In 1964, Carl Oglesby, a copywriter within the Bendix Corporation, was asked by a local congressman to draft a campaign paper on the Vietnam War. He had little idea that its publication would put him on a fast track to becoming the president of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).


About the Author: Carl Oglesby (1935-2011) was an American writer, academic, and political activist. He was the President of the leftist student organization Students for a Democratic Society from 1965 to 1966. (Wikipedia)

Questions for Discussion

1. What does the raven symbolize?
2. Discuss the strategies and methods used by anti-war activists to avoid the draft? Were all anti-war activists trying to avoid the draft?
3. How did the John F. Kennedy assassination affect Oglesby? How did it affect the corporation, Bendix?
4. Why was Oglesby so worked up about the Bendix flying the American flag at half-mast immediately after the assassination?
5. Why was Wes Vivian considered a New Democrat?
6. “I am not against the American Constitution. Rather I am against those powerful enough to violate it whenever it suits them. I am a republican democrat and at the same time, yes, a democratic republican. This is not an oxymoronic contradiction in terms. Democracy without rule of law is anarchy, just as republicanism without democracy is tyranny.” (Page 53) How fitting is this quote for the 2016 presidential election?
7. Discuss the passion and drive that set Oglesby on the path of selling his middle-class home, lifestyle to join a political organization. Could you do the same? Why or why not?