Peter Robinson: Welcome to Uncommon Knowledge. I am Peter Robinson. As a 27-year-old producer on the Mike Douglas show, Roger Ailes overheard Richard Nixon waiting to go on the air say it was a shame that a man had to resort to gimmicks like television to get elected. Mr. Ailes replied television is not a gimmick. If you think so, you will lose. A few days later Richard Nixon hired Roger Ailes. Mr. Ailes worked on Richard Nixon's 1968 campaign, on Ronald Reagan's 1984 re-election campaign, and on George H. W. Bush's 1988 campaign. In 1996 Mr. Ailes joined the new corporation to found a new cable television network, Fox News. Fox News passed CNN in the ratings in 2002 and has remained the dominant cable news channel ever since. Recently on the ABC show this week, Arianna Huffington referred to the famous essay by historian Richard Hofstadter entitled The Paranoid Style in American Politics. Then she looked at you.

Roger Ailes: Yeah.

Peter Robinson: Your reply?

Roger Ailes: Did you ever read her website? I mean, if you want to talk about paranoia, it is you know. She has got her own gimmick going.

Peter Robinson: Okay.

Roger Ailes: I did not tell her I enjoyed her on Green Acres, but I was tempted to.

Peter Robinson: All right, segment one. How you did it. I want to get to the launch of Fox News in a moment, but first a series of earlier events. During the first half of the 1990s, the news corporation hired a number of executives to head Fox News, including Van Gordon Sauter, a former president of CBS News. 20 years experience with CBS News rising to president. None of those guys, including Van Gordon Sauter succeeded in doing what you were about to do. How come?

Roger Ailes: Well, Van is a very talented guy. He did grow up in the network system. Cable does not have as many zeroes at the end of the budget lines as network. I think that was part of it. I think at different times I am a great admirer of Van Sauter's, and the other guys I am not sure what happened because I was not here at the time. I was president of CNBC for a couple of years. When I left politics in the very early nineties after the '88 campaign, I decided that was the end of politics for me. My mother always thought I could not find a job because I told her I was a consultant. I finally found one, and I went to CNBC. Then I came over here and Rupert asked me if I could build a news channel.

Peter Robinson: Could I ask you there Roger? So another way of putting a similar question is you at NBC running their cable operation, CNBC, you did not do what you would then do at News Corporation. There is the meeting of news corporation with Roger Ailes seems to have been the mixture. What was going on?
Interview with Roger Ailes

Roger Ailes: I think part of it is the meeting of Rupert Murdoch and Roger Ailes. Rupert Murdoch is a great entrepreneur, probably the greatest media entrepreneur in history. He is certainly a guy who has had tremendous success in his own life. He prefers his executives to be sort of entrepreneurs. He gives you the time. He listens to the idea. He funds it. As long as you can deliver it, he expects you to do your job. It is not quite the same as it was working at NBC. When I worked at NBC it is much more corporate. There were many more meetings. There were a lot of CYA meetings where everybody had to get their fingerprints on something, so if you failed everybody was guilty. Here it is very clear. Rupert gives you the budget, gives you the time, and says get it done. If you do not, then of course you fail. I operate better in that kind of a climate. I think that is the reason Rupert has had so many successes.

Peter Robinson: Okay. You launched Fox News in 1996. At the time, Fox News had access to 17 million homes. MSNBC did 22 million homes. CNN was to 70 million homes. Yet from that beginning we go to the night of the special election in Massachusetts here in January when Fox News attracted six million viewers, more than three times as many as CNN and MSNBC put together. That is the viewership. Here is the money. From the New York Times, "Fox News is believed to make more money than CNN, MSNBC, and the evening news casts of NBC, ABC, and CBS combined." How did you do it?

