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Injured Pilot Testifies Against TV Star

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A helicopter pilot who is now paraplegic after a fatal crash in the Northern Territory is expected to give crucial evidence in the trial of reality television personality Matt Wright. The case, being heard in the Northern Territory Supreme Court in Darwin, follows the February 2022 accident that claimed the life of Outback Wrangler cast member Chris “Willow” Wilson.

The crash occurred in remote Arnhem Land during a crocodile egg-collecting operation. Chris Wilson, 34, died at the scene, while pilot Sebastian Robinson sustained severe spinal injuries, leaving him permanently paralysed from the waist down.

Wright, known for his work on National Geographic's *Outback Wrangler* and Wild Croc Territory, has pleaded not guilty to three counts of attempting to pervert the course of justice. Prosecutors allege he travelled to the crash site before emergency services arrived, removed or destroyed key evidence, and sought to manipulate maintenance and flight-hour records.

Evidence presented to the court includes allegations that Wright disconnected the helicopter's Hobbs meter, which records flight hours, in order to avoid expensive maintenance. Covert recordings played in court captured Wright allegedly telling another person to "just torch it," referring to maintenance documentation.

The court also heard that Wilson's mobile phone was removed from the crash scene by pilot Michael Burbidge, who allegedly disposed of it with the words, "Dani doesn't need to see what's on that," referring to Wilson's widow.

Robinson's testimony is expected to cover the events leading up to the crash, operational conditions during the flight, and the actions taken in the immediate aftermath. His account is considered central to the prosecution's case.

Other witnesses, including crocodile farmer Mick Burns, have described the scene of the crash and their interactions with Wright in the days following the incident. Aviation investigators from the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) have also been called to provide technical evidence.

The trial, expected to last four to five weeks, began with jury selection earlier this month. Justice Alan Blow has warned jurors to avoid outside media coverage after concerns were raised about a televised report that nearly derailed proceedings.

Public interest in the case remains high due to Wright's profile and the dramatic circumstances of the crash, which took place in a remote and challenging environment. The tragedy has also prompted discussions within aviation and wildlife industries about safety standards in extreme operations.

Wright maintains his innocence, and no verdict has yet been reached. Proceedings continue, with further witness testimony scheduled over the coming weeks.