

Power Corrupted

How Carbon County Attorney Alex Nixon Uses and Abuses His Office to Shield the Good Old Boy Club and Silence Critics

OPINION & EDITORIAL

By Lisa Bennett

When a citizen sits in the dock of a courtroom, the message delivered by the State of Montana is absolute, solemn, and unyielding. You are told that the law is a sacred shield, that public safety is paramount, and that rules apply to everyone equally. We are lectured on personal responsibility by prosecutors who wear the mantle of the public trust like a badge of moral superiority.

But what happens when the man holding the charging pen—Carbon County Attorney Alex Nixon, who decides entirely in his own discretion whose life gets upended by a criminal charge—decides that those rules are optional for himself?

Let’s be clear about how the power is structured: as County Attorney, Nixon doesn’t hold the gavel; a judge does. But the County Attorney holds something far more dangerous in an unchecked system: absolute prosecutorial discretion. He decides which crimes are brought to light and which are quietly buried. That unilateral power means he can simply look the other way for friends and members of the good old boy club, while throwing the full penalty of the law at those that dare challenge the good old boy club. It gives him the unchecked ability to target and prosecute any citizen who steps out of line—making examples out of community members he wants to intimidate, silencing critics, or pushing ideological political agendas under the guise of law and order.

Carbon County Attorney Alex Nixon has made a career out of this brand of selective accountability. Yet, looking back at his track record of dodging scrutiny, sheltering insiders, and his own cavalier brushes with the law, it is painfully clear: Carbon County has a top prosecutor who looks the other way for political insiders, and enforces strict punishment for anyone who dares rock the boat.

The Midnight Double Standard and the Cost of Recklessness
Let’s talk about the elephant in the room—or rather, the cruiser parked on the side of the highway, and the dangerous reality of driving under the influence.

According to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), an impaired driver has, on average, driven under the influence approximately 80 times before their first official arrest. When an ordinary citizen who dares to question the status quo gets behind the wheel after a drink, the system moves with swift, merciless precision. Handcuffs click, licenses are suspended, and public shaming follows immediately. But when Carbon County’s own chief law enforcement lawyer, Alex Nixon, was pulled over by the Montana Highway Patrol and slapped with a DUI charge, how did the machinery react? Behind closed doors, quiet legal handwringing, and an establishment eager to look the other way and sweep personal failings under the rug.

How many innocent families, teenagers, and community members did Nixon seriously put in jeopardy on the road before that arrest caught up with him—and how many times since? Among local observers, the open secret and persistent rumor is that his March 2023 arrest was hardly an isolated incident, pointing to a long-running pattern of driving under the influence both before and after that night.

When the heat briefly turned up, Nixon offered a token gesture of resignation—knowing full well that his allies on the county commission would refuse to accept it, allowing him to save face while keeping his grip on power. True to form for the good old boy network, the commissioners quickly batted it away, keeping him securely in office. And while ordinary offenders carry the permanent stigma of their convictions, Nixon managed to secure an expunged record—a legal luxury few ordinary citizens ever see.

The hypocrisy runs even deeper when examining his private conduct in the county’s open range area, a legally established “driver



Alex Nixon

beware” zone where livestock have the legal right to roam. Consider the civil litigation involving the Harrison Ranch Company, where late at night Nixon struck a cow on the open range. In a stunning display of entitlement, reports indicate he was never given a breathalyzer at the scene, yet had the gall to turn around and sue the ranch, dragging a local family-owned business through a punishing three-year legal battle and saddling them with heavy legal fees. It is the ultimate expression of a system rigged by the good old boy network: wreck your car on someone else’s livestock in a designated open range where drivers are legally bound to beware, escape standard chemical testing, and then use the legal system to punish the victim.

Masterclass in Manipulation: Lies of Omission, Secret Files, and Political Cover-Ups

If you want a masterclass in how this good old boy network covers its tracks, look no further than how Nixon handles official inquiries. When responding to state regulators regarding election integrity complaints, Nixon mastered the art of the misleading narrative. In an official May 18, 2026 letter to the Commissioner of Political Practices (COPP), Nixon aggressively pushed to dismiss complaints by leaning heavily on technicalities, claiming that the applicable periods of limitation had run.

