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MEDIA

# Trump again calls for FCC to revoke ABC and NBC licenses

AUGUST 25, 2025 -- 5:28 PM ET

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David Folkenflik

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**3-Minute Listen**

PLAYLIST

TRANSCRIPT

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Under Chairman Brendan Carr, the Federal Communications Commission has launched investigations into NBC and ABC News.

John McDonnell/Getty Images

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The nation's chief broadcast regulator is, once more, at the center of President Trump's culture war after the president launched a social media barrage Sunday night against ABC and NBC.

While the Federal Communications Commission has historically operated with a degree of independence from U.S. presidents, its new chairman, Brendan Carr, has muscularly followed Trump's lead.

Carr has launched formal reviews of nearly all the major broadcast networks — ABC, CBS, NBC, NPR and PBS. He has also initiated investigations into the diversity, equity and inclusion actions of the corporate parents of ABC and NBC — the Walt Disney Co. and Comcast, respectively.

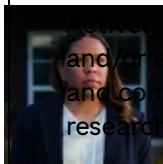
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**Corporate America's retreat from DEI has eliminated thousands of jobs**

One network has so far escaped his scrutiny: Fox, which is owned by Trump political ally Rupert Murdoch.

Carr has also publicly supported lawsuits Trump filed as a private citizen against ABC and CBS, which yielded twin \$16 million settlements from the networks' parent companies. (Trump is suing Murdoch's *Wall Street Journal* for reporting that

he sent a sexually suggestive birthday greeting to the disgraced late financier Jeffrey Epstein.)

In a trio of social media posts late Sunday, the president attacked the media and accused ABC and NBC of being "two of the worst and most biased networks in history." He said, without citing any evidence, that 97% of the stories they had aired about him were "BAD STORIES" and suggested they were an arm of the Democratic Party.

He then suggested the FCC should revoke the networks' broadcast licenses for how they cover Republicans and conservatives or, barring that, should at least make them pay BIG for using the airwaves.

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Earlier in the day, the networks' Sunday morning public affairs shows included some pointed criticism of the FBI's search of the home of Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton, who has become a sharp opponent of the president.

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Trump soon after trashed the host of ABC's *This Week*, Jonathan Karl, over his hair ("He looks absolutely terrible!") before attacking a former ally, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who assailed the FBI investigation of Bolton on the show.

To be clear, the national networks do not own broadcast licenses to use the public airwaves, which are granted and reviewed by the FCC. Local stations do hold those licenses, however. And ABC corporate parent Walt Disney owns 10 stations, while Comcast, the parent of NBC, owns 36.



### CBS is the latest news giant to bend to Trump's power

These attacks on the media are of course nothing new for Trump, who has long accused news outlets of unfair coverage.

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#### FCC reviews could thwart business plans

According to current and former colleagues at the FCC, Carr was previously seen as a relatively conventional free market conservative on the commission, eager to strip the agency of what he viewed as needless restrictions and bureaucratic red tape. And he has indeed as chairman embarked on an effort to do that, with initiatives to cut back regulations

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And yet the investigations and reviews Carr has initiated — including over journalistic choices by the networks' news divisions — have served to tie the national news outlets in knots and have left free speech concerns in the rearview mirror. Were parent companies Disney or Comcast, which have vast entertainment holdings, to enter into major deals requiring approval from federal regulators at the FCC or other agencies, the FCC reviews could prove nettlesome — or costly.



