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**Angry Phone Call**

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported last month that Lynne Cheney, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, "is well-known for her temper" and not afraid of expressing displeasure when she feels her stewardship has been falsely maligned.

The story's author, Stephan Salisbury, recently got a taste of that displeasure. Cheney's communications director, Clare del Real, called the Inquirer's ombudsman to say she "would no longer deal with Salisbury because she considers his coverage vicious."

Del Real says Cheney was "troubled" by Salisbury's stories but that cutting him off was not the chairman's idea. Del Real says she told her boss that she had declared Salisbury "persona non grata" and that "unless I could trust a reporter, I could not do business with him."

Salisbury called del Real's complaints "totally ludicrous..." She doesn't address any of the issues in the story and doesn't cite any specific instances of error or imbalance.

The contretemps began when Salisbury asked "several times" to speak to Cheney for two stories involving NEH. "They said she was incredibly busy and wouldn't be available," Salisbury says.

Salisbury's May 3 story dealt with the controversy surrounding Cheney's nomination of Carol Iannone to an NEH advisory panel. A June 11 story dealt with allegations that Cheney has rejected grant proposals for political reasons. Salisbury quoted from Cheney's past statements, noting that she had declined to comment for the article, and included several quotes from NEH program chief Jerry Martin.

The story cited Cheney's "angry telephone calls" to critics, quoting Lois Scharf, executive director of National History Day, as saying Cheney told her that "it will be a cold day in Hell before I lift a finger for you again."

Del Real's complaint followed a June 14 report on the Iannone nomination, in which Salisbury quoted an unnamed source as harshly criticizing Iannone's record and quoted del Real as defending the nominee.

Del Real, a veteran Republican spokesman who began at NEH three months ago, says few of her comments were used. She says Salisbury quoted Scharf out of context and never made clear that his interview request also involved the June 11 grants story.

"I've never, ever had a reporter do this to me," del Real says. "When I give him answers that clearly reflect our side of a disagreement, I would expect he would quote those... We just can't do business with anyone like that."

Ombudsman John Bull says del Real "did a lot of hollering" when she called but cited few specifics.

Says Salisbury: "Ms. del Real was brought on board to make those kinds of phone calls... All this stuff just goes to confirm my story, which is that they go after people. It's kind of disturbing."