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Media coverage of court proceedings in cases of gender-based violence

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Abstract. This paper analyzes media coverage of cases of gender-based violence in a two-year period covering the 2015 and 2016 calendar years. The aim is to highlight the fact that the media acts as an important instrument in informing and educating the public, as well as a general deterrent of the observed crime type. The incidence of cases of femicide is discussed, directly compared to femicide cases in the previous period (2012 and 2014) both in criminological terms and in terms of their media presentation, and positive innovations that have occurred in the reporting period relating to the systematic monitoring of judicial summations in cases of gender-based violence as a result of the demands of women's activism are identified. The main topics of the paper thus include criminal convictions for the most serious forms of gender-based violence, foremost among which are partner and non-partner femicide and rape. Also discussed are decisions of the Press Council of Serbia in cases of violations of ethical norms of the Serbian Code of Journalists, as well as cases of domestic violence involving celebrities, which the media has had a tendency to report in a serialized and sensationalist manner.

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1. Characteristics of media reports about court procedures and judgments

One of the positive novelties observed in media reporting on violence against women in the 2015 to 2016 period is the increasingly consistent publishing of reports of trials in criminal proceedings and criminal judgments handed down to the perpetrators of gender-based violence. There are two primary categories of judgments: judgments handed down in cases of public celebrities, and judgments of femicide perpetrators. Such reporting has entered into media practices, and thus created public interest in such content that had previously been non-existent. The primal cause of this was arguably intense media coverage of violence in celebrity circles. This was probably fortified by repeated requests from the women's movement for such reports to complete the 'crime and punishment' circle. Specifically, as stated, it is important that the stories of violence "follow through and to investigate the responsibility for the lack of protection of victims" (Ignjatovic, Macanovic & Ljubić, 2008). It was furthermore recommended that an emphasis be placed on the punishments handed down in courts, and that perpetrators be publicly condemned for their acts, with the consequences being publicly presented. Punishment is indeed mentioned in almost half of the analyzed texts, as recognized by other analyses of media reporting on violence against women, mostly in the publications *Politika*, *Vecernje Novosti*, *Blic* and *Kurir* (KontaktA, 2015).

The main feature of these reports is an adherence to the facts presented during the trial and sentencing, usually without additional (sensationalist) commentaries. A rare example is an obvious expression of disagreement with the judgment rendered in a case in the town of Jagodina, where the High Court sentenced Dragan Antic (50) to five years in prison for the

murder of his wife Marina (49) (Informer, 2015: 17.12): “Dragan Antic (50) from Dragocvet near Jagodina, on 24 May 2014, on the terrace of the family home, killed his wife Marina (49) with a gun, and was sentenced to only five years in prison! Furthermore, the murder was characterized as an offense that was committed negligently”. In this report, it is clear that there is no comparison with sentences imposed for similar offenses, nor comments on the length of the imposed penalty, which actually shows respect for the independence of the judiciary, as court rulings are not – and must not be – the subject of media validation or media propagated discussions in public sphere about judicial decisions.

One of the features that the media indicate that a first-instance verdicts come in the same year when the killings occurred, after only a few months after the crime. This information speaks more for itself on the commitment of the prosecuting authorities and the judiciary, so that no delay in trials in cases of femicide occurred.

2. Examples of judgment for partner femicide

Partner femicide, the murder of a woman by her partner, is the most common form of femicide, and certainly represents one of the most difficult forms of betrayed confidence, especially because it often happens within the environs of a family home; a place that should be a haven for its inhabitants. Recent documents from the United Nations, for example. the Report on Femicide in Armenia and the Report of the Special Rapporteur of the UN on violence against women, define femicide as the murder of women and girls because they are women, based on their gender, and occurs as a result of gender inequality, discrimination and the economic powerlessness of women (Coalition to Stop Violence against Women, 2016). In this report, the Special Rapporteur (Manjoo, 2012: 4), addresses the topic of gender-motivated murders of women that have occurred within a family or community, and in instances where the murder was committed or condoned by the state.