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MEDIA

**FCC approves the merger of local television owners Nexstar and Tegna**



MEDIA

**FCC approves merger of local television owners Nexstar and Tegna as two lawsuits seek to block it**

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**The embarrassing truth of dating men : Pop Culture Happy Hour**

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## FCC chair threatens broadcasters' licenses over negative coverage of the war in Iran

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NATIONAL

## Federal judge finds Trump violated free speech by ordering NPR and PBS defunded



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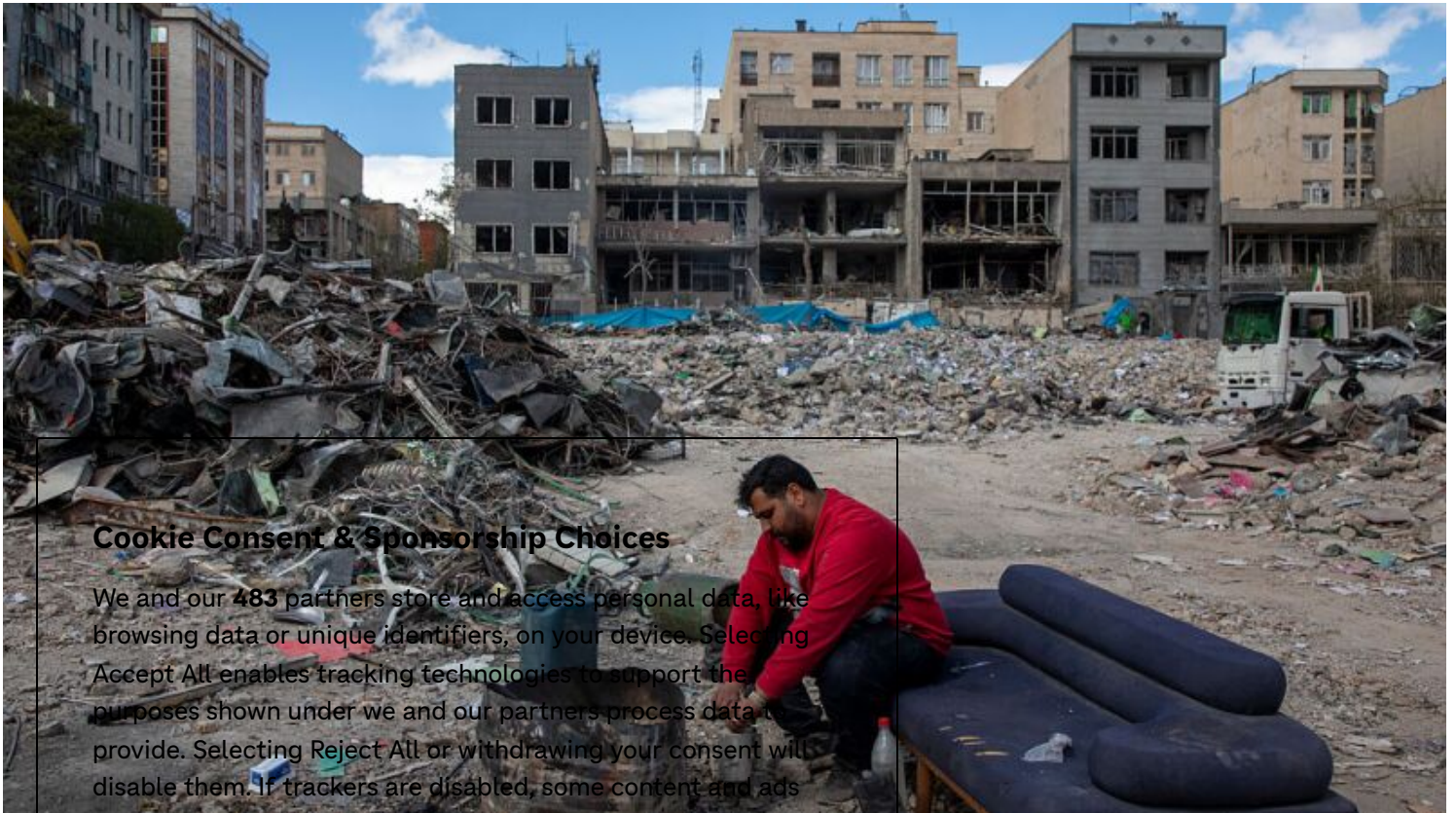
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## Federal Judge finds Trump violated free speech by ordering NPR defunded



