

Bernadine Dohrn

- Leader of the domestic terrorist group Weatherman
- Participated in the bombings of New York City police headquarters in 1970, the Capitol building in 1971, and the Pentagon in 1972
- Delighted in Charles Manson's infamous murders
- Director of the Children and Family Justice Center at Northwestern University
- Professor at Northwestern University Law School

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1942, Bernardine Dohrn is currently an Associate Professor of Law at Northwestern University, where she is also Director of the Legal Clinic's Children and Family Justice Center. Moreover, she sits on important committees and boards of the American Bar Association and the [American Civil Liberties Union](#).

In the 1960s, Dohrn was a leader of the [Students for a Democratic Society's "Weatherman"](#) faction, which in 1969 went underground to become America's first terrorist cult. At a 1969 "War Council" in Flint, Michigan, Dohrn gave her most memorable and notorious speech to her followers. Holding her fingers in what became the Weatherman "fork salute," she said of the bloody murders recently committed by the Manson Family in which the pregnant actress Sharon Tate and a Folgers Coffee heiress and several other inhabitants of a Benedict Canyon mansion were brutally stabbed to death: "Dig it! First they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the same room with them. They even shoved a fork into the victim's stomach! Wild!" The "War Council" ended with a formal declaration of war against "AmeriKKKa," always spelled with three K's to signify the United States' allegedly ineradicable white racism.

Professor Dohrn has said of her Weatherman past, "We rejected terrorism. We were careful not to hurt anybody." Both assertions are false, however. Weatherman's twofold agenda was terrorism (which is why Charles Manson was Dohrn's hero) and war (the organization's very existence was launched with a formal "declaration of war"), and Dohrn periodically issued "war communiqués" to the public at large. The intention of the group was to shed their "white skin privilege" and launch a violent race war on behalf of Third World People. A Chicago district attorney named Richard Elrod was seriously injured in the Weatherman riot that erupted during the Chicago "Days of Rage" in October 1969, and he was paralyzed for life as a result. Dohrn later led a celebration of Elrod's paralysis by leading her comrades in a parody of a Bob Dylan song -- "Lay, Elrod, Lay." Moreover, law-enforcement authorities are still investigating a bombing in San Francisco that killed a policeman, for which Professor Dohrn is one of the suspects.

Dohrn spent most of the 1970s with her accomplices running from the FBI, which had placed her on its "Ten Most Wanted List." During the last years of their underground life, Dohrn and her husband [Bill Ayers](#) resided in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood where they used the aliases Christine Louise Douglas and Anthony J. Lee. In 1980 Dohrn and her cohorts surrendered to authorities, but all charges against them were subsequently dropped on the grounds that the fugitives had been illegally surveilled. Dohrn did plead guilty, however, to charges of aggravated battery and bail-jumping, for which she received probation.

Shortly after turning themselves in, Dohrn and Ayers adopted Chesa Boudin, son of former Weather Underground members Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert, when the parents were arrested for their activities with the Black Liberation Army.

Dohrn later served less than a year in prison for refusing to testify against ex-Weatherman **Susan Rosenberg** in the latter's trial for armed robbery.

Today Professor Dohrn expresses no real regret over her radical past. Though she has distanced herself from the Manson remark (insinuating falsely that it was a "joke"), her political views are as extreme as ever. On one occasion she justified her past actions, saying, "We organized both against war and racism. We also taught that all human life is equally valid, not just the body count of the United States."

In the mid-1990s, Dohrn and her husband **Bill Ayers** hosted **meetings** at their Chicago home to introduce **Barack Obama** to their neighbors during his first run for the Illinois Senate.

Professor Dohrn has been a commencement speaker at several university graduations, including California's prestigious Pitzer College, where in 2004 she told the graduates: "During your student years here, the shredded economy and loss of jobs, the consequences of deregulation and devolution that bankrupted state and local governments, the relentless punishment and imprisoning of over two million people in America, flagrant corporate plunder and criminality, rolling blackouts, the apparently permanent war on terrorism, the shock and awe occupation of Iraq, systematic and degrading detention without trial, torture and extra-judicial assassinations, and the establishment of a crescent of new U.S. military bases across the Middle East and South Asia -- all have transformed whatever blissful illusions were harbored as you entered college."

Dohrn earned a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Chicago in 1963, and a J.D. from the University of Chicago School of Law four years later.

Dohrn and Ayers have two other children, whom they named Malik (the Muslim name of Malcolm X) and Zayd. Zayd's namesake is Zayd Shakur, a Black Panther killed while driving the radical JoAnne Chesimard (a.k.a. Assata Shakur) to a hideout — the resulting traffic stop shootout ended in the murder of a New Jersey State Trooper.