2.1. Zrenjanin, the High Court in Zrenjanin concluded a trial of the lawyer and former judge of the Municipal Court Branislav Kenjić (53), finding that, on February 4th, he brutally killed his wife Jasmina (37) on March 12th (Balaban, 2015: 12 March). The closing arguments given by the prosecution and defense yesterday in the High Court in Zrenjanin completed the re-trial of the lawyer and former judge of the Municipal Court Branislav Kenjić (53) from the same town. He was faced with the charge that, on 4th February 2011, in his family house in Štrosmajerova street, he killed his wife Jasmin (37). The trial was held behind the closed doors, while the pronouncement of the judgment, that the presiding trial judge Branislav Surla announced will occur next week, will be made public. Kenjić was already sentenced to 35 years in prison in the first instance trial, which was also conducted before the High Court in Zrenjanin.

However, the Appellate Court in Novi Sad has accepted the appeal of the accused regarding "an essential violation of the criminal procedure" and overturned the first instance judgment and returned the case for retrial. After the first instance verdict, through which Kenjić was sentenced to 35 years in prison for aggravated murder committed in a cruel manner, the Court of Appeal ordered a retrial in order to precisely determine what actually happened on the day of the tragedy, how it came to be that the victim was stabbed 36 times, mostly to the face and the neck, how she received 13 wounds to her body, how her skull was broken, as well as the circumstances under which the defendant, subsequent to the murder, managed to cross the state border and escape abroad, in spite of a warrant for his arrest having already been issued. The High Court in Zrenjanin, confirmed on 17th March the sentence of 35 years in prison. The failures of state authorities, which were supposed to protect the victim before the crime was committed, were highlighted as a factor leading to the crime. Namely, five days before the murder, the victim's family had visited the police station to report the threats and attacks upon her.

2.2. Belgrade, High Court, 12 years for Jadran Suljic (35) for the murder of his wife

Catherine (33) 25th July (N.B. 2015: 25 July). The first instance verdict of the High Court in Belgrade sentenced Jadran Suljic (35) to 12 years' prison for the murder of his wife Katarina (33), at the end of September 2013, in their family home in the village of Višnjička Banja. The unfortunate woman was the victim of jealousy. It was found that her husband hit her on the head with a heavy dish more than 20 times. Katarina was allegedly beaten until he had broken her skull. Jadran then tried to kill himself by jumping from the first floor of the house onto a concrete staircase.

2.3. Belgrade, the High Court sentenced Radomir Jeremic (76) for the murder his wife Mileva (76), committed in August 2014, to 15 years in prison, on 16th March. (A.C., 2016: 17 March). The High Court in Belgrade sentenced Radomir Jeremic (76) to 15 years in prison for the murder of his wife Mileva (76). The Court found Jeremic guilty of murder and extended his detention until being sent to serve the sentence. Mileva Jeremic was found dead on 19th August 2014 in a garage in the back yard of the family home, in a bathtub, with multiple head injuries. Her husband Radomir was arrested a few days later in a village in the vicinity of Niš. The Court of Appeal, however, increased his sentence on July 21st (Blic, 2016: 21st July) by five years, sentencing him to 20 years in prison because of the brutality of the murder and his subsequent escape from Belgrade.

3. Example sentences for the murder of old women

The killings of elderly women are almost every year, including in the analyzed 2015/16 period, among the most brutal of homicides. Their meaninglessness in terms of circumstances and motives is recognized almost universally. Murderers and rapists of elderly women are often unknown to them, or little known younger men. The victims are often killed and raped because they are old and infirm women, alone and helpless, because they can

simply and easily be tortured and killed, and they are a living paradigm of an imbalance of power as a basis for gender-based violence. Perpetrators' motivations stem from self-perceived male power often without any reason or rationale behind them, usually to prove their own superiority over someone, anyone, although sometimes such homicides have financial gain as a motivation. Their root causes are the same as those of partner femicide in hegemonic masculinity (Mršević, 2014: 93)², except that murdered elderly women, unlike victims of partner femicide likely did not have even a theoretical chance to confront the perpetrators, they could not fight back, flee, call for help, report threats, violence and murder attempts, or seek and obtain police protection or protection of other institutions.