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### MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

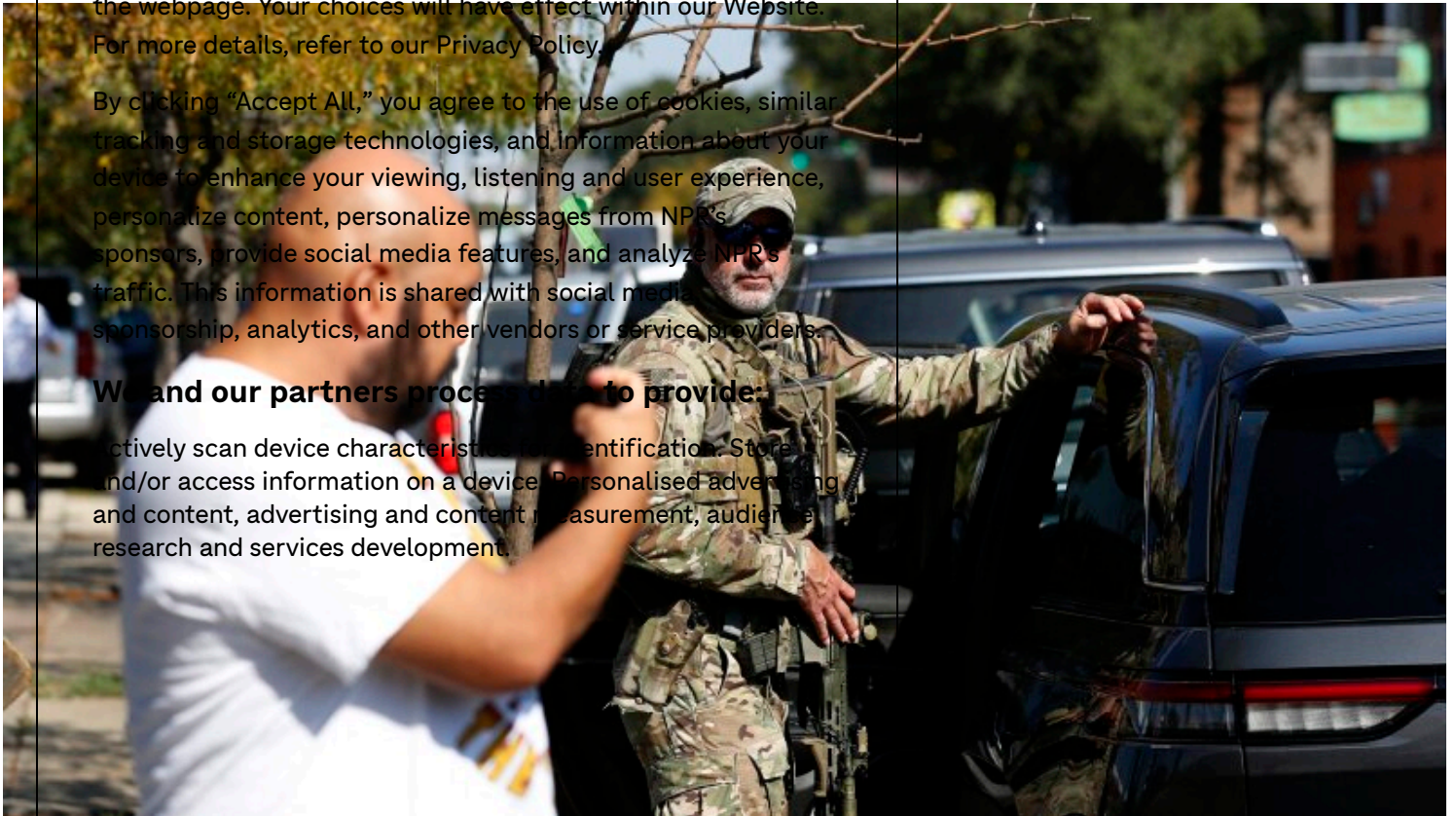
## U.S. and Iran agree to 2-week ceasefire, suspending Trump's threat to annihilate Iran

