JEREMY VINE:
Well they started the week as “clowns” and “fruitcakes”, but by the end of it the main parties were queuing up to pay their respects to UKIP and its supporters, acknowledging it’s a mistake to dismiss the choice of nearly a quarter of the voters in Thursday’s local elections. But UKIP has been warned the flipside of being taken more seriously is that they’ll also be put under more scrutiny: the detail of their policies and the ultimate aim of the party will be looked at. We are joined now by UKIP’s Leader Nigel Farage. Welcome to you.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Good morning.

JEREMY VINE:
So what is this all about? Is this you trying to win power or just adjust the Conservatives, the course that they’re on?
NIGEL FARAGE:
No, I mean it’s very interesting. People obsess about our effect on the Conservative Party, completely ignoring that we knocked the Liberal Democrats out of several seats in the South and the West Country; that we picked up a lot more Labour votes than David Lammy. I thought he’d been rather complacent this morning about UKIP. I mean South Shields, a by-election called with three weeks’ notice, and we scored 24 per cent of the vote - most of our votes coming from old Labour voters. So what you’ve seen …

JEREMY VINE:
(over) But my question really is what’s it all about, where’s it all heading?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Oh, what it’s all about is fundamentally changing British politics. We have had enough of three parties that have virtually merged into one. You know the coalition, the opposition … I mean, frankly, there are very few serious differences between them. We want our country back from Brussels - that’s number one - otherwise we can’t govern ourselves. We want to control our borders because whilst we’ve got no prejudice against anybody immigration has been hopelessly out of control for the last decade and a touch more.

JEREMY VINE:
But if the Conservatives move into the zones that you want them to be in, which is what you’ve …

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well …

JEREMY VINE:
… been trying to engineer so far, then it’s job done, is it?

NIGEL FARAGE:
But they’re not going to do that, are they? You know what’ll happen …
JEREMY VINE:
They’re talking about it this weekend.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Oh I know they’re talking about it, but they don’t mean it and everyone knows that. You know Mr Cameron set the course of this coalition government, indeed his own leadership since 2005 has been pro-EU, pro-open door immigration and pro-building wind turbines all over our green and pleasant land. He’s not going to U-turn on all of those things. If he does, well good luck to him, but please don’t think that UKIP is just some little pressure group that will go away because somebody in Downing Street starts singing the same song.

JEREMY VINE:
Well not just that, but a string of Conservative MPs are starting to say well hang on, there’s the EU we need to sort out, immigration and so on. So if you take David Cameron out of the picture, have you got what you want then?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well you know if David Cameron gets removed - and I suppose given that we’ve got a European Election coming up before the next General Election that’s not impossible - if he was removed and somebody else was put in place who wanted to come and talk to us and say shall we find an accommodation, we’d consider it. But it’s not my priority. My priority is to build a new political party and movement in this country that actually wants to stand up for the interests of ordinary people.

JEREMY VINE:
So you need policies across the piece?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Yes.

JEREMY VINE:
You need policies on potholes, for example. We heard some of your candidates. UKIP hasn’t previously had much to say on other areas.
NIGEL FARAGE:
Well we’re going to find out, aren’t we, because we’ve established the bridgeheads that I wanted on county councils up and down the country. We’re going to be taking that very seriously indeed and we’ve got to prove to people what UKIP can do in local government.

JEREMY VINE:
Okay well looking at your 2010 manifesto, just for example, on transport you called for three new high-speed rail lines. The local elections come and you campaign against the only one that they’re planning. You went on a march.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well I mean quite right. Do you know it’s slower now from Penzance to Paddington than it was in 1914, so there’s a very good argument of upgrading lines and bringing benefit to millions of people across Britain, not to spend over £40 billion to build a line through the middle of the English countryside that will only benefit incredibly rich commuters.

JEREMY VINE:
So you want three new high-speed rail lines and you don’t want the one that they’re planning?

NIGEL FARAGE:
We certainly don’t want HS2 and we opposed it from day one.

