**Claude Douglas "Doug" Lewsader**, son of Claude Mathew (1896-1990) and Bernice Elizabeth (Smith) (1897-1967) Lewsader, was born 22 December 1923 Danville, Vermilion County, Illinois. Doug graduated in 1941 from Okemos High School.



## Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Thursday 1 April 1943

Pvt. Claude Douglas Lewsader, 19, of Okemos, son of Mr. and Mrs. Claude M. Lewsader, 3639 Haslett-Okemos road, has arrived at University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, for course of army air force instruction lasting approximately five months prior to his appointment as an aviation cadet in the army air force.

Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Monday 2 July 1945

Stationed at a B-17 Flying Fortress base in southern England are three Okemos men, ally neighbors, as well as graduated from the same class at Okemos. The youths are: Douglas Lewsader, son of Mr. and Mrs. Claud Lewsader; Dick Williams, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Williams;

and Loren Everett, son of Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Everett. Lewsader and Williams are B-17 pilots and Everett is a parachute rigger. Williams is transporting slave labor. Stationed at a B-17 Flying Fortress base in southern England are three Okemos men, ally neighbors, as well as graduates from the same class at Okemos. The youths are: Douglas Lewsader, son of Mr. and Mrs. Claud Lewsader; Dick Williams, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Williams; and Loren Everett, son of Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Everett, Lewsader and Williams are B-17 pilots, and Everett is a parachute rigger Williams is transporting slave labor

Editor: Doug piloted B-17 Flying Fortress' during World War II. He later graduated from George Washington University, Washington D.C. There were several marriages but by the 1950's Doug was in Texas and had become personal pilot to the infamous Billy Sol Estes. Doug was caught up in the huge scandal of Estes and the Department of Agriculture involving fraudulent ammonia tank mortgages.

"<u>Oscar Griffin, Jr.</u>, the journalist who uncovered the storage tank scandal, later received the 1963 <u>Pulitzer Prize</u>. His articles for a weekly newspaper in <u>Pecos</u>, <u>Texas</u> outlined how the businessman Estes masterminded a Byzantine scheme to borrow money using nonexistent fertilizer storage tanks as collateral, leading to the FBI's investigation." (Quotation from Wikipedia.com)

Lewsader gave conflicting testimony during several court hearings of his knowledge of what went on in and around his position as Estes' pilot. Innumerable newspaper articles during 1961-1963 mention Doug: The Eagle, Bryan Texas; El Paso Herald-Post, El Paso, Texas; Abilene Reporter-News, Abilene, Texas; Longview News-Journal, Longview, Texas; The Amarillo-Globe-Times, Amarillo, Texas; Express and News, San Antonio, Texas, Corsicana Daily Sun, Corsicana, Texas.

Evetts Haley, in **A Texan Looks at Lyndon, A study in Illegitimate Power**, published 1964, Evetts reports:

As the civil litigation precipitated by the collapse spread, the testimony of scores of men was searchingly sought, among these that of **Douglas Lewsader**, Billie Sol's loquacious pilot, who at first could not even afford a jack-leg lawyer. But when the testimony of **Lewsader**—the pilot who had flown so many political notables for Estes—came to be taken his counsel was one of the most able and expensive in Texas—John D. Cofer.

In each case the public wonders: Who paid Cofer? The bankrupt Billie Sol? Then how? If not, who? And why?

Before Cofer took over and tied a knot in **Lewsader's** tongue, that knowledgeable gentleman had spilled a lot of loose and indiscriminate information. He told of a 'command call' he had one night to come to Estes' home. When he got there a big, burly man with Billie introduced himself as an agent for the Teamsters union, Hoffa's outfit that was having its trouble with Bobby Kennedy, who had lost no love on Lyndon, but who still in his capacity as Attorney General, the arbiter of federal justice and boss of the FBI—might lower the boom on Billie Sol. All of which was in the realm of political reason.

In view of the well-known fact that gangsters think and operate in terms of blackmail and payoffs, his suggestion was logical and from the point of view of all involved, if not prudent, at least reasonable. One thing about gangsters, they come to the point. His proposal was that 'for a million dollars we will deliver the dope on Lyndon Johnson.' It was a waste of words to elaborate upon its possible use among men of parts and imagination. Bargained into the hands of Bobby, it might slow the sometimes-rusty wheels of justice from grinding down on Billie Sol. In the hands of Estes, it might mean that Lyndon would have to go all the way to keep Billie out of trouble. At least these were the sordid implications.

His proposition made, the gentleman rose to his feet, flipped out his card with the address of a Chicago Club and, suggesting they check his credentials, said: 'Here's my card and here's the Club. I'll be back in two weeks to get your answer. Whoever lets this news get out will be dead!'

According to Lewsader, on April 21, 1963, two weeks later to a day, he was back for an answer. Estes had checked the Club and confirmed his identity. Aside from the other imponderables in such dealings, however, was the uncertain question of whom he really might represent. Puzzled investigators have wondered if it might have been Lyndon, or even the Kennedys, applying the ancient materialistic test as to whether Billie Sol himself was amenable to blackmail and hence politically exceedingly dangerous.

Billy Sol, the paragon of Pecos virtue who 'never took a drink, smoked, or cursed,' turned the proffered professional services down. After all there is a limit to which decent men can go.

Editor: Doug for a while, after Estes' 1963 conviction, flew helicopters for oil companies. Rumor said he stayed low, out of sight and incognito after Estes went to prison. By around 1970 he was in Alaska flying a Jet Ranger which was on contract to BLM from Kenai Air Service. Doug was used as pilot for a group doing "bear studies" with grizzly bears.

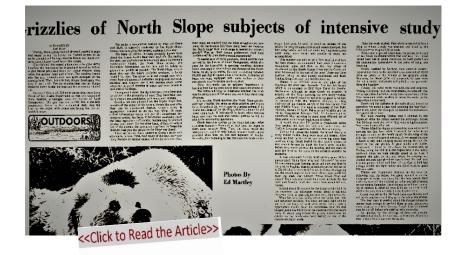
## Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (Fairbanks, Alaska) Thursday 10 June 1971

It was Lewsader's first try at the grizzly game. He's a master pilot, flying fixed wing and "choppers" for some 30 years - sometimes herding cattle and now and then in the past, he laughed, chasing jackrabbits just for the fun of it. His initial problem with the bears, however, was figuring out the correct angle to



DOUG LEWSADER Chopper Man

hold the craft so Crook could fire from the small rear window. Twice Crook fired and missed. Then Lewsader found the correct altitude for the cart and Crook's third shot, made from about 30 feet scored."



Doug also owned, for several years, The Crow Mountain Creek Lodge in Girdwood, Alaska. He was married to a woman named Theda at that time. Theda, born 10 December 1931, died in July died 29 April 1997 in Alaska

1986 in Anchorage. Doug died 29 April 1997 in Alaska.