ANDREW MARR:
Now with two MPs now, Nigel Farage likes to say that the UKIP fox is on the loose in the Westminster henhouse. So what’s his plan if UKIP win more seats at the General Election: general mayhem, blood and feathers all over the shop; or, if there’s a hung parliament, to cut a deal with one of the other parties and prop up or even join the next government? Well we’ll find out because Nigel Farage is with me now. Good morning.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
Not a great morning for UKIP so far, I have to say, looking at the papers.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
I must ask you about this defector, first of all. He was a very senior guy, stood
alongside you. He was, as it were, the Asian face of UKIP showing it’s not all white men who are angry and so forth, and now he’s joined the Tories and said vote Farage, get Ed Miliband in effect. Quite a serious blow.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Yeah, I mean look we’ve been increasingly alarmed by Mr Bashir’s behaviour over the last few months. He didn’t tell us the truth about the employment of illegal immigrants in his business. There are some money…

**ANDREW MARR:**
He denies all of this, we have to say, very strongly.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well I’m afraid there’s some quite strong documentary evidence and we’ve been investigating this. There are some big open questions in Brussels about money. And the final straw on Friday, a Hustings meeting that took place in West Yorkshire where gerrymandering appears to have taken place. Now that added to his …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* Well …

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
*(over)* Hang on. His … That added …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* I have to keep saying that he denies all this.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well he can deny that, but I tell you what he can’t deny and that’s his continuing associations with political extremists from Pakistan despite us saying please, please keep away. Whichever way we look at this, he’d reached the end of the road with us. He knew that. My only surprise, and my genuine surprise, is that the Conservative Party have accepted him caveat emptor.
ANDREW MARR:
Well buyer beware that means for those who don’t speak Latin. Nonetheless it is a blow because he was somebody who was seen as it were as the prime example of UKIP not being all alike and so forth and now he’s gone over.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well you know we had an action day last Sunday in Thanet to try and kick the campaign off that I’m fighting down there and I was amazed how many members of the ethnic communities are there. They’re standing as UKIP candidates in local elections, we’ve got many standing in the General Election. I think this idea, this attempt to paint UKIP as a racist party is dead.

ANDREW MARR:
Well let’s drop racist, but there are hundreds of thousands of bigots all over Britain and [Matthew Richardson], your man, says that UKIP is the party for bigots.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well you know it just shows you the depths to which this General Election is sinking. Tribal politics, the Tories, the Labour Party, their friends in the media, any attempt to damage UKIP. Now I’m not surprised. I mean don’t forget …

ANDREW MARR:
Well we will get …

NIGEL FARAGE:
… I mean don’t forget we won the European Elections last year, we won two by-elections, we nearly beat Labour in a seat in the North. And what happened here is there are people in a pub, officers of the party after a long meeting in the pub having a drink, and in this case – because we’ve been branded bigots by left wing comedians – making a joke that in fact the late Eric Forth used to tell. Now if you’re expecting me to ban all UKIP officials from …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Going into the pub.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
(over) … and smiling and laughing and joking, it isn’t going to happen.

**ANDREW MARR:**
And yet [Matthew Richardson], also the same guy, said something clearly not in a pub because he said it in front of an audience in America. He said that the NHS was a terrible drain on resources in Britain and he said it was the Reichstag bunker of socialism left …

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well …

**ANDREW MARR:**
… and privatisation had to happen and that argument had to be won. And you yourself have said in the past that you’re in favour of an insurance based ……??

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
(over) Well he didn’t say … No, no, no, he did not say privatisation had to happen. That wasn’t in the speech. Remember when he gave that speech …

**ANDREW MARR:**
(over) He used the word ‘privatisation’.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Remember when he gave that speech, he was a Conservative, alright, and a lot of Conservatives were talking that way about the NHS – not least of which Dan Hannan who went even further than Mr Richardson went. So he made those comments as a Conservative and he was very critical of hundreds of millions of pounds being wasted through middle management. Now look, once again we have a General Election campaign being fought on American terms where it’s all negativity. It’s artillery shells being lobbed between Labour and Conservatives and now of course towards UKIP. Can I be clear, we have had a big debate about the National Health Service - how it should be run, within UKIP - and I’m acutely aware that Labour are very
sensitive to this because it’s Labour that did privatise large chunks of the National Health Service. So the line now from Labour is UKIP wants to privatise the National Health Service. The line from Mr Cameron is that UKIP want to privatise the National Health Service. UKIP …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) So let’s come on to UKIP’s policies …

NIGEL FARAGE:
(over) Well let’s do it.

ANDREW MARR:
… because in the past you have said that a national insurance system is something that you would favour and have you come off that?

NIGEL FARAGE:
(over) What I’ve said, what I’ve …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) You did say that, didn’t you?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well hang on, what I said in the past was we’ve got to have a debate about whether the way they do health in Holland and in France is better than the way that we do it here. When you form policy, you should discuss everything. And we have discussed everything and we have decided that the National Health Service, the bits of it that have privatised haven’t worked – in particular the PFI deals where the hospitals now face repayments …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Hugely expensive.

NIGEL FARAGE:
… of 300 billion sterling. Labour did this and you’d think, to listen to them today,
they’d had nothing to do with it. We want the National Health Service to be better run, we want it to be more efficient. We think it’s ludicrous that middle management has grown by 48 per cent. We think the fact that health tourism is costing £2 billion a year is wrong, and the fact that 1 in 5 of new nurses being taken on have to come from abroad says to us let’s make sure there are no tuition fees for people that are taking medical degrees. We want …

ANDREW MARR:

(over) But we all know that this needs more money.

NIGEL FARAGE:

(over) … we want the National Health Service … Well we want a National Health Service that is free at the point of delivery and funded through taxation. But the one thing nobody dares say is the reason we have an NHS crisis right now is because of a massive increase in the population in this country and whatever anybody tells you …

ANDREW MARR:

(over) And they’re getting older.

NIGEL FARAGE:

Well they’re going to be getting very much older clearly. The National Health Service will need a lot more money in the years to come. So far we’ve had bids and proposals from the Labour and Conservative Parties – both of which would increase the amount we have to borrow every year. What we are saying is that we could put £3 billion a year extra into the National Health Service, and to fund that by a reduction …

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Three billion is more than the Labour Party are promising.

NIGEL FARAGE:

(over) It’s more than the Labour Party. We would promise an extra £3 billion a year for the National Health Service funded out of the fact we will not be paying daily membership fees as members of the European Union. Now that is …
ANDREW MARR:

(over) Ah, so you could only do it once you’ve left the EU. You can’t do it now.

NIGEL FARAGE:

Well but that’s a way you can fund it without having to borrow money. Any proposal put by Labour or Conservatives would only add to the deficit, which I will remind people is still enormous.

ANDREW MARR:

And are you still in favour of people with long-term conditions like HIV not being allowed into this country because of the health consequences?

NIGEL FARAGE:

I very much take the view that it’s a national health service and to open ourselves up - whether it’s to HIV treatment, whether it’s to maternity services or whatever it is to the rest of the world – doesn’t make sense. It is costing us at least £2 billion a year. The National Health Service is here for British citizens.

ANDREW MARR:

Now UKIP is in a sense an insurgency party and one of the things that happens in insurgency parties is you get a lot of very angry insurgents inside the party who are then very difficult to control. Looking at the papers today, do you think you have in some respects lost control of UKIP?

NIGEL FARAGE:

Oh goodness me, the fact that the Party Secretary goes and has a laugh and a joke in the pub – you know I tell you what, that’s fine by me. The fact that of 24 MEPs, we’ve had one who we’ve fallen out with and who now supports the inclusion of Turkey in the European Union and who thinks that we should forgive the Pakistani government for their blasphemy laws (sighs) look you know all parties will finish up with people they’d rather not have had in the first place, but that is not unusual to UKIP.
ANDREW MARR:
You are now facing a very, very well-funded, very, very well organised Conservative Party across the country and the Labour Party. You have relatively little funds. You can’t spread yourself very widely. Your realistic chances for the number of MPs in the next election must be quite low?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well we are fighting a target seat strategy. We’ve identified the seats at which we’ve got the best chance. They are generally marginal seats and the reason for that is we take equally off the other political parties and the Rochester by-election showed that this nonsense about UKIP votes being Tory voters, only 1 in 3 of our votes in the Rochester and Strood by-election came from the Conservatives. We won the last two by-elections. We are going to win a good number of seats on May 7th. Of that I’m confident. How many …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) A good number? More than three or four?

NIGEL FARAGE:
A good number is more than three or four, yes. And beyond that, I’m not going to make any wild predictions, but we’re confident we’ve got the right campaign in place for those target seats.

ANDREW MARR:
And with a good number of MPs, however that is, if you find yourself in the happy position of holding the balance of power and exercising influence, how will you use that influence? Would you join the Conservatives as allies? Would you join a coalition? Would you be outside as a kind of flying buttress to the Conservatives? How would you act?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well it’s very unlikely to think of UKIP joining a coalition. You know I don’t think the lure of a ministerial car is the reason that I got into politics in the first place.
ANDREW MARR:
One of your insurgent friends in UKIP says you want to get into the House of Lords and you’re talking to the Tories about it …

NIGEL FARAGE:
(over) Oh you know I’ve never heard such rot in all my life. You know I got into politics – I was in business before – I got into politics because I want to change things and that’s what UKIP is here to do. At the moment, between Labour and the SNP, they could … they could be the biggest group in Parliament. We couldn’t do any deal with Ed Miliband all the while he’s turning his back on a referendum on our membership of the European Union. We could potentially do a deal with Mr Cameron on this, but not unless the timing and the terms of the referendum were right.

ANDREW MARR:
Now what does that mean because he said actually on this programme …

NIGEL FARAGE:
Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
… that he would be open to a referendum before 2017 and you can see why.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well what he said was that it wouldn’t be in late 2017. And the reason for that of course is that Britain holds the rotating presidency of the European Union for the last six months of 2017, so once again it's Mr Cameron choosing his words carefully. I want to know when the …

ANDREW MARR
(over) So if I was David Cameron and I said, “Nigel, tell me what you want from me in order to get the support of some of your MPs in this future scenario”, what would you say to him?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well the first thing to point out is we’re a long way from that. There are 102 days to go …

**ANDREW MARR:**
Sure.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
… and my focus is on getting as many UKIP MPs elected as possible. If then we come to that, I would say I want a referendum, I want it now. I want a referendum with good rules – namely the spending limits for both sides are the same – and I want a guarantee that in this referendum the only people that can vote are British citizens because at the moment you know there are 4 million or so EU citizens living in Britain who I do not think should be allowed to vote in that referendum.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Now if you got all those things …

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Yeah.

**ANDREW MARR:**
… and to your great disappointment the British people voted to stay inside the EU, would that be the end of UKIP, would it be the end of Nigel Farage as a leading politician?

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well the Scottish National Party lost a referendum last year. They seem to have done extraordinarily well ever since. Never …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* Yeah that’s the SNP though.

**NIGEL FARAGE:**
Well, well … no but it’s a similar situation, isn’t it, because you know they’ve been going since the 1920s to try and separate Scotland from the rest of the United
Kingdom and, despite losing, they’ve done well. Look don’t forget whatever debate we’re having in Britain about the European Union, events in Greece and across the rest of the European Union mean that very big change is coming.

ANDREW MARR:
Now we’ve talked a little bit about your own future. Again I go back to all those people from UKIP who seem to be popping up all over the place. Do you think you yourself … I mean you come on a programme like this, you’re very affable. You’re seen in the pub - not on dry January …

NIGEL FARAGE:
(over) No quite.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) … we share that – with your point of beer smiling and all the rest of it. But deep down, do you have a problem with some of your lieutenants and other people in the party? Do they have a problem with you? Is there something about the Nigel Farage style that’s difficult?

NIGEL FARAGE:
Well maybe I’m too soft. You know all this nonsense that it’s all very dictatorial. I had MEPs begging me to get rid of Amjad Bashir back in October and November of last year, and I chose to take the tolerant approach and I was wrong.

ANDREW MARR:
Nigel Farage – too soft, too tolerant – thank you very much for joining us this morning.

NIGEL FARAGE:
Thank you.

ENDS