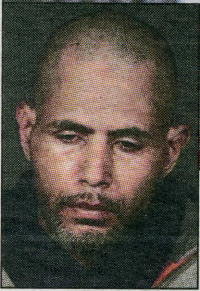
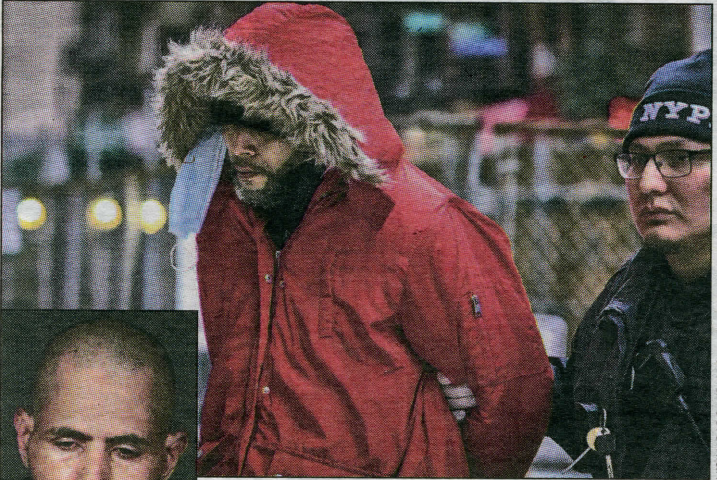


Serial-‘thief’ bail, finally!



IN CUSTODY: Wilfredo Ocasio (inset, and above in red jacket Monday) was being held on \$5,000 cash bail or \$15,000 bond Tuesday after earlier being released in dozens of shoplift cases.

Stefan Jeremlah

Held after 27 more ‘lifts’

By JOE MARINO
and JORGE FITZ-GIBBON

A serial shoplifter who has skirted jail time despite dozens of busts was arrested yet again this week — and accused of 27 new heists at Manhattan pharmacies, *The Post* has learned.

Wilfredo Ocasio, 44, was finally held on bail Tuesday on charges he swiped more than \$5,000 in goods from three Duane Reades over several weeks, prosecutors said.

The sticky-fingered recidivist was allegedly caught red-handed at a Duane Reade in the Financial District Monday, police sources said.

Ocasio, who has served two stints in state prison on rape and robbery convictions, already has 33 busts on his record since mid-August when he was arrested on Nov. 16 for 23 separate thefts from two Duane Reade stores.

But he caught a break when prosecutors with the Manhattan DA’s Office charged him with just two — telling *The Post* at the time it would have been “a waste of resources” to move forward with all charges.

“Nobody should be surprised that Mr. Ocasio has been once again arrested — this time on 27 [petit] larceny charges,” said Paul DiGi-

como, president of the NYPD Detectives’ Endowment Association. “Why would he stop when there are absolutely no consequences?”

Under state law, Ocasio would have to serve a maximum of only two years behind bars, even if he was charged with and convicted of all the raps, a spokesman for the office explained at the time.

On Tuesday, prosecutors from Bragg’s office changed their tune, asking a judge to set bail on Ocasio based on the “harm on harm” clause, which stipulates a repeat offender who gets busted on a class-A misdemeanor or a felony while facing charges in another case can be held on bail if they represent “harm” to a person or property.

The judge set bail at \$5,000 cash or \$15,000 bond.

Ocasio is accused of repeatedly hitting Duane Reade outlets on Broadway, Water Street and Wall Street between Oct. 26 and Dec. 21, according to sources, who said he made off with candy bars, donuts, Monster and Red Bull drinks, and a Whitman Chocolate Sampler — along with holiday items like gingerbread houses.

Ocasio’s lawyer said his client is “badly in need of mental health” treatment.