JEREMY VINE:
Now the United Kingdom Independence Party has always taken a very dim view of
Britain’s membership of the EU. However, recent polling suggests that what really
exercises UKIP voters is not Europe, but the thorny issue of immigration. UKIP have
seen a surge in support recently and its Leader, Nigel Farage, has been marketing his
party as if it were, in the words of one commentator, “a Thatcher era tribute band”.
Let’s see if he takes that as a compliment. Good morning.

NIGEL FARAGE:
(laughing) Good morning.

JEREMY VINE:
Is it a compliment or not?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well one thing for certain: whether you agree with Thatcher or not, at least that was a
period of time when we had politics of conviction, ideas, and general elections really
mattered. And now what do we have? We have leaders of the so-called main parties, none of whom have ever had a job, lived in the real world, and it’s very difficult on the really big issues to tell them apart. So I’ll take it more as a compliment than an insult.

**JEREMY VINE:**
We haven’t had the Cameron speech on the EU yet, which is much trailed, but we’re told there’s going to be in-out vote on Europe. And if there is, that’s your job done, isn’t it?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well I think the first thing to say is, you know that ten years ago, you couldn’t even discuss the question of leaving the European Union in polite society. I mean it was considered completely beyond the pale to even talk about it. So the very fact that a British Prime Minister is making a speech on this issue is actually a tribute to the thousands of people that have worked and helped get UKIP established as a political party.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Sure, but job done then for you lot?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
No job done is when, firstly, we become an independent self-governing nation; and, secondly, when we start to put into practice the things the British economy needs and the British people need for us to be a proper 21st century country engaged with the world and not just with Europe.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Are we clear on what in-out means because you’ve always said you can ask that question, but actually others say well it’s far too simplistic to put it that way?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well I mean really the question is simpler than that. The question is do you wish to govern your own country through the ballot box in a democracy or become a province
of a new United States of Europe? That in reality is what it’s all about. And what we’ve had over the last week are …

**JEREMY VINE:**
Well that’s a rather loaded take on it, isn’t it?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
No it isn’t.

**JEREMY VINE:**
That’s asking for the answer let’s stay as the UK. I mean that’s exactly what people fear.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
*(over)* Well at the heart of this, at the heart of this is the whole democratic argument: do we want to govern ourselves or are we prepared to accept that nearly all of our law comes from somewhere else over which we only have a tiny say?

**JEREMY VINE:**
If we leave, we lose the trade, people say …

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Yeah, I know. *(laughs)*

**JEREMY VINE:**
… we lose the numbers. Okay now the numbers go on forever in this debate, but it’s clear we do an absolutely huge amount of trade with the EU and we’d do less.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Yeah. I mean, look, the EU is an important marketplace. Something like 40 per cent of our overseas trade goes to European Union countries. That is true. That figure, by the way, declines every year as the EU itself becomes a smaller part of the global economy. But we want to go on doing business with the EU and we will go on doing business with the EU.
JEREMY VINE:
But they might not want it on the same terms. They definitely won’t.

NIGEL FARAGE:
You know the last year for which we have full trade figures show that the EU sold us nearly 46 billion pounds worth of goods more than we sold them. There is no prospect of Mercedes and Volkswagen not wishing to sell their cars in this country because we’re not part of a political union.

JEREMY VINE:
What about the criticism that as soon as you say we’re having the big referendum, the in-out referendum, you leave the question hanging in the air, creates uncertainty, people don’t invest, you already get into a slippery slope?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well there’s uncertainty staying in the EU. I mean goodness knows what new legislation they’re going to come up with over financial services, over the environment, which is already damaging British manufacturing. So the world’s uncertain whatever you do. But even if we did accept that argument, that really means that what Mr Cameron ought to do is to say right, we’re going to have a full, free and fair referendum on this before the next General Election because what this speech apparently is going to offer us is the idea that if he wins the next General Election - which looks doubtful - after a renegotiation, which I don’t believe to be possible because the other member states of Europe aren’t in the mood, then in five years time he’ll give us a referendum. And the trouble is we’ve heard this all before from Mr Cameron and, frankly, I don’t trust him.

JEREMY VINE:
Okay, is your party ready for the big time, people ask? People say they look at the members who start populating your forums and some of them are racist, some of them are anti-gay, and when their views emerge you don’t throw them out.

NIGEL FARAGE:
I don’t think the racist slur works at all. We are the only party in British politics that actually prohibits anybody even becoming a member if they formerly have been with the BNP or racist organisations. As far as the homophobic claims are concerned, look we’re a party that believes in free speech. I know on members’ forum sometimes people go ridiculously over the top, but I do think …

**JEREMY VINE:**
Somebody said on your forum, a member apparently, “Schizophrenia among black people is caused by in-breeding in the Caribbean.” Now do you throw them out, do you take some action?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well it’s difficult to know what to do other than to say if people go …

**JEREMY VINE:**
*(over)* Labour says throw them out.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
… if people go beyond the pale, we do throw them out. And in fact you know over the last few years lots of people have been removed from UKIP. So there’s a balance here between free speech and debate and people that bring our party into disrepute.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Senior UKIP member Dr Julia Gasper branded gay rights a “lunatic’s charter” and said “some homosexuals prefer sex with animals.” What’s she doing in the party?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
*(over)* Well she’s not. Well she’s not a senior UK member, number one.

**JEREMY VINE:**
She’s still in the party though, isn’t it?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
She has resigned as an officer of our Oxford branch, I am very pleased to say.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Right. But you don’t throw people out for those kinds of views?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Listen, don’t think this is just UKIP. This happens in the Tory Party, it happens in the Labour Party. All party leaders face this kind of thing.

**JEREMY VINE:**
What about a possible alliance with the Conservatives? Now I thought you were going to laugh when I said that …

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well nearly.

**JEREMY VINE:**
… but they go into the next election and let’s say the whole Lib Dem coalition thing falls apart but they’re the biggest party still and they turn to you. What do you say?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
I think with David Cameron as Leader that is virtually impossible to even contemplate. It’s very interesting. You know Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg, they don’t agree with what UKIP stands for, but they recognise that we have you know a sensible point of view that is held by a large number of people in this country. Mr Cameron whenever he’s asked about UKIP just throws abuse at us and calls us “nutters” and “closet racists”. So I don’t think there’s any prospect of us doing a deal with the Conservative Party with Mr Cameron in charge.

**JEREMY VINE:**
Okay on a national level no. But local deals, maybe moving aside when you like the cut of a particular Conservative candidate?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
It may happen, but it’s not my priority. My priority is not to take UKIP backwards; it’s to take UKIP forwards. And as your introduction said, people support us not just because of where we stand on Europe but where we stand on open door immigration, where we stand on wind farms springing up all over this country, where we stand on attitudes towards small business. There are lots of reasons why people go out and vote UKIP and my job is to push this party forwards, not drag it back.

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

INTERVIEW ENDS