JEREMY VINE:
Okay. On tax, The Times had a good look at your tax proposals at the last election.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Yeah.

JEREMY VINE:
You want to cut taxes by 90 billion and spend an extra 30 billion, so they add the two
together and they say it’s a £120 billion black hole.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
I know, it’s complete rubbish. You know what they’ve done is taken our view that ultimately if we could get rid of employers’ national insurance that’d be a marvellous thing for jobs. That would cost £50 billion and we say in the document we couldn’t do it now. This is all rubbish, frankly. What they haven’t …

**JEREMY VINE:**
(*over*) But isn’t this where it’s going to have a …

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
… what they haven’t done is taken into account in 2010 where we said the cuts and savings should come. They deliberately haven’t done it. But quite honestly, if we look at the Labour Party right now, they have no policy at all for the next election; the current government’s figures have failed hopelessly and we’re in a 130 billion black hole. And we will next year for the General Election put a fully costed proposal for how we can cut taxes and cut spending in this country.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Well give us an example of where you put some big swingeing cuts.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well I wouldn’t be giving £53 million a day to the European Union.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Well I thought you’d say the union, funnily enough.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well there you are, and that would be a very good start, wouldn’t it? And we also wouldn’t be wasting quite as much money on foreign aid, particularly to countries who’ve even got aircraft carriers and their own defence forces - unlike much of ours. And £60 billion a year is spent in this country on quangos - most of which, from what I can see, do no good at all.
JEREMY VINE:
Do you want to be Prime Minister?

NIGEL FARAGE:
That’s never been my ambition. There are two types of people in politics - there are those that want to be something and those that want to do something - and my priority is I want to make sure that my children can grow up in a country that they can call their own.

JEREMY VINE:
Are we or are you getting a bit carried away here because you get 23 per cent of the vote in the local elections; you don’t get a single council - you get lots of councillors; and you know that problem is magnified with the General Election, with the first past the post system?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Yeah.

JEREMY VINE:
So what do you do?

NIGEL FARAGE:
I’m not getting carried away with it. You are with your questions, saying do I want to become Prime Minister. I’m a realist. I mean it’s fascinating really. We are the party with the broadest appeal across the country - north, south, east and west; old Labour voters, rural Tory voters. We are a genuinely national political party. Now to succeed in Westminster in 2015, we’ve got to grow and build a lot from here, but please don’t think that it’s impossible.

JEREMY VINE:
Okay …

NIGEL FARAGE:
And I promise you this: UKIP is here to stay.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Alright, well let me just tone down the prime ministerial question and ask you whether you might want to be an MP. I mean are you going to go in in a by-election or …? At least tell us you’re going to stand in 2015.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
(over) Well I’ve been an MEP for the last thirteen years, which I’ve enjoyed in many ways - far more than my colleagues in the European Parliament have certainly. I’m not going to stand in any by-election before next year. June 2014, we have a European Election. That is the day on which I believe that UKIP can cause an earthquake in British politics. I want to lead the party into that. Thereafter yes I will stand for a seat in 2015.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Oh have you decided which one?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
No I’ve been rather busy for the last few weeks doing other things, but I will think about it.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Alright, well thank you for that information. It sums up the problem a bit for your party though, doesn’t it Mr Farage, that it is a one-man show?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
I don’t think it is and I think if you look at …

**JEREMY VINE:**
(over) Who else has anyone else heard of?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well I think that the lady that stood for us in the Eastleigh by-election, Diane James,
appeared on a raft of BBC programmes and other networks last week and universally is acclaimed as being very good news for the party. My Deputy Leader Paul Nuttall has appeared on all sorts of programmes and once again is very popular. He incidentally is also somebody from a working class background, which of course doesn’t happen in Labour, Lib-Dem and Conservative parties anymore. So no, we are broadening. We’re broadening our policy base and we’re broadening the number of faces people will see on television. And actually now in counties up and down the land, we’re going to have local representatives with a big local media presence too.

JEREMY VINE:
Nigel Farage, thank you very much for joining us.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS