

The FIRESTICKS Author's Commentary

The Firesticks book uses a physical model to depict every living person's 'soul'. The human soul itself is pictured as a spark, an ember, and even as a fire. Considering the model framework, the human soul should never have any less than four faces who serve as *bystanders*.

For example, a baptized infant ideally has two parental figures (typically a mother and father). But also, the infant has two 'bystander' witnesses. These two are typically called a godmother and a godfather. Indeed their role involves commitment, such as a vow to assume the parental role should the parents pre-decease the infant.

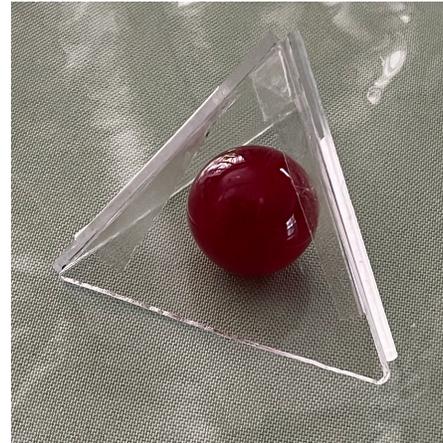
Another example is matrimony. Here the notion of an infant is simply a *concept*. The marriage contract signing represents the *infancy* of becoming lifetime soulmates. Just like baptism, four individuals face the conceptual soul.

Typically the bride, the groom, and two designated bystanders serve as primary witnesses. These two are conventionally called a 'Maid of Honor' and a 'Best Man'. The two special witnesses respectively sponsor the about-to-be-legally joined pair. One bystander assures or 'vouches for' the bride, the other the groom.

The book addresses two of the most challenging issues the next generation has to deal with. One is approaching perils due to threatened climate control inaction. Two is what the book calls the 'New Republic of Anarchy' (NRA): unfettered freedom to own and bear firearms. Both of these topics have been abject failures when addressed by the baby boomer generation. The book's theme is one of 'enlistment'. Even hapless veterans (for example, with both legs amputated) are sought to help solve these two threats.

The reader is left with the impression that it isn't too late to gather enlistees of all stripes and ages. The reader is left with the impression that climate-control issues are likely more important than others. Still, as exemplified by prolific gun massacres, unfettered freedom represents root concerns that can be addressed locally.

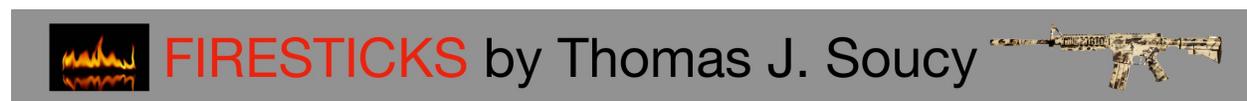
Indeed, towards the book's end, an essay (contained within the book's text as well as separately accessible at the website: www.oddBulb.com) describes a vision that is not unlike a baptism or a wedding. The non-governmental



Tetrahedron - Fire Element
It has four 'faces'.

approach (akin to baptisms and marriages) supplies ‘bystander’ witnesses associated with any citizen who might desire to acquire any firestick. Whether for hunting, protection, collecting, target shooting, or whatever reasons.

The Rev. Greg Perez (photo on book’s back cover) took the initiative to help his parishioners to deal with two horrific gun massacres. Images of the victims displayed at the church’s vigil appear on the book’s front cover. The photos include the Buffalo, NY Tops market souls and the Uvalde, TX souls. Souls (fires) that had been extinguished by senseless gun violence. Later the Reverend asked, “Why can’t Lynn be safe?”



Spine images: a burning stick on fire, an assault weapon (deadly firestick)

The book’s so-called ‘spine’ shows two images. These photos represent the two themes the reader should ponder after completing the book.

The first image is a burning stick on fire (from end to end). It symbolizes tension. There is some degree of tension that connects the young couple. On one end (of the stick), we have Namale trying her very best to ignite, to enflame mainly younger generation folks to become enlistees, to take a leap of sorts, to respond to threats of impending climate-induced peril. On the other end of the stick, we have Yusuf doing his best to understand ice and water. His role is to gather pertinent data. The data provides evidence that could be useful to squelch fires.

