

## 005 Austerity in Silicon Valley

The crisis has hit tech's **spiritual** home hard, but it is already planning ahead.

Firing somebody is hard **under any circumstances**. But doing it over a video call is **brutal**. "It's not the best **environment** for this, with people at home and kids in the background," **observes** Marwan Forzley, the boss of Veem, a **startup** based in San Francisco which allows firms to **transfer** money cheaply. He recently had to **let go** 30 of its employees.

Mr Forzley **speaks for** many in Silicon Valley. The largest American tech firms may be the winners from a global **pandemic**. Demand for their online services has exploded among people and businesses in lockdown. But many startups in tech's **heartland** are hurting. Hardly a day **goes by** without news of more **lay-offs** and firms **going out of business**. Yet amid **the doom and gloom**, **venture-capital** (vc) firms and **entrepreneurs** are already doing the thing they believe they do best: **divining** the future in their **crystal** balls.

Californian tech firms and their **financiers** were among the first in America to **take** the threat of coronavirus **seriously**. Some **venture** capitalists began refusing to shake hands at the beginning of February (and were **ridiculed** for it).

The moneymen also moved quickly to "**triage**" companies in their

portfolio, classifying them according to how likely they were to survive and what they should do. Mostly this involved letting people go. "The shocking thing is how fast everything has moved," says Marco Zappacosta, who runs Thumbtack, a marketplace for local professionals from plumbers to dog trainers, which laid off 250 of its 900 employees.

Definitive figures are hard to come by. When big firms cut back it makes the news. Airbnb and Uber recently announced they would let go 1,900 and 3,700 workers respectively. Layoffs.fyi, a website that tracks dismissals in the tech industry by adding up numbers from press reports, has counted about 17,600 jobs lost since mid-March. But this misses many sackings at smaller startups. Although still well below the national average and the peak during the financial crisis of 2007-09, unemployment in the region is edging up.

## 一、单词&词组预习

austerity [ɔ:'sterəti] n. 紧缩; 严厉

spiritual ['spiritʃuəl] adj. 精神的, 心灵的

brutal ['bru:təl] adj. 残忍的, 不讲理的

observe [əb'zɜ:v] v. 说; 评论

startup ['startʌp] n. 启动; 开办

transfer [træns'fɜ:r] v. 转让; 转移



pandemic [pæn'demɪk] adj. (疾病) 在全国 (或世界) 流行的

heartland ['hɑ:rtlænd] n. 中心地带; 心脏地区

entrepreneur [ˌɜ: ntrepɹə'nɜ: r] n. 企业家; 主办者

divine [dɪ'vaɪn] v. 占卜; 预言

crystal ['krɪstl] n. 水晶 adj. 水晶的

financier [ˌfɪnən'sɪr] n. 投资家

venture ['ventʃər] v. 敢于冒险

ridicule ['rɪdɪkjʊ:l] n.&v. 嘲笑, 奚落

triage ['tri:ɑ:ʒ] n. 分类

portfolio [pɔ:rt'fəʊliəʊ] n. 证券投资组合

classify ['klæsɪfaɪ] v. 分类; 分等

plumber ['plʌmə] n. 水管工; 堵漏人员

definitive [dɪ'fɪnətɪv] adj. 最后的; 最佳的; 最权威的

respectively [rɪ'spektɪvli] adv. 分别地; 各自地, 独自地

track [træk] n. 足迹, 踪迹 v. 追踪

dismissal [dɪs'mɪsl] n. 解雇; 免职

sacking ['sækɪŋ] v. (非正式) 解雇

under any circumstances 在任何情况下, 无论如何

let go 解雇; 防守

speak for 代表.....讲话

go by 过去, 流逝

lay-offs 裁员

go out of business 歇业

doom and gloom 前途暗淡；无望

venture-capital 风险资本

take ... seriously 认真对待某事

come by 得到；获得

cut back 减少，削减

edge up 缓慢上升

## 二、单词&词组详解

1. austerity [ɔ: 'sterəti] n. 紧缩；严厉

- 记忆：austerity=auster (August 奥古斯都) +ity (名词后缀) → 严峻；简朴→紧缩；严厉
- 释义：Austerity is a situation in which people's living standards are reduced because of economic difficulties.





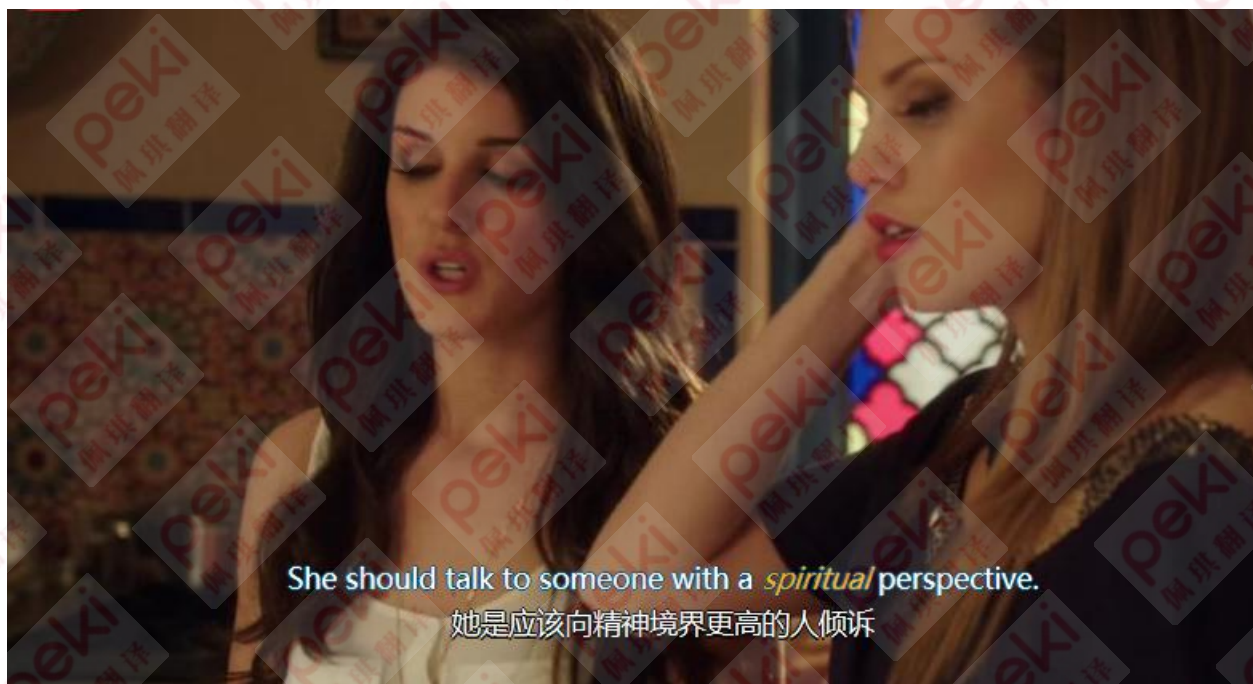
Austerity riots (in London) and the FAA shutdown.

财政紧缩引发伦敦骚乱，美国联邦航空局关闭。

2. spiritual ['spiritʃuəl] adj. 精神的，心灵的

- 记忆：spiritual=spirit（精神）+ual（形容词后缀）→精神的
- 区别：Spiritual——means relating to people's thoughts and beliefs, rather than to their bodies and physical surroundings.

Mental——means relating to the state or the health of a person's mind.



She should talk to someone (with a spiritual perspective).

她应该和有灵性的人谈谈。

3. brutal ['bru:tɪl] adj. 残忍的，不讲理的

- 记忆：brutal=brut (brute 残酷的人，暴君) +al (形容词后缀) → 不讲理的【大力水手中的反派布鲁托】
- 释义：If someone expresses something unpleasant with brutal honesty or frankness, they express it in a clear and accurate way, without attempting to disguise its unpleasantness.





They planned (some brutal family) dinner (for tonight).

他们计划了今晚残忍的家庭晚宴。

4. observe [əb'zɜ:rv] v. 说；评论

- 释义：( formal ) to make a remark.
- 例子：I'll observe Harper's class, I'll make my decision then.  
我会听哈珀的课，然后再做决定。

5. startup ['startʰʌp] n. 启动；开办

- 记忆：startup=start (开始) +up (完全) →完全开始 (从无到有)  
→开办
- 释义：the act or process of starting or making something start.



I get it. Dixon, you're a startup operation.

我明白了。迪克森，你是个新手。

#### 6. transfer [træns'fɜ:r] v. 转让；转移

- 记忆：transfer=trans (across 越过) +fer (to carry 拿取，如 offer)  
→拿过去→转移
- 释义：If you transfer something or someone from one place to another, or they transfer from one place to another, they go from the first place to the second.





