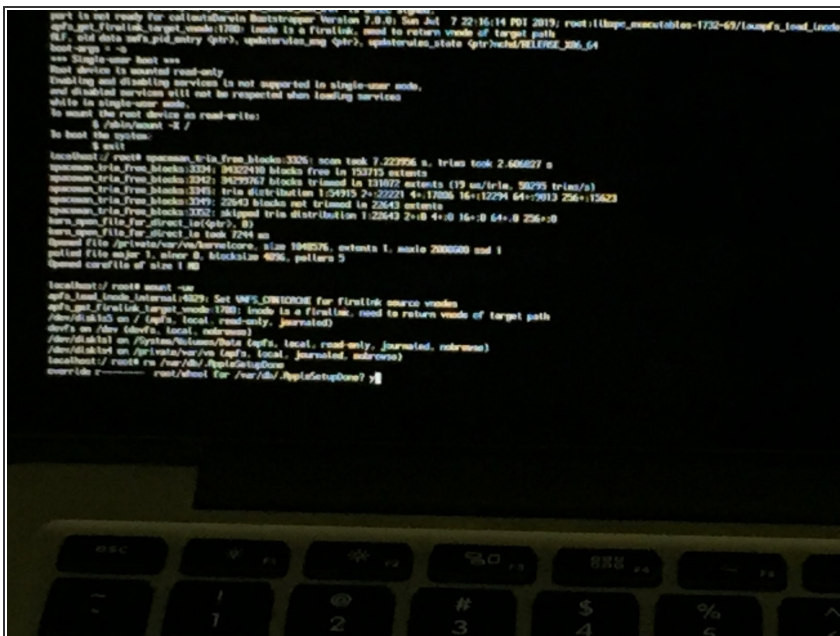

- If you get a message that says "override r------- root/wheel for /var/db/.AppleSetupDone?", type in "y" and press enter/return.

- You may get an error that says, "rm: /var/db/.AppleSetupDone: read-only file system.

- If you don't see a message that says "override r------- root/wheel for /var/db/.AppleSetupDone?", then continue to the next step.

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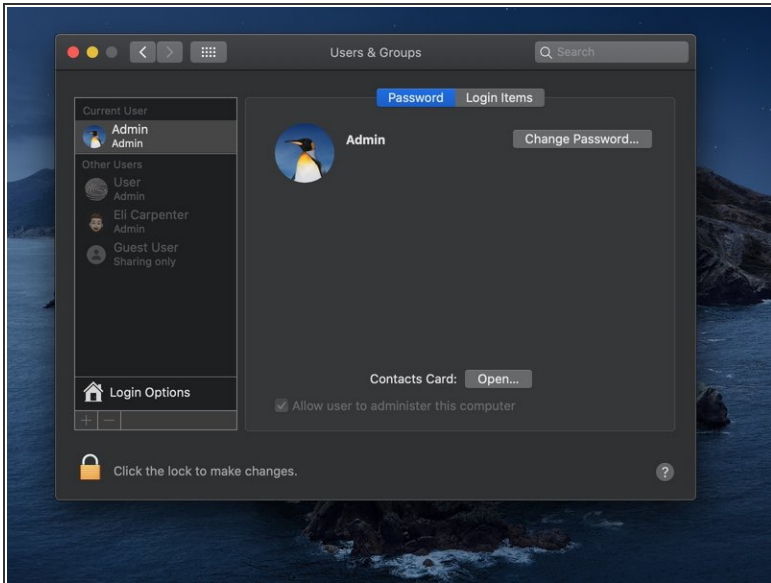www.iFixit.com

