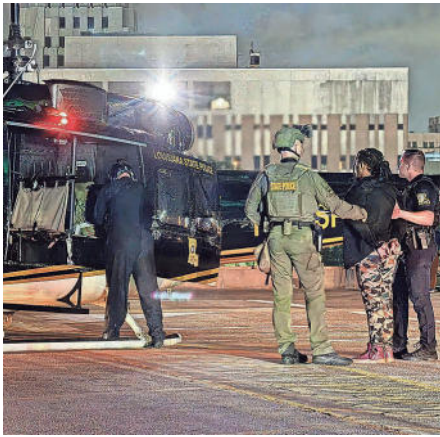


Big Easy unease as jailbreak inmates hide out

New Orleans residents carry on despite concern

N’dea Yancey-Bragg and Terry Collins
USA TODAY

It’s a typical bustling Tuesday as waiters yell customer orders to prep cooks inside Daisy Mae’s Southern Fried Chicken & Breakfast in New Orleans. But nothing is normal outside. Hundreds of law enforcement officers are scouring the streets for inmates who escaped a city jail May 16. The search has spilled into the city’s famed French Quarter, where a few of the escapees were seen on video while on the run. One inmate was found hiding under a car in the garage of one of the city’s swankiest hotels. Still, the city has remained vibrant, says Tess Gonzales, manager of Daisy Mae’s. Gonzales said there’s some worry about the escaped inmates still out in the streets, but there’s also relief now that five have been captured in five days. “It’s both yes and no. There’s some concern for our safety because they are dangerous criminals,” Gonzales told USA TODAY. “But it’s not like we’re going to stop living our lives.” Gonzales, 53, quickly mentions New Orleans’ resiliency during tough times like Hurricane Katrina. She recalls how the city soon rebounded after an armed man drove a speeding truck into New Year’s Day revelers on Bourbon Street, killing 14 people and injuring dozens more in what officials called a domestic terror attack.



Louisiana troopers and partner agencies worked overnight to find escapees from Orleans Parish Jail, according to a May 17 post on X by the Louisiana State Police. PROVIDED BY LOUISIANA STATE POLICE

After the jailbreak, officials urged the public to remain vigilant but not panicked even as they suspect people both inside the jail and outside have helped the escapees. The daring escape from a long-troubled facility has put some of those closest to the crimes of the fugitives on edge, while other New Orleans residents say they’ve been going about business as usual. “We keep it moving here. This city never stops. We keep going. We have to,” Gonzales said.

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Faithful fear being abandoned

Congregations could lose thousands of foreign-born clergy



At the Church of the Ascension in Orlando, Florida, the congregation was energized and invested in the direction set by its senior pastor of several years. Then a reinterpretation of federal law changed everything. The Episcopal church’s minister, Ryan Cook, was Canadian – but a new understanding of immigration law meant he had to leave the United States and his congregation. “He was remarkably good at his job,” said the Rev. Canon Dan Smith of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida. In early 2023, a change in how green card applications for foreign-born religious workers are processed upended what had been a quick and predictable process for such workers to obtain permanent residency. The switch created a backlog that has put thousands of clergy at risk of being forced to leave

Marc Ramirez
USA TODAY

A change in immigration law in 2023 has put priests, pastors, faith instructors and others serving in ministries nationwide at risk of having to leave the United States.
PETER WILLOTT/USA TODAY NETWORK

“Families will be unable to practice the basic tenets of their faith.”
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

the United States and disrupting the faith communities they serve. “Simply put,” the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote in a letter addressed to Congress, “an increasing number of American families will be unable to practice the basic tenets of their faith if this situation is not addressed.” Many foreign-born clergy, like Cook, have already been forced to leave the country to avoid overstaying their visas. Smith said the Central Florida Episcopal diocese is facing similar situations with several other priests – two from Canada and one from the Caribbean. “Everybody knows it’s looming,” he said. “We lost a really good priest. And we could lose two or three more.” The situation affects priests, pastors, seminary instructors and

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RFK Jr.’s report to spotlight food toxins

Agenda has bipartisan support, new poll shows

Swapna Venugopal Ramaswamy
USA TODAY

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s Make America Healthy Again commission report is set to be released by May 22, gathering data on how toxins may be contributing to widespread diseases. The report will offer a comprehensive look at how Americans have become sick from exposure to toxins in food, environment and pharmaceutical drugs, Vani Hari, a food activist who will be at the White House for the launch of the report, told USA TODAY. For instance, it will highlight the toxin glyphosate. A 2022 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study



found that 87% of 650 children tested had herbicide glyphosate in their urine. The primary exposure to glyphosate, which is used in weed killers like Roundup, occurs through food.

“It is literally President Trump declaring war on the ultra-processed food and pesticide companies,” Hari said.

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Since taking office, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has announced plans to phase out artificial food dyes from the nation’s food supply and encouraged the removal of fluoride from drinking water.
JACK GRUBER/ USA TODAY