The book challenges the reader to devise plans to help save the planet. The book intentionally does not prescribe solutions. Indeed the problem must be handled globally, with many other countries participating.

Towards the book’s end, a focused discussion concerns the other spine image: an assault weapon. Why is this focused discussion in so few pages?

In general, significant problems must be broken down into smaller pieces. Global cooperation, notwithstanding, is far less relevant when it comes to a very elegant and simple solution to mitigate gun massacres. First, the ideas are narrowed down: just a US problem. Not global. Second a problem that intransigent legislators need not solve! Does it require a law to conduct a baptism? No. Are there so-called ‘common-law’ marriages? Yes.

As described in a paucity of pages, the obvious solution is simply a civil (such as a nonprofit) mechanism to establish a scheme where bystanders vouch for anyone who cares to purchase a firestick. Certain benign events (such as baptisms and marriages) have merely two verifiable witnesses and a host of other attendee witnesses.

At a minimum, for one to acquire a simple target pistol (for example), the website would require four sponsors (bystanders). Seekers of military-style weapons (AR-15s) or large-capacity magazines for bullets would require almost a committee-sized group of bystanders.

The US is perceived as a world-leading free and democratic country. The book details a non-intrusive mechanism to solve a salient issue domestically. Ironically, by so doing the very same technique (“it takes a village” and/or “kana takon”), the rest of the world’s countries can join in to help solve the far more daunting task: climate-change-induced peril.

In a few short pages, the ‘non-intrusive mechanism’ is outlined. The book’s readers need to understand that ultimately not people, not firesticks, but instead, *bullets kill*. (The book mentions *bullets* about two dozen times). A case in point: pick up a number 4H fine-point sharpened pencil. Poke your wrist. ‘Ouch,’ that could hurt! The pencil diameter is about the same as many bullets. However, many bullets are purposely made to wobble and contort within your body. Ball your fist behind your back. That dimension shows the exit wound. Such a gaping hole causes bleeding out. Death follows quickly.

A yoyo is a toy, right? So why is the term ‘yoyo’ cited even more than ‘bullet’, one might ask? Well, yes, it is indeed a toy, and various pages depict how such a gizmo brought delight to a young (almost five-year-old) girl, Pietra. The toy, through assorted ‘tricks’, presents the yoyo as the book’s metaphor object (The bicycle served as a metaphor in prior books). Two examples of the yoyo metaphor follow.

The ‘around-the-world’ trick symbolized the ever-spinning world with a particular shrine for mother nature at the center. Readers, Pietra too, needs to question, “how safe is the center”? That trick sheds light on the climate issue.

The yoyo toy typically has a ‘string attached’. For example, the ‘walk-the-dog’ trick leashes a puppy. The fictional group cited in the book, a ‘New Republic of Anarchy’ (NRA), has visions that include *no strings* attached: ‘the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.’ But the Firesticks book suggests otherwise. Almost as a postscript, the text presents a case, or at least a reasonable mechanism, to attach ‘strings’. How so?

To start with, legal grounds exist to establish a nonprofit in the US. For example, recent press reports say that one Alex Jones allegedly raised about 95 million *by denying* that the Sandy Hook massacre occurred! All on ‘legal grounds’ (that sucked in believers).

The ‘walk-the-dog’ trick is a rare yoyo trick where the spinning yoyo touches the ground. Reread that last sentence. Words ‘spin’ and ‘ground’ should bob in one’s head like a yoyo. If Alex can spin a yarn to the tune approaching 100 million, can others lay the **grounds** for lassoing the NRA’s vision?

The book expects the reader to know that there once was a complete Second Amendment cited here: *A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.*

In effect, the thrust of the simple solution proposed by the book uses, almost word for word, that fundamental text and depends on *legal grounds* (a nonprofit, just like Alex’s). Intentionally not specified in the book, here is the essential proposal (try to find the singularly changed word):

*A **groundswell** regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.*

The book suggests a *groundswell* movement! A non-governmental organization. The book covers the why and the how. The book never hints that citizens in good standing (let’s describe that as folks with suitable bystanders) should have their so-called ‘right to keep and bear arms’ infringed.

