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## A sell-off at Moderna, the 50 best shows on Netflix, and good luck getting inside The French Laundry (no, really!)

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# STRICTLY | VC

**September 4, 2020**

[Friday!](#) Wishing you a wonderful long Labor Day weekend, fellow Americans. (We hope those of you who are not in the U.S also have a very lovely weekend.)

We aren't publishing on Monday because of the holiday, but we'll be back in fighting form Tuesday, assuming we make it [past Sunday](#).

More then.:)

### **Top News**



**SoftBank** has bought many billions of dollars' worth of U.S. equity derivatives in recent weeks in a move that stoked the fevered rally in big tech stocks before a

sharp pullback yesterday, the Financial Times reported this morning. It says the "Japanese conglomerate has been snapping up options in tech stocks during the past month in huge amounts, fueling the largest trading volumes ever in contracts linked to individual companies." (Ever!) Much [more here](#).

The Pentagon reaffirmed its controversial decision to give its largest-ever cloud computing contract to **Microsoft** instead of to market-leader **Amazon**, defying a court decision that blocked the earlier award amid criticism that Donald Trump's animosity toward Amazon influenced the decision. An Amazon spokesman said the company isn't about to let this one go, that it will continue to [challenge the decision](#).

**Tesla's** shares sank more than 6% after hours today after Etsy, Teradyne, and Catalent were added to the S&P 500 Index, but not the carmaker. Tesla was seen as a candidate for inclusion after reporting its fourth straight profitable quarter, [notes CNBC](#).

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## Massive Fundings

**Auxmoney**, a 13-year-old, Düsseldorf, Germany-based credit marketplace that claims to be the largest in continental Europe, has raised €150 million in growth capital in a round led by the private equity firm **Centerbridge Partners**. As part of the deal, Centerbridge is buying shares from other existing investors. Tech.eu has [more here](#).

**Gaana**, a 10-year-old, Noida, India-based music streaming app, has raised \$50 million in a fresh round led by earlier backers **Tencent** and **Times Internet**. The firms last provided the company with \$115 million in funding in 2018. [More here](#).

**Livspace**, a six-year-old, Singapore-based platform that invites shoppers to purchase furniture and home decor from numerous vendors, as well as connects them with interior designers, has raised \$90 million in Series D funding co-led by **Kharis Capital** of Switzerland and the India- and Southeast Asia-focused firm **Venturi Partners**. Tech in Asia has [more here](#).

## Big-But-Not-Crazy-Big Fundings

**AnyVision**, a five-year-old, Holon, Israel- and New York-based maker of facial, body, and object recognition platforms, says it has raised \$43 million in new funding, though it isn't saying from whom. Crunchbase shows the company

previously raised \$74 million, including from **Lightseed Venture Partners**, **Bosch**, **DFJ Growth**, and Microsoft's **M12**. [More here](#).

**Moteefe**, a six-year-old, U.K.-based platform that enables other e-commerce businesses to produce and sell customized items around the world, has raised \$11 million in fresh funding led by **BGF**, with participation from earlier investors **Gresham House Ventures** and **Force Over Mass Capital**. The startup most recently closed on €5 million in Series A this past February. Tech.eu has [more here](#).

**Nreal**, a 3.5-year-old, Beijing-based startup that has become one of the most-watched mixed reality startups in China, has raised \$40 million in Series B funding. **Kuaishou Technology** led the round, joined by **Sequoia Capital China**, **GP Capital**, **GL Ventures** and **CCEIF Fund**. TechCrunch has [more here](#).

**OK Play**, a two-year-old, L.A.-based maker of an app for young children and their parents that encourages kindness and empathy and aims to deal with negative emotions like anger using behavioral science, has raised \$11 million in funding. Investors included **Obvious Ventures**, **Forerunner Ventures**, **Greycroft**, **Abstract Ventures**, **Dreamers VC**, **Collab + Sesame**, **LEGO Ventures**, **Muse Capital**, **Progression Fund**, and individual investors. Business Insider has [more here](#).

**Pharmapacks**, a 10-year-old, College Point, N.Y.-based online health and beauty marketplace, has raised \$40 million in bridge round financing from **Reckitt Benckiser**, **The Craftory**, **Straus Group**, **Emerson Group**, and **Sawaya Capital**. The capital comes just two months after the company closed on \$150 million in funding from **GPI Capital** and **JPMorgan Chase Bank**. [More here](#).

## Smaller Fundings

**Anvilogic**, a year-old, Palo Alto, Ca.-based collaborative security operations center content platform (we don't know what this means but you hopefully do), has raised \$4.4 million. **Foundation Capital** led the round, joined by **Point72 Ventures**, former NetApp CEO **Dan Warmenhoven**, and Palo Alto Networks CEO **Nikesh Arora**. Crunchbase News has [more here](#).

**Demodesk**, a three-year-old, San Francisco- and Munich, Germany-based online sales platform that says it helps teams to automate scheduling, preparation, follow-ups, and data reporting to convert prospects faster, has raised \$8 million in funding. **Balderton Capital** led the round, joined by **Target Global** and **Funders Club**. [More here](#).