We're gonna transfer you to a safe house.

我们会把你转移到一个安全的地方。

7. pandemic [pæn'demɪk] adj. (疾病) 在全国 (或世界) 流行的

- 记忆: pandemic=pan (all 全部, 如 pan-American 全美洲的) +demic (people 人民, 如 democracy 民主 epidemic 传染病) →全部人民都有的→在全国/世界流行的【可看成 pan 和 epidemic 的组合】
- 释义: (of a disease) existing in almost all of an area or in almost all of a group of people, animals, or plants.
- 区别: epidemic——happening a lot and affecting many people.



I've caused (a small) pandemic (of erections in freshman boys).

我在大一男生中引起了一场小小的“起立”大流行。

8. heartland ['hɑ:rtlænd] n. 中心地带; 心脏地区

- 记忆: heartland=heart (心脏) +land (土地) →中心地带; 心脏地区
- 释义: Journalists use heartland or heartlands to refer to the area or region where a particular set of activities or beliefs is most significant.





I love (the barren back) roads and (strip) malls (of the heartland)!

我喜欢心脏地带贫瘠的小路和狭长的购物中心!

9. entrepreneur [ˌɒː ntɹəprəʻnɜː r] n. 企业家; 主办者

- 记忆: 词源同 enterprise
- 释义: An entrepreneur is a person who sets up businesses and business deals.



Now, our first guest is an author and an *entrepreneur*.  
我们第一位嘉宾是作家亦是企业家

(Now),|| our first guest is an author and an entrepreneur.

现在，我们的第一位嘉宾是一位作家和企业家。

10. divine [di'vain] v. 占卜；预言

- 记忆：与 god（神）有关的，神能预测未来。
- 释义：to guess something





I can already *divine* content of his reply.

我已经能想象出他的答复了

I can (already) divine content (of his reply).

我已经能猜出他回答的内容。

11. crystal ['kristl] n. 水晶 adj. 水晶的

- 记忆: crystal=cryst (crust 外壳; 坚硬外皮) +al (...的) →有坚硬外壳的→水晶的
- 释义: transparent glass of very high quality, usually with its surface cut into delicate patterns.





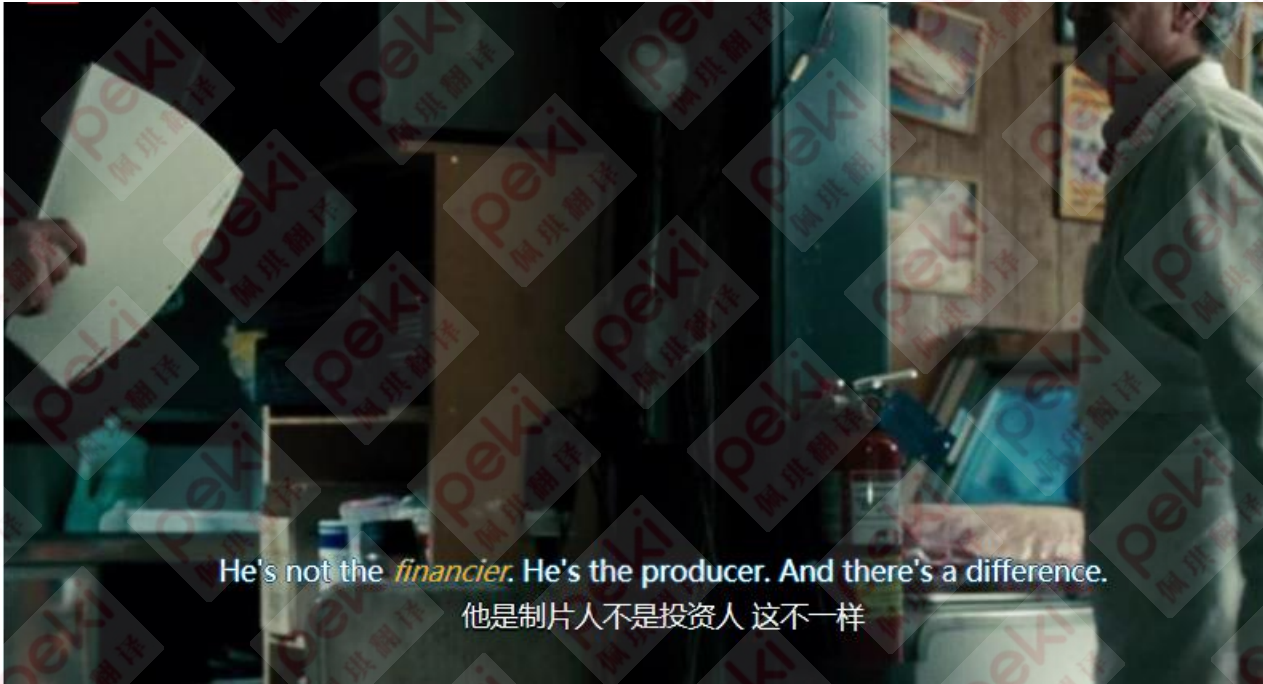
There are (a number of crystal) skulls (in the world).

