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EPISODE NAME: Former Professional Wrestler Paul “The Butcher” Vachon of Newport, Vermont discusses his book: Wrestling with the Past: Life In and Out of the Ring

Today on across the fence we meet a hall of fame pro wrestler and discuss his book the Chronicles Life in and out of the ring. Good afternoon and thanks for joining us I am Judy Simpson. In the early days of pro wrestling a pair of brothers from Southern Quebec earned international acclaim. Maurice and Paul Vachon, known in the ring as mad dog and the butcher were the first of many Vachons to win pro wrestling championships. This spring Paul the butcher Vachon released his latest book on his career. The book is titled wrestling with the past life in and out of the ring. Paul now lives in Newport and has made the trip down from the northeast kingdom to be with us today on across the fence. Welcome.

Paul.: Thank you very much it's nice to be here.

Judy.: The first thing that people learn about you in your book is that you're from a very big family.

Paul.: Yes actually there were 13 of us and I'm right smack dab in the middle. I have six older siblings and six younger ones.

Judy.: You grew up on a farm.

Paul.: Yes indeed on highway 105 the part the goes into Canada. When I was growing up I thought I was American because all the cars that went by our house all had Vermont’s plates on them. It wasn't till I was 13 of 14 are that I started getting out of the region and I found out that I was not really American I was French Canadian of course.

Judy.: Tell us about your father because he was originally a police officer.

Paul.: Yes my father was a sergeant of detectives in Montreal Canada. By the time he had 12 children it was hard to embrace 12 kids on a policeman salary so he decided to go back to his roots and he bought a farm in the eastern townships in bloom county on highway 105 and he brought us all to the country and taught us how to milk cows by hand and shovel manure which
is something that you have to do on a farm as you know.

Judy.: You have a great story in the book has about even though your father was not a police officer at the time she still gets calls at the home.

Paul.: Oh yes. People would come by and ask him what are we going to do Mr. Vachon because he was almost like the justice of the peace you might say because people knew he had a background in law enforcement and he had a big family and supposedly knew what to do about all sorts of situations.

Judy.: I guess he asked you at one point to help them out with one of the situations at a local bar?

Paul.: I think I must've been seven years old. This is before we moved to the farm he was working in Montreal and I happen to be riding with him that day in an unmarked police car that he had and he got a message to go to the crystal my club and ballroom. There was a riot going on and he had to clean that up. He told me you stay there and count the bodies that Euclid and I throw out. Sure enough within 10 minutes to have the place cleaned out and I counted 26 of them.

Judy.: Now you're not the only wrestler in your family?

Paul.: Absolutely not. I have asthma said earlier I have seven brothers and five sisters and all the brothers at one time did some wrestling. Amateur wrestling. The pros and my family were my brother mad dog and myself and my sister Vivian the baby of the family. She became a very well-known famous beautiful girl lady wrestler.

Judy.: And also your daughter.

Paul.: Yes my daughter Luna. She was only 12 years old when she decided she was going to be a wrestler. She idolized her and my Sister Vivian for wrestling and she saw her father in the ring all the time and I use to take her with me to the wrestling matches. She decided when she was 12 that she was going to be a wrestler. And I said a lady wrestler you got to be some kind of lunatic. To be a wrestler it's not even a business for men much less for women. And you know what use that as surname when she first started wrestling. Her professional name was Luna Vachon. Short for lunatic.

Judy.: How did you and your brother become tag team champions?

Paul.: My brother mad dog and I we became world tag team champions one we wrestled against Dick the bruise and the crusher these two guys had been AWA American wrestling association world Tai team champions and had never been beaten by anybody for the championships they're there a couple years and when we had an opportunity to wrestle against them at Comiskey Park in Chicago. I believe as white sox stadium a baseball stadium and I told mad dog what we going to do? He said just follow me kid. My brother had been hit in the throat so much that he talks like that. Lots of people thought he put it on but it didn't there was just too many blows to the larynx. I did we went in there and about 20 minutes later we became world tag team champions and it's probably one of the big reasons why together my brother mad dog and I got inducted to professional wrestling hall of fame and this is a ring I'm wearing now I never take it off and the
other one is the only jewelry I’ve ever worn this one is from the marine core. My wife was a girl from Newport and also from 105. She was a marine staff Sargent and she keeps me in line and she makes us salute every morning and I'm grateful for that. I don't know if that's true or not but she says staff sergeants deserve a salute every morning so she makes me salute.

Judy.: She's actually included in the book as far as writing she writes part of the book which I think is an interesting perspective.