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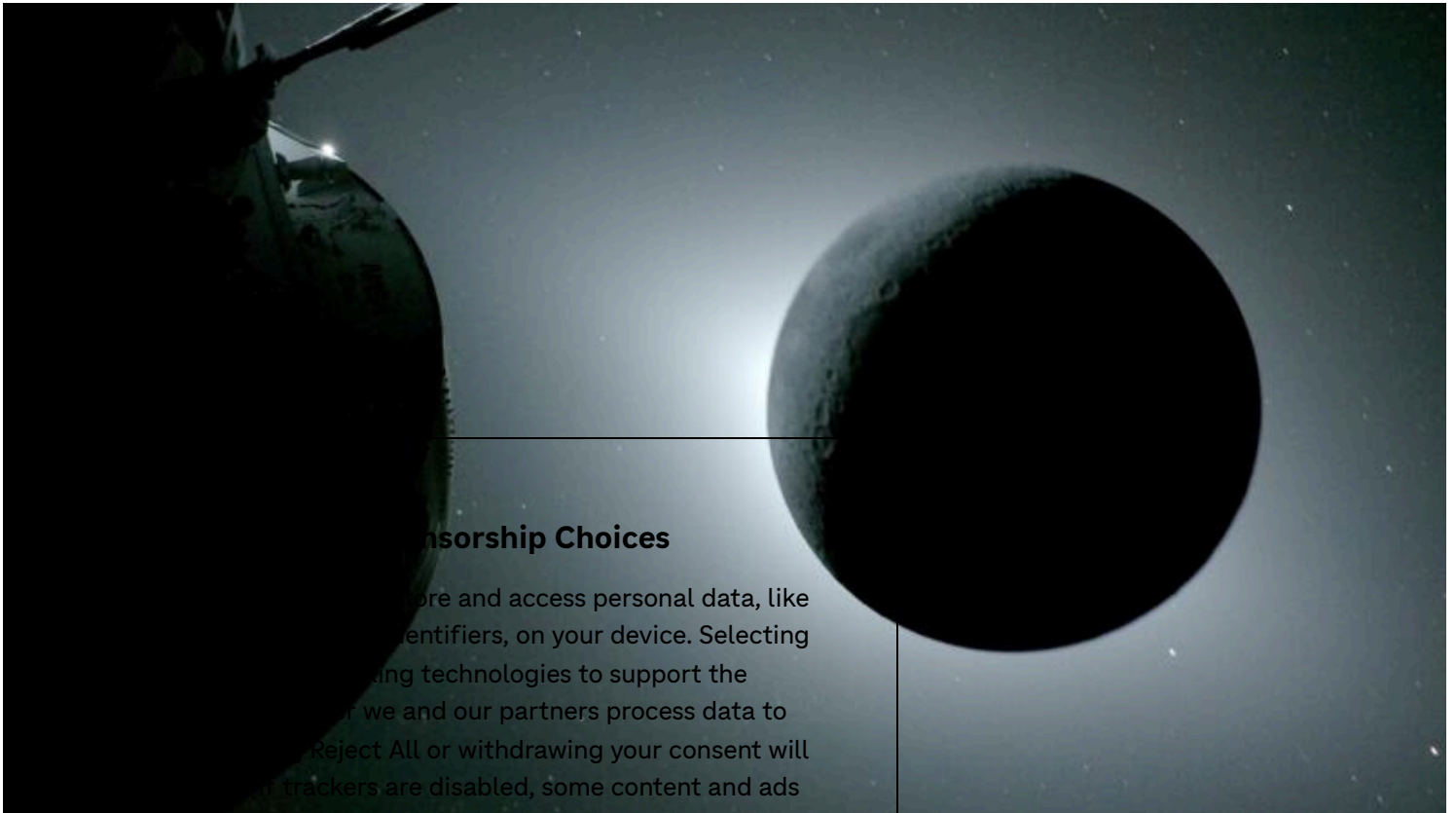
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### TECHNOLOGY

