11

A Series of Fortunate Events

Caner (Jay) Baykal

Caner (Jay) Baykal lives and works in Bodrum, Turkey.

During my time in high school, I possessed a skill for mathematics and statistics, and my inquisitive nature always led me towards the subject of economics. It was then that I made the decision to pursue a degree in Econometrics, believing it would provide answers to all the questions that plagued my mind on the matter.

However, after completing my first year at university, I soon discovered that Econometrics held no solutions to the enigmas I sought. I found myself adrift and resolved to acquire another degree that, at the very least, would make some semblance of sense. While waiting for an opportunity to present itself, I began working at the Karia Princess hotel as an apprentice. It so happened that this establishment belonged to my great aunt’s granddaughter, Gülçin.

During my time at the hotel, Gülçin and I engaged in stimulating conversations regarding the realms of business and economics. On one occasion, I mentioned my disillusionment with econometrics and my intentions to pursue a different field of study. Astoundingly, her response proved to be a game-changer. Gülçin opined, “It makes sense that econometrics doesn’t make any sense.” She went on to reveal that she was diligently working on her doctoral thesis, focused on the Austrian School of Economics and its esteemed figure, Ludwig von Mises. She even presented me with one of Henry Hazlitt’s works.

As an econometrics student, both Mises and Hazlitt were foreign names to me. However, with their influence entering my life, economics suddenly began to fall into place, and I found myself embracing classical liberalism.

In 2005, I was bestowed the honor of serving as an embedded assistant to Hans-Hermann Hoppe during his inaugural visit to Turkey for a series of conferences held across Ankara, İzmir, and Istanbul. While I had heard of him before, I could not anticipate what lay ahead. After spending ten days together, I believe both Hoppe and I found the experience immensely gratifying. We shared meals, engaged in conversation, and he endured my seemingly far-fetched inquiries about libertarian societies with calm and logical responses. It was around the fourth or fifth day of our interactions that my paradigm shift occurred, so to speak.

Later that year, Gülçin and I attended Mises University, which proved to be the most intellectually demanding period of educational rediscovery in my entire academic history. Over those days, Gülçin and I enjoyed dining and talking with intellectual figures including Hans-Hermann Hoppe, Guido Hülsmann, Ralph Raico, Tom DiLorenzo, and others.

By the following year, in 2006, Hans and Gülcin were married and the inaugural meeting of the Property and Freedom Society was held at the Karia Princess in Bodrum. I was called upon to assist with this meeting, to which I was honored to contribute and participate. In subsequent years, I was called upon to help organize later PFS Conferences. where I encountered great personalities and met great friends.

From the moment I first encountered Hans-Hermann Hoppe, he possessed the ability to shift paradigms. He initially served as an influential mentor in my life but eventually blossomed into a cherished friend as well.