ANDREW MARR:  
So let’s take that dilemma to Lord Falconer who’s much less of Lord Falconer than we used to see and very, very slim these days.

LORD FALCONER:  
Thank you.

ANDREW MARR:  
You worked for a long time obviously in the inner core of the Labour machine and, presumably, there were days when bad polls as well as good polls came in and you thought oh lordy, lordy, lordy, what are we going to do?

LORD FALCONER:  
Indeed and you know this is not a good day in the Sunday papers for the Leader of the Labour Party, but he is focused and you’ve got to remain focused on the key thing. And the key thing – and it came out from what Deborah and Peter were saying – is Labour remain ahead in the opinion polls. This is an election that they can win.
ANDREW MARR:
Yeah.

LORD FALCONER:
And another thing about the Sunday papers, just to make this point, it’s filled with polls. It’s not filled with anything other than anonymous people saying Ed should go, and my feeling about the Labour Party is they’re very keen for Ed to stay and lead us to victory.

ANDREW MARR:
But there are very few people jumping out this weekend as well saying Ed must stay. I mean people are keeping their heads down. Is that a good strategy? Do you think the leader should be out there making the case for himself? They seem to be just hoping the story will die away of its own accord.

LORD FALCONER:
Ed would be the first to say that he should be out there making the case himself, and he will be out there - not just in London but right out in the country - making the case for Labour. But what we are facing – and Peter and Deborah both said this – we’re facing a very anti-politics, anti-politician time. Every single party, if you believe the newspapers, goes through a leadership crisis once every three weeks.

ANDREW MARR:
Sure.

LORD FALCONER:
We shouldn’t be focusing too much on that, but focusing on what the choices are.

ANDREW MARR:
But the Observer, which is a generally Labour supporting paper, talks about twenty ministers involved in wanting Ed to go and so forth. Are you saying that those people are simply making it up, that there is nothing going on behind the closed doors of Westminster and it’s being reported?
LORD FALCONER:
I think any sensible politician would be anxious about the fact that the landscape out there is changing radically. You said in your introduction at the beginning of the programme that the Observer article had three unnamed MPs. They were the only people and they were the people who were saying well there’s this number or that number. Don’t pay too much attention to the detail of stories when there’s no names given and they’re reporting what other people say. I think the critical thing to do is to focus on what’s likely to happen at the General Election and what would happen if Labour won and what would happen if the Tories won.

ANDREW MARR:
You don’t think that Ed Miliband is in some kind of death spiral where terrible opinion polls, very hostile papers and increasingly jittery MPs worrying about their own backsides and their own seats combine to kind of make it impossible for him to cut through?

LORD FALCONER:
No, he is most certainly not in any sort of death spiral. The position is that he’s facing forward. I mean I’ve seen quite a lot of him over the last few weeks. He’s strong and focused and aware that one’s going to go through periods like this, but he’s very, very aware of the responsibility on his shoulders to win the election because if we lose it’s out of Europe, what happens to the union, what happens to the economy, what happens to our commitment to human rights, what’s our attitude to immigration? Those are the sorts of issues that really, really matter.

ANDREW MARR:
You heard Peter Kellner saying there that Harold Wilson went out and made some great, big, heavyweight speeches one after another, thumping his way through that period before the election. Do you think you’d like to see Ed Miliband try to do the same kind of thing?

LORD FALCONER:
I am very keen to see Ed Miliband (and I’m sure he takes the same view) out there,
putting the choice that I’ve just put. And I think … I mean I was interested in Peter’s story about Harold Wilson. I don’t think the problem for Labour at the moment is a lack of policies. We’re clear what we’re going to do on the health service, on devolution to the cities.

**ANDREW MARR:**
So what is the problem?

**LORD FALCONER:**
Well I think this is a problem where people are very, very untrusting of politicians. What’s happening – and I think Peter and Deborah’s work confirms this – is people are looking for alternatives. And, interestingly enough, Ed of all the three leaders of the political parties has been the one who’s been the furthest in advance of the view that we need to talk to the electorate in a totally different way. Their concerns are no longer the sorts of concerns that people had when it was a two-party dominated system.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Traditionally successful political leaders cheer people up, cheer the country up and give them a real sense of Britain is going to be different under me in this way or that way and it’s going to be better for you. Is that perhaps what Labour has failed to quite convey at this moment?

**LORD FALCONER:**
I agree with you about politicians being people who should cheer people up and I think they should do it on the basis of what they offer going forward. Listen to what Ed says. What he is offering is a vision of a new Britain and he’s probably the only leader who’s doing that. Is he getting his message across? Yes he is. Does he need to do more? Obviously he does.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Is he getting his message across? Not according to the opinion polls.

**LORD FALCONER:**
Well not according to the Sunday Times, the Sunday Telegraph and the Mail on Sunday, which lead with opinion polls. But I don’t think that is what’s going to determine how people vote. It’s whether or not there is an alternative – an alternative to what the Conservatives are offering.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Very, very hard for the Labour Party, as we all know, to change the leader at any time compared with the other parties. Very little chance of Ed Miliband leaving before the election or absolutely zero chance in your view?

**LORD FALCONER:**
Absolutely zero chance. And there is in reality no desire within the great bulk of the Labour Party for a change in leader. What there is a real desire to do is win this coming General Election, which – as Peter and Deborah will confirm – we can do.

**ANDREW MARR:**
You can do, but very, very unlikely to be the largest party. You’re going to probably have to do some kind of deal with another party. And the problem that you have is that the likely other party – I’m going to turn to Peter on this one as well – is the SNP who are not going to be easy bedfellows for the Labour Party, are they?

**PETER KELLNER:**
Yes, I think there’s a real risk, possibility, that if the Liberal Democrats lose 30 seats (which they may well do) and Labour and the Conservatives are very close, there won’t even be enough MPs to have either a Labour Liberal or a Conservative Liberal Coalition, so they may be looking to the Scottish Nationalists or perhaps to the Democratic Unionists in Northern Ireland to get to a majority. This may be a very, very messy Parliament and the fortnight after May 7th next year may be just as exciting and tense and uncertain as the fortnight before.

**ANDREW MARR:**
And it’s dangerous as well.

**LORD FALCONER:**
I don’t know. I genuinely do not know what will happen. I mean one’s feeling is that in the last few elections, most people would say it was possible to give a quite accurate prediction of what was going to happen. I don’t get that sense at all at the moment.

DEBORAH MATTINSON:
Yeah, absolutely (over).

LORD FALCONER:
What Peter is saying about Scotland is very, very interesting. We’re in a … I feel we’re in a very, very, all the cards are in the air in the post-referendum period. We are choosing a new leader in Scotland. I don’t know who will win, but my feeling is that things will settle down to a new normality where I believe that Labour will be able to connect with its new leader in Scotland whoever it may be because …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) That is crucial to Labour’s chances – doing better in Scotland and regaining that Scottish position.

LORD FALCONER:
We have 41 seats in Scotland at the moment. My own view is that it is unlikely that we will lose significant numbers of that. I mean I don’t know if you remember Mr Nicholas Clegg was the most popular politician, more popular than Winston Churchill, in the build-up to the 2010 General Election, and that had evaporated in about two weeks.

ANDREW MARR:
Alright, thank you for now very much indeed.

INTERVIEW ENDS