## ICE acknowledges it is using powerful spyware



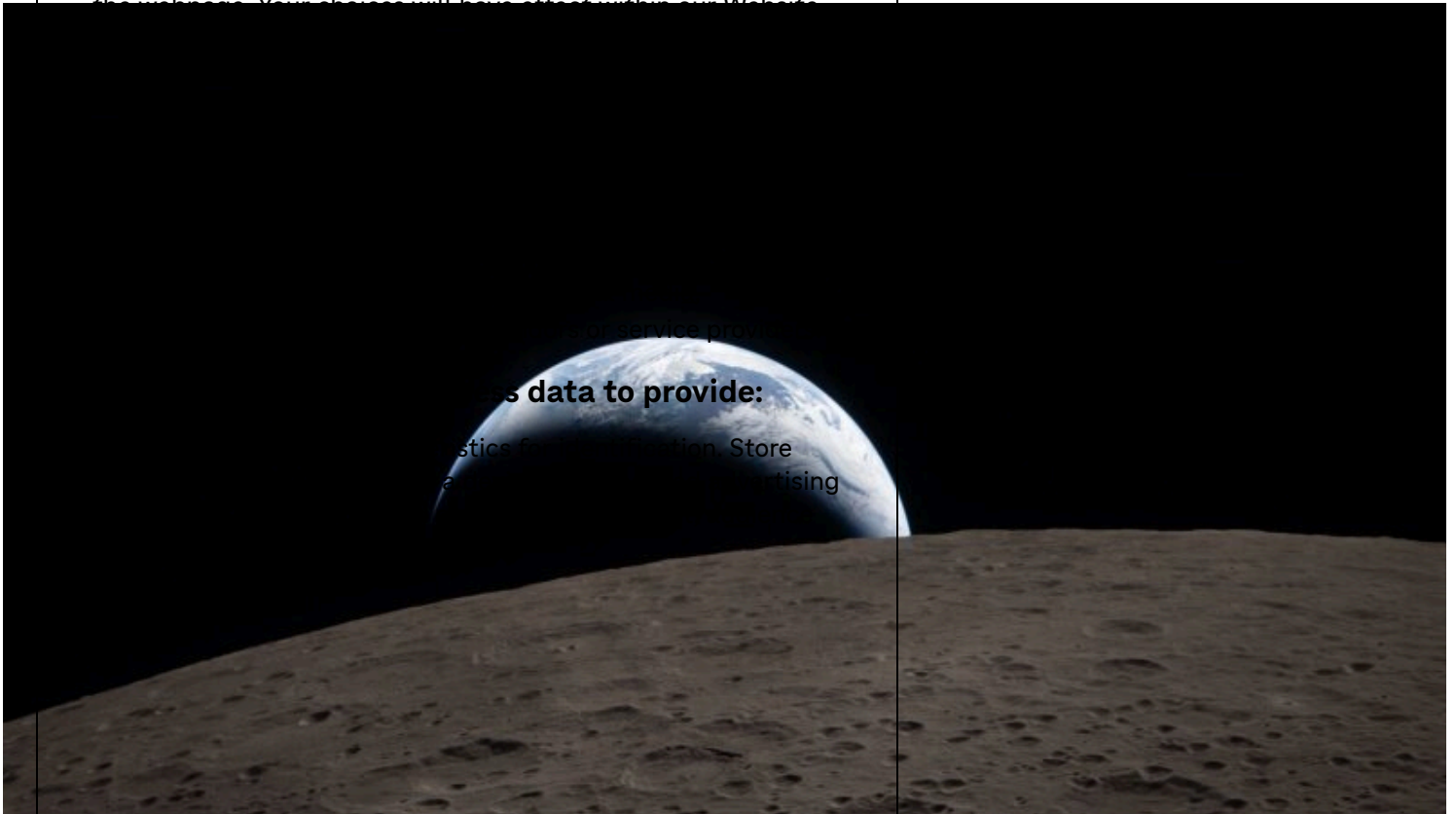
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