



## **Tycoon's doctor son makes \$1m bid for freedom days after deadly crash**

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### **Body**

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The obstetrician son from one of Perth's richest families - accused of killing a young woman when he allegedly sped his Jaguar through one of Perth's wealthiest suburbs - has offered up \$1m to secure bail.

Rhys Bellinge appeared in Perth Magistrates Court via audio link from the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital bed to which he has been handcuffed since Saturday night, shortly after his car slammed into an Uber vehicle carrying 24-year-old student Elizabeth Pearce. Ms Pearce died as a result of her injuries and the Uber driver is in intensive care with two broken legs and a broken arm.

Dr Bellinge is a high-profile obstetrician and the son Bruce Bellinge, who himself is a prominent doctor who owns Concept Fertility.

Bruce Bellinge is married to Megan Wynne, providing her with early-stage funding to build and expand her disability employment group, APM Human Services International, that would float on the Australian Securities Exchange and make the couple billionaires.

The company was acquired by private equity shortly after it suffered a collapse in value last year. At its peak the couple were worth more than \$1bn.

Dr Bellinge's lawyer, Tony Hager, said Bruce Bellinge had been by his son's side in hospital since the incident.

Rhys Bellinge was allegedly driving at 130km/h and had a blood-alcohol content of almost four times the legal limit driving from his wife's Nedlands home to his parents' palatial home on Jutland Pde through the suburb of Dalkeith on Saturday night. He has been charged with manslaughter and dangerous driving.

Dashcam footage from the vehicle captured Dr Bellinge screaming and shouting about his estranged wife in the moments leading up to the accident. His lawyer, Mr Hager, on Tuesday told the court the language used by his client about his wife was "unflattering" and "disgraceful".

Mr Hager said Dr Bellinge and his family were willing to put up a \$1m surety to secure bail. He proposed the bail be conditional on Dr Bellinge being confined to his father's home and abstaining from alcohol.

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He denied his client was a flight risk, citing his lack of prior convictions, the fact his two daughters go to school in Perth, and the injuries he suffered in the accident. He said Dr Bellinge had suffered a fracture to his L3 vertebrae.

Police prosecutors opposed bail, telling the court Dr Bellinge had attempted to minimise his actions in the immediate aftermath of the crash.

Body-worn camera footage allegedly shows him saying the other vehicle had "cleaned me up". About 40 minutes after the crash, Dr Bellinge was filmed denying responsibility for it.

The prosecutor said the footage captured Dr Bellinge saying, "wait a minute, wait a minute, they came out of nowhere. Why the f..k am I the bad guy here, I only had two beers", and describing his driving as "routine".

The prosecutor said the crash had occurred as a result of Dr Bellinge "not being able to control his behaviour".

Magistrate Clare Cullen said she was concerned about the "disproportionate emotional upset" Dr Bellinge had displayed since the breakdown of his marriage.

"I remain concerned about what is going on in the background," she said. "Separations happen every day, this behaviour does not." Ms Cullen will hand down her decision on Dr Bellinge's bail application on Wednesday Mr Hager told the court Dr Bellinge's marriage had broken down on January 11, and the obstetrician left the family home at that time. The pair had undergone marriage counselling between February 3 and 14.

The prosecutor said police had been attempting to talk to Dr Bellinge's wife but she had so far not wanted to speak to police.

Ms Pearce was the daughter of a geophysicist and nurse who was just metres from her family home when the car she was in was hit.

Her family issued a statement describing their heartbreak over Ms Pearce's death. "Our world is shattered. Our beautiful, bright girl brought sunshine to our lives and we are now in darkness," they said.

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