Step 5 — Reboot computer
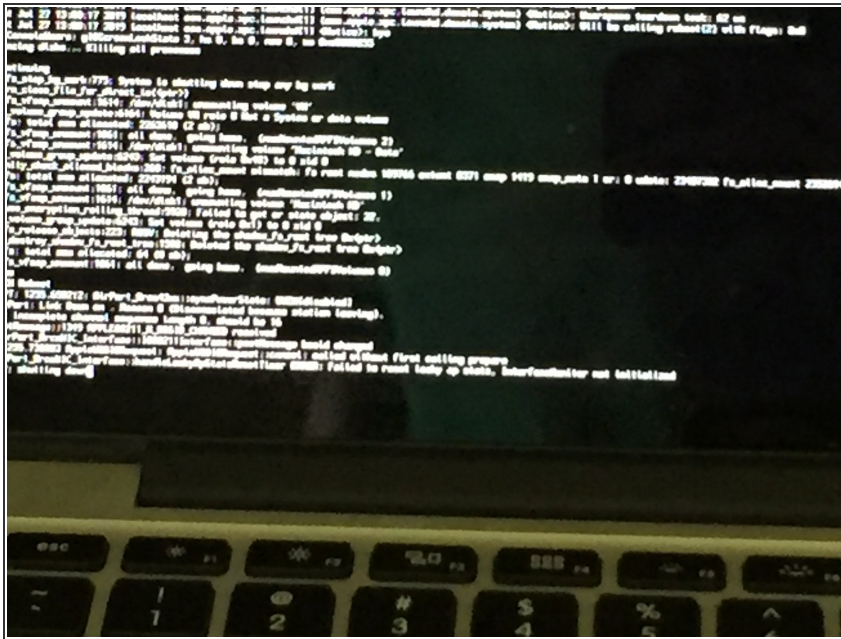
- Type in "reboot" and press enter/return.

Step 6 — Setup your Mac
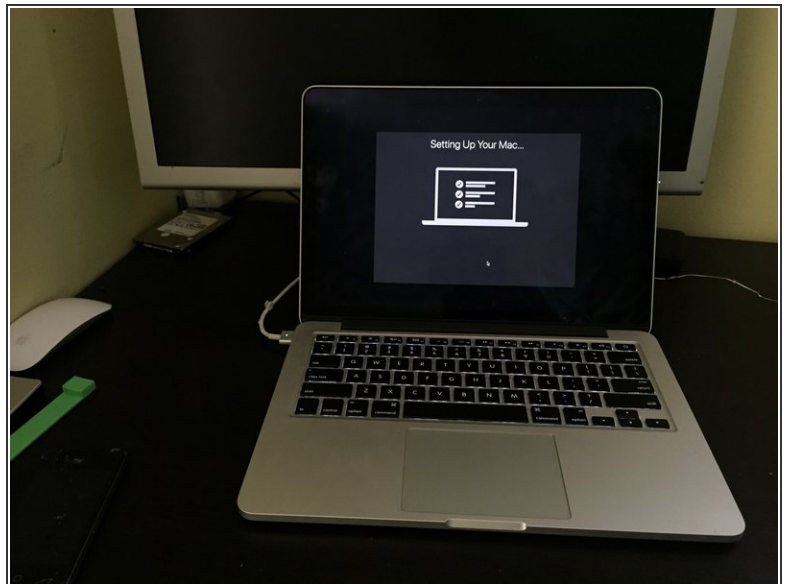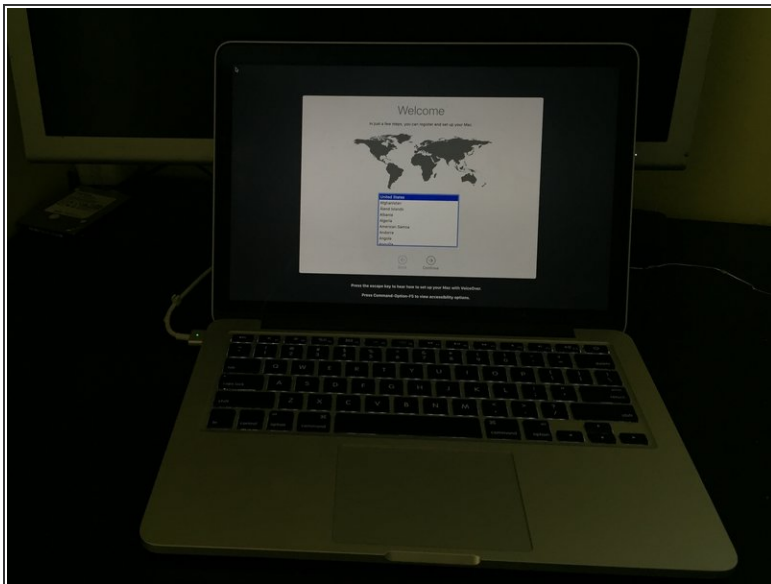
- Your Mac will now reboot to the Setup Assistant. you can now set up your Mac.

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Step 7 — Congratulations

- You have now created a new user account with full administrator access. And all the user accounts created prior to this remain untouched

You have now successfully created a new administrator account on your Mac.