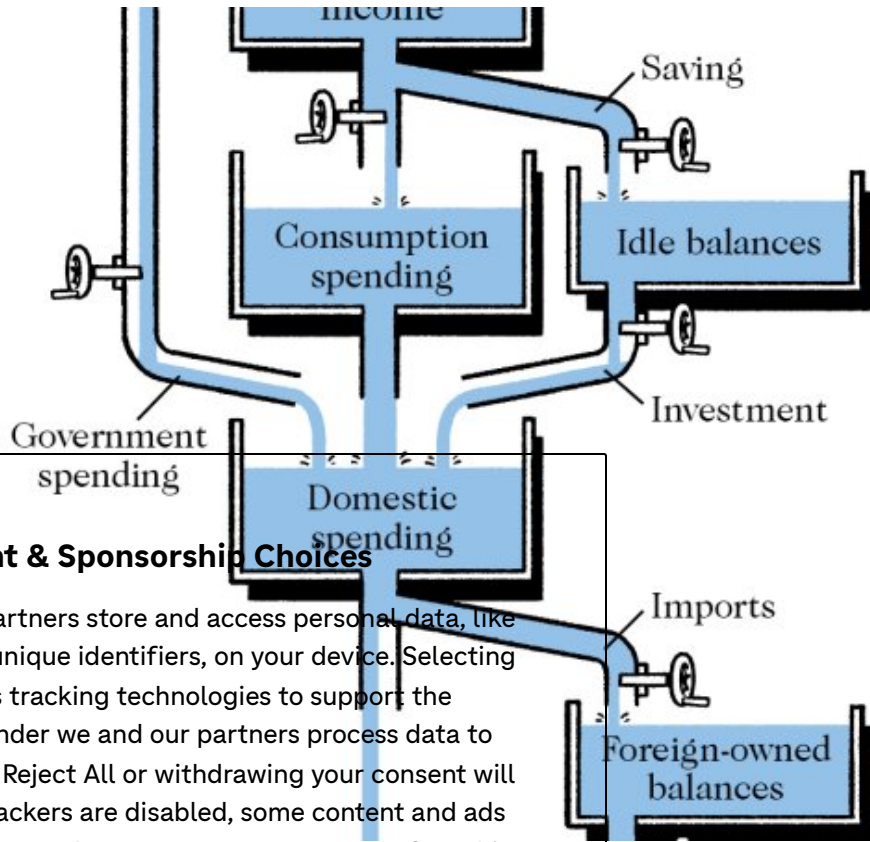
**The Artemis II crew saw parts of the moon never seen before. Here's what they said**