Femicide of old women, as with partner femicide, is not an unexpected and unpredictable deed. Usually the murderers are multiple returnees, convicted earlier for the brutal murder and rape an old woman. Such is the case in a murder which occurred in Sviljig, for which a repeat offender was charged with aggravated murder during the commission of an armed robbery. According to unofficial information of the Juzne Vesti newspaper, it is a recidivist who, in January 2000, brutally murdered Ljubinka N. (66) in their home village. In that instance, the murderer was sentenced to 15 years in prison, but was released after having served only 12 years. A year after his release from prison, the perpetrator (identified only by the initials M.M.) was arrested again in March 2013 on suspicion that he also tried to rape an old woman, K.Ž. (89) in his village (Kostic, 2015 3 March).

The media presentation of the judgments of the murderers of elderly women generally implies that the sanctions were adequate, in accordance with the harm caused by such a crime. The problem is that the media often fails to follow these crimes to their final verdicts. This is arguably because such cases, from the perspective of the media, lack the 'reportable'

² Hegemonic masculinity is a model of male domination over women. The term "hegemonic" refers to contextually tolerated models on which men practice masculinity. These models include violence as a way of subjugation of women.

elements of love, eroticism, and romance. Therefore, these cases are afforded scant reporting, because they lack the ‘three Ss’; sex, scandal, and spectacle. The practice is that the media affords little column space to such crimes, reporting them in a factual manner, with such cases falling quickly into oblivion, because reporting on abused and murdered elderly women tends not to increase circulation.

Moreover, these cases raise little interest among feminists, for example, the Network "Women against Violence" follows media articles and records (analyzes, comments, protests, etc.) of femicide only in instances of the murder of women by a partner (either former or current) and family members.³ Killed Andelka Anzuicki, Milinka Jeftić, Milena Mlačić, Tatjana Velimirović, Mileva Glišović, Nadezhda Đorđević, to mention only some of the names of those whom the women's movement neglected. They apparently were not victims of interest to analysis nor of the media reports neither from the feminist movement against violence against women.

A paradigmatic case of non-partner femicide which evidences the need for this kind of femicide to be paid full attention is the brutal murder of Andelka Anzuicki (88). Azuicki from Novi Becej was tortured, raped and brutally murdered in her home. The robbers ransacked the house, and then sexually brutalized the old woman until she died in excruciating pain (Kurir, 2014: 25 November). In spite of the fact that she lived in a dilapidated house, the robbers assumed that it contained money or jewelry. They robbed and then raped and sexually brutalized Andelka , who weighed barely 40 kilograms. In search of money and valuables, the young men entered the old woman's house on the fatal evening, and when, after a search, did not find even a single dinar, they jumped on the unfortunate old woman. They beat her across the head and body, with the helpless woman having no chance

³ “Women against violence network” consists of 28 women's organizations that provide services to women survivors of male violence in Serbia. Organization for coordination of the Network is the Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade.

to defend herself. She was subjected to terrible torture and raped (Alo, 2014: 23 November). The scene encountered by the police was horrific, even in comparison to other murder scenes. The perpetrators forced a wooden stick into Azuicki's anus, tearing her liver and other internal organs (Urošev, 2016: 15 June). at the conclusion of their trial, the murderers of Andelka Azucki (88) from Novi Becej, Nikola Stojkov (21) and Jovan Stojkov Mojić (20) both also from Novi Becej, were sentenced to a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment (B. T. 2016: 15 June).

3.1. Niš, High Court, Milovan Misic (36) 37 years imprisonment for the rape and murder of the elderly woman Milinka Jeftić (82), 9th November (Alo, 2015: 9. December). Milovan Misic (36) from Beloinje was sentenced by the High Court in Niš to 37 years imprisonment for the rape and murder of Milinka Jeftić (82) from Svrnjig, committed on 2nd March 2015.

3.2. Niš, the Court of Appeal, Milovan Misic (37) sentenced a maximum of 40 years for killing Milinka Jeftić (82), 8th July (Informer, 2016: 8th July). The Court of Appeal in Niš, in its role as the second instance court, sentenced Milovan Misic (37) from Svrnjig to a maximum of 40 years in prison for raping and killing fellow resident Milinka Jeftić (82) on 2nd March 2015. Through this sentencing, the first instance judgment of the High Court in December was increased by three years.