世界上有许多水晶头骨。

12. financier [ˌfɪnənˈsɪr] n. 投资家

- 记忆: financier=finance (金融) +ier (人) →投资家
- 释义: A financier is a person, company, or government that provides money for projects or businesses.





He's not the financier. He's the producer. And there's a difference.

他不是投资家。他是制片人。这是有区别的。

### 13. venture ['ventʃər] v. 敢于冒险

- 记忆：venture=adventure=ad (to 去) +venture (to come 来) → 敢于冒险
- 释义：to risk going somewhere or doing something that might be dangerous or unpleasant, or to risk saying something that might be criticized



Your father would venture (forth with respect and caution).

你父亲会带着尊重和谨慎去冒险。

14. ridicule ['rɪdɪkjʊ:l] n.&v. 嘲笑, 奚落

- 记忆: ridiculous 的名词和动词形式
- 释义: If you ridicule someone or ridicule their ideas or beliefs, you make fun of them in an unkind way.





Oh, so you're awake enough to ridicule the boss.

哦，所以你已经清醒到可以嘲笑老板了。

#### 15. triage ['tri:ɑ:ʒ] n. 分类

- 记忆：triage=tri (try, 意为 to pick, 选择) +age (名词后缀) → 选择→分类
- 释义：the process of examining problems in order to decide which ones are the most serious and must be dealt with first:



Do you think 【you can walk (with me) to triage】 ?

你能和我一起去分诊吗？

16. portfolio [pɔːrt'fəʊliu] n. 证券投资组合

- 记忆：portfolio=port (to carry 拿；携带) +folio (sheet, leaf 纸张，树叶) → 拿回纸张（证券）→ 证券投资组合
- 释义：In finance, a portfolio is the combination of investments that a particular person or company owns.





We select the securities 【that go into the CDD portfolio】.

我们选择进入 CDD 投资组合的证券。

17. classify ['klæsɪfaɪ] v. 分类；分等

- 记忆：classify=class（班级，阶级）+i+fy（make，做；布置）→ 分类
- 释义：To classify things means to divide them into groups or types so that things with similar characteristics are in the same group.