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PLANET MONEY NEWSLETTER

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HEALTH

### Telehealth abortion will remain available for now, after a federal judge's ruling

## NPR Editors' Picks



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### Congressional Democrats raise alarm over Trump's comments on Iran

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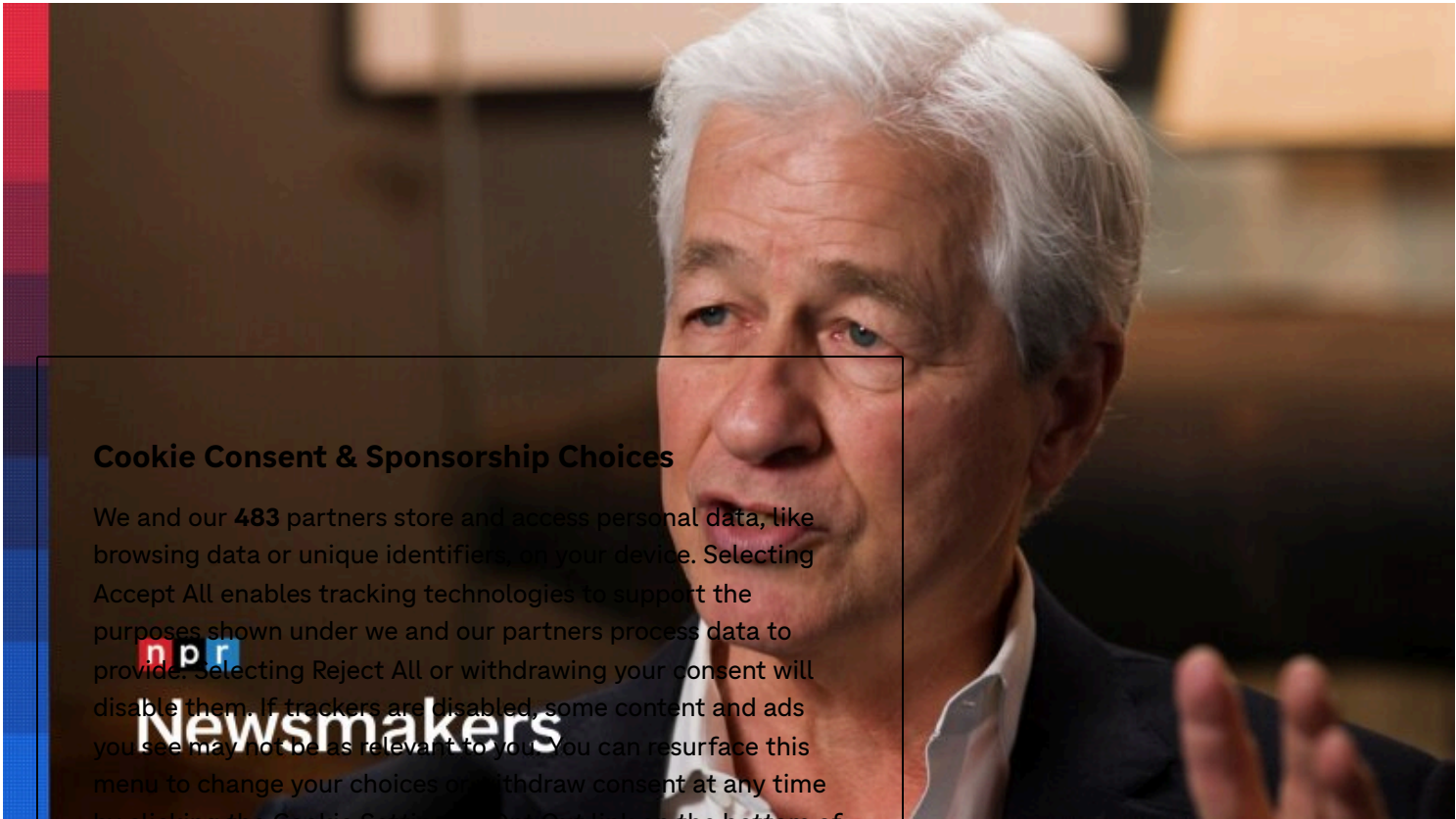
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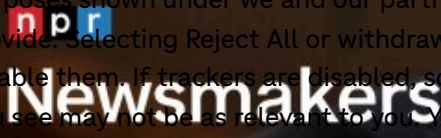


# Astronauts suggest naming a moon crater 'Carroll' after their commander's late wife



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NPR'S NEWSMAKERS

## CEO of nation's largest bank says Iran war raises risk of 'bad economic outcomes'

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BUSINESS

## Drive slower, go electric, don't drive at all? Americans weigh options for saving gas

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