3.3. The trial of the instigator of the murders of two old women from Beočin began on 26 February 2016. Mother Milena Milačić (93) and her daughter, Tatjana Velimirović (72), were killed by robbers expecting to find 1,000 to 2,000 euros, but instead finding only 3,000 dinars (slightly below €25 at the time of the crime) (Vujacic, M, 2016: 26 February). The High Court in Novi Sad sentenced Kemal Nunić (49) to 20 years and Dragan Stankovic to 30 years for each deed on 10th June, (M Vujacic, 2016: 10. June). According to the indictment, the defendants, as accomplices, were charged that, on the night between March 21 and 22

2015 in Fruškogorska Street, Susek, near Beocin, a juvenile, Sasha Vujicic, was coerced into killing an old woman Tatiana Velimirovich (72) during a robbery, with the defendant Dragan Stankovic murdering Milena Mijalčić (92), Tatiana's mother. According to the findings and opinions of expert witnesses, Milena Mijalčić suffered at least seven blows to the head.

3.4. Kragujevac Appellate Court, Igor Begic (36) was sentenced to 30 years for the murder of pensioner Mileva Glišović (60), 6th February (Blic, 2016: 6th February). By final judgment of the Court of Appeal, Igor Begic (36) was sentenced to 30 years in prison for the aggravated murder of pensioner Mileva Glišović (60) from the village of Stara radnička kolonija. The crime occurred on the night between the 5th and 6th of July 2013, during Begić's weekend leave from the 'Zabela' jail. He was serving a sentence there for a series of robberies and other crimes. Begic was, by the decision of the High Court in Kragujevac, originally sentenced to 18 years in prison for the murder. Begic strangled the unfortunate woman before taking a mobile phone and a small amount of savings from her purse.

3.5. Pozarevac, the High Court, J. Danko (22) for the murder of Nadezhda Djordjevic (88) in February 2014, sentenced to six years in prison on 11th November (Danas, 2016: 11 November). The High Court in Pozarevac validly sentenced Danka J. (22) from Boljetin near Majdanpek to six years in prison for the murder of Nadezhda Djordjevic (88) from Radoševca near Golubac. Although this offense is punishable by 5 to 15 years in prison, the accused received a near-minimum sentence, because at the time of the murder, the perpetrator was only a young adult with less than 19 years, and was therefore subjected to a psychiatric appraisal, where it was established that, while he was mentally competent at the time of the murder, he was of very low intelligence, on the border of being classed as mentally incompetent, which was an important mitigating factor. The crime took place in February 2014, in the house of the murdered women, who received a pension from abroad, and whom the accused helped around the house. After an argument about money, he strangled her with

his bare hands and then wrapped her body in a blanket and placed her in a bin liner, transporting her body using a wheelbarrow out of the village to the location where it was found on 20th March, on the main road from Golubac to Kladovo.

4. Examples of sentences for the murderers of mothers

4.1. Jagodina, High Court, Mladja Djuric (50) from Izvor entenced to 30 years for killing mother (Vesti-Franfurt, 2016: 3 December). The High Court in Jagodina sentenced Mladja Djuric (50) from the village of Izvor near Paracin to 30 years in prison for the matricide of Milja Todorovic (85). The prosecution was satisfied with the first-instance verdict for aggravated murder committed in a reckless manner, and so no appeal would be launched, according to deputy senior public prosecutor, Miomir Vasic. The crime occurred on 18th April 2015 at the family home, when Djuric, after returning from a bar, beat his mother to death with his fists. Then he left her in a pool of blood and spent the night elsewhere. The next day, he saw that his mother was dead and reported himself to the police. He admitted the offense and repented, saying he did not remember event precisely because he had drunk a liter of rakija. As he said later, his mother was killed because she always "runs after him in the pub".

4.2 High Court, Belgrade, Zoran Lalović (56) sentenced on 3rd November to 30 years for killing his mother Danica (79) on 19th November 2013 (Beta, (2016, 2 December). The High Court in Belgrade sentenced Zoran Lalović (56) to 30 years in prison for a murder committed three years previously. The former clerk of the Misdemeanor Court in Belgrade beat his mother Danica Lalović (79) to death on 19th November 2013 for refusing to sell the apartment and give him the money to settle his gambling debts. According to a court statement, the sentence was to include time spent in custody, where he had been remanded since his arrest.

