

Pilot lied to wife about deaths

By Emily Woods, AAP

Accused Caroline Springs double murderer Greg Lynn has admitted lying to his wife about his involvement in the deaths of two campers, as he apologised to their families for destroying evidence.

The 57-year-old ex-Jetstar pilot stuck to his story, appearing calm as he was questioned by lawyers from both sides when he testified on Thursday, four weeks into his murder trial.

Almost 100 people filled the Supreme Court in Melbourne for Lynn's evidence, including his wife Melanie, one of his sons and members of Russell Hill and Carol Clay's families.

He has pleaded not guilty to murdering Mr Hill, 74, and Mrs Clay, 73, in the Wonnangatta Valley, in Victoria's northeast, in March 2020.

Defence barrister Dermot Dann KC said Lynn had offered to plead guilty to a charge of destroying police evidence before the murder trial began.

Lynn admitted he deserved punishment for that charge, as he apologised to the victims' families.

"All I can say to their families is that I'm very sorry for your suffering," Lynn told the jury.

"I should be punished for what I did.

"I am innocent of murder."

Lynn claims Mr Hill threatened to show authorities drone footage of him hunting deer close to their campsite, which led to a struggle over a gun and Mr Hill accidentally shooting Mrs Clay in the head.

Mr Hill then came at him with a knife and Lynn claims he was trying to defend himself when the weapon went into Mr Hill's chest.

But the prosecution alleges Mr Hill was shot dead by Lynn, who then killed Mrs Clay as she was the only witness to the murder.

Lynn told the jury on Thursday that after the two campers died, he panicked as he realised



Greg Lynn said he lied to his wife Melanie (centre) to protect her. (AAP image/James Ross)

he could lose his career as a Jetstar pilot over improper gun storage.

Mr Hill had taken a shotgun and ammunition from Lynn's car, and he tried to get the gun back but four to five shots went off, with one hitting the side mirror and killing Mrs Clay, he claimed.

The accused murderer feared he would lose his Aviation Security Identification Card over improper gun storage, causing "severe financial hardship" to his wife and children.

But under cross-examination by prosecutor Daniel Porceddu, Lynn admitted "things are worse for me now" as he was on trial for the

two murders.

"It's a disaster and it would've been a disaster if I had've gone to police. At the time it seemed the magnitude of disaster was irrelevant," Lynn said. "I never expected to be in this courthouse."

Lynn said he went into crisis mode after both campers died and his training as a pilot helped give him the presence of mind to burn the campsite and dispose of the couple's bodies.

"I was a panicked person, I've been trained to remain calm. I can manage stress," he told the jury.

He described a bloodied crime scene, which he had cleaned up using gloves used to clean Jetstar planes.

"There was a large pool of blood on the ground," Lynn said. "The scene was horrendous."

Lynn put the two bodies in his car's trailer and took them to the remote bushland of the Union Spur track, returning in November 2020 to burn the remains.

He took cash from Mr Hill's wallet to pay for fuel, as he didn't want his credit card to be detected.

"To be honest, my aim was to disappear," he said.

Lynn was grilled for almost two hours by Mr Porceddu, who said he had more than a year to come up with his story before his arrest in November 2021.

He asked if Lynn admitted to his wife his involvement in the deaths after they were bugged by police while watching a 60 Minutes program about the missing campers.

"I lied to her, said I had nothing to do with it," Lynn replied.

"It would be involving her in a problem that was nothing to do with her - I lied to my wife to protect her."

The jury was sent away until Tuesday when the prosecution will begin closing their case.



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