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Cantrell indictment jolts city

Some express frustration with mayor's conduct, others skeptical

BY SOPHIE KASAKOVE
and JAMES FINN
Staff writers

Kevin Green walked his dog near the Lake Pontchartrain shoreline Sunday morning and, like many residents of New Orleans this weekend, thought about the squandered promise of Mayor LaToya Cantrell.

A neighborhood activist-turned

anti-establishment politician, Cantrell once seemed like a breath of fresh air for New Orleans, said Green, a retired police officer who grew up in Gert Town and the Lower 9th Ward. She was someone who would "speak her mind" about problems in the city whether people wanted to hear it or not.



Cantrell

"I thought she was a really good person at first," Green said as dog Parker sniffed around. "But with decisions you make, consequences come behind them."

Two days after a federal grand jury handed up an 18-count indictment against Cantrell and her former bodyguard Jeffrey Vappie, New

Orleanians from all parts of the city were left to contemplate her eight years as mayor and the scandal that's essentially ended her second term.

In interviews around the city this weekend, residents expressed a mix of outrage over the alleged crimes and disappointment with a city government long plagued by mismanagement. Some mocked the mayor and Vappie, others ex-

pressed some sympathy for them. There was also skepticism over what some saw as the federal government charging the mayor for little more than engaging in an affair.

Friday's indictment — a 44-page document accusing Cantrell of carrying on an amorous relationship with Vappie, traveling the world with him on the taxpayers' dime and then conspiring to cover it up — sealed her fall from grace, said Green and others.

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New data sheds light on La. menhaden fishing



STAFF PHOTOS BY CHRIS GRANGER

Westbank Fishing boats are loaded with menhaden in the Gulf off the coast of Louisiana. Louisiana's menhaden boats have long been scrutinized by recreational anglers, but the industry has pushed back, highlighting its economic contributions and pointing to sport fishermen's far higher catch of trout and redfish.

Controversial poggy boats long scrutinized by recreational anglers

BY MIKE SMITH | Staff writer

Two boats slide off the back of their mothership and into the Gulf's green waters. Then the real work begins.

With waves rocking them, the boats begin to separate, unspooling a net bigger than five football fields as they motor in opposite directions to form a circle. Hundreds of pelicans hover, hoping for a free meal.

When the net is set, yellow floats along its perimeter bobbing on the surface, the men on the boats close it off and haul it back, bringing small, silvery fish with it.

"You've got a little fish in the net," said Shane Treadaway, who oversees the operations, as he watches from a separate boat nearby, speaking of what was primarily intended as a demonstration for visiting journalists rather than an actual attempt to catch menhaden.

Later, the menhaden, or pogies, will be pumped onto a mothership about 170 feet long, for the trip back to the dock. There, they'll be shuttled through pipes into a plant that runs them through an elaborate process to create oil and fish meal for uses that include food for animals and aquaculture.



Westbank Fishing employees pull in their giant nets as they catch menhaden in the Gulf on July 1.

It is far from the idyllic vision of south Louisiana fishing held by generations of anglers. Not even Treadaway, an Empire native who is now vice president of operations for Westbank Fishing, would argue that point.

It is an industry, one that creates jobs, tax revenue and wealth. And, let there be no mistake, lots of controversy, too.

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Radio host faces scrutiny over state job

Jeff Crouere works behind the scenes for Cassidy opponent

BY TYLER BRIDGES | Staff writer

Jeff Crouere delights in bashing former President Joe Biden and "woke" Democrats during his daily talk radio show on WGSO-990 AM in New Orleans.

But the conservative commentator aims many of his sharpest words at a fellow Republican: U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, who is running for a third term.

"That guy is the biggest fraud in the Senate," Crouere said on the air Wednesday. "He's got to be defeated."

Called "Ringside Politics," Crouere's show airs on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and again from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. In between, he takes on a very different role by serving on the state payroll as communications director for Treasurer John Fleming — who is one of three



Crouere

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Change in police chiefs roils Golden Meadow

Investigators say previous elected official deleted records after loss

BY JOSEPH CRANNEY | Staff writer

GOLDEN MEADOW — On Michelle Lafont's first day as the newly elected police chief of this tiny speed-trap town and shrimping community on the way to Port Fourchon, the door of her Town Hall office wouldn't budge.

You've got to be kidding me, she thought. Her predecessor, former Golden Meadow Police Chief Troy Dufrene, had locked the keys inside the office after losing the November 2024 election by an excruciating nine votes, she said.

That wasn't all.

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LOW 80

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