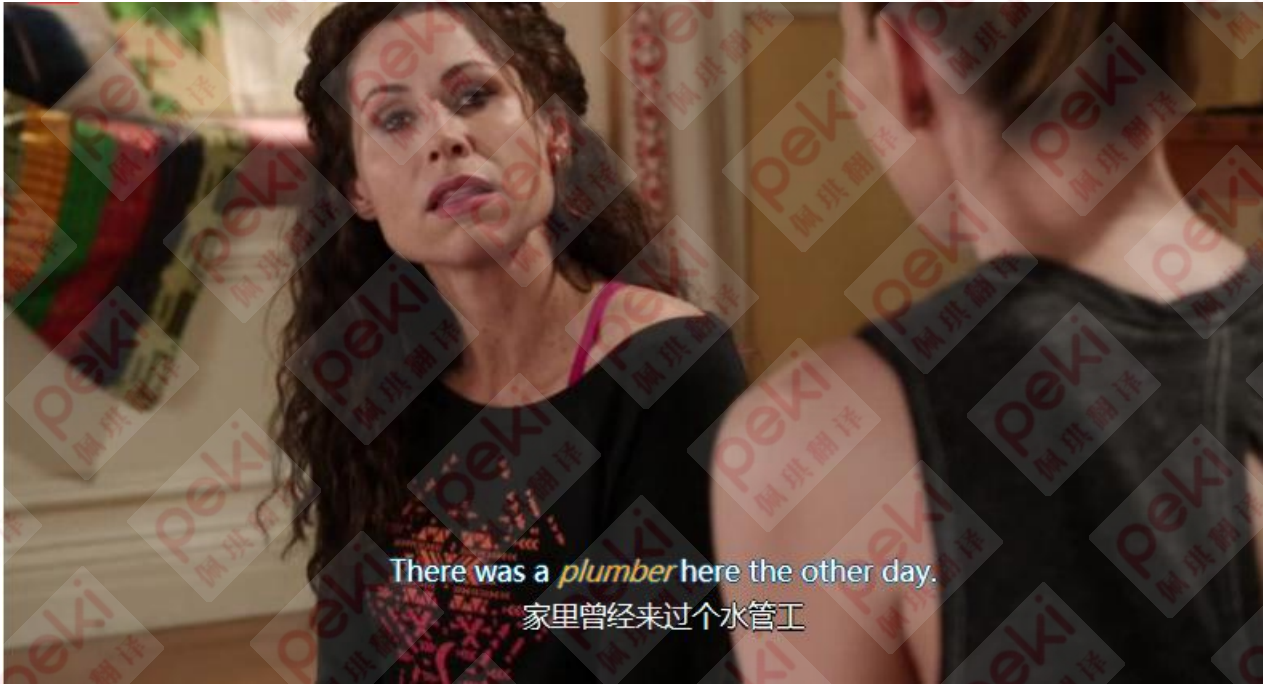
I would **classify** it as a recognizable psychiatric phenomenon.  
我将其归类为可识别的精神病现象

I would classify it (as a recognizable psychiatric phenomenon).  
我认为这是一种可以辨认的精神病现象。

18. plumber ['plʌmə] n. 水管工；堵漏人员

- 记忆：plumber=plumb（拟声词，“噗通”）+er（人）→水管工
- 释义：A plumber is a person whose job is to connect and repair things such as water and drainage pipes, bathtubs, and toilets.





There was a plumber (here the other day).

前几天这里有个水管工。

19. definitive [dɪ'fɪnətɪv] adj. 最后的；最佳的；最权威的

- 记忆：definitive=de (completely 完全；彻底) +finit (finish 边界，结束) +ive (形容词后缀) →完全地结束→最后的；最佳的
- 释义：A definitive book or performance is thought to be the best of its kind that has ever been done or that will ever be done.



That gives (both) parties (a definitive end) date.

这给了双方一个明确的结束日期。

20. respectively [rɪˈspektɪvli] adv. 分别地；各自地，独自地

- 释义：separately or individually and in the order already mentioned (used when enumerating two or more items or facts that refer back to a previous statement).
- 例子：Their sons were three and six respectively.  
他们的儿子们分别是 3 岁和 6 岁。

21. track [træk] n. 足迹，踪迹 v. 追踪

- 记忆：track 通 trek（远足，徒步旅行），即用脚踩出的足迹
- 释义：Tracks are marks left in the ground by the feet of animals or people.





You're (sort of) set up to track my phone? You track my phone?

你是在跟踪我的手机吗?你跟踪我的手机?

22. dismissal [dis'mɪsl] n. 解雇; 免职

- 记忆: dismissal=dis (apart, away 分开; 分离) +miss (send, let go 送走) +al (名词后缀) →打发走→解雇; 免职
- 释义: When an employee is dismissed from their job, you can refer to their dismissal.



(After his dismissal), he spent (several) days (in bed).

被解雇后，他在床上躺了几天。

### 23. sacking ['sækɪŋ] v. (非正式) 解雇

- 记忆：sack 指"large bag, 麻布袋" 这里为衍生含义，工人带着袋子里的工具离开，即为解雇。
- 释义：an act of removing someone from a job.
- 例子：They're not sacking you!  
他们不会解雇你的！

