

# Migrants flooding NYC's justice system — making up '75% of arrests in Midtown' — as 'pathetic' sanctuary city laws handcuff cops

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1.2K Comments

Jefferson Maldonado, a 31-year-old migrant from Ecuador, has been arrested in New York City five times since arriving in the US earlier this year.

His latest bust was for stealing a pair of pants and a beer from the Target near Herald Square.

Asked why he committed the crime, the migrant thief said, "I wanted to change my clothes and think.

"I wanted to sit down and think about my life, about what to do. <sup>9</sup>Because this is not a normal world."

Migrants  
Juan  
Bernal  
Rodriguez  
(left) and  
Jefferson  
Maldonado  
at  
Manhattan  
Criminal  
Court  
admit the  
reason  
why they  
commit  
crimes.

Marie Pohl /  
NYPost



He was just one of five migrants in a Manhattan courtroom for arraignment one night last week.

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Across New York, recently arrived migrants are flooding the criminal justice system — at far higher rates than public officials have acknowledged.

Police sources shared with The Post a staggering estimate that as many as 75% of the people they've been arresting in Midtown Manhattan in recent months for crimes like assault, robbery and domestic violence are migrants. In parts of Queens, the figure is more than 60%, sources there estimate.

On any given day, Big Apple criminal court dockets are packed with asy<sup>9</sup>l

New York migrants are flooding the criminal justice system — at far higher rates than public officials have acknowledged.

James Messerschmidt

The problem is made much worse by sanctuary city laws that mean New York cops aren't allowed to work with ICE on cases in which they believe suspects are in the country illegally. Additionally, the NYPD says it is barred from tracking the immigration status of offenders.

This makes it almost impossible for authorities to get their arms around the problem, experts and sources on the ground say.

"New York City eliminated a tool to get rid of violent criminals. What a mess," Jim Quinn, a veteran former prosecutor at the Queens District Attorney's Office, told The Post.

"The sanctuary city law is pathetic. It's disgusting. It's crazy."

Making matters worse, police sources say, word has gotten out in the shelters about the city's lax bail guidelines — meaning migrants know they're going to get kicked back onto the street quickly after they're nabbed.

A City Hall spokesman pointed to Mayor Eric Adams' previous calls for the City Council to change the sanctuary city laws. Last week, Adams said, "Right now, we don't have the authorization to be able to go and coordinate with ICE. We have to follow the law."  
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New  
York  
cops  
aren't  
allowed  
to work  
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on  
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illegally.

Viral  
News nyc

The mayor's office also said the city is working with the Midtown Improvement Coalition to better police the neighborhood.

An NYPD spokesperson said overall crime is down so far this year compared to last year, and added, "New Yorkers can count on the NYPD's ongoing vigilance in every neighborhood."

However, the spokesperson also noted, "Police officers are prohibited from asking about the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses, or suspects and therefore the NYPD doesn't track data pertaining to immigration statuses."

As a result, the only people who have a full understanding of the scale of the problem are the police officers and court workers who see it day in, day out.

"I would say about 75% of the arrests in Midtown Manhattan are migrant selling counterfeit items," a Midtown officer said.

He said the figure is an estimate because "you can't be 100% sure [they] dumb enough to give you a shelter address."

Another Manhattan cop said that excluding petty larcenies at drugstores, 75%, noting that most who get caught shoplifting go more for the pricey t

“They can’t be bothered with lower-end stores. They like Lululemon and Sunglass Hut,” he said, adding that migrants are behind “most” of the pickpocketing and phone and chain snatches the NYPD is encountering.

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NYPD

The problem is visible in Queens courts, too.

“There are days we have so many migrant cases, we have to call in for extra Spanish interpreters,” a law enforcement officer at the Queens Criminal Courthouse told The Post.

Another court officer said, “Come on Mondays! Almost every case is a migrant.”

While many of the crimes are domestic incidents or petty thefts, others are far more heinous, sometimes involving gang violence or vicious sexual assaults.

Venezuelan migrant Yurlex Daniel Guzman Quintero was arraigned in Queens Criminal Court on Aug. 28, accused of a deplorable act of sexual abuse against his girlfriend in which he viciously choked her and held a knife to her head. Court documents allege it all happened in front of her child.

The same day, migrant Dionisio Moran Flores was arraigned in Manhattan Criminal Court for allegedly raping his 5-year-old daughter. He was ordered held on \$150,000 bail.

