

# THE ANDREW MARR SHOW

## INTERVIEW: NIGEL FARAGE

### 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2016

Andrew Marr: Chairman Mao began his long march to power in Changji Province. For Nigel Farage I suspect it was an agreeable saloon bar somewhere in Kent or central London. But for him too it has been an astonishing journey. Dismissed and ridiculed for years, he is perhaps the man most responsible for taking us so close to leaving the EU. And he joins me now. I say you're responsible partly because I assume that's why David Cameron held the referendum in the first place, to scupper you. It hasn't gone very well has it?

Nigel Farage: Yeah, to shoot the UKIP fox, that's what it was all about. We were picking up votes, the perception was that it was Tory votes that UKIP were getting – ironically in the general election we probably hurt Labour more. He also feared defections in his own ranks to UKIP. And that's why he promised the referendum. And he went into the election promising it. He got a majority. He then spent much of last year saying Britain could do fine outside the European Union. He then said that he wouldn't rule anything out in terms of which way he'd vote, depending on the renegotiation. Now it's daily prophet of doom as to what would happen to our pensioners or everybody else. And I wonder: which is the real David Cameron?

AM: Well, let's come on to that in a moment. But on Friday when the markets closed the FTSE was down 116 points and nearly £40 billion had been wiped off savings and so forth.

NF: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

AM: Well, it happened, it's a fact. It is a fact. And these are not Europhile Brussels-funded scaremongers; these are hardnosed people trying to price in the risk of Brexit.

NF: Andrew, I'm sorry. I did work in this for 20 years; I know a little bit more about it than most people. Sterling is up since March. Since Brexit became a possibility sterling is up, and the FTSE is exactly the same level it was in March. And what happened on Friday were very

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bad economic figures from America and the fact that our growth forecast in Britain had been downgraded from two and a half to two per cent, and that our borrowing is still out of control. So again, these are ludicrous scare – these are scare stories that are being put up. Even if sterling, even if sterling were to fall a few percentage points after Brexit, so what? The point is we have a floating currency and it'll be good for exports.

AM: Okay, well, I'll tell you so what, in a sense. I was talking in the park yesterday, I bumped into this guy and he said, 'what do you think's going to happen?' We had a conversation and he said, 'almost all my friends and family are voting to leave, but I can't because I have investments and pensions and I'm really worried about what's going to happen.' And he looks at the Treasury forecasts and the IFS and that's why he's worried.

NF: And I do understand that these relentless scare tactics, Project Fear, now it's Project Threat with our pensioners today – I do understand that some people are being scared. But let me just say this: firstly, the IFS, this great independent god of economic forecasting, who funds it? Well, mostly the British government, and over ten per cent of their income comes from the European Union. You know, think tanks like that –

AM: You're not saying they're a corrupt organisation?

NF: I'm saying over three quarters of their funding comes from the British government and the European Union.

AM: So you're saying we shouldn't trust what they say?

NF: Well, I'm saying that if you work, you know, for government and effectively are funding by the EU, and you're asked to produce a report you tend to do what you're told. You don't bite the hand that feeds you.

AM: That's a very serious allegation against people who have been regarded as gold standard, serious economic advisers to be taken seriously.

NF: Well, do you know something? At the start, that little introduction, you said was it in a saloon bar in Kent that I converted to Euroscepticism. Well, actually it was one in London.

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AM: I put London as well.

NF: And when all the aspects told us that joining the exchange rate mechanism – this is 25 years ago – would be good for Britain and I thought it wouldn't. I then saw many of the same experts tell us that if we didn't join the euro there'd be doom for the British economy, investment would dry up. And now we're hearing the same again. But the central point is this: everything the Prime Minister says, and George Osborne says, is predicated on the idea that we are part of something that is good for the British economy. And the answer is, for tariff-free access to the European market, and tariffs now have come down massively in the last 40 years, we have to pay a net membership fee of £34 million a day. We have to accept regulation of the 88 per cent of our economy that is not exports to European countries. We have to accept unlimited free movement of people.

AM: The single market itself has been useful to British exporters, being able to get into a single market has been very useful.

NF: The Common Market, forget the politics for a minute, the Common Market economically was good for us. It gave us a bigger market, it brought down tariffs. The single market actually is inhibiting us in a world – we're living in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy, and no one talks about this. We put up trade barriers against countries all over the world as part of the EU. And my answer is this: we are not leaving Europe, we're divorcing ourselves from a failing political union so that we can re-engage with a bigger, broader world.

