

Squirrel Suits

A New Renaissance in Flight!

By Koeby Johnson



Raise
your hand
if you
have ever
dreamed
you were
able to fly!



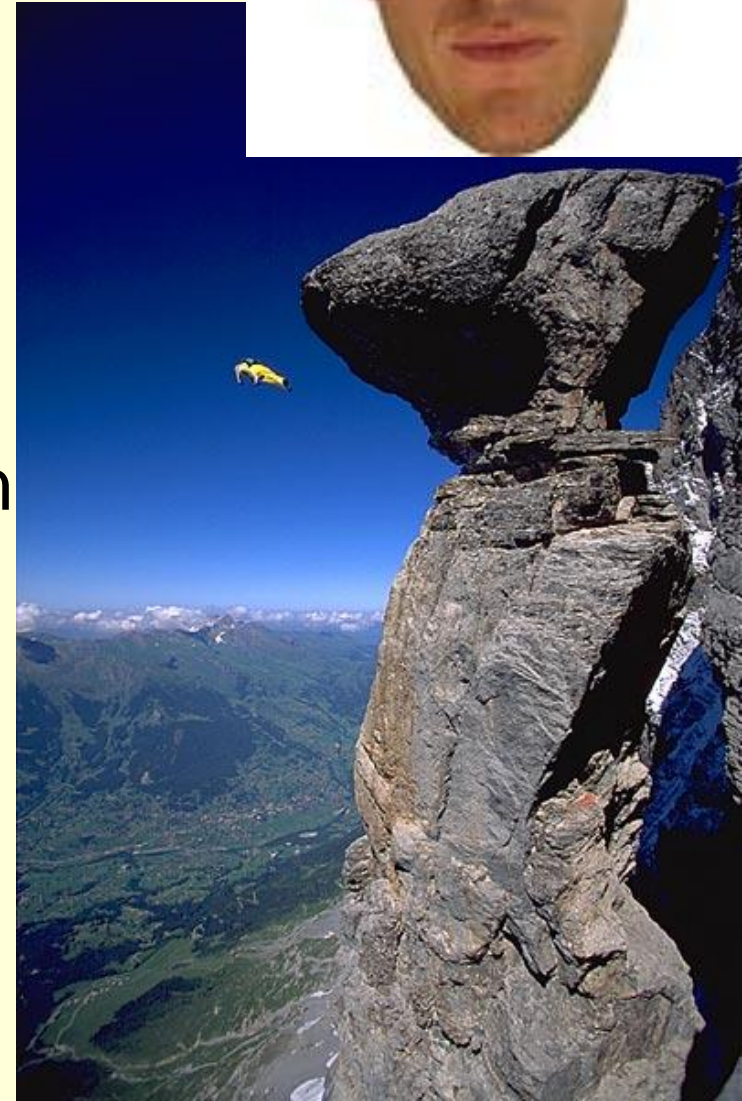
Many people have
dreamed about
flying, but only a few
have made that
dream into reality...

Extreme Base Jumping in Wingsuits



Who?

- Jeb Corliss is famous for his unique black outfit. His wide range of hobbies also includes “normal” base-jumping and hanging out with great white sharks
- Loic Jean-Albert, of France, is better known as “Flying Dude” in a popular YouTube video
- Maria von Egidy, a wing-suit maker from South Africa, has begun creating a suit that would allow pilots to land on their feet on a horizontal surface.



What?

- Modern suit design features tightly woven nylon sewn between the legs and between the arms and torso, creating wings.



<http://www.tonywingsuits.com/jedei.html>

A detailed look at the components of a flying suit shows that it is both extremely high-tech and amazingly simple!

When?

- The idea of wing-suits is not new — they have captured the imagination of storytellers since the first person dreamed of flying — remember the ancient Greek myth of Icarus?
- The suits' practical use began to take hold in the early 1990s, when a modern version proved safer and led to rapid innovation.



Where?

- Around the globe at least a half-dozen groups — in France, South Africa, New Zealand, Russia and the United States — are developing flying suits.



Why?

- **For the sheer thrill of it!**
- **To prove that it can be done!**
- **To create a successful business – the South African Glide System 1 sells for 8,000.00 ZAR = 1,056.93 USD!**