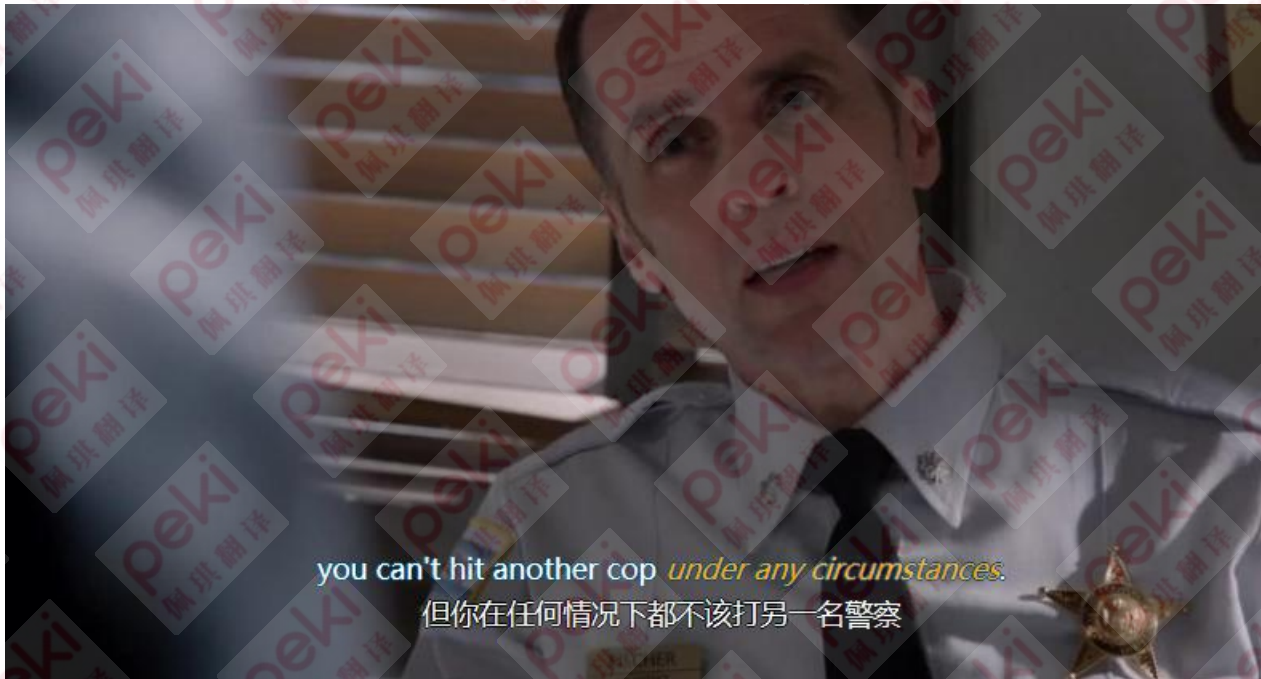
——【哈利波特与阿磁卡班的囚徒】

### 24. under any circumstances 在任何情况下，无论如何

- 记忆：under (在...下面) +any+ (任何) +circumstances (情况)  
=在任何情况下



- 释义：You can emphasize that something must not or will not happen by saying that it must not or will not happen under any circumstances.



You can't hit (another) cop (under any circumstances).  
在任何情况下你都不能打其他警察。

## 25. let go 解雇；放开

- 记忆：let (让) + go (走) =让...走=解雇
- 释义：To cease to employ; dismiss



*Let go.* If you don't *let go*, there's gonna be trouble.  
放手 你再不放手 可就要有麻烦了

Let go. 【If you don't let go】, there's gonna be trouble.

放手。如果你不放手，就会有麻烦。

26. speak for 代表.....讲话

- 记忆：speak（讲话）+for（为了）=代表.....讲话
- 释义：To say something on behalf of one; to express one's opinions for them.





I'm here to speak for sir walter loxley.

我是来代表沃尔特·洛克斯利爵士发言的。

27. go by 过去，流逝

- 记忆：go (走) +by (经过；通过) =过去，流逝
- 释义：If you say that time goes by, you mean that it passes.
- 例子：Time goes by and we feel safe too soon.

