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JOHN WILLIAM PILBEAM GOFFAGE.

a. k. a. CHIPS RAFFERTY.

John Goffage was born on 26th March, 1909, at Billy Goat Hill near Broken Hill, the first of a family-to-be of 3 boys and two girls. His father, also John William Goffage, was approximately 50 years of age when Chips, as he was to become known, was born. Because of this Chips claimed he was not particularly close to his father. John Goffage senior was about 6ft. 3ins. in height, pre-metric days of course, and was a silver miner.

The Goffage family moved around quite a bit from Broken Hill to Orange in N.S.W. and Adelaide before settling in Parramatta when Chips was about 11 years of age. He claimed it took 6 months to find the school so in his words he spent a glorious summer on the beach.

John Goffage grew very quickly when young to be a foot taller than other children and always stayed that much taller, in fact at the age of 13 years he was already 6ft. tall. At school, because of his height, he became a butt of jokes and a target for bullies so he learnt boxing and gave one of these bullies in his words "a hiding" and became accepted as an "accomplished lout". Later in life Chips remarked to the actor, Brother Charles (Bud) Tingwell that he felt he developed his personality as a defence for his height when he was young. The name Chips appears to have been given to him after a popular English comic of the time, Cornelius Chips, who was a long lean gangling sort of fellow and Chips himself said in 1970 that was how the name was derived. The Rafferty bit will be dealt with later.

When Chips was 16 he became an apprenticed moulder at The Clyde Engineering Works, but when his father died soon after, leaving the family penniless Chips broke his apprenticeship and "went bush", working at many and varied occupations including miner, kangaroo shooter, axeman and even as a false teeth packer. Over this ten year period Chips moved around extensively, at one stage having a mate, Willy, who was 4ft. 8ins. in height and it was a favourite trick for Willy to put on a long coat and sit on the shoulders of Chips and ask for handouts. It must have been quite a sight, all 10ft. of them! In these travels Chips worked with horses and also studied Aboriginal folk lore.

It is claimed that he commenced his acting career around this time,