Roger Ailes: I think that Fox News probably is more in touch with the American people. When I traveled around the country, I probably worked in 35 different states. I have been in television stations in states. I produced the Mike Douglas show back in the sixties so I had a sense of audience. In fact, we began in that show to use politician's wives. We filmed in Hubert Humphrey's home. We had his wife, Muriel, on as a co-host. I had a sense of what was going to happen in television, that there would be a mixture of entertainment, information, and politics. It is all one now. If they looked at Jack Parr, they wanted their politicians to be as comfortable as he was telling a story. Jack Kennedy of course changed everything because he was so handsome and articulate. I think that the times changed. I was there. I saw what was going on, and I brought all of those to Fox News including the ability just to talk in a conversational manner. In the old days it used to be, I am the anchorman. I know the news and you do not. Please be quiet.

Peter Robinson: Ken Oletta. Fox News is opinionated and conservative, and its news is delivered by people who are often opinionated and conservative. This is the big take on Fox News. You did it by recognizing that according to Gallop, 40 percent of Americans call themselves conservative. They were being underserved in television, and that is the opportunity Roger Ailes spotted. It is politics.

Roger Ailes: Well, with all of my respect for Ken Oletta, everybody is a conservative to Ken Oletta because he is a liberal. Of course, if you look at other networks and say well do you not have too many conservatives on? I say yes, compared to none on the other channels we look very much like that. We have as many liberals as we have conservatives on the Fox News channel. What I recognized was the American people did not want to be told what to think about
the information they were receiving. We came up with we report you decide, fair and balanced. We have never told anybody what not to say. We have never not booked any liberal on the network that wants to be on. We just want a dialogue, and we believe the ideas and the issues will sort themselves out.

Peter Robinson: Segment two, what makes Roger Ailes Roger Ailes? I quote you, "I built this channel from my life experience. My first qualification is I did not go to Columbia Journalism School. There are no parties in this town that I want to go to." My reply to that is why not? New York is full of people who come from little towns like Warren, Ohio and take to the place and go to the parties. What is it in your life experience that has enabled you or compelled you to remain insistently an outsider?

Roger Ailes: Well I started out digging ditches in Ohio and putting in sewer pipe. I know those people very well. They do not get to go to these parties. They are happy to get to go to the Olive Garden on a Friday night and go home and watch a game. Frankly, that is more entertaining than going to the New York parties. I have been to some. I have to go to some for business purposes. I never wanted to necessarily. It is just my personality. I understand what is going on out there. People are really hurting. I went back to my hometown and they were holding up signs, welcome home Roger. Please come back. Bring jobs. I mean, these are people who are really suffering. They are people who are worried about the security of the United States. They are worried about being able to afford college for their kids. So I work like I worked when I was 25 years old. I do not work any differently. So I do not party any differently probably.

Peter Robinson: So you have made a conscious effort to remain in touch with the heartland in a way that the folks who staff most news rooms around here, you would argue just have not.

Roger Ailes: Well I meet too many people who want to be seen in restaurants, and get the right table, and want people to think that they care. They wear ribbons for various charity events. I try to contribute to charity. I try to help people where I can, but I do not wear the pins. So they assume that I do not care. Of course I care. I do not think wearing the right pin makes me a caring person. I think whether I am or I am not is in my heart.

Peter Robinson: Ken Oletta, listen to this one; "Roger Ailes needs enemies like a tank needs fuel." You have been successful Roger since you were in your twenties. I mean, producer of the Mike Douglas show when it started out in Cleveland and it became a big national show, and all this is happening to you when you are still in your twenties. You have got success early, and yet you remain as everyone will say one of the most pugnacious men in the business. How come? Why the pugnacity?

Roger Ailes: Well I would argue with that. I do not need enemies. I have plenty. I actually do not need any more. I have had my ups and downs in my life and in my career; but it is not whether you stay down, it is whether you get up. I have had to get up several times and I do. I do not look for fights.
Peter Robinson: But you do not mind them. You do not mind them.

Roger Ailes: Well I am better at them then probably I should be. I do not look for them.

Peter Robinson: Okay.

Roger Ailes: I really do not. I am quite a happy guy, and I prefer to stay that way. If somebody gets over the line or challenges in some incorrect way, I will respond because I do not worry about what they are going to write about me.

Peter Robinson: You grew up in a factory town. Just on the demographics, that would suggest democrat background. You made your career in the media. Again just on the sort of demographic averages that would suggest that you would be a liberal democrat. The three presidents you helped get elected; Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George H. W. Bush. Where do your politics come from?

Roger Ailes: Many of my family were democrats I think, and we grew up in a kind. They were World War II democrats. They were very patriotic. They were very much in favor of the country. They might have been a little more pro-union or what have you. I never had a political thought, I do not think until they asked me to join the Richard Nixon campaign. I joined as a television producer. Now the New York Times likes to write that I was somehow a strategist and in charge of the southern strategy. I was hired to put the key light and the back light in the right place, and make sure the tape was rolling. I was a good television producer. Everybody said this guy will never get elected on television. I thought that is a media challenge. I am pretty good at media. Let me see what I can do here. I did not disagree with his policies.

Peter Robinson: Can I just ask sort of as a mental experiment; if in 1967 it had been Hubert Humphrey in the green room of the Mike Douglas show saying something about television, would you have just as readily gone to work for Hubert Humphrey as for Richard Nixon?

Roger Ailes: No, because I knew Hubert Humphrey and I knew Linden Johnson's policies with regard to Vietnam. Remember.

Peter Robinson: So it was Vietnam?

Roger Ailes: Yeah. Vietnam; my best friend was killed in that war. I was too old for it. I tried to fly but I could not get into the flying because of eyesight when I was in my early twenties. Then by the time I was 25, I was out of range of draft and so on. I knew a lot of people who went. I did not think that escalating 400,000 more troops warranted in a jungle that I did not know what we were going to win. It is a little bit like Afghanistan right now. Now I understand the nuclear issue, but there is a problem. When you send people into war, you have to tell them what they are trying to win.

Peter Robinson: Go in to win or do not go.
Interview with Roger Ailes

Roger Ailes: Yeah.

Peter Robinson: So your politics with Richard Nixon, it was the silent majority, the heartland, the hard working, the patriotic American. With Reagan it was the Reagan democrat; again hardworking, patriotic, tend to be in the heartland. Those are the people that you think of yourself as that kind of American. Is that right?

Roger Ailes: I am not. I see myself between the Hudson River and the Sierra Madres. I do not see myself at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel or La Cirque here in New York. Those are people who aspire to different things. The chattering class, they want to talk about these things. They think Ahmadinejad wants to have a chat with us and that we have not really been out enough for outreach. No, he wants to actually cut our heads off and blow us up with nuclear weapons. He has made that clear. There is something about those people who think oh, he is just kidding. He does not want to kill us. No, he wants to kill us. I tend to be a realist about things.

Peter Robinson: Okay. Segment three, number seven. The London Telegraph recently published its list of the 100 most influential conservatives in America. Roger Ailes came in at position seven. That is ahead of former President George W. Bush, ahead of Chief Justice John Roberts, and ahead of Presidential candidates Governor Tim Pawlenty and former Governor Mitt Romney. On the other hand, I have to break it to you; you came in just behind Glenn Beck. So here you are, the director of a news.

Roger Ailes: Glenn is actually not a conservative. I would argue that in 40 years nobody has ever asked my position on an issue. They have no idea what I believe about certain issues.

Peter Robinson: So you reject this outright?

Roger Ailes: I do. I think you have to know, just like in a poll; you have to know how the question was asked. What is their definition of a conservative? I tend to be conservative. I grew up in Ohio during Taft time and so on and the Eisenhower era. I tend to be conservative on many issues, certainly on national security. I would probably qualify, but I am not anywhere near a radical.

Peter Robinson: Okay. Let us talk about the effect, the Fox effect. Whose term am I using? I am using the 44th President of the United States' term. He called it the Fox Effect. Barack Obama said that the Fox Effect probably cost him a couple of points in the election. Democratic political consultant James Carvel said recently that "If Roger Ailes were a democrat there would be 67 democratic senators right now instead of 59."

Roger Ailes: 68, but go ahead.

Peter Robinson: 68?

Roger Ailes: I respect James, but when I used to do that for a living I was pretty good at it.
Peter Robinson: Okay. So here you have the President of the United States and others, including the extremely intelligent James Carvel saying Fox News shapes the nation's politics. Were you pleased? Were you appalled?

Roger Ailes: That is their fault.

Peter Robinson: Go ahead.

Roger Ailes: That is their fault. What we do is we go on the air every day with two points of view in the news. Glenn Beck has a phone on his set that says if I make any factual errors please call me so I can correct them immediately and apologize. The phone never rings because what he is saying is apparently true. We have been 13 years on the air. In our fourteenth year we have never taken a story down because of factual problems.

Peter Robinson: Right. Paul Starr, journalist writing in the current issue of the Atlantic. This is a longish quote but he gets at something interesting. I want to see how you respond. "Not since the nineteenth century have Presidents had to deal with partisan media of this kind." He was referring to cable news. "Today the media saturates American life far more fully than they did early in American history." Now here we go. "When Cronkite gives way to Beck, political leadership loses a consensus building partner. This is the problem that faces Obama." Cable news fractures the media. The President can no longer command the attention of the entire nation. He has got this niche operation, that niche operation, and Fox News over here attacking, attacking, attacking. It is a new kind of problem that a President has not had to face before.

Roger Ailes: Well, Spiro Agnew did not like the media either and he went off on nattering nabobs of whatever.

Peter Robinson: Negativism?

Roger Ailes: Negativism. Now we hear the President saying it is all the cable news' fault. What about the other cable news channels that endorse everything and cheer? I mean they get up and applaud. He stood up at the radio TV dinner and said I know you all voted for me, and they stood up cheering. Of course they did.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Roger Ailes: I once asked somebody; I went to one of those seldom that I go to parties, but somebody started on me about Fox News being conservative. I said are you comfortable with CNN and MSNBC? He said absolutely. I said what about NBC, ABC, and CBS? He said fine. I said PBS, NPR? No problem. I said New York Times, Washington Post, and LA Times? He said great. I said but this little cable channel called Fox is somehow ruining your life? I said keep in mind the last two guys to get all of them lined up together were Hitler and Stalin. That did not work out well for people. To be honest with you, if all the media tipped to the right I
would be the biggest liberal in New York. The American people have got to understand that
everything that government does costs money. There are only two places to get it; their wallet or
to print it. If they print it, it reduces the amount of money in their wallet. That is it. So they get
a right to have a voice in those things. Politicians do not like that. The way they get re-elected is
to spend money, spend the American people's money. You are seeing some people begin to
rebel.

Peter Robinson: So when you think of the way the press treated Richard Nixon; when you
think of the way the press treated George W. Bush, do you subscribe to the statement of your
news host Chris Wallace that the Obama administration is the biggest bunch of cry babies that he
has dealt with in his 30 years in Washington?

Roger Ailes: That was just.

Peter Robinson: They are whining over nothing.

Roger Ailes: Well, I do not think they are whining over nothing. I think there are legitimate
complaints that they can have. I have had this dialogue with David Axelrod who I like very
much. There are legitimate areas. Chris said that. Those are his words. That is what he
believed, and he had reason to believe that.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Roger Ailes: I do not think it is helpful to say that. I mean, Richard Nixon got himself into
trouble and he got a lot of press because he went to war with the press, which is never helpful.
George W. Bush probably could have been more articulate about some of the things he was
doing, although in retrospect the main successes in the Obama administration is where he is
copying what George W. Bush did. He is having problems everywhere else.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Roger Ailes: I am not taking sides here on either one. I would love for Barack Obama to
understand that Americans are worried. They are worried about their national security. They are
worried about government spending. Yeah, they are worried about health care. Let me give you
an example, and I tried to say this. 300,000 people roughly, not quite that 270 or 280, who have
health care they like.

Peter Robinson: 300 million.

Roger Ailes: 300 million.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Roger Ailes: There are 30 million who do not. If you are an executive, where do you go to
solve that problem? Do you go upset the 300 million who are happy, or do you go over here and
try to maybe try to get a public-private partnership between insurance and the government to take care of the 30 who need it? We did not do that. The health care plan was a voter registration plan. As long as you can get 300 million people getting a check from the government, they are going to vote a certain way.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Roger Ailes: One party government does not work. It worked in Chicago, but it does not work for the country. Every time you have a poverty city, you have one party government. Chicago, Newark.

Peter Robinson: Baltimore.

Roger Ailes: Cleveland, Baltimore; you cannot have one party. It does not matter which party. Republicans sometimes steal big things like Enron and things like that. They tend not to steal cities. Corruption and leadership are the two biggest problems in American today. The corruption is a problem and the fact that people just will not step up and lead is another problem.

Peter Robinson: Segment four; the medium itself, talk radio. Rush, Sean Hannity, Hugh Hewitt, Laura Ingram, Michael Medved, and on and on. Air America, the left wing attempt to launch a talk radio station; belly up, gone. Cable TV, there is Fox News and then there is everybody else. Print journalism, broadcast television; politically you get a completely different complexion. Why is it that conservative or free market or simply pugnacious journalism tends to thrive in talk radio and cable news operations, but these other media seem to be dominated by liberals? Is there something about the media themselves? What is going on there?

Roger Ailes: What are the two that are dying out? Broadcast and print journalism, and cable and talk radio are still going up. That is because people respond to them. People have a right. If you are going to do Air America and present all liberal views, that is fine. Those people are not funny. They are not funny. They are worried about the snail darters and the bark on the tree and the ozone. They go crazy because it is hard to sell some of those points of view. It is hard to sell that you want to have a chat with Ahmadinejad. It is hard to sell that a 12 trillion dollar deficit is a great idea. It is hard to sell that, so they attack conservatives and say these are mean horrible people because they do not want to spend their money. I think that is what the problem is. They are not very entertaining. If I produced Air America I would make it entertaining and interesting.

Peter Robinson: They are just bad journalism. They are just bad journalism.

Roger Ailes: No, they are okay. They are a great journalist and broadcast. Brokaw and those guys were great journalists.

Peter Robinson: Good professionals.
Interview with Roger Ailes

Roger Ailes: Good professionals. The journalism schools today are wildly to the left, so they say we are wildly to the right and it is just not true. They can come on and say that on our air. You see?

Peter Robinson: Roger, Fox News has defeated CNN in the ratings every year for something like eight years now. Now I can understand it if Pepsi has trouble catching up with Coke because there is a secret formula, but what you do is right there. You turn on the dial and it is on. Hours and hours and hours of Fox News. Why is it that there is some; that CNN and MSNBC are culturally or organizationally incapable of doing what they need to do to catch up?

Roger Ailes: Believe it or not I knew Colonel Sanders. When I was young I worked at WTAP in Parkersburg, West Virginia when I was in college. I used to stop at Colonel Sanders original restaurant.

Peter Robinson: Really?

Roger Ailes: Down in Marietta, I think, Ohio right before the bridge. I would drive down there at night. Fox News has a secret formula, and we are never going to tell anybody what it is. That is it. I learned a lot from Colonel Sanders.

Peter Robinson: But why can they not? What is it? It is in their heads somehow that CNN will not stoop to do what Fox does even though?

Roger Ailes: We have got to look down to find them. The idea of stooping to our level is just ridiculous. I mean they do everything we do in terms of tabloid journalism, only worse. It is not that. There are several factors. Somebody asked me how I pick talent. I sat down and wrote a list because I am going to do a book one of these days.

Peter Robinson: Okay.

Roger Ailes: I had 26 items of how I picked talent. Just I quickly said how do I do it, and there were 26 items. The first one was do I hate their agent? If I hate their agent they are never going to even get an interview. There are ways you do these things.

Peter Robinson: Fox anchor Neil Cavuto once asked GE chairman Jeff Immelt how he planned to improve GE’s cable news operation, MSNBC. They may sell it soon, but they still own it for now. Immelt replied, "I think the standard right now is Fox. I want to be as interesting and edgy as you guys are." MSNBC seems to be trying to be a niche player on the left. Are they doing a good job? Are they misreading you as saying you have got the niche on the right so we will try to take the left? What is going on there?

Roger Ailes: Well I am not going to help them. I think that every one of these networks has talented people, and many of them are friends of mine believe it or not. I do not want to disparage what they do. I think that if you understand America; people say well it is a set of
right nation. There is some truth to that. In the end, there are simple things that the American people believe in. It is the reason John Wayne is still one of the top five movie stars of all time. He has been dead for 40 years. You always knew about him. Do not touch my woman. Do not steal my horse. Do not ever draw a gun on me. Otherwise we are going to get along fine.

Peter Robinson: We can be friends.

Roger Ailes: Americans are simple, but not simpletons. They are very smart. They love their family. They love their flag. They think schools have gone off the edge and killed American history, and they have. They think they ought to get to keep some of their own money. I mean, it is pretty simple stuff.

Peter Robinson: Pretty simple stuff. Last segment. Roger Ailes the pro. In a sentence or two, would you please critique each of the following as a communicator, particularly as a communicator on television? Richard Nixon.

Roger Ailes: He was hard work. He was not comfortable. It was not his media.

Peter Robinson: Did you ever develop an affection for him?

Roger Ailes: Yes. I thought he was very smart. I thought he was socially awkward. People who head the Nixon-Kennedy debate believed he won it on radio.

Peter Robinson: On radio, right.

Roger Ailes: On voice and substance, but Jack proved that life was changing. They had to look at you and see you. He was magnificent in those.

Peter Robinson: Kennedy?

Roger Ailes: Kennedy, in those debates. I think it was not his media. The times had changed and he had not.

Peter Robinson: Ronald Reagan.

Roger Ailes: Reagan was a natural because he did not feel uncomfortable around cameras, directors, people, and noise on the set. He had been through it all.

Peter Robinson: When you say he was a natural; to what extent was it a kind of God given innate gift and to what extent was it that Reagan had been through decades in Hollywood and radio and just was professional? Were you ever able to assess those?

Roger Ailes: He was a serious professional. He knew. He would say where are my marks. You never hear a candidate walk in and say where are my marks, where is my key line. Okay what is the backlight? He could do that and he knew it. He worked best with speech writers, but he would also write a lot of his own materials as you know.
Peter Robinson: Yes.

Roger Ailes: He had his own thoughts about it. He was comfortable, and that is the most important thing. He was comfortable and likable.

Peter Robinson: George W. Bush.

Roger Ailes: I have not studied. I have been so busy working in news.

Peter Robinson: You are running Fox.

Roger Ailes: I was running Fox News. I saw what everybody said. I asked our research center to get me some good press on him and they called me back in about an hour and said we cannot find any. I said this guy has been President for seven years, you cannot find anything good about him? They said not really. He was at a bridge opening or something. I thought wow.

Peter Robinson: Here you have an honorable, hard-working man, whose politics fundamentally conform with the politics that you have just been describing in the middle of the country; and he leaves office with an approval rating in the thirties.

Roger Ailes: Well if you get pounded for that many years; now he did get good press right after 9/11 but so did everybody. Now we are too worried about the terrorist's feelings. We will not even call them terrorists; we call them unhappy people who are trying to hurt us. That is just stupid.

Peter Robinson: Could he have done better? He had the war.

Roger Ailes: Yeah. He was not a natural communicator.

Peter Robinson: Did he let the medium get away from him? Could he have stayed on top of the press?

Roger Ailes: No, he could not.

Peter Robinson: He could not.

Roger Ailes: No.

Peter Robinson: All right.

Roger Ailes: Not in my view.