Paul.: I thought it was a darn good idea because the book originally was going to be called in my mind a life after professional wrestling and of course life after professional wrestling hast to include her. You understand? She is quite a pastor so colorful. She had been a staff sergeant as I've said and she contributed to our life together for the past 20 years. It's only fair if I'm going to write about my life for the past 20 years and she has to be included. As it turns out she's quite a writer.

Judy.: She did a very good job.

Paul.: I thought so too. Almost as good a job was keeping me in line.

Judy.: That's got to be a fulltime job. You and your brother were sort of put raid as the bad guys? Was that always that someone had to be the pat dye and someone had to be the good guy when it came to the ring?

Paul.: Before I was a professional wrestler I was an amateur wrestler and so was my brother mad dog. We represented Canada in 1948 at the London Olympics when he was only 18 years old. The biggest crowd you ever get for amateur wrestling match is maybe two or 300 people because as not that spectacular to watch in richer wrestling. It's OK for an athlete if you participate and want to be there but you can never make a living wrestling as an amateur wrestler. Wrestling as a professional and as a professional means you make a living at it so you have to make a spectacular and you have to make it interesting enough and exciting enough so that people will pay so that you can get paid.

Judy.: So it's a performance sport sort of?

Paul.: Sure absolutely all professional sports are like that. Football player's boxers all professional athletes they're there to entertain you really otherwise they would not be call professionals.

Judy.: And the blood was a real.

Paul.: Yes indeed.

Judy.: Really it was very popular I remember growing up watching wrestling one watching you and your brother do think it's still as popular today when people talk about it?

Paul.: I'm of two minds and there are really two stories to tell here. Professional wrestling is not what it used to be. It has changed a lot. It was always a very very exclusive club there's never worldwide of more than 2000 professional wrestlers. And you know how many there are today? People say there has to be millions well know do know how many professional wrestlers
there are today 100 and that's all. Because that's all they need now the business has changed so much they only need 100 people that they can get on TV to show simultaneously over the world in every home that has their 40 or $50.00 to pay for pay for view. They make more and more money than ever. To make billions of dollars every year but I don't like the story to tell in order to draw that big money. First of all I would like to say this. If you're inspiring young professional wrestler and want to be a professional wrestler forget it. There's no room for you they already have the quota and that's all the need. In that aspect Wrestling is dead and another aspect is bigger than ever. As I say they can come to Burlington memorial auditorium tape their show and it's going to show simultaneously all over the world. In Hong Kong and Australia and Japan all over the place and it's the same wrestler they see all the time and that's all they need.

Judy.: When did you finish Wrestling?

Paul.: I stopped wrestling and my last match was done in Saint Albans a Vermont in 1987. It's not by Roddick but it's funny that 32 years before that I had had my first match in Richford Vermont and I guarantee you there has not been any wrestling in Richford Vermont before that and there hasn't been any since then put it so happens there was a traveling barnstorming bunch of wrestlers that came through the town put up posters and my father heard about it and said I have aborted at 17 1/2 years old he's an amateur wrestler he won the silver medal in Canadian championships he'd loved to become a professional wrestler. The man said send them over Saturday night Richford town hall and he said if he's any good will hire am and that's how I started to wrestle as a professional.

Judy.: What are some of the things you do now to keep busy?

Paul.: We'd have to talk to surgeon Goddard about that. I keep busy nowadays and I like to me and my wife Dee and I build a cabin a log cabin in the woods and we're very happy sitting there looking at the MTN and I said I'm not going to do this the rest of my life I was still in my fifties so I started going to fairs and festivals. That's what I do now fairs and festivals are over New England.

Judy.: And you also are a Santa?

Paul.: Oh yes somebody remember that. That's one of my glories also. We were setting our stuff up but the Berlin wall when the manager said Paul you have to help me the Santa that we hired he's drunk and he can't do his job. You have to do it. I said I don't know if I want to. Any way to make a long story short I've been doing it for the last 12 years and I have kids to come and see me and say you're the only Santa we've never seen so you must be the real Santa. I have a lot of fun doing it.

Judy.: I know you enjoy the very much.

Paul.: At the Berlin wall yes.

Judy.: If people are interested in finding a book or your other books which to do where can they find them?

Paul.: Actually you can get Ahold of Amazon. Amazon .Com for the last book and for the other three that a trilogy called one wrestling was real 1,2 and three. Or butcher Vachon .com.
Judy.: Okay I want to thank you so much for joining me today it's a great story because it's a unique story. You've really lead an astonishing life.

Paul.: Thank you.

Judy.: Thank you for joining me today.

Paul.: You're very welcome.

Judy.: That's our program for today; I'm Judy Simpson. We will see you again next time on Across the Fence.

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