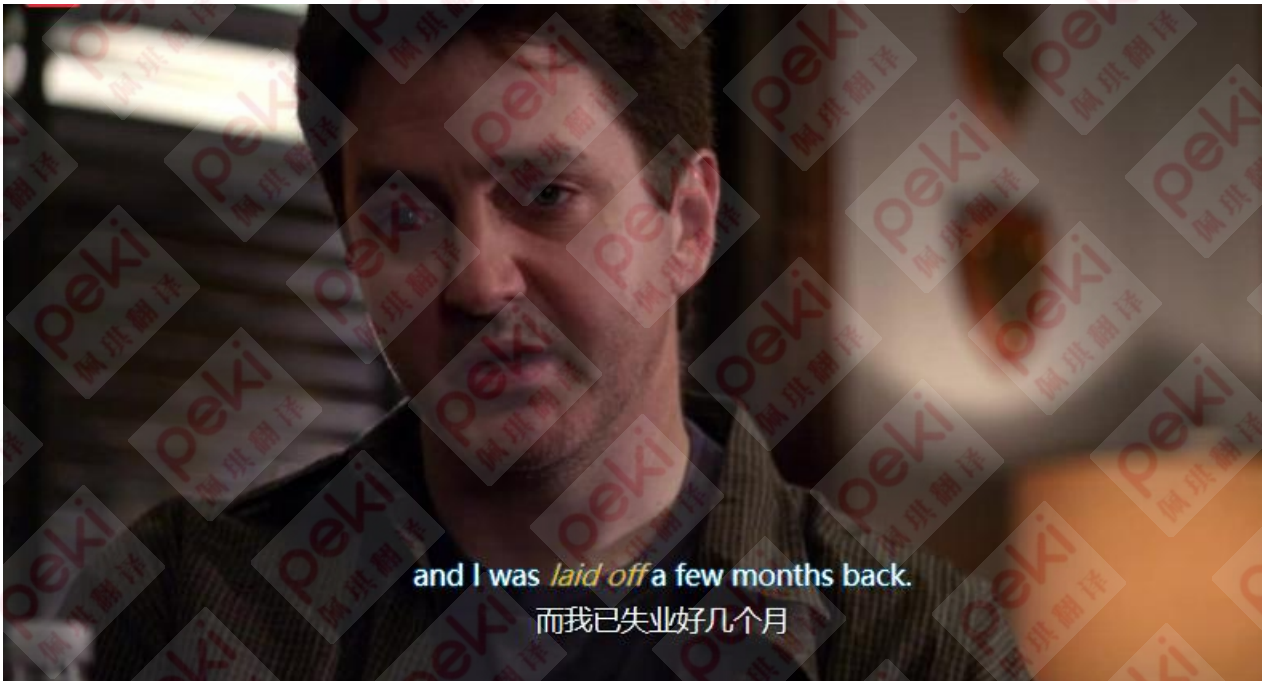
时间不知不觉地过去，我们过早感到安心了。

——【燃情岁月】

28. lay-offs 裁员

- 记忆：lay (位置) +off (离开) =离开工作岗位=裁员
- 释义：When there are layoffs in a company, people become unemployed because there is no more work for them in the

company.



I was laid off a few months back.

我几个月前下岗了。

## 29. go out of business 歇业

- 记忆：go out of (离开) + business (业务；生意) = 歇业
- 释义：To cease operating as a commercial business, typically because there is not enough commercial activity to cover costs and make a profit.





We'll go out of business, live in a box.

我们会破产，生活在困境中。

30. doom and gloom 前途暗淡；无望

- 记忆：doom（厄运；判决；使失败）gloom（昏暗；阴暗）
- 释义：(A situation) characterized by negativity or futility.





It's all doom and gloom. In my head, I hear music.

一切都是前途暗淡的。在我的脑海里，我听到了音乐。

### 31. venture-capital 风险资本

- 记忆：venture 冒险 capital 资金
- 释义：Venture capital is capital that is invested in projects that have a high risk of failure, but that will bring large profits if they are successful.





And she worked for this really powerful *venture capital*,  
她为汤姆·库里工作 一个有权有势的

And she worked (for this really powerful venture capital).

她为一家非常强大的风险投资公司工作。

32. take ... seriously 认真对待某事

- 记忆：take 接受，拿 seriously 认真地
- 释义：to regard (a matter) as a subject for concern or serious thought.





But this is hard (to take seriously for a number of reasons).

但这很难被认真对待，原因有很多。

33. come by 得到；获得

- 记忆：come (来) + by (在...旁边) = 来到...旁边 = 遇到 = 得到；获得
- 释义：To come by something means to obtain it or find it.



你怎么弄到五块金子的

How would you come by five gold pieces?



你怎么能得到五块金币呢？

#### 34. cut back 减少，削减

- 记忆：cut（切）+back（向后）=减少，削减
- 释义：To reduce or decrease



I'm gonna have to cut back (on the vino).

我得少喝点酒了。

#### 35. edge up 缓慢上升

- 记忆：edge（缓缓移动）+up（向上）=缓慢上升
- 释义：to advance gradually or cautiously
- 例子：Unemployment will edge up, but not by much.  
失业率将缓慢上升，但增幅不是很大。