This is Robert Main. The purpose of this is to record my thoughts and events as I remember them as they occurred during USAir Flight #405, which took place on Sunday, March the 22nd. I am recording this on Thursday, March the 26th, 1992.

The plane was definitely running late, we were originally supposed to take off at approximately 7:20 PM and I got to the airport early because I had completed my responsibilities at the optical convention I was attending at the Jacob Javitz Convention Center in New York. I decided to go early to the airport and change clothes and get something to eat. I'd just do some work in the meantime till the flight took off. When I arrived at the airport at approximately 4:00 PM, it was not snowing but the clouds were getting darker and began to look threatening. The forecast called for a big snow storm. I went to one of the restaurants in the airport to eat. It was approximately 5:00 PM when I finished eating. I bought some magazines, looked outside and noticed it was beginning to snow. Then I spent some time doing work, reading and making a couple of phone calls. I called my fiance Joyce and my parents. I passed a friend of mine, Randy MacDonald, in the hall. He is a member of the United Red Carpet club, so we went to the United Club and sat down to watch a little bit of the basketball game on TV. I went down to check on my flight, this was approximately 6:45, and noticed that it had been delayed to 7:45. I went back up to the Red Carpet Room, sat and talked a bit longer with Randy. There are a lot of windows in the Red Carpet Room that face the area where the planes are. I noticed that it was snowing quite heavily, and had been for a while. There was definitely an accumulation beginning to build, and I remarked to Randy, "I'll be amazed if they don't close the airport because it is snowing so hard. I don't see how these planes are continuing to take off with this." At about 7:30, I went down to the gate. Originally it was scheduled for gate 12. When I arrived at gate 12, I discovered they changed it to Gate 1. So I ran to gate 1 thinking I was going to miss my flight. When I got there, the plane had not arrived at the gate yet. I asked the gate agent what time we were going to

take off. He said the plane was in the area, it was just landing and that we would be taking off as close to 8:00 as possible. Delays and more delays. It was I guess 8:30 approximately (I didn't notice the exact time) that we were able to start boarding the airplane. I got on the plane and began to read a magazine, (a Readers Digest,) and really wasn't paying much attention to what was going on around me. I did notice, however, at one time in particular they were deicing the plane. It sounded like going through a car wash. You could hear the solution being sprayed on the airplane as they were rinsing it down. I also remember, the pilot came on and made an announcement that we were ready to back up and start going to the tarmac. However, there would be a slight delay because the deicing truck had broken down and was stalled behind the airplane. It would take a few minutes more. I did not really observe what kind of job they were doing on deicing. As I understand subsequently from other newspaper articles, they did deice it twice. Anyway, they push back the airplane and started going torward the tarmac. The pilot made an announcement that there was about 6 or 7 planes in front of us so it would be about 10 minutes or so before we would take off. I remember remarking to myself half-laughing, that there's no way we'll take off in 10 minutes, it will probably be closer to a half hour. This was about 9:00 PM, as I recall. Again, I became engrossed in my book, took a nap for just a couple of minutes. When I woke up, it was close to 9:30 PM. Looking outside, I did notice it was still snowing rather hard. As I looked back on to the wing, I saw there was a thin build up of snow and ice on the wing, just on the crest of the wing. From my angle, I could see approximately 3/4 of the wing on the left side. I was in seat 3A. I thought to myself that this is strange they are going to take off without deicing us again. At other airports I had been at before, when the planes had to wait as long as we did, they usually had a truck out at the end of the runway and would spray the wings down at least one more time. I didn't see a truck and just thought it strange that we were going to do this. I thought to myself, "Well, the pilot's on board, so if the plane crashed, he'd be in it too so he would not be taking off if it weren't safe." The pilot, you assume,

has many, many hours of flying so you trust his judgment that everything is ok. I also noticed that planes were still taking off in front of us and nothing was happening to them, so I assumed that the pilot and USAir knows what they are doing. I'll just trust them and assume that everything is going to be alright. Surely the airlines take every precaution to ensure our safety, I though.