5. Examples of long-term imprisonment

5.1 Belgrade High Court for the murder Snezana Pajic (48) on 26 December 2011, 30 years' imprisonment, April 3 (Informer, 2015: 3rd April). Goran Zivkovic Golub (43) was sentenced in the High Court in Belgrade to 30 years in prison for the murder of Snezana Pajic (48), the owner of a jewelry store in Obrenovac. In the same case, Dusan Stankovic (32) was sentenced to 20 years, Ljubinko Milosavović to six and Sasa Mitic three and a half years, as accomplices in the crime.

5.2. Jagodina, High Court, Stevan Kojic (30) 30 years for the murder of his wife Jacqueline (26) on 2nd April 2015, 4th June 2016. (Vecernje Novosti, 2016: 4. June). Stevan Kojic severely beat his wife, who subsequently choked to death on her own blood. Kojic killed his wife on April 2nd last year in the rented family house in Jagodina. When he returned home drunk from visiting friends, he started a fight because she did not tell him there was a repeat of the show "DNK" on TV "Pink", in which he sought to find out whether he was the father of their two children.

5.3. Zajecar, High Court, Cedomir Djuric (67) was sentenced to 40 years because of the monstrous murder of Dragana Ceric on 6th October (S Božinovic, Adzic A. Z, 2015, 6. October). Djuric, who had previously confessed the crime, told to the court how he was pathologically in love with the girl, who attended the fourth grade of the Economics School. Although they had no form of relationship, his jealousy was triggered by Dragana finding a boyfriend. Djuric openly admitted that there was never anything between the pair, not even a kiss, but he killed her out of jealousy.

5.4. Subotica, High Court, Dragan Djuric received a maximum sentence of 40 years, for the murder of Tijana Juric, 16th June (Danas, 2015: 16. June). The High Court in Subotica sentenced Dragan Djuric to the maximum prison sentence of forty years for the murder and

attempted rape of Tijana Juric (15). The Trial Chamber sentenced Djuric to 12 years for attempted rape and 40 years for aggravated murder.

6. Examples of sentences in cases which in the past had attracted public and media attention

6.1. Smederevska Palanka, 15 years in prison for singer's murder (Informer, 2015 19 March). Accordionist Milanče Ivanovic (44) from Badljevica was eventually sentenced to 15 years in prison for the murder of singer Marija Mihajlovic (20) from Smederevska Palanka on 30th January 2012, by 29 blows with a hammer. Milanče said at the time of his arrest that he was madly in love with the singer, but that evening she wanted to leave him, which was the reason for their fight.

6.2. Niš, Ivan Milovanovic (37) was sentenced to thirty years, 25 May (Kurir, 2015: 25 May). Milovanovic was sentenced to 30 years in prison for aggravated murder because on August 21st of the previous year he strangled his ex-wife Bojana Bačević (27) to death in the conjugal visitation room of the Niš prison.

6.3. Čačak, High Court, Miso Draskovic (64) received a 20 year sentence for the murder of his wife, 4th July (Politics, 2015: 4 July). Miso Draskovic (64) from the village Šume near Ivanjica was sentenced to 20 years in prison for killing his wife Rosanda. He killed his wife on 4th September 2014, whom he choked, punched and repeatedly stabbed. During the trial it was found that the day before the murder of his wife, he threatened to slit her throat, which resulted in police intervention. The Court found that at the time of the murder, Drašković had a blood alcohol content of 3.4 g/L.

6.4. Belgrade High Court, Darko Kostic (42) was sentenced to a maximum of 40 years for the 2014 murder and rape of Ivana Podraščić (14) on May 9 (Ljutić, 2016 May 10). Explaining the decision of the five-member panel of judges, Judge Zoran Ganic said Kostic

was charged for the offenses which he was "undoubtedly determined" to commit, as the prosecution pointed out. He was sentenced to 40 years for the aggravated murder, and 4 years for the rape, to run concurrently. On 26th September 2016, the Court of Appeal confirmed the first instance sentence of the maximum penalty of 40 years in prison for the brutal murder and rape of 14-year-old Ivana Podraščić from Batajnica in July 2014 (TV Pink, 2016: 26. September).

