

Domi's writing partner brings 'Shift Work' to Aurora

By Brock Weir

As a reporter covering the Toronto Maple Leafs for SportsNet, Jim Lang was often on the road with the boys in blue. When you're on the road with a team you get to know the players pretty well, and he soon became acquainted with the professional side of Tie Domi but never the personal.

Now, many years later, however, they have something of a 'bromance' going on after collaborating on Domi's new bestselling autobiography, *Shift Work*.

Lang, who lives in Newmarket with his wife and children, brings the book, which he co-authored with the hockey great, to a special book talk at the Aurora Public Library this Monday, December 14, at 7 p.m.

'We were acquaintances and casual friends, but my wife ended up calling this a bromance,' says Lang with a laugh. 'We spent a lot of time with each other to put a book like this together and almost became good buddies along the way. He met my family, I met his family, and we got to know a lot about each other personally and professionally, and that never would have happened without doing this book.'

Lang, who got his start in broadcasting at Humber College, before moving to SportsNet and The Fan, before finding himself at 105.9 The Region, the fledgling radio station serving York Region and North Toronto, which celebrates its second anniversary this Friday, says he was instrumental in getting the elusive hockey player to sit down and tell his story.

After his literary agent met with publisher Simon and Shuster, Lang was put forward as the ideal candidate to collaborate with Domi. The retired player, however, had apparently fielded numerous offers to do just that and Lang's first overture was no exception. A few months later, things had changed. After meeting up at a charity event, the puck dropped.

'In Tie's mind, he needed some separation from his hockey playing days before he was comfortable doing a new book,' says Mr. Lang. 'He retired in 2006, so it had almost been a decade since he retired from the NHL. He spent quite a bit of time helping to raise his family post-hockey and didn't want to take any time away from that, but now was the perfect time to do it.'

'He almost wanted to do it as a tribute to people like Wade Belak and Bob Probert, guys he had gotten to know who did the same job as his and lost their lives. A big reason he wanted to do it is paying tribute to the everyday people out there like construction workers, people in the coffee shop, waiters, people he feels people don't often treat with the proper respect. He wanted to write about his feelings about how everyone, no matter if you are a cab driver or shining shoes, should be treated just as importantly as the owner of a company or a star hockey player.'

Whether this was a component that surprised Lang, he went into the project with an open mind. He says he learned a lot along the way, including Domi's long struggle with dyslexia and the challenges he overcame with that while growing up.

'As a reporter and broadcaster, you don't really know the whole story,' says Lang. 'Spending time with him, doing the book, having all these conversations, gives you the full picture. There was an image in the media about the person he was. In all ways, as tough as he was, he is a big softie. His kids, his family, his friends, are everything to him. He has been through some ups and downs on and off the ice and there is a real sense of humility about him that people don't realise. He had to overcome a lot just to make it in and stay in there, and I think that will surprise a lot of people.'

While Lang's wife might call this a 'bromance', his working on *Shift Work* really did change their friendship for the better. The fact that the book has shot up the best seller list is unexpected gravy.

'I am stunned,' says Lang, who says he now opens the paper each day to check out the bestseller list, something he has never done before. 'I thought it was going to be a good book and I thought people would like it. I have written many different things, but this is

the biggest thing I have ever written in my life. I have never been part of a project this big, so to see it on the shelves and to see it selling like that is very humbling and exciting. It's almost like you won the lottery because it doesn't sink in.

?I am looking forward to the book night at the Aurora Public Library. I was very honoured when they approached me and asked me to do this.?