The plane began to roll to the end of the runway. I remember the pilot making the announcement instructing the airline attendants to please take their seats. We came around the corner and started going faster down the runway for our takeoff. At this point, everything seemed normal to me. As we lifted off the ground, we got slightly airborne, I'm guessing 20 or 30 feet. The airplane banked sharply to the left at about 45 degrees. I immediately knew that there was a problem. I heard one lady scream. Another lady screamed, "Oh My God!". At that point, the plane sort of leveled back, and I thought to myself, "OK great. He's got it back under control." Just a second or so after the plane seemed to level, we slammed into the ground very, very hard. I had a sensation of being compressed or crushed. The next thing I recall was a big fire ball coming at me and fire just engulfed me. At this point, I thought I was going to die. I can very vividly remember the feel and smell of that fire. The next thing I recall is having a sensation of falling and then water splashing all around me. As soon as I felt the water, I started splashing on my face and head so that, if I was on fire, the fire would be put out. I seemed dazed at this point for several minutes. I recall regaining my senses and having trouble breathing because of the water. The next thing I did was to just instinctively reach down and undo my seat belt. The seat had evidently been thrown about 10 or 15 feet away from the wreckage. I was in the water, about chest-high (when standing, but submerged when sitting.) The seat was sort of half-cocked to the side. I undid my safety belt and got out of the seat and stood there. I remember trying to gather my thoughts. I looked back at the wreckage, and remember seeing the fire and two thoughts came to me, #1) "How in

the world did I get out of this, I can't believe that I'm alive after this has happened." and #2) I remember looking back at the plane and the fire and hearing people yelling and screaming, "Help me, help me." The thought crossed my mind, "How can I get back in the plane, how can I help some of these people out?" But, looking at it, the fire was very intense, there was no way I could have gotten into it. I decided to just crawl back to shore. It was very difficult, I was half-swimming and half-crawling. It was difficult to walk because there was wreckage or something underneath of the water. I would walk for a while and then stumble, and it occurred to me that I had to be careful because some of this metal might be jagged and I'll seriously cut myself. I took my time and walked slowly back in towards the shore. Estimating it was maybe 25 feet to the shore. After I reached the shore, I noticed that there was a man with his wife trying to swim to shore. He seemed to be fairly coherent. I think he had some blood coming from his head, and he was yelling, "Help me! Help my wife!" She didn't seem conscious, she seemed like she might have been badly hurt, so I went back into the water a few feet and helped him drag her up on the shore. Then I heard a young lady screaming, "My leg, my leg is broken!" So I went back into the water and helped her on to shore as best I could. We sat there for a few minutes. As we sat there, there was a puddle of fire on the water, which was maybe 20 feet in front of the wreckage. We were between the wreckage and the pool of fire. The wind began to pick up a little bit and fanned the flames and the fire was getting bigger and this patch of fire in the water was beginning to encroach upon the lady with the broken leg and she kept saying, "Help me get away from this." And I said, "Well, just wait a few minutes, the fire's helping to keep us warm." Then the man was saying, "Help me get my wife away from the fire." So I went over and helped him with her. I grabbed her from underneath her armpits and he grabbed her legs and we carried her further up on the shore, away from the fire. The fire was growing closer to the other lady and myself, so I helped her get another 10 or 15 feet away from the fire. Then, we just stood there in amazement. As I began to regain my senses, the pain and cold became a reality. I was

shaking uncontrollably from the cold. I was wet, it was snowing and I was freezing. At that point, I realized I was bleeding from my head and my neck and ribs were hurting a lot. I just stood there and yelled for someone to help us. It seemed like an eternity until someone came.

Some men began to come over the embankment and were yelling, "Come on over here! Come on over here!" We answered, "Help, we are hurt!" They came over and helped the man and his wife and the lady with the broken leg. I attempted to crawl up the embankment. It was hard to walk on the snow. I kept slipping and hurting my ribs. As I came to the crest of the ridge, (over the embankment,) I could see a lot of emergency vehicles beginning to descend on the area. There was an old paneled truck at the bottom of the ridge. A man pointed to me and said, "Get in the back of the truck." So I got into the back of the truck. It was freezing cold and I was shivering very hard. I thought, "I don't want to get into the back of a truck, I want to get to someplace where it's warm, someplace where they can help me." I got into the truck anyway. There were 3 or 4 other survivors in the back of this truck. I crawled in, waited a few minutes, and this guy drove us to an area where there was an emergency vehicle. I think it was a fireman's emergency trailer. We got inside where it was a little bit warmer, out away from the wind. I sat down and they gave us some blankets. I took off my wet sweatshirt and shirt to try to get warmer, and wrapped the blanket around myself. They were just nice and comforting, they really weren't set up to treat us. The guy asked me what was wrong with me and he wrote some things down. I told him that my side hurt, my neck hurt, and that I was bleeding from the top of my head. He wrote those things down on the triage tag, put it around my neck. We just stayed there for what seemed like a long time. I really don't have any recollection of how long it was. Then some other guy, I guess a paramedic, came in and looked at my wounds. I guess they were assessing who was the most injured and what were the most severe cases.

