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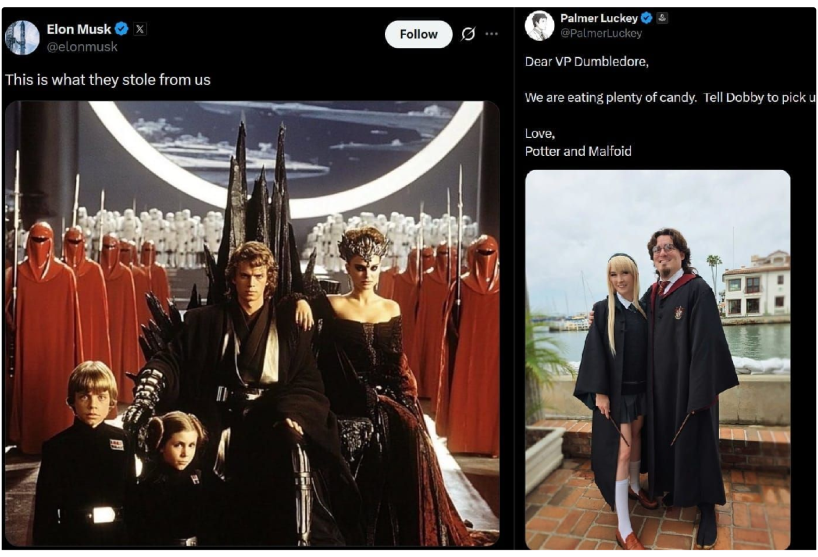
NEWS

Republicans Learn X Is the Echo Chamber

MATTHEW GAULT · NOV 5, 2026 AT 9:52 AM

It turns out you can’t post Malfoids and Anakin when diesel is $6 a gallon and expect America to vote for you.



Elon Musk @elonmusk

This is what they stole from us

Palmer Luckey @PalmerLuckey

Dear VP Dumbledore,

We are eating plenty of candy. Tell Dobby to pick u

Love,
Potter and Malfoid

IMAGES VIA X. 404 MEDIA EDIT.

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There's a BlazeTV YouTube video whose thumbnail shows the presenter with his arms around Anakin Skywalker and a gender-flipped Draco Malfoy called Malfoid. “Total Chud Victory?” It says. The video’s title: “Young Right is Reclaiming Culture and Liberals Are Mad About it.”

BlazeTV posted the video on November 2, the day before Democrats swept the midterms and started a political realignment in America so overwhelming that Republicans lost control of all the most powerful state positions in Texas.

The video is a profound misreading of the political and cultural moment. It reminded me of stories of the Bolsheviks seizing the Winter Palace to discover tarot card playing courtiers who had no idea a revolution was happening in the streets.

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The American version was watching defense contractor Palmer Lucky dress up like Harry Potter on Halloween while standing next to his Malfoid wife. And it was Elon Musk — who spent roughly half a billion on the election only to see his chosen candidates fail — posting an AI generated picture of Anakin Skywalker sitting at the head of a happy fascist Star Wars family two days before the midterms.

> This is what they stole from us
> pic.twitter.com/q1GnpjF394
> — Elon Musk (@elonmusk) November 1, 2026

The online right has dominated American culture for a decade, or at least has dominated political narratives picked up by the mainstream media. Its memes and conspiracies drove news cycles. At first, the right’s memes filtered from random people on obscure Discord channels to Reddit’s r/the_donald or 4chan to Trump’s Twitter feed. More recently they’ve come from AI slop farms, from Musk, or from the administration itself. Powered by a well-funded media and podcast ecosystem, Fox News (and a propensity for shamelessness) its comedians, podcasters, and pundits became powerful celebrities and influencers, at least within Elon Musk’s X.

This insular, often inscrutable world has given us Ben Shapiro, Nick Fuentes, Gamergate influencers, the streamer Asmongold, and a revolving door of characters who have shuffled interchangeably between Twitterverse celebritydom and actual government; Kash Patel, DataRepublican, Laura Loomer, Pete Hegseth, RFK Jr., Dan Bongino, the list goes on.