If one is old enough to become a citizen-soldier (i.e. join the services such as the US Army), this book is intended for them. If one has a young family with a child about to enter school, a school where ‘active shooter drills’ occur, this book is for them. If one is a member of a later generation, such as ‘baby boomers’, then it isn’t too late for them to ‘take the leap’ (as portrayed in the book). Folks approaching or into retirement years need to learn how they failed to address salient issues (such as climate and/or gun control).

If, on the other hand, one is old enough to start kindergarten, attends school through mid-teens (about sixteen years old), this book is inappropriate to read.

Another ‘on the other hand’ comment: the NRA type folks tend to blur the lines as to suitability and what’s appropriate or not. For example it appears that they noticed that a ‘rite of passage’ is in decline. For years it was common for an

early teen to acquire their first firearm. For example, squirrel or rabbit hunting. Skilled hunting seems to be in decline; maybe it is too bloody. So their response is a 'cute' solution. The AR-15, to some folks, is a military-styled rifle ('AR' meaning Assault Rifle). The cute solution to younger teens losing interest in rifles? The product they call a 'JR-15'. Yes, it looks and acts identical to the massacre weapon of choice! It simply has a junior (JR) size about twenty percent smaller and 'only' shoots 22-caliber bullets. But bullets kill! Do the NRA folks care?

The Firesticks book ends with an embedded essay titled: "Searching for the Soul of the Fire Element." Yusuf wrote the entire essay knowing his goddaughter; now five, was about to start kindergarten. It didn't sit too well with him that within the first thirty days, she would have to undergo 'Active Shooter Drills'.



Left to right: Malaika (Swahili 'angel), Knitty, Angel spinning Globe on top a baton stick, and, the balanced angel bobbing a yoyo.

The above commentary of the Firesticks book describes the intended readership audience. Collectively best described by Pietra. The very last sentence in the book (before the embedded essay by Yusuf) reads:

"She didn't know much about a special essay he wrote. She heard it was important after hearing grownups discussing it..."

Grownups. The gun control issue is too complex for her to understand fully. Yusuf has appointed himself as her Guardian Angel, Pietra is an angel (Malaika). The five year old did understand how her godfather helped disabled veterans make the leap to become enlistees. She saw a veteran sitting on a trapeze type swing, bob up and down like a yoyo and leap from a helicopter. Everyone cheered.



Disabled veteran joined ZipUFly

The Yo-Yo Guy

Wednesday, December 28th at 10:30a.m. & 2 p.m.

\$8 for Members | \$12 for Nonmembers

Tickets Include Museum Admission

The Yo-Yo Guy performs a high-energy, funny, and interactive show with yo-yos, a unicycle, and a giant yo-yo that he walks on!

Museum Flyer Included Photo (No Caption)

Although the text is for grownups, the generation gap between Namale and Pietra had been narrowed. Pietra's godmother, Namale, gave her a keepsake knitted doll for her fifth birthday. While most such dolls are flexible, Namale had placed a special stick inside thus giving the doll 'spine'. It is too soon for Namale to know if little Pietra will understand larger issues such as climate or gun control issues. The book ends leaving the reader asking that question. One wonders if she will grasp a stick with a world symbolically spinning on top of it or if she can achieve balance. Enough balance to hold on with one hand, bob a yoyo with the other hand.

This commentary as well as the book's synopsis employed photos obtained at a nearby museum. The museum's promotional flyer did show a picture of the 'Yo-Yo Guy' but it was not captioned. The performer remains anonymous. The synopsis has additional pictures since the books author arrived at the head of a line, was able to sit up front, came prepared to 'shoot' (pictures not a gun), and thankfully no announced prohibitions of the pleasant interactive show were announced. Sensitive to full face portrayals the interacted little ones also remain anonymous.

Sincerely yours,

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