Then, a triage bus came up beside. I got into the triage bus, and was able to lay down in sort of a bed/cot. At that point, I guess it was an emergency medical person, came over and took my blood pressure and a few things. He asked me where I hurt, I told him, he read the triage tag. They checked the would on my head and put a piece of gauze on my head and wrapped some bandages around my entire head to hold the gauze on. Then, an EMS guy came and put a hard plastic collar around my neck. I assume to immobilize it. Then they put me on a back board and wrapped tape around my head and the back board so my head was totally immobilized. I stayed there for a little while. It was very hard to discern how long. Seemed like a very, very long time. I asked several times if someone could call my fiance to let her know I was alive. They said they couldn't. They needed to keep radios clear for emergencies only.

Eventually an ambulance came along side the triage bus. They carried me on the back board and put me in the ambulance. The person in the ambulance checked my vital signs again and asked me how I was. She double checked my wounds and the collar to make sure everything was ok. Then they took me in the ambulance to Booth Memorial Hospital which they told me was only a couple of miles away. Even though I had some blankets on, I was still freezing cold. I could not stop chattering my teeth.

On the way to the hospital, reality began to set in as to what had really happened. That I had been in an extremely serious accident. Maybe some of the shock was beginning to wear off. I began to cry uncontrollably and continued to shiver. At this point, I was remembering just what a horrible experience it was. It began to flash back into my mind. The people in the airplane as they were screaming and yelled to get out. There was nothing I could do. In my mind, I began to wonder how many people had been killed, I

knew there had to be a lot of people killed. That upset me terribly and just the whole ordeal began to really settle in as to just what had happened.

When we arrived at the hospital, they moved me on the backboard onto a stretcher. They took me into the emergency room where they began to treat me. There was a lot of people who were working on me, 5 or 6 people at one time. They cut all of my clothes off, began to put IV's in, checked for vital signs, put tubes in every orifice on my body, checked my neck and issued orders to take x-rays. This was a very scary, embarrassing and traumatic time for me.

As far as the injuries are concerned, I had some cracked ribs, my neck was extremely sore, difficult to move from side to side and backwards and forwards without a lot of pain. As to the cuts on my head; originally the doctors thought they would suture them, but then determined they were of the nature that probably would heal themselves, (which they did). Spent almost all Sunday night in the emergency room. I was extremely sore. I literally couldn't move because of the soreness over my entire body and the pain in my ribs and my neck was severe. During the day on Monday, I was taken down for numerous X-rays and a CAT scan. Still a lot of soreness, still hooked up to the catheter and was not really able to get out of bed until, I believe, it was later on that day. They weren't sure of the extent of my injuries, (whether they were internal or not) so I wasn't allowed to have any water, any liquids, or any food. There was still a horrible taste in my mouth from the airline fuel I swallowed while in the water. I was extremely uncomfortable. The terrible taste. Trying to spit that out but I just couldn't. It seemed permanent. I was anxious to drink a glass of water because of that terrible taste but had to wait for quite a while.

I was released from the hospital on Tuesday, the 24th, and flew back to Cincinnati on USAir. It was a very difficult situation trying to get back on to that airplane. As we were

getting closer to boarding the airplane, I became very emotional. Flashes kept going back through my mind how horrible the whole experience was. I asked the guy that was wheeling the wheelchair down to the airplane to stop for a few minutes. I said "I don't think I can go through with this." But stopped and just gathered my thoughts. "Well, I have to do this eventually, sooner or later." So I went ahead and got on to the plane. It was very traumatic getting back onto that airplane. I was extremely nervous, I was very scared, very upset. It just was not something I didn't want to do. I felt that if I'm going to go home to recuperate, I can't go home in a car because that will be too long. I have to do this and I have to get it over with. So I did go ahead and get on the airplane.

