

# LOBBY WATCH

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Merry Pranksters:

March 20, 2014

## Huffines' Top Consultants Are A Wire Tapper and a 'Hooker'

Conservative Celebrity Couple Collected 11¢ of Every Campaign Dollar Spent.

To knock out powerful Dallas Senator John Carona in this month's primary Republican Senate nominee Don Huffines paid almost \$250,000 to a hooker impersonator and a failed phone tapper.

These Huffines consultants are conservative celebrity spouses Joseph and Hannah Basel. Then known as Hannah Giles, Hannah Basel played the "hooker" to activist James O'Keefe's pimp in the 2009 [media stunt](#) that helped bury the liberal advocacy group ACORN.

Hannah's husband, Joseph Basel, was [convicted](#) with O'Keefe and two others in a botched 2010 attempt to tap Democratic U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu's phones in New Orleans.

A year later the Basels formed their C3 Strategies consulting firm.<sup>1</sup> C3's first reported state campaign—for Huffines—was a doozy. The Carona-Huffines showdown was Texas' most expensive 2014 legislative primary.<sup>2</sup> After advertising costs, the Huffines campaign's top payouts went to C3 for consulting and canvassing. On the eve of the primary, the Basels had collected 11 cents of every dollar that Huffines spent.

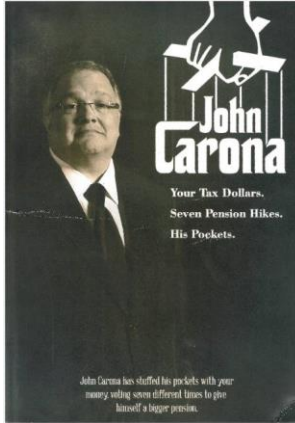


James O'Keefe and Hanna Giles pose as pimp and hooker to publicize the 2009 ACORN sting.

The Basels also helped launch three conservative Texas non-profits with other conservative media celebrities. They formed the [American Phoenix Foundation](#) in 2010 with Stan Dai, another one of the "Landrieu Four." That non-profit reported to the IRS that it raised almost \$500,000 from undisclosed sources in its first two years. Its stated purpose is to "recruit, educate and facilitate citizen journalists."

### Huffines Campaign Payments to C3

Date	Amount	Description
12/4/13	\$35,000	Campaign Services
12/19/13	\$28,244	Campaign Services
1/3/14	\$41,538	Grassroots Canvassing
1/9/14	\$107,969	Grassroots Canvassing
2/1/14	\$32,859	Campaign Consulting
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$245,610</b>	



A Huffines attack ad.

In 2011 Hanna Giles Basel helped form a non-profit promoting civic solutions “without the necessity of governmental funding.” Yet the [website](#) of Citizen Patriot Response does not list Hanna Giles Basel as a founder.

Citizen Patriot’s most prominent founder was Los Angeles blogger [Andrew Breitbart](#), who championed and bankrolled O’Keefe and Giles before his 2012 death. Another founder was [Brandon Darby](#), who recently opened [Breitbart.com’s](#) Texas office. As an FBI informant in 2008, Darby helped convict Austin activists [plotting](#) to serve Molotov cocktails at the Republican convention in Minnesota.<sup>3</sup>

Another founder of Citizen Patriot, Catherine Engelbrecht, previously formed Houston’s [King Street Patriots](#) to advocate strict voter-identification laws.

In 2011 Joseph Basel also started Culture Shift Foundation to support “cultural activities and artists that promote liberty.” That non-profit’s other founders are Kristopher Rutherford and Chris Loesch. Loesch’s wife, conservative commentator Dana Loesch, had a [litigious falling out](#) with Brietbart.com in 2012.

Late in the last decade a small cadre of young conservatives from the East Coast and Midwest adopted colorful, merry-prankster media tactics reminiscent of 20<sup>th</sup> Century leftist organizers Saul Alinsky and Abbie Hoffman. A disproportionate number of these young activists gravitated to the monster Red State of Texas. That’s where Joseph and Hannah Basel now appear to be transitioning into lucrative careers as political consultants.

## The ‘Landrieu Four’ Plumbers



Joseph Basel

Stan Dai

Robert Flanagan

James O’Keefe

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In 2012 Joseph Basel also formed the for-profit American Lion Studios, LLC.

<sup>2</sup> One week before the election, Carona reported spending \$3,979,740, surpassing the \$2,315,865 Huffines spent.

<sup>3</sup> Breitbart.com wrote about a 2013 [confrontation](#) between Darby and one of the Molotov baristas he informed on. Brandon Darby recently fired the author of that article, Lee Stranahan, in a [split](#) covered by the *Texas Observer*.