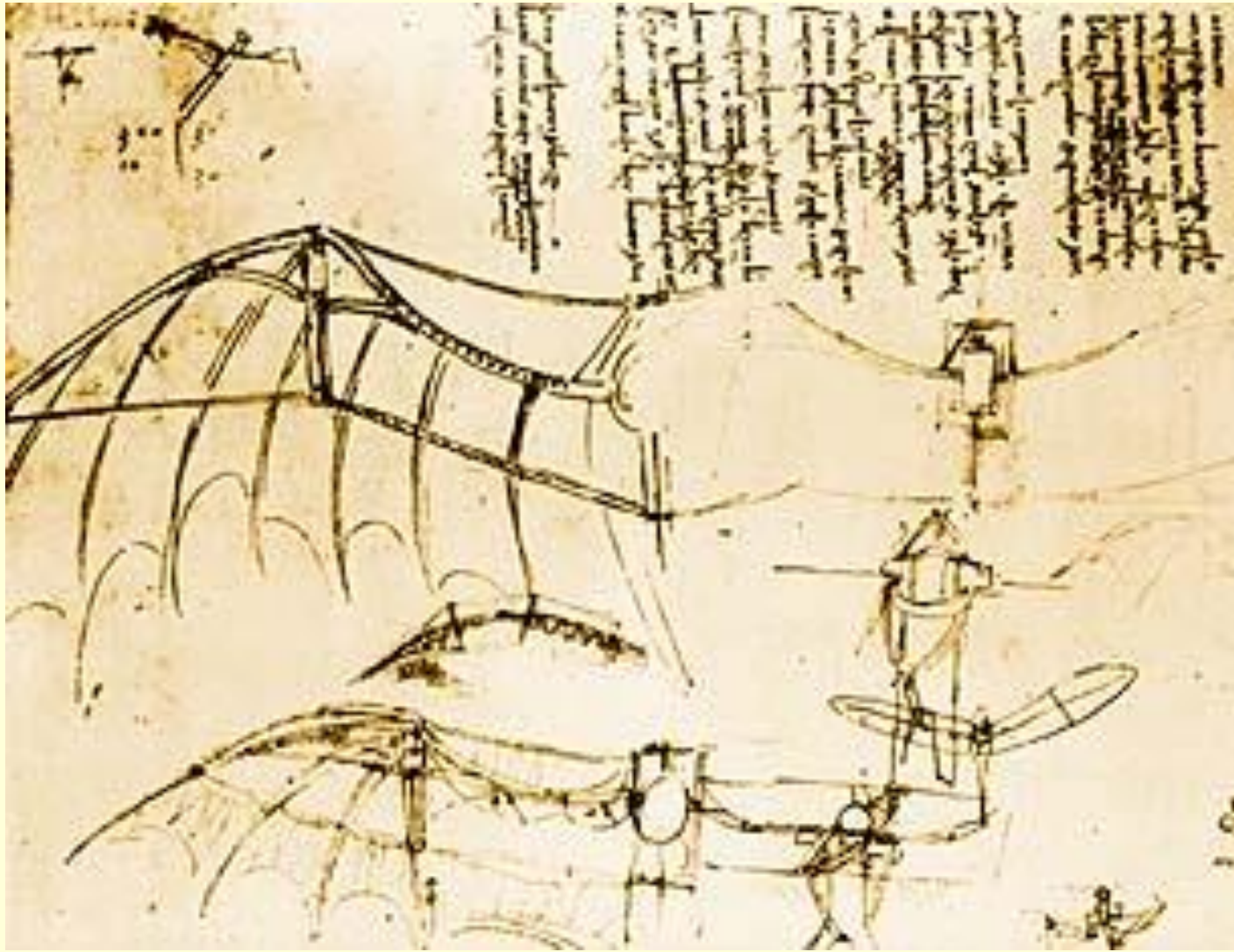
How?

- **How is this similar to developments made during the European Renaissance?**

(Learning Target: I can identify the significance of two important people, places, and events from the European Renaissance.)