Peter Robinson: All right. Barack Obama. Chris Matthews famously said after listening to an Obama speech, "I felt a thrill going up my leg." Do you buy the Obama as magnificent orator?
Interview with Roger Ailes

Roger Ailes: The first time I saw him was a few years before he ran on a stage. I said that guy is really good. He was doing teleprompter speeches, but he was really good. He is obviously very smart and comfortable with language, comfortable with audiences, and so on. That is a big step. He is much more of a natural communicator. He is now so over-exposed and accepting press conferences or anything where he might have to actually answer a question that it has taken the edge off. You do not want to see too many Ginger Rogers movies.

Peter Robinson: Okay.

Roger Ailes: You enjoy them, but you do not want to see them forever.


Roger Ailes: And by the way, I did not agree with their politics always.

Peter Robinson: Yeah.

Roger Ailes: I do not feel it is my job necessarily to agree.

Peter Robinson: From the point of view of a television professional, what advice do you give Barack Obama right now? One is you are over-exposed? Stay in the Oval Office?

Roger Ailes: He is over-exposed. He is under-exposed and over-exposed. He said he is going to be transparent. He is not. So that is under-exposure. He is on television every time I look at the television set. He is kind of over-exposed but he is not letting us in on any of the inner workings of what he is trying to accomplish. He has got.

Peter Robinson: The press and people respond to that. You cannot pull that off.

Roger Ailes: No they have an investment in him now because they jumped so far in the tank during the election they cannot get out. But, he is smart. If you go to the American people sincerely and say look, I really believe a 12 trillion dollar deficit is a good idea. You have to sell it, but it is going to be a hard sell. He has to sell his ideas. Richard Neustadt, you know in Presidential Power, 50 or 60 years ago wrote that the real power of the Presidency is the power of persuasion.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Roger Ailes: He said I did not sell my health care plan well enough.

Peter Robinson: He had a year.

Roger Ailes: He had 127 appearances to sell it, so either he needs to look at his speech writers or exactly what he is saying about it. The bottom line is if you think you can trick the American
people; the old line is you can fool some of them some of the time, but you are not going to fool all of them very long.

Peter Robinson: So the notion that his oratorical gifts and his presence on television are so overwhelming that he can sell something that is unpopular to the public, that will not fly?

Roger Ailes: I do not think it will. I think that he has the chance. He has more problems probably than any president. Bush had a problem, we were attacked and 3000 people killed.

Peter Robinson: Right.

Roger Ailes: That was a tough problem. Every President has some tough problems. Some coast and some do not, but most of the times it is how you face those times you live in and how you pass through those times. I think Barack Obama has still the opportunity to be a great president. He has to decide. He has to lead the American people. He cannot tell them what to do and he cannot do it in a back room. They are going to catch on.

Peter Robinson: Okay. Last question. Roger, you have a home that you love, a family you cherish, and more money than your father the electrical worker back in Warren, Ohio could ever have dreamed of. Why do you not take up rose gardening? What keeps you coming in and putting in these long days?

Roger Ailes: There are too many people who want me to retire. If it were only me, I would probably do it. I believe we are in the most difficult tipping point probably decade of our history.

Peter Robinson: You do?

Roger Ailes: Oh absolutely. We have to go back to understanding that we are Americans. The people, multiculturalism, diversity, and all those things are very good; but they do not trump the one word that should be taught in schools, unity. People came to this country from different countries, and backgrounds, and races to be Americans. We are American African. We are American Jewish. We are American Irish. We are American something, but we are Americans. We have got to go back to that culture. We have got to teach it in our schools. We have got to understand it. We are making a difference in the world. The world looks to us to be strong. They look to us to be financially strong and militarily strong. In the end we are fair. Ultimately, we are the only guys who show up when there is trouble. Look at Haiti. That should have been a UN problem.

Peter Robinson: You cannot walk away from the mix of it?

Roger Ailes: I cannot walk away until I think that enough people understand how valuable and how important being an American is. That is a responsibility.
Peter Robinson: Roger Ailes, chairman and chief executive officer of Fox News. Thank you. I am Peter Robinson for Uncommon Knowledge. Thanks for joining us.