Up to this point, I really hadn't slept very much. Every time I closed my eyes, every time I wasn't thinking about something else, my mind would flash back to the feeling of fire all around me. The crushing feeling as the plane crashed. Getting out of the seat in the water and looking back at the airplane and seeing it on fire and hearing the people screaming and the yelling for help. Knowing that there was nothing I could do to help. It just was a horrible feeling. I'll carry that thought of looking back at that burning fuselage I know for the rest of my life and that feeling of being crushed in the airplane and the fire that was all around me. Recognizing it was all so senseless. It wasn't necessary. Nobody should have had to go through this. If only they would have been more cautious and not tried to take off with all of that snow and ice on the wing. It's just that it was stupid and there was a lot of prople that died and a lot of people in agony, a lot of loved ones have gone though a lot needlessly just because a stupid decision was made by someone that it was ok to fly with that kind of conditions, it just seems so senseless to me.

Part of the mental agony came from when I got into the triage trailer. It dawned on me that this was the kind of thing that would probably have a TV news bulletin. I thought how Joyce would find out about it and she would be upset, not knowing if I was dead or

alive, and my parents and all of my friends were sitting there wondering. I remember asking one of the people in the triage trailer if they could please call Joyce, call my parents, to let them know I'm ok. No one was able to do that until I was in the emergency room. This was several hours after the crash. I gave a nurse Joyce's phone number and said, "Could you please call her and tell her I'm OK?" It was a terrible feeling of knowing that she was probably aware that I had been in this accident and on the plane, but not knowing whether I was dead or alive. Subsequently to that, in talking to Joyce, I realized she suffered a lot of mental anguish in not knowing if I was dead or alive for several hours. My parents said it was several hours before they got the word that I was alive, and it was a terrible ordeal for them and all of my loved ones. A lot of people knew I was on that plane, not knowing whether I was dead or alive. That added a lot to the trauma; the terribleness of the situation.

I'm going to see a counselor on Saturday. Maybe he can help me get through these mental visions and this mental replay that I can begin to get my life and my thoughts both physically and mentally back to where they were before the crash. But deep down inside, I know that it's going to be very hard to do because of the horribleness of the whole thing and the way it continues to just replay in my mind.

Another thing that continues to haunt me was that my mustache, eyelashes and hair were singed in the fire. Every time I look in the mirror, it reminds me. I'm going this afternoon to get a haircut so I can get rid of the singed parts. Another bad memory is that my hair still smells like aviation fuel. I've washed it numerous times trying to get the smell out but I just can't. Every time I take a show and every once in a while, I get a whiff of that smell and it reminds me, takes me back to that horrible experience I went through.

Other things that just add to the tragedy of it are that all of the personal things that I lost in my luggage. I was in New York giving some lectures. I had all of my seminar materials, notes and slides there with me. I spent years accumulating and putting the information together. Those are gone and lost forever. It's going to take a lot of hard work to get all of those materials back and to recreate all of the seminar material. It's going to be very, very difficult to do. One thing of sentimental value; I had recently gone on a helicopter skiing trip in Vail for the first time in my life. We rented a video camera, and taped the entire event. That was in my suitcase and now it's gone. That's the kind of memories that you can't do again. I mean, a first time is a first time and it's on film, and now that's gone.

One of the things I had in my briefcase was a Franklin Day Planner. I keep all of my notes from meetings, appointments, phone numbers, store sales tracking, etc. in there. Just endless amounts of business and personal data. Now that's gone too. I'm trying to recreate that and it's a tremendous amount of work. Not for just myself but for everyone else who's trying to help me gather that data. It'll take a year or more to try to recapture all of that information. Some of it will never be recaptured, notes for meetings, and things that were extremely important. Those are gone now and it will be a tremendous amount of effort to try to recapture that data.

One of the major hassles this whole event created was a furor of press. Just an army of press people constantly calling, asking for interviews, asking for information, and trying to fight them off. When I got home in Cincinnati, there were numerous reporters there. As soon as I got off the airplane, literally attacking me and wanting an interview. When I got to my home, there were reporters at my front door. I felt like a freak at a side show! The phone literally rings constantly. It's reporters from all around the country, wanting an interview and wanting to know the story. I understand their curiosity but what I'm

needing to do is heal and rest. Had this incident not happened, I wouldn't have to deal with those things and I wouldn't have to put up with all of that inconvenience, hassle, and invasion of my privacy by the press.

Another thing that has been very disturbing to me is knowing that this has put Joyce through so much. I love her so much and I want things to go so well for her. I can tell that this has been a terrible experience for her. Those horrible hours not knowing if I was dead or alive. The hurt and the anguish that she's gone through. Watching her go through this has been very tough for me because I care for her so much. I want to protect her and shelter her from these things. This incident has caused her a lot of pain and agony. Likewise to me because I can see that she has suffered so much and probably will for some time.