Exhibit One

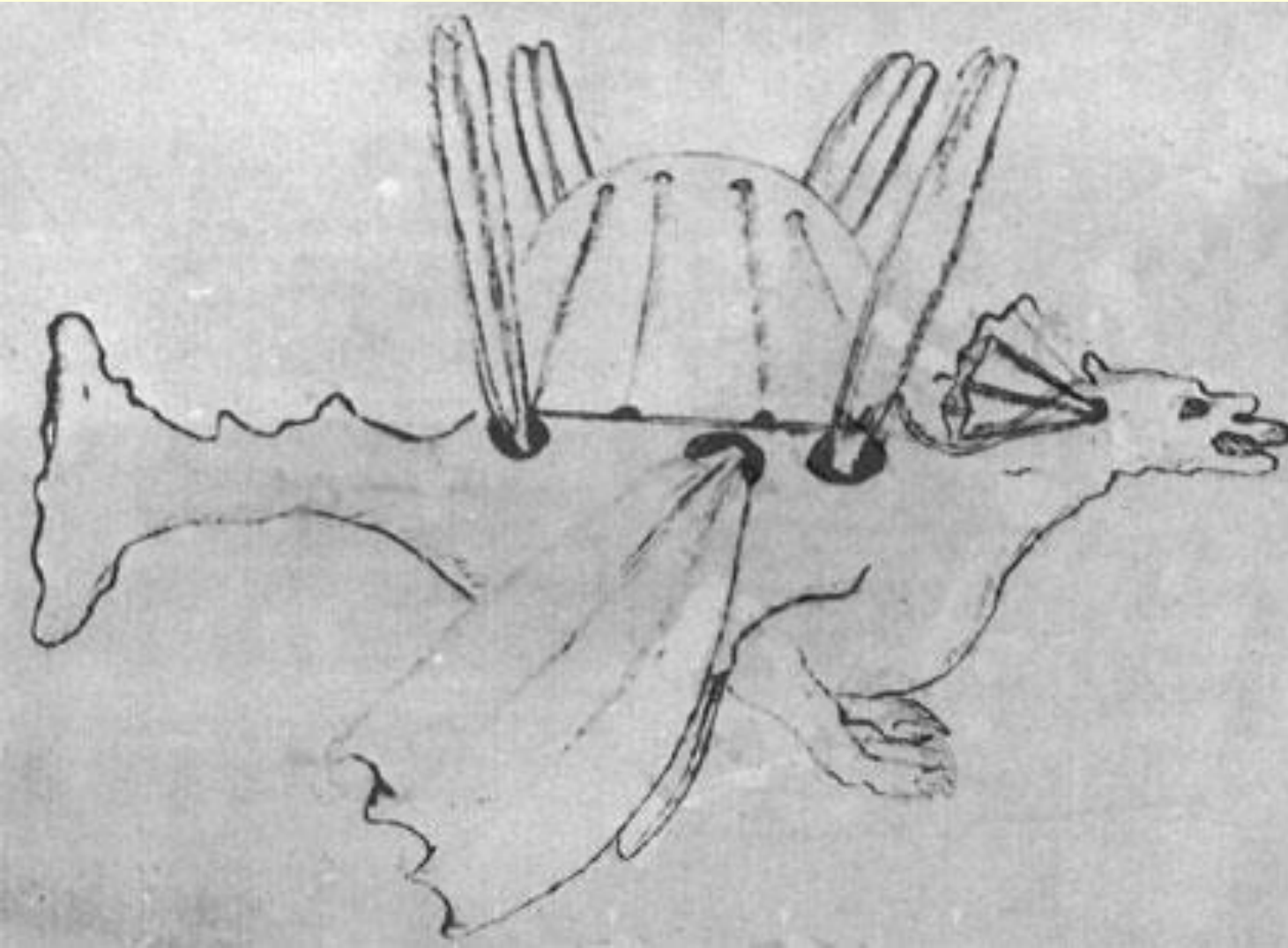
Drawings that Leonardo da Vinci made while working in Milan, Italy in 1485!



Leonardo da Vinci studied the flight of birds. He realized that humans are too heavy, and not strong enough, to fly using wings simply attached to the arms. Therefore he sketched a device in which the aviator lies down on a board and works two large wings, using hand levers, foot pedals, and a system of pulleys.

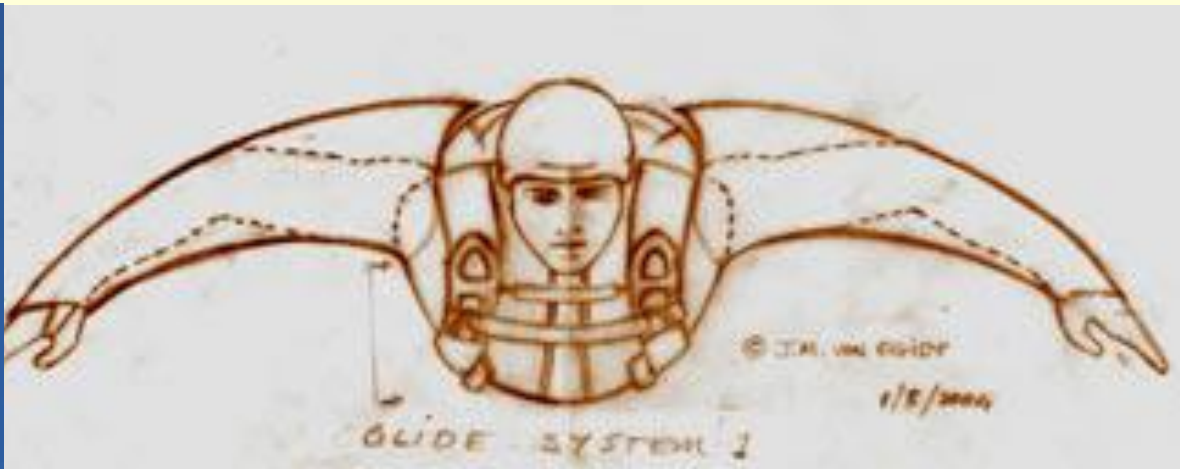
Exhibit Two

Aircraft that Tito Livio Burattini made while working in Warsaw, Poland in 1648!



King Władysław IV invited Burattini to Poland. In Warsaw, Burattini built a model aircraft with "four pairs of wings attached to an elaborate 'dragon'", It succeeded in lifting a cat but not Burattini himself. He promised that "only the most minor injuries" would result from landing the craft.

- The scientific innovation that was happening in the Renaissance (~1300 – 1700) is still happening! People around the world are continuing to test the limits of what is “possible”. It was only a few steps from Leonardo da Vinci’s drawings of flying machines to the early machines of the Wright brothers.
- As each generation of aviation inventors added to the legacy of past innovations, it was only a matter of time before humans could put on an article of clothing that enabled them to glide like a bird of the sky!



Works Consulted

Barber, Barrington, Leonardo, and William Wray. *Through the Eyes of Leonardo Da Vinci*. New York: Gramercy, 2004. Print.

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