Kaiyas Pallets on 31st Street in Long Island City is fed up dealing with serial shoplifters in their store.  
Obtained by NY Post

Meanwhile, Tren de Aragua — the vicious Venezuelan prison gang wreaking armed havoc around the country — has set up shop in NYC and is already tied to hundreds of crimes, including the shootings of two NYPD cops who were trying to arrest a member in June.

The very same pack of thugs has been arming up to facilitate further terrorizing the city, smuggling guns into city-run shelters in food delivery bags to evade metal detectors.

“Most of the people we arrest are professionals — these aren’t their first crimes,” one law enforcement source said.

The cop added that the Biden-Harris administration’s lax border policies, combined with sanctuary city laws, have allowed the problem to fester.

“Crime would be down significantly if there was a wall and we could account for everyone who comes into the country,” the source grumbled. “And more importantly, throw them out if they commit a crime.”

Some migrants have become recurring guests of city jails and courtrooms — and are often back on the streets to reoffend as quickly as they were captured.

“They don’t care if they get arrested — they laugh if they get sent to Rikers. Where they come from, they get tortured in jail,” a Bronx cop said.

He added that while “most” people arrested in the borough are migrants, it’s impossible to say if they entered the country during the massive wave that began in spring 2022. About 64,000 migrants remain in the city’s shelter and social service system.

“I would say about 75% of the arrests in Midtown Manhattan are migrants, mostly for robberies, assaults, domestic incidents and selling counterfeit items,” a Midtown officer said. <sup>9</sup>  
NYPJ

People sell goods on the sidewalk near the intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and 91st Street.  
NYPJ

Migrant arrest numbers in Queens don’t fare much better than those for people arrested in Jackson Heights are migrants, whose offenses involve such crimes such as robbery, grand larceny and assault.

“Roosevelt Avenue and 91st Street looks like a scene from ‘Casablanca’ with all the vendors. You can buy food, clothes, toys, electronics, tools and get your car washed,” the NYPD source said of the mass-scale open-air bazaar that has sprung up along the sidewalks.

“The area has become a Third World country, and it seems like City Hall doesn’t care about the taxpayers who live and work here.”

He said Elmhurst, particularly the area along Roosevelt Avenue, has experienced a nearly 22% uptick in crime compared to last year — much of it migrant-related — putting it in second place for the worst increase of crime citywide, trailing only Central Park in Manhattan.

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New York  
Post cover  
for  
Wednesday,  
April 10,  
2024.

Business owners and residents of Jackson Heights and Elmhurst said they’ve watched helplessly as the neighborhood has taken a nosedive into a crime-riddled slum.

“People don’t want to come to the pharmacy because of the sidewalks here,” said Jenny Leal, pharmacist at Mi Pharmacia on Roosevelt Avenue, while gesturing to a row of at least 50 vendors who have set up shop in the immediate vicinity.

“The number of prostitutes have doubled in the last two months. They’re starting to act like they are part of the community now,” she said. “We see them every day, it’s like the same people wearing the same outfits. It’s really strange.”

City PBA president Patrick Hendry decried the out-of-control lawlessness taking root across the city, blaming the courts for failing to take a firm enough hand to combat it.

“Our justice system is already failing to protect New Yorkers and hold lawbreakers accountable, regardless of where they come from,” he said.

“But now word has gotten out that you can come to New York to commit crimes and attack police officers and be out the next day. That message needs to change in order to keep dangerous people off our city streets,” Hendry said.

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Bernal  
Rodriguez  
(left)  
revealed  
he was  
arrested  
for stealing  
French  
fries.  
Jefferson  
Maldonado  
(right) has  
been  
arrested in  
New York  
City five  
times  
since  
arriving in  
the US  
earlier this  
year.

Marie Pohl /  
NYPost

Some migrants who have been arrested multiple times said they tried the straight and narrow path — but it's just too hard in the US.

"I walked through the woods. I kept on walking — walking to get to the American Dream. They tell you about the American Dream. But when I got here, I saw that it was not like they said. It's not easy here. It's no bed of roses," said Maldonado, the migrant busted for stealing from Target.

Juan Bernalrodriguez, 45, from Colombia, said he was arrested for stealing French fries at La Guardia Airport.

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He gave the city shelter system mixed reviews, acknowledging "you can get help" at one of the complexes but also bemoaning theft at the hands of fellow migrants.

"It's not always easy in the shelters. They steal there. People steal your stuff," he said.

The district attorneys' offices of Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx did not respond to requests by The Post for comment on Monday.

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