

ANDREW MARR SHOW

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PAUL NUTTALL

Andrew Marr: Now UKIP's Leader Paul Nuttall has been called the 'purple Pinocchio' and he's been derided on social media as a fantasist. One of the party's biggest donors Arron Banks says that his leadership is weak and that the party quotes 'thrashing around for a purpose. Paul Nuttall joins me now'

Andrew Marr: It was a very, very bruising by-election for you and you then went on holiday.

Paul Nuttall: Yes.

Andrew Marr: Where did you go?

Paul Nuttall: Where did I go?

Andrew Marr: Yes.

Paul Nuttall: I disappeared somewhere in this country. I wanted to get away. I was being hounded by the press, my family were being hounded by the press as well. Frankly, you know, it was a long, difficult campaign and you know, I'm back in the saddle now, that's the main thing, and UKIP will move forward.

Andrew Marr: After all the things that were said about you during that campaign did you ever think 'I might step down as leader. Maybe I'm the wrong guy for this job'?

Paul Nuttall: I never thought I was the wrong guy. I mean, of course you do have moments of doubt. Well, look, you know, it was a highly personal campaign. My family were being hounded in a way that I think most politicians will never have to go through.

You know, when your 86 year old grandmother, who's standing there in her dressing gown, gets a camera shoved in her face, when your father's being followed to work, you know, when your wider family are being harassed, you know, it is difficult. But you know what? It's made me more determined, because if it beats me then it beats UKIP and UKIP has got a great future as long as it stays on the pitch.

Andrew Marr: We'll come onto that, because the thing that was said about you again and again and again was that simply you were not telling the truth about important parts of your life. So can we go through a few of those things and nail them down one at a time?

Paul Nuttall: Yes.

Andrew Marr: Why did you say that you had lost someone close to you at Hillsborough?

Paul Nuttall: Well, firstly I want to go back before that, because there was an orchestrated smear campaign, which I knew was coming, from December, which was suggesting that I wasn't actually at Hillsborough. Can I just put this on record, Andrew? Because this is really important.

Andrew Marr: Who was smearing you?

Paul Nuttall: Well, there was an orchestrated campaign, which I knew was coming, which was done by a political party. I'll leave it at that, okay.

Andrew Marr: You've got to tell us more. Was it the Labour Party you're accusing of smearing you?

Paul Nuttall: Well, yes I am, actually. Yes, I am. Okay. But they suggested that I wasn't actually at Hillsborough. I've provided witness statements, I've given evidence to Operation Resolve and I'm prepared to stand on a witness stand in a court of law. As for the close personal friends issue, well, it went up on my website in 2011. I didn't put it there, it was a mistake. My press officer offered to resign. I refused to accept it because it's my responsibility. I've apologised –

Andrew Marr: You accept responsibility for that?

Paul Nuttall: Oh absolutely. I didn't check. Look. But the point is I've apologised to the people that matter. But look, can I also make – I'm going to make another point here. Because people need to get a bit of perspective on this. It's not as if I've lied about weapons of mass destruction, it's not as if I've taken us into an illegal war, it's not as if I've caught... (talking together) No, no, no. But the way some of the media portrayed this is it's been .. and it's been unfair.

Andrew Marr: Alright, when you were asked about Hillsborough afterwards you said that you hadn't lost a personal friend, 'I've lost someone who I know.' Can I ask who that was?

Paul Nuttall: No. Because as a family we all lost people who we knew. It was a horrendous day. I was twelve and a half years of age. I've said everything I have to say to Operation Resolve and I'm prepared to stand in a court of law in a witness stand.

Andrew Marr: Were you surprised when UKIP officials in Liverpool walked out because of what you said?

Paul Nuttall: Well, look, one of them said that he walked out as a result of what Arron Banks said, not what I said, and I have his complete support. But look, I'm always sad when people leave

UKIP, always. And I don't want people to leave UKIP, whether that's at the top of the party or the bottom of the party. We need to stick together because we need to grow.

Andrew Marr: Was this the same press officer who was responsible for saying that you were a professional footballer for Tranmere Rovers, which you weren't?

Paul Nuttall: Well, no, I played for Tranmere Rovers at the age of 13.

Andrew Marr: But not as a professional.

Paul Nuttall: Hang on. Look, from the age of 13 to 18 I was at Tranmere Rovers, I played as a youngster and for the youth team, and yes, you know, it was the same press officer, it was a mistake. Back then she made a mistake, but again it was my website, I should have checked.