**Justpoint**, a two-year-old, New York-based startup using artificial intelligence for analysis of individual medical malpractice claims, has raised \$1 million in seed funding. **Vivek Garipalli**, founder and CEO of Clover Health, led the round, joined by **Amino Capital**, **Whoa Ventures**, and individual investors. Business Insider has [more here](#).

**Mustard**, a year-old, L.A.-based startup whose mobile app analyzes an athlete's mechanics and offers corrective tips to help them improve, has raised \$1.7 million in seed funding led by **Shasta Ventures** and **Intersect VC**, with participation from numerous individual investors, including NFL quarterback **Drew Brees**. TechCrunch has [more here](#).

**Myst AI**, a two-year-old, San Francisco-based startup focused on time series forecasting in electricity, has raised \$6 million in Series A funding led by **Valo Ventures**, with participation from **Gradient Ventures**. Crunchbase News has [more here](#).

**PhotoniCare**, a seven-year-old, Chicago-based company that makes an imaging tool for the middle ear, has raised \$5.2 million in Series A funding led by **I2E Management**, with participation from **OSF Ventures**, **Sony Innovation Fund**, and **Dreampact Ventures**. [More here](#).

**Teemyco**, a year-old, Stockholm-based startup that's focused on reproducing office interactions in a virtual environment, has raised \$1 million in seed funding led by **Luminar Ventures**, with participation from **Antler** and **Gazella**. TechCrunch has [more here](#).

**ThruWave**, a 3.5-year-old, Seattle-based uses millimeter waves to see through packaging, has raised \$6.4 million in seed funding. **E14 Fund** and **Ubiquity Ventures** led the round, joined by **Root Ventures**, **Blue Sky Capital**, **WRF Capital**, **In-Q-Tel**, and **Tsingyuan Ventures**. GeekWire has [more here](#).

## New Funds

**Cota Capital**, the 5.5.-year-old San Francisco-based enterprise tech investment firm founded by investor **Bobby Yazdani**, is raising \$100 million for its second fund, per an SEC filing. [More here](#).

**Rainmaking Venture Studio**, a London-based unit of a broader, 14-year-old venture development company in Copenhagen, has raised £50 million in capital commitments as part of what it hopes will eventually be a £150 million fund to back start-ups globally. The money will reportedly be used to back between six and eight start-ups each year. [More here](#).

## IPOs

**Graybug Vision**, a five-year-old, Redwood City, Ca.-based Phase 2 biotech developing transformative medicines for ocular diseases, filed today with the SEC to raise up to \$86 million in an IPO. According to Crunchbase, it has raised \$130 million from investors to date, including from **Hatteras Venture Partners** and **Deerfield**. [More here](#).

**Pulmonx**, a 25-year-old, Redwood City, Ca.-based which makes minimally invasive medical devices for emphysema, filed on Friday with the SEC to raise up to \$86 million in an initial public offering. The company booked \$32 million in revenue for the 12 months ended June 30, 2020. According to Crunchbase, it has raised at least \$276 million over the years from more than a dozen investors, including DeNovo Ventures, Kleiner Perkins, and Boston Scientific. [More here.](#)

Ubiquitous self-driving cars are still many years away from becoming reality, which has forced numerous companies that earlier poured heaps of resources into speeding them along into coming up with new ways to push them forward without continuing to commit so much capital. The newest case in point: **Yandex**, the publicly traded Russian tech giant that started as a search engine but has expanded into a number of related areas, is now spinning out its self-driving car unit from MLU BV, which is a ride-hailing and food delivery joint venture it operates in partnership with **Uber**. Yandex and Uber were said to be considering an IPO of the unit last year that could have valued it at \$7.7 billion. TechCrunch has [more here.](#)

## Exits

TikTok owner **ByteDance** says it has acquired the Chinese third-party payment service **UIPay** in a bid to leverage its domestic payment capability. Reuters has [more here.](#)

## People

**Jennifer Friel Goldstein**, a director of venture capital at Pfizer who joined [Silicon Valley Bank](#) in 2012 as a managing director, has been promoted to managing partner in charge of a new life sciences investment team that will include a life sciences-focused direct investment fund.

The nation's richest big tech executives -- Bezos, Musk, Zuckerberg and Gates -- collectively [lost \\$25 billion](#) of their net worth after the market sell-off.

## Data

The IHME, a research institute working in the area of global health statistics, predicts that [410,000 Americans](#), and 2.8 million people globally, will die from COVID-19 by January. Right now those numbers are 187,000 and 871,000.

A *\*majority\** of young adults in the U.S. live with their parents for the first time [since the Great Depression.](#)

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## Essential Reads

Why are Moderna executives selling stock while developing a coronavirus vaccine? "On a scale of one to 10, one being less concerned and 10 being the most concerned," says Daniel Taylor, an associate professor of accounting at the Wharton School, "[this is an 11.](#)"

## Detours

Why fashion is going [all-in on anime](#).

How the American drive-in [staged a comeback](#).

The [50 best shows](#) on Netflix right now (and twenty more shows to [watch this fall](#)).

## Retail Therapy

Socially distanced dining [inside The French Laundry](#).

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StrictlyVC, LLC, 1 Blackfield Drive, No. 239,  
Tiburon, CA 94920

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