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## Australian Story: Phantom of the Opera House

**Airs Monday, February 1 at 8pm on ABC & iview - introduced by Caroline Jones**

***"Hall was the man who buggered up the Opera House."  
Philip Drew, architect and writer***

***"Why was my father treated so badly? And why did he die a destitute, broken man?"  
Willy Hall, son of Peter Hall***

***"I think Peter Hall probably had the short end of the stick in this job."  
Jan Utzon, son of Jorn Utzon***

*Australian Story* returns on Monday, February 1 at 8pm with a gripping story that turns everything you think you know about the design of the Sydney Opera House on its head.

For more than 50 years, the celebrated Danish architect Jorn Utzon has been internationally acclaimed for creating the iconic building.

But few people have heard of Peter Hall, the local architect who completed the design after Jorn Utzon's resignation, mid-way through the project.

Hall was just 34 and had recently left the NSW Government Architect's office when he was approached to take on the job of completing Utzon's work.

He went on to completely redesign the building's interiors, turning the main hall into a single purpose concert hall and controversially shifting opera to a smaller space that had been intended for drama performance.

He also resolved the problem of how to build the glass walls on the north side of the Opera House, an issue that Utzon and his team had struggled with.

But Peter Hall's decision to take on the Opera House job came at a heavy price. For the rest of his career, he was ostracised by many in the architectural community who wanted the New South Wales government to bring back the "genius," Jorn Utzon.

In this episode of *Australian Story*, Peter Hall's children speak for the first time about their father's sad, lonely and premature death.

"My father was portrayed as a strike breaker and a mediocre architect who took on a job he shouldn't have taken," says Willy Hall.

"There were times when he found it unbearable."

Peter Hall was just 64 when he died in 1995, destitute and an alcoholic. His family sees him as a tragic victim of “that incredible building.”

“To say it destroyed him is a very strong thing, but yes I think so,” says his first wife, Libby Turner.

Willy Hall has unearthed hundreds of his father’s personal diaries, letters and photographs, a collection which gives a new slant to his father’s role in history.

“Utzon did a beautiful job of designing the concept, but unfortunately he wasn’t able to finish it. A very worthy team of talented Australians was able to finish it, and the history needs to be put right.”

Jorn Utzon’s son Jan, also interviewed for the program, says both architects deserve to be put on a pedestal for their contribution to the building.

“My father felt that this young, promising architect, who he had actually met in Denmark many years previously, was probably a good successor in the way that he would carry my father’s ideas onwards.”

***Australian Story: Phantom of the Opera House – Airs Monday, February 1 at 8pm on ABC***

Join the conversation: **#AustralianStory**

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