Andrew Marr: And was she the same person who was the over-enthusiastic researcher who claimed you had a PhD?

Paul Nuttall: No, that's an absolute lie, and I want to nail this one right now, okay. I've never claimed once in my life that I've ever had a PhD and I'm on record in interviews time and time again saying I'd like to finish my PhD. That came from a LinkedIn page that wasn't even mine.

Andrew Marr: Okay. Again on your website you claimed credit for being on the management board of the Northwest Training Council –

Paul Nuttall: No, I didn't.

Andrew Marr: - which you weren't. I've got it on ..

Paul Nuttall: Hang on. No, what happened was they offered..

Andrew Marr: Your spokesman said –

Paul Nuttall: No, hang on, they at the time okayed that press release, alright. So everything that was in that press release was factual. I don't know what happened in the meantime.

Andrew Marr: But you weren't on the council of that, were you?

Paul Nuttall: No, I wasn't, but they asked me verbally – they asked me verbally would I, okay, they okayed the press release back in 2009. I don't know what happened between then and now.

Andrew Marr: So when people say that you're a fantasist, and you've seen all the stuff on social media. You're there with the Beatles, you're there at the Queen's coronation, you're there on the moon, you're there at D-Day and so forth.

Paul Nuttall: Oh, I'm sure I also founded the Church of Scientology.

Andrew Marr: It's become a meme it's become a joke, and that means that you have become a bit of a joke figure, and I say again are you therefore really the person to lead a party who's having a tough time at the moment?

Paul Nuttall: Look, there is a narrative out there which is being spawned by media outlets that have political motivations to see UKIP destroyed. Of course I'm the right person to lead this party. I was the only person who could have unified the party, brought it together and ensured that it stayed on the pitch. And what UKIP's got to do now is it's got to hold its nerve. Politics will come back onto UKIP's turf in the near future once the government begin to

backslide on Article 50, and all we've got to do is stay in the game.

Andrew Marr: Because it's not just your opponents and enemies in the media. Arron Banks, who's your main funder –

Paul Nuttall: No, he's not.

Andrew Marr: Well, he certainly was for a long period of time.

Paul Nuttall: No, he wasn't. No, he wasn't. Listen, this is another media lie. Just because you tell a lie often enough doesn't make it the truth. Arron has never been UKIP's major donor, and since I've got back off holiday I've got a commitment from a consortium of UKIP's biggest donors that we are financially secure going forward.

Andrew Marr: Because in the last quarter you got £33,000 raised, which is only £3,000 more than the Women's Equality Party and way, way behind parties like the Lib Dems, which leads people to think maybe this is the beginning of the end for UKIP.

Paul Nuttall: But that wasn't on my watch. You know, only a month of that was on my watch. And would you give money to a party where you have MEPs having altercations in Strasbourg? We had two leadership elections. No, you wouldn't. If you look at the next quarter you will see there is a big improvement in UKIP donations.

Andrew Marr: Alright. And so when Arron Banks compares the running of UKIP variously to running a squash club or running a jumble sale – I'm not sure which is better or worse – what do you say to him?

Paul Nuttall: Well, look, a lot of what Arron says I tend to agree with, okay. And I get on with Arron.

Andrew Marr: So you're running a jumble sale?

Paul Nuttall: No, look, UKIP needs to professionalise. But I want to make this point: I've only been in this role for 13 weeks. Five of that was spent fighting a by-election, two of it was the Christmas period. Give me time to sort out this mess and I will. And trust me, politics is going to come back onto UKIP's turf and UKIP will prosper in the future, but only if people in the party stop in-fighting and people hold their nerve.

Andrew Marr: Should Douglas Carswell remain as a UKIP MP?

Paul Nuttall: Well, look, this is all about this whole knighthood issue.

Andrew Marr: Nonsense.

Paul Nuttall: Well, look, we've had it in writing now from Douglas Carswell that he lobbied for Nigel Farage to get a knighthood and he spoke to the people involved. He's put it in writing, let's see what happens. It'll go to the national executive.

Andrew Marr: So I just ask again, do you personally think he should remain as a UKIP MP?

Paul Nuttall: Well, if it's proven the Douglas lobbied for Nigel to get a knighthood – and let's not forget Nigel Farage deserves a knighthood or a peerage, he's been one of the most influential political figures in British politics since the turn of this century – you know, it's it proven that Douglas has done that then I don't see a problem.

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