7. Example of a sentence for rape

7.1. Belgrade High Court, Marjan Petkovski sentenced to 40 months in prison for rape, 28th February (NB, 2015: February 28). Marjan Petkovski (24) from Smederevska Palanka, was sentenced by the High Court in Belgrade to three years and four months in prison for rape. MP (24) on this occasion furthermore caused serious bodily injury. The court decided that, until the final judgment, he was to remain under house arrest. During the rape, he used a knife to inflicted several cuts on the victim's body. He broke two of her vertebrae and then stole her cell phone. At one point she managed to take advantage of his distractedness and escaped from the car. For Petrovski, this was not the first indictment of indecent assault: He was arrested in January 2012 on suspicion of having sexual relations with a minor, whom he met through Facebook. He tricked her into entering his apartment, where he forced her to perform oral sex, which he recorded with a mobile phone. The juvenile girl remained silent about the incident in the days following. However, Marijan soon called her again, insisting that she return to his apartment, threatening that if she did not comply, he would send the footage from his mobile phone to her parents and publish it on Facebook. For this he also was sentenced by the High Court in Belgrade to five years in prison. However, the Court of Appeal overturned the verdict and ordered a retrial, was allowing him to be released from custody.

8. Decision of the Press Council

8.1. Quasi-humour case

Due to articles in newspapers *Alo* ("He killed his wife because she asked for sex", published on 29th November 2016) and the *Informer* "Woman was ruled by a stick" after an argument about sex", published on 29 November 2016), an investigation was conducted by the Press Council after a complaint put forward by the Autonomous Women's Center (the Press Council, 2017: 26.1). Namely, when a tragic situation presented as ridiculous and allows questioning of the victim's accountability in a quasi-humorous way, this cannot be considered an acceptable form of media communication. The petition of the Autonomous Women's Center against such texts in daily newspapers *Alo* and *Informer*, was upheld by the Press Council. Specifically, based on the statements of unnamed witnesses, it was reported that the suspect man "killed his wife because she asked for sex." *Alo*, as surmised by the complainant, reported assumptions and rumors, through which the victim was fully exposed to ridicule and her dignity undermined, while the murder itself was presented in an extremely banal way. Instead of condemning the murder and associated violence, these texts relativized responsibility of the perpetrator and justified the crime by attributing its motivation to the alleged conduct of the murdered woman. Since partner violence is not just a woman's problem, nor solely of the family, but rather of entire society, a report reducing the whole story to speculation about the titillating cause of the murder is completely unacceptable. The members of the Appeals Commission stated that the manner in which the newspapers reported the killings was unacceptable from an ethical standpoint, because, they represented tragic events as farces, and also further victimized the victim - referred to as the 'culprit' in one text, thus practically justifying the murder.

In January 2017, the Press Council decided that the daily *Alo*'s article titled "He killed his wife because she asked for sex", published on 29th November 2016, violated Points 2 and 5 of Section I (Truthfulness of Reporting) of the Code of Journalists of Serbia; the obligation of journalists and editors to make a clear distinction between fact and comment, assumption and speculation. The Press Council furthermore found the article to be incompatible with journalistic publication of unfounded accusations, slander and gossip; in violation of Points 3 and 5 of Section IV (Responsibility of Journalists), by which the journalist is obliged to respect the rule of presumption of innocence and cannot proclaim anyone guilty prior to a court verdict, as well as to protect the rights and dignity of victims of crime. Likewise, it was found to have violated Point 2 of Chapter VII (Respect for Privacy), which obliges journalists to respect the privacy, dignity and integrity of the people it writes about. The daily *Alo* was ordered to publish the decision of the Commission in its print and online editions not later than five days from receipt of the decision. A public warning was issued with the same explanation to the daily *Informer* or the article "The woman ruled by stick, after an argument about sex", published on 29th November 2016 (the Press Council, 2016: 29.11).

Photos have also often been sensationalist in nature, and especially in the case of public figures, texts have also often been inappropriately illustrated, with photographs being commented upon in an extremely inappropriate way (Lutovac, 2015: 22 May). For example, in February 2015, *Kurir* published a series of inappropriate texts on Vlado Stanojević's violence against his wife, under the photo Ana Mary Žujović (victims of the partner violence) and the man beside her, was written: "Woe, how do you beat?" while under his photos was written, "Do you want me to push you hardly on your face" (*Kurir*).

9. Sentences in cases of violence in the circles of public celebrities

During the period covered, a significant proportion of media coverage was given to the detailed monitoring of the cases of Čume and Sindi. One characteristic of the reporting on these cases has been that – as a rule – these have been serializations lasting several months. These reports were written in the form of "light note" usually published in sections of entertainment and show business news. All of these stylistic elements have contributed to relativizing and normalizing violence, with the message being that this is to be expected as part of the 'normal' everyday life of all people when 'this' happens in the circles of the famous and wealthy.

