Maloney reckons he couldn’t have been any other way because he’s “not that good an actor”.

THE OLD MAN

Brian Maloney was renowned as a hard man of Group Ten rugby league. A rugged back in five-eighths, he sported a bristly black beard and an ethic of taking no prisoners. In times when former Sydney full-backs could go both ways and make a reasonable living—complimenting holding down an actual job—but some captains coached Orange CYMS in his mid-30s. He was level-headed, respected and feared in equal measure.

“Maloney reckon he couldn’t have been any other way because he’s ‘not that good an actor’,” says Craig Bellamy, who played with and against the man. “First time we hit, I thought we’d kill him. But when you don’t play as a really good guy. We played in a Group Ten team, together. Western Division. He was definitely one of those guys you knew playing with and not afraid of. In those days, you could give him a white sheet, and he’d just send it back to you. The game was a lot more open then.”

Maloney never saw his dad play and didn’t have too much about his playing days from the man himself: “the old boy wouldn’t have wanted me to glorify that stuff, you know. He said: ‘Everyone out in Orange speaks very highly of him as a bloke and a player,’ says Maloney. “He was pretty tough, out in the truth. He played in Queensland under Don Furner at the time. Apparently he was pretty good.”

Maloney got to grade in Sydney: “He was in Queensland for that boy. He left Queensland this year the Raiders came in. 1988. We went to Griffith. He won coach-of-the-year. He probably could have stayed but decided to go. I was a bit different then, the old back. Coy. The corps were actually really strong.”

Brian Maloney died of cancer in 2009, three months before his son made his debut with Melbourne Storm. The club gave Maloney time to grieve. Bellamy says it was tough for all of them seeing what Maloney went through. “In the clubs, we put the brave face on but you knew he was doing it tough. Very sad time for all of us,” he adds. “It was tough, but we just tried to help him through it. His mum did it really tough, too.”

Maloney was always the first to arrive and the last to leave. He was always looking for the funny side of everything, looking to play a gag on someone,” says Bellamy. And of times — not many times, but at times — he was a touch disruptive. He was a confident kid who could be very memorable. He was very popular with our blokes because he was always looking for the funnier side. And yes, at times, he found that funny side a little bit too often, to be quite honest. A few of the coaches would have maybe taken him to task. But you’re just Jimmy and one of his good qualities as well.

Maloney reckons he couldn’t have been any other way because he’s “not that good an actor.””

Maloney says he was able to hide behind some giant team-mates before sneaking out to whack blokes. “One game we’re playing The Divy, I got James Forbes on an elbow — who? Few minutes later he got me back — who?” [laughs]. “I was like, ‘Okay, that’s how it is!’ I’ve loved it after that. I’ve loved it out there.”

Maloney and four mates trained in Sydney with the North Sydney Bears. All got picked up. They’d pick from the pool. Eight day Bears boss Greg Turner picked Maloney into his office for a chat — those things weren’t usually good news for Maloney. But this time Turner asked if he had a manager.

“I said, no, it was all new to me. Greg suggested I find someone and I hooked up with Wayne Beaven, who got me a deal with Parramatta. I got about 12 and a half grand. Not free accommodation, living with uni near the league club. I used to do 20 hours a week at the stadium. I was still doing my carpentry apprenticeship and used to fix stuff. But mate, we’d be over the drink three nights a week and on money that was untraceable. [laughs].”

Maloney was on the verge of first grade with Parramatta, while still at high school. Jim Beam Clips was pretty strong, sorry, Sydney Bulls. Unfortunately, big upset. The old former NRL man, Maloney

Maloney reckons he couldn’t have been any other way because he’s “not that good an actor.”

Maloney reckons he couldn’t have been any other way because he’s “not that good an actor.”

Maloney reckons he couldn’t have been any other way because he’s “not that good an actor.”

Maloney reckons he couldn’t have been any other way because he’s “not that good an actor.”