It has been said many times that "Twitter is not real life," and that posting too much anywhere will rot your brain. Never has that been more apparent than now: Much of Trumpworld spent the week before an election in which they would get utterly trounced using AI to generate barely legible Anakin and Malfoid memes for an inconsequential ingroup on the social media platform run by the biggest loser on the planet.

"It certainly seems like it has had its high water mark and that reality has FINALLY caught up with the Republican Party," Michael Senters, a research assistant at the Anti-Defamation League who studies online and gaming culture, told 404 Media.

In 2016, 4chan posters talked about "meme magic" — the pseudo-ironic belief that pictures on the internet could manifest great change in reality. According to legend, Trump strategist Steve Bannon was running a *World of Warcraft* gold farm when he realized the angry gamers could be harnessed into a powerful reactionary political force. Bannon and others would successfully parlay Gamergate into an endless culture war that's dominated online life in the Trump era.

During the midterm livestream of Bannon's War Room podcast, his guest read exit polls that suggested the right-wing had lost young men — a group long thought to be its strongest soldiers. The split between the parties was even, the guest explained. "That can't be right," Bannon whispered, signalling he'd lost touch with the constituency he'd harnessed on behalf of Trump ten years ago. As the election results began coming in, right-wing podcasters, livestreamers, and newscasters across the internet went through at least a few of the stages of grief. First they struggled to understand what was happening, suggesting the votes must be wrong. Eventually, many of them ragequit.

"Okay, I'm going to be honest. I'm absolutely rage quitting. I'm so frustrated. I am so unbelievably frustrated. I'm so mad. I think Trump didn't do 50 different things he should have done. I think he should have gone a thousand times harder. I think that he wasted his time selling trinkets and nonsense," Asmongold said as the returns came in. He lives in Texas where Democrats swept in a shock victory.

"I wish that there were more people who thought like me that weren't sorry about it. But you know what? There's not. So it's just me. And that's fine. It's fine. It's OK," he said, his voice catching in his throat.

> Asmongold (@Asmongold) realizing in real time that he's a total fucking moron who got duped by the most cartoonishly obvious con-man of all time and ragequitting his election night coverage pic.twitter.com/XgtnqNjAaf
>
> — kilo (@kilotonics) November 4, 2026

Many right-wing personalities went into Tuesday somehow expecting to win despite a disastrous war, a disastrous economy, disastrous polls, and a doddering president whose closing argument seemed to be more about his ballrooms, golf courses, and the Reflecting Pool than anything else. Since Trump was re-elected, these same people have called everyone else out of touch, convinced by their X algorithm and prediction markets that no blue wave would materialize. The media has similarly spent many thousands of words suggesting that Bluesky is an out-of-touch leftist echo chamber while mostly failing to suggest anything of the sort about the AI-pilled Silicon Valley executives, bots, and racists shitposting on X. Tuesday's election wipeout highlights how detached from reality the Malfoid/Anakin-shipping, X-brained billionaires and their acolytes have actually become.

"Blueskywave. Those of us on here, across the board, were out of touch. I see no other conclusion," Joe Weisenthal of Bloomberg's Odd Lots podcast (who is a serious, good journalist), said in a post on X after the election amidst a sea of Anakins tonguing Malfoids.

> "I see through the lies of the Democrats."
>
> VOTE STRAIGHT TICKET REPUBLICAN pic.twitter.com/i1HjdHdAn7
>
> — Utah College Republicans (@UtahCollegeReps) November 1, 2026

The meme game and general demeanor of Trump and his followers has grown wildly tiresome in his thus far-disastrous second term. Under the guidance of White House Communications Director Steven Cheung, official government accounts have posted racist Halo memes, used AI to put a studio Ghibli face on anti-immigrant propaganda, and fully embraced Malfoid and Darth Vader as cultural heroes. The base on X loved this stuff. No one else did.