AM: Now, if we do indeed vote to leave, then a lot depends upon the kind of negotiation that follows, and you and many other people are saying it will be a benign negotiation in which they won't cut off their noses to spite their faces, they will do a good deal with us. But I put it to you that that is unlikely. You want to see the end of the EU. You want this to be the start of a process of disillusion and collapse of the EU structures as they are now. The people that we will be negotiating with believe in all these structures. They will be very, very upset, very angry, and they will not want to negotiate in a very friendly way. And they've already said so.

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NF: Well, I'll tell you who's angry. Who's angry are the peoples of Europe, from all the member states, who are saying, 'we never voted for this, we never wanted political union. We've finished up with a currency that has beggared the south. We've got a migrant policy that is tearing countries apart politically.' So look, there is a tariff-free area that extends from Iceland to Turkey, that exists right now. We are the eurozone's biggest market in the world. There are elections coming up next year in France and in Germany, and –

AM: It's going to take a long time. This will go beyond those elections.

NF: Well, all I'm saying is –

AM: Maybe three years of negotiation.

NF: - the most powerful lobby in the whole of Europe is the German car industry. They need this market very badly. But let me just say this: even if things did go wrong – let's just assume that things went wrong.

AM: Yeah.

NF: And that Merkel is happy to see hundreds of thousands of German car workers laid off, guaranteed she'd lose the election. Even in that scenario, the benefit that we joined for, namely tariff-free access, that is now outweighed by our net membership fee alone. So the worst case scenario economically is better than where we are today and gives us the chance to start thinking globally, and by the way, bringing prices down for consumers.

AM: For the last 70 years we have had peace in Europe, we've had a much longer history, which I know you know as well, where every single time there's been trouble in Europe we have had to get involved and spend our blood and our treasure. Are you absolutely sure that the collapse of the EU is not going to be angry and difficult, divisive and cause us more problems than where we are at the moment?

NF: If we hadn't been independent, if we had been part of a greater Europe, we wouldn't have been able to intervene in the last two wars to try and put democracy and independence of nations back on the map.

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AM: That's a debating point, if I may say so, rather than a political...

NF: A Europe at peace, a Europe at peace. Look at Europe's role in the breakup of Yugoslavia. Look at what's happening in Greece. Look at the rise of extreme politics, of the neo-Nazi right and the extreme left. This is not a happy Europe. This is not a Europe that's going in the right place. And the answer for peace, firstly, is that NATO, an example of countries cooperating together, is what maintained the peace, and provided that Europe is democratic it will never go to war.

AM: Let's talk about immigration if we may, because I'm slightly confused about your position. You told Andrew Neil that you wanted to return to the old norm, as it were, of immigration, the '50s, '60s and '70s and so forth. And that was around 30 to 40 thousand a year. Is that a fair figure?

NF: Absolutely. For 60 years after the war that's pretty much what net migration was.

AM: Okay. Net migration from outside the EU, as you know, is 188,000 at the moment. So if we vote to leave you also want a serious cut in migration from the rest of the world.

NF: Yes. I mean, this government is not handling immigration from outside the EU very well. I mean, the very fact –

AM: But you want less of it?

NF: Well, hang on – the very fact that last year 20,000 illegal immigrants were given permanent leave to remain, is it any wonder that a boat was found off Hastings this morning with people in it? So I don't think this government's got it right at either end. It's failed on the non-EU stuff, and on the EU stuff we have absolutely no control at all. How this Prime Minister – I'm giving you where I'd like to get to. This Prime Minister promised the British people he'd bring it down to tens of thousands a year, knowing we have an open door to the whole of the EU.

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AM: Alright. Now, you are not the kind of guy, I think, who wants to stop family reunions and so forth, are you? So that would carry on after Brexit.

NF: Well, provided they're legitimate.

AM: Provided they're legitimate.

NF: And we returned to what called the primary purpose rule, so we know we're doing it properly.

AM: So they were running at 43,000 last year. You want to get immigration down to 40,000. You can't let anybody else in. No Australian doctors, no Indian engineers, nobody.

NF: Let's be clear, you know, getting back to a norm that starts to relieve the pressure – people can't get GP appointments in Britain, people's kids can't get on the housing ladder. You know, we've got these massive problems that are affecting people. Getting back to a reasonable number won't be easy. It needs two things: it needs a government, a government led by people with resolve, and it needs us to stop the open door to over 500 million people from across the European Union. Without that we'll never achieve it.