9.1. Belgrade, the Third Basic Court, Ljubisa Buha Čume (50) entered into a settlement with the prosecution, April 2nd (J Spasic, 2015: 2nd April). The cooperating witness, who has been in custody since November 15, admitted to attacking police officers and his wife in exchange for one year of house arrest. In the case of Čume, the sentence for domestic violence, included sequences of the hearings from January to April, with various not important details about the previous proceedings pending since 2011 against Čume, the clothes wearing his victim Ivana Buha, their offensive statements against each other, the postponement of hearings, allegations of theft, screening the origin of his "millions", and the like.) Buha is charged that, on November 8th, he committed the crime of domestic violence against his wife, after which he attacked two members of the security and thus committed a second criminal act and the third - the attack to the police officer.

9.2. Violence against Sindi, a former member of the Modelsica group. The trial of Nikola Pavlovic, ex-husband of Modelsica member Sindi (Ivana Stamenkovic) for domestic violence (V Djordjevic, Katic D, (2015, 12: March). Sindy was furious: The law protects abusers, April 17th (Jokic, V., 2015, 17. April). The sequence of reported events is as follows: Ivana sued Nikola for domestic violence, then the court granted him child custody, Ivana, revolted by the court decision, slandered him, and he raised a private charge for defamation.

It is easy to lose custody, said Ivana who does not give up the struggle, which is now led on social networks against the man against whom he raised indictment for the crime of domestic violence and who got custody... it can only in Serbia! shame! - wrote Ivana on Facebook. The former Modelsica member was also revolted by another postponement in the proceedings against her former husband, whom she accused of beating her. Former spouses Ivana Stamenkovic Sindi (36) and Nikola Pavlovic (33) have been at loggerheads for a long time. After she lost custody of their daughter Petra (4), Cindy revealed that she was a victim of domestic violence, and had therefore filed a lawsuit against her ex-husband. Another in a series of bitter hearings in the case was supposed to be held at the Third Municipal Court in Belgrade, at 10:00, but was postponed because Pavlović, like in a previous hearing, failed to appear. Ivana arrived in court with her lawyer, but left a few minutes later, visibly upset.

10. Conclusion

It is necessary to underline that every violent crime always has the victim and the offender, it should be noted that someone committed the violence, and that is a crime. Media reports on violence in the analyzed period 2015-2016, as with the preceding period (Mršević, 2015: 83) rarely, or rather, almost never, contain a clear and unambiguous condemnation of violence and the message that violence is never acceptable and that any responsibility for violence lies solely with the abuser. Instead, there is a frequent use of indications that suggest that the victim is also responsible for what happened to her.

The media is more and more prone to adopting the style of the so-called tabloid media, reporting about violence in a way that is trivial and sensationalist, with such articles appearing in sections dedicated to fun, entertainment, hot stories, and showbiz. This goes a long way to minimizing the seriousness of the violence. The impact of following such reports should be the instilment of the message that violence is life-threatening, but, on the contrary,

the idea is conveyed that violence it is part of a ‘normal and regular’ partnership. Or possibly that this is some kind of partnership and mutual tit-for-tat ‘game’. Furthermore, if this happens to those within celebrity circles who have a lot of money and live a life that ordinary citizens perceive as glamorous, the message is that this is part of everyday life. Ordinary people who struggle with existential problems see those who are assumed to be ‘famous’ as role models. So when violence occurs here, and is implied to be ‘regular’, or even ‘fun’, it is to be expected by the reader that this happens to others. This affects not only the public but also the responsible persons in the police and judiciary, who are also a part of the public. As in previous analyses (Mršević, 2013: 142), it is necessary that the public has access to all information pertaining to cases of femicide and rape, regardless of the system of statistical processing of data that is currently being employed by Serbia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs, in its intended primary narrative form, without subsequent legislative interpretation or statistical categorization. It is furthermore necessary for the media to also recognize the problem of violence against vulnerable and regularly discriminated groups of women (Roma women, older women, women with disabilities, lesbians, rural women, the unemployed, single mothers).

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