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COVER: A sudden flash of brilliance lighting up the night sky, this streak of lightning is the accompaniment to the sort of storms being studied as part of the Cooperative Convective Precipitation Experiment. For more on what storm research is revealing see p. 122.

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AUGUST 22, 1981

Former aerospace editor dies in Nairobi

SCIENCE NEWS lost a respected colleague with the violent murder of Everly Driscoll in Nairobi, Kenya, on August 14. Driscoll, the principal science and aerospace editor with the U.S. International Communication Agency, was on assignment covering a United Nations energy conference. She was 40 years old.

We at SCIENCE NEWS feel a special loss because it was at this magazine that she began her professional journalism career. From March 7, 1970, to October 13, 1973, she reported on the latest developments in

manned spaceflight, aircraft innovations and basic space-science research. From her first feature — on the upcoming flight of the ill-fated Apollo 13 crew — she brought readers frank and lively news coverage. But while her career as aerospace writer began here, her coverage of the field did not. Prior to joining the SCIENCE NEWS staff, she had worked in Houston at the Johnson Space Center in the office of astronaut Frank Borman.

According to ICA, Driscoll was shot in the head by thieves who had stopped the car in which she had been riding with Hugh Muir, a fellow ICA employee and Voice of America correspondent stationed in Africa. Muir, who had moved to Kenya from Washington only six weeks earlier, was unharmed.

News accounts of the incident read like something out of a spy thriller, beginning with a high-speed chase through wealthy Nairobi suburbs. Although the pursuers took elaborate measures to catch Driscoll and Muir — at one point even side-swiping Muir's white Peugeot sedan — Muir had hoped to elude them. Eventually he braked to a halt in front of his home. As he jumped out of his car to open the gates, the thieves overtook him.

Muir surrendered his wallet at gunpoint. When asked for his keys, he told the thieves he had locked them in his car. A gunman walked around to the passenger side of the car, shot Driscoll in the head, reached through the broken window, then unlocked and opened the door. Driscoll was shoved across the seat and dumped at Muir's feet. "It all took about 15 seconds," Muir is credited with saying.

Taking off in Muir's car, the thieves left behind a stolen Peugeot. Pounding noises from the trunk of the car revealed that its original driver and passenger had been locked, unharmed, inside it. Driscoll was taken to a local hospital and died 11 hours later.

Preliminary reports from the American embassy in Nairobi indicate the shooting was probably an isolated incident without overtones of international terrorism.

Those who knew Driscoll had always been impressed by her ebullience, wit, energy, determination and verve. She was conscientious, often irreverent, and "a real pro," Dietrick Thomsen notes.

A native of Houston, Tex., Driscoll is survived by a father, mother and stepfather, all in Texas. ICA held memorial services for Driscoll at its headquarters in Washington on Friday.