AM: Okay, well let's put the EU to one side and assume that absolutely nobody comes in there from the EU afterwards, which I think is very unlikely.

NF: That's all we're saying.

AM: Just say that for the sake of argument you've still got 188,000, has to get down to tens of thousands, 43,000 people with family reunion. The numbers simply don't add up. Then you have a much, much tougher immigration policy.

NF: Well, we're going to have to have a tougher immigration policy, that's true. And I think that everyone knows that when it comes to family reunion that some of the boundaries have been perhaps stretched. We need to get it back to some clearer definitions.

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AM: Okay, you said you wanted quality migrants in the past, and when you were asked what that meant you said, ‘well, we don’t want Albanian murderers and we don’t want people with HIV.’ Is that still your view?

NF: Look, all I’m saying is I want this country to be a normal country. And normal countries all over the world –

AM: That is a specific question.

NF: Yeah, well, normal countries all over the world don’t allow criminals to come and settle in their country; don’t allow people to come into the country who would be a huge burden on the health service or anything else.

AM: And so would you also include in that things like tuberculosis and other important and difficult diseases?

NF: Let’s be clear, let’s be clear, if you’re coming to live in this country, to work in this country, you have to bring your own health insurance. We have a national health system that is at breaking point. It literally is at breaking point. There are many inside who are happy to tell you that now. Because things are serious. So it’s a national health service, it’s not an international health service.

AM: So a very straightforward question: how do you know that people have got HIV when they come in?

NF: Well, if you go to Australia you have to prove various things don’t you? Look, you’re getting into very specific details and looking for a big headline, I know. But – I know that – but what I’m saying is that the way Australia does it is very simple, you’ve got to be under 45, you’ve got to have a trade or skill, you’ve got to have some money, no criminal record and bring your own health insurance. Doesn’t that sound like a good, sensible way for immigration to become a positive part of British debate and not a negative one?

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AM: What about all those British businesses, care homes, hospitals, restaurants, coffee shops and all the rest of it who are relying at the moment on not very highly skilled, not very highly paid people coming in from the EU? What happens to them? Do they go under?

NF: It's very interesting, I mean, of the new jobs that were created in the UK last year, roughly 450,000 new jobs, you know, over 70 per cent of them went to people who weren't British. Now there are 1.7 million unemployed Brits at the moment. Maybe they're all lazy, maybe they're all useless, maybe they're all drunk permanently, but I don't think so. I think actually what's happening is that big companies are choosing foreign labour over British labour.

AM: Okay, just going back to the HIV thing, you didn't really answer my question, which is whether you still believed in that, whether you still think that people with HIV should not be allowed into this country? A yes or no.

NF: No, no. What, to get free healthcare?

AM: We don't know why they're coming in, they're coming in for all sorts of reasons. Would you keep them out is my question?

NF: I'm sorry. You are trying to get me – should they –

AM: It's a fair question, you raised it not me.

NF: Should we, should we say to people from all over the world if you've got a very serious disease we are very happy for the national health service to provide whatever healthcare you want, at the same time as it now takes people all over Britain a fortnight to get a GP appointment? It's about priorities isn't it? And my priority would be we put our own people first. It's about time we did.

AM: Final question. We are very, very close in this referendum, we're very close to the result, we're very close to – and the two camps, according to polls, seem very close indeed. Many polls put you ahead at the moment. If in the end you lose 51 to 49, is it over?



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NF: Well, let's remember one thing: the vast majority of our political class want to stay part of the European Union. Many regret the Prime Minister's decision to give us a referendum. I think if the Leave side was to narrowly lose the chances of parliament giving us another referendum in the short term is probably pretty slim. So I do view this as the one great opportunity. You know, there's nothing radical about this, all we want to do is take back control of our lives and put power back in the hands of the British people.

AM: Alright, but there's an awful lot of people who'll be very angry if the Remain campaign win by a sliver and think it's been an unfair campaign. You have said in the past we could see violence. Would you see problems on the streets, do you think, if that happens?

NF: I haven't predicted violence.

AM: You've talked about it.

NF: There may be violence inside the Conservative Party, that's certainly true. A lot of his own MPs think that he's frankly used taxpayers' money wrongly and is not running a full, free and fair referendum campaign. I don't expect violence from the people of this country; I would expect profound disappointment. But let me just say this: there's been a shift in the last fortnight, there's been a change in this debate. People have had enough of being threatened by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor, and I think collectively people are beginning to put two fingers up to the political class.

AM: They may very well be. We'll see. Nigel Farage, thank you very much indeed for joining us.

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