

Case study from Yugoslavia

Boris Bankovic

Boris Bankovic, a 37-year-old fresco and icon painter from Belgrade was shot in his home by a stray bullet during celebrations on New Year's eve.

Boris had been sitting in an armchair, watching television in his apartment in central New Belgrade. He had been out to enjoy the New Year celebrations, but had come home early.

When his nephew, Srdjan, arrived home at 1.30am he went to wish Boris a happy new year.

“Boris had been ill for a couple of days and he didn't want to take part in the celebrations. He went out earlier then came back around 9.30pm to watch TV,” said Srdjan.

“I came back home around 1.30 am and went to his room to wish him a happy New Year. He was sitting in his chair with his legs covered by a blanket, as he always did, but his head was leaned onto another chair. Most of his head was already blue. I thought he was not well, and I tried to wake him, but saw that he was dead.

“At first I couldn't understand what had happened because there was only a small amount of blood and I hadn't seen that the window was broken. Later, when police arrived, it became clear.”

During New Year celebrations a bullet had been fired into the air from the balcony of a neighbouring flat, and it had hit Bankovic in the head. He is thought to have died sometime between 00.15 and 01.15. The police located the building and balcony from which the gun was shot and several people were detained.

This accident happened in spite of the warnings by the police to citizens not to shoot guns in the air during the New Year celebration.