Conveniently, Nixon’s letter relies on lies of omission: he emphasizes that the misdemeanor statute of limitations has passed, while glossing over the fact that if federal or felony election violations occurred, those carry a 5-year window. He boldly asserts that matters were “thoroughly investigated” and “found to be unsupported”. But when public records requests were subsequently filed with the Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) to view the DCI investigative files, the AG’s office stonewalled, hiding behind a blanket claim that investigation files are completely confidential and refusing to produce a single record.

If there is nothing to hide, why keep the records locked away? When transparency is blocked, it becomes entirely plausible that these agencies are covering up the fact that a rigorous investigation was never actually completed—or perhaps never happened at all. Nixon leans heavily into this manufactured lack of transparency, counting on the public’s inability to verify his claims. Meanwhile, whispers grow louder about how federal inquiries into local conduct—such as the FBI investigation—mysteriously wound down after just a single interview, managed under an establishment where partisan ties and institutional self-preservation run deep. After all, Nixon operates as a Democrat while carefully hiding behind the “nonpartisan” label in local races, seamlessly leaning on friendly state-level networks to shield his office from real accountability.

This systemic deception traces right back to the county’s public statements. In a January 2023 press release approved under his watch, the county defended the shredding of UOCAVA ballot materials by claiming it was standard practice to protect voter identity. Yet this “interpretation” flies directly in the face of common sense and election laws, which mandate that all election records must be preserved. Whether it is dodging accountability

for destroying documents, hand-waving away serious allegations, or building an administrative shield to protect local cronies, Nixon treats the law not as a standard of justice, but as a flexible tool to protect his inner circle.

Hiding Behind the Shield of Government Immunity
When regular people make a mistake, they face the music. When Alex Nixon makes a mistake—or worse, when his office tramples on the civil liberties of citizens—he doesn’t face a jury of his peers. Instead, he retreats behind the impenetrable fortress of government and prosecutorial immunity.

As legal scholars and everyday citizens increasingly ask: *When government breaks the law, can you even sue?* The answer in Nixon’s world is a frustrating, rigged “no.”

When federal civil rights lawsuits have pointed out that Nixon acted outside the bounds of proper legal procedure—stepping into private property disputes to act as a “curbside courtroom” without probable cause—he didn’t stand up like a man and defend his actions on their merits. He hid behind the state, invoking legal shields designed to protect public officials from accountability, effectively rendering himself untouchable. It is the ultimate tool of the institutional bully: wield the heavy sword of the state against everyday citizens who challenge the local power structure, and when you overreach, duck behind government immunity to dodge the consequences while the taxpayers foot the bill.

A History of Strategic Omissions and Evasion

As County Attorney, an elected prosecutor’s job is not to win at all costs; it is to seek justice. Yet time and time again, Nixon has demonstrated that his primary loyalty is not to the people of Carbon County, but to power preservation and protecting his cronies.

It’s a game of strategic omissions, where uncomfortable truths are buried, oversight is resisted, and anyone who dares question the local power structure is treated as an enemy of the state. From shielding institutional allies to dodging liability when his office steps out of line, Nixon relies on secrecy and legal technicalities to keep the public in the dark.

The Public Deserves Better Than a Protector of Himself

The people of Carbon County are not fools. We smell the stench of protectionism. We see how sensitive investigations involving the good old boy club are met with a blind eye, while the full weight of the law is brought down on anyone who dares challenge them.

Alex Nixon was elected to protect the public, not his own career or his network of friends. He was hired to uphold the law, not treat it as a flexible weapon that looks the other way for insiders while intimidating those who demand transparency.

As County Attorney, a prosecutor who flouts the very laws he is sworn to enforce—and then cowers behind government immunity to avoid accountability—has forfeited his moral authority to prosecute anyone else. A man who relies on secrecy, special treatment for his inner circle, and institutional armor has no business sitting in a public office funded by the very citizens he holds in contempt.

It is time to retire Nixon—don’t vote him back into office. We need a County Attorney with morals, not loopholes. Carbon County deserves a justice system built on integrity, equality under the law, and honest leadership—not a private playground for the good old boy network. 🗳️