As our friend Gita Jackson over at Aftermath wisely put it immediately before the election, "The idea that they can meme magic their way into a red sweep by posting about Anakin Skywalker a lot is pure desperation [...] Their values have been rejected by popular culture at large, and they are now resigned to exist in the margins."

Senters said the midterms showed the hard limits of memes as a political tool. "The power that memes have has always been, in my opinion, the power to help define linguistic and community lines in the amorphous space of the Internet. You create a community when you 'get the joke' behind a meme but memes generally don't persuade," he said. "I'll be curious to see if the government accounts will continue to post these far-right cultural memes in the wake of the defeat or if they'll change their tune at all. Like do they double down on the meme posting to try to rally their base? Because it very clearly had ZERO appeal to anyone outside their base."

Yet the right-wing has spent the last ten years acting as if their memes had moved the country politically. “They deluded themselves into believing that memes carry persuasive power and that their bubble on X represented material reality in a meaningful way when that was no way close to the truth,” he said. “They saw how many ‘numbers’ the Malfoid and Anakin memes did on X and convinced themselves that this was a real cultural awakening moment and that the volk were on their side.”

> It cannot be overstated how culturally significant Anakin poasting is. I dont think you could engineer a better anti-progressive memetic virus in lab if you tried.
> — Max (@minordissent) October 31, 2026

Alyssa Mercante, an internet culture reporter who is writing a book about politics and video games called *Rage Game*, agreed. “I think what it's really showing is that when you start to get a little bit too deep in the weeds of this hyper online culture war stuff, it cannot escape the internet,” Mercante told 404 Media. “It is not working anymore. The material reality of America is just not good enough.” Gas prices are up. Everything is more expensive. And ICE has killed Americans in the streets.

“This conspiratorial mindset is wrecker mentality. It is just destructive for the sake of destruction. There is no goal beyond pulling away any sort of legitimacy from the media or from democracy,” Mercante said. “When you get so deep in the weeds of this anti-establishment conspiratorial thought process, you just can't make anything or do anything of value. You're just upending tables and pointing at them and laughing.”

Democrats crushed Republicans who leaned into the online culture war during the midterms. Bo French — an overt racist who ran for railroad commissioner in Texas — sent text messages to voters that depicted himself as Master Chief from Halo. His opponent beat him by more than a million votes.

In Nevada, *Halo* composer Martin O'Donnell ran as a Republican for a House seat and lost to incumbent Susie Lee. O'Donnell announced his campaign on Discord and leaned hard into an extremely online gamer identity. “He's like, ‘I wrote the *Halo* music and I'm voting for Trump and you should too.’ He did a *Halo* LAN party campaign fundraiser. The imagery was him as Master Chief,” Mercante said. “This dude is like: ‘My personality is gamers, gamers are not woke and they're resisting this [...] and Trump is the person that is going to help us resist,’ and he's polling like absolute dog water.”

It's been 12 years since Gamergate set the tempo for online culture wars and a decade since Trump won in 2016. In 2026, Star Wars, Halo, Harry Potter feel dated in a way they didn't back then. “What 22-year-old kid is going to be like ‘they took *Halo* from me.’ They don't know *Halo* to have it taken away from them,” Mercante said.

She stressed that so much right wing online culture is about distraction — she likened it to jingling keys to capture the attention of a baby. “If the economy is the number one issue for both Democrats and Republicans going into the midterms, no amount of Malfoid scissoring Anakin Skywalker is going to change that need for people to be in a better financial position,” Mercante said. “The tech oligarchs pushed this stuff straight into our eyes for two years straight unfettered [...] And I wake up and gas is this expensive? I don't care if you take a Taylor Swift song and make JD Vance walk out to it.”

“[They] really thought that this would just last forever,” she added. “When you build up a meme presidency, eventually the cards just collapse underneath you, and there's just nothing to show for it.”

Though this midterm signals a move away from Gamergate-style culture war politics, both Senters and Mercante cautioned that this type of rhetoric is still dangerous, and can still be destructive. “They're still very good at doing propaganda on the internet — they wrote the book in many cases,” Mercante said.

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