

**Manchin, Garrison spoke once about Bresch flap – 5/1/08**  
**Manchin says he asked for no favors for daughter**  
**By Scott Finn**

**Studio lead:** Gov. Joe Manchin says its time for the media and the state to move on from the controversy surrounding his daughter and the MBA degree she did not earn. Last week, an independent panel found that high-ranking officials at WVU were wrong to grant Heather Bresch the degree nine years after she was supposed to graduate. Bresch is also an executive at pharmaceutical-maker Mylan Incorporated. Of course, one reason this story is getting nationwide attention is because Bresch is the governor's daughter. One question that's being asked is whether Manchin intervened on her behalf. Reporter Scott Finn asked the governor about that yesterday.

**Finn:** WSAZ-TV in Charleston interviewed Manchin on Tuesday and asked him directly if he talked with Garrison about his daughter's case.

**WSAZ reporter:** Cause you had no conversations with President Garrison about any of this.

**Manchin:** No, no, no. And I think...trust me, if there would have been any after six months of evaluation...

**WSAZ reporter:** It would have come out.

**Manchin:** Sure it would have.

**Finn:** Yesterday, we asked Manchin the same question...

**Finn:** Did you talk to President Garrison...

**Manchin:** No.

**Finn:**...at any point in this?

**Manchin:** No. You know how I found out. And I've told people. I found out when Lara Ramsburg said there's something in the paper. My daughter never said anything to me.

**Finn:** That's not entirely true. Garrison told the independent panel that he spoke to Manchin about his daughter in late December.

**Garrison:** Next question.

**Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reporter:** Did you get a call from the Governor about this in October?

**Garrison:** No, I did not. I stated to the panel, and if you check my statement to the panel, the first discussion and only discussion I've had with the governor about this matter was in December after the story came out in, I believe, your newspaper. Next question.

**Finn:** In his statement, Garrison says he and Manchin were talking about the search for a new football coach. Then the subject turned to the article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Garrison said, "The only thing that he did stress to me is that we have to make sure that we have all the information. It was the governor's suggestion to be open and transparent." When we pressed Manchin a little harder, he clarified himself.

**Finn:** Did you talk to Garrison after that story came out in the paper.

**Manchin:** There could have been a time I talked. And I said, 'Mike, why didn't someone say something. I never knew there was any...' He says, 'Didn't think you needed to be involved. Didn't think you needed to know.' He says, 'It will go through the proper...' I said, 'It should go. Whatever needs to be done, should be done.' If we talked, that was all that was said that I can even remotely remember. But it was nothing. We never talked.

**Finn:** Manchin also says he didn't ask anyone else in his administration to get involved.

**Manchin:** I have never asked anyone to do anything or check into it or do any of that. Do what's right.

**Finn:** Manchin says he believes his daughter earned her degree, and that she's been singled out because he's the governor.

**Manchin:** As far as my family, if anything, it's a detriment, not a plus or a benefit. And I would only ask the press and all of you who are listening, do you believe if this was somebody else's daughter that wasn't governor or high profile, would their child be put through this? This girl has been very successful. She is very independent. She's worked hard. She has paid her way and carried her own load. And WVU, I'm sure, is extremely proud of her being a graduate of that school and now being head of a company that has 11,000 employees that has worldwide operation, that has grown. This is not fair for her. And it's hard. I'm speaking as a father now. When my children hurt, I hurt.

**Finn:** He also questions the motives of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, which broke the story in December. Bresch's employer, Mylan, is based in suburban Pittsburgh.

**Manchin:** And then, what is the great interest? Why would someone from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, in this type of attack? I've never seen anything like it in my life. We're too tough. This is a strong state. We're not going to let this happen and destroy us from within. It won't happen.

**Finn:** Manchin also challenged Paul Speaker, the WVU professor who was in charge of the MBA program when Bresch was a student. To understand this, we have to go back to the fall of 1998. At the time, Bresch was busy with a major trial involving Mylan in California. She was having trouble completing her classes. So, in December 1998, she met with Speaker to see if her work experience could substitute for class credit. Bresch says that Speaker said yes. Speaker disagrees. He says he suggested a "workout plan." But neither one of them followed up on that plan, and Bresch never registered or paid for those credits. In our interview, Manchin brings up apparent contradictions in Speaker's story, based on statements from other WVU officials.

**Manchin:** And then to have this one contradiction from this one person, that says, 'Oh, I've never said this.' And then the FOIA information comes out and says, well, I guess I can see where there might have been a misunderstanding. Well, how can you say there could be a misunderstanding, when previously you said you never talked and never said anything.

**Finn:** All day Wednesday, Manchin fielded questions about his daughter. He says it's time for the media and the public to move on.

**Manchin:** There's nothing there. If they're trying to make this into some kind of a plot, or this paranoia that's going on, I have never nor will I ever ask for a favor. Okay?

**Finn:** But it doesn't look like this issue is going away. The WVU faculty senate plans to talk about it Monday and again on May 12<sup>th</sup> – the day before Manchin competes in the Democratic primary. Also, several high-profile donors, including one that pledged \$1M for a new museum at WVU, have said they're withholding their donations until their confidence in the university is restored.

For West Virginia Public Broadcasting, I'm Scott Finn in Charleston.