



Attorney General Eric Holder speaks at DC drug court graduation

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[Video link](#)

WASHINGTON - Attorney General Eric Holder attended a graduation ceremony Thursday where the honorees were saluted for staying clean and sober. All of them rewarded for completing the strict conditions of D.C. drug court.

As the ceremony began, many if not all of the graduates, walked into a courtroom where they once stood in handcuffs and shackles - strangled by drugs and looking for anyway out.

"Drug court has been a blessing to me," said Alvin Holbrook. "When I first walked in drug court, I knew I had a problem and it was out of control."

With the Attorney General looking on, the graduates received their diplomas along with a gift they had been promised from the start.

"Your Honor, with the courts permission, the United States would like to Nolle the case of Ivan Carter," said U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Ronald Machen.

That's right - Nolle. It is a Latin term meaning "will not prosecute."

"I am proud to report the results of this drug court and all of those around the country have been clear," said Holder. "Fully three quarters of drug court graduates nationwide are able to avoid re-arrest for at least two years after the program. Studies suggest drug courts can reduce crime as much as 45 percent, more than any other sentencing options."

Shameka O'Brien was among the group to get her diploma Thursday. Eight months ago, she was strung out on PCP.

"I was in denial when I was out on the street," she said. "The light didn't come on. It was real dim."

That is until her arrest last September 11th.

"I needed a sober and clean mind to further do what I want to do, especially for my kids, because I have teenagers and grown kids and it was time to break that chain," O'Brien said.

And here's the irony. As she accepted her diploma, O'Brien recited an anti-drug poem she wrote herself at the age of 13.

"Why take drugs, is that going to make you hip? Just to put a joint between your lips. Does it make you happy to impress your friends? But will they be there in the end? The pressure's heavy with all the drugs you face, but just getting involved will lead to one lonely place. A place where only you can go. A place that could have been avoided by a simple no. But no, we had to get involved, had to use drugs. It only left us with some raggedy rugs. So don't get involved with boat, coke or meth. Don't get involved with any of that mess. Take my advice and try my way. Earn your apple the honest way."

O'Brien is now a clean and sober at 38 years old.