

3. Chaofeng Ge

Who was Chaofeng Ge? Chaofeng Ge was a 32 year old Chinese immigrant who came to the United States, hopeful and optimistic. Ge's brother and people who knew him describe him as kindhearted and perhaps overly trusting.

Chaofeng Ge was born into a poor peasant family struggling for food in a village in Henan province in the center of China. The memories his siblings have about their childhood are almost all related to poverty – their mother shielding them with her arms because she feared their mud hut could collapse in heavy rain. They wore broken shoes they patched with plastic bags. When Ge, the youngest, was a toddler, his family would put him on the back of the only pig the family raised to help keep him warm in the winter because the family couldn't afford heating, his brother Yanfeng said.

Villagers and family members said that Ge had difficulty communicating and was gullible, possibly a hereditary trait that also showed in his father and some other family members, according to his brother. "He behaved and talked like Forrest Gump," Yanfeng said.

How did Chaofeng Ge end up in ICE detention? Ge arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border near Tecate, California, on November 22, 2023, and was arrested by the Border Patrol for unlawful entry. Officers released him into the U.S. with a Notice to Appear for a hearing at a later date. He longed to make enough money to afford a dowry in his home village so he could get married. Instead, his friends and family say, in the U.S. he was lured into a criminal fraud scheme that landed him in jail and detention for about \$150 in gift cards bought with stolen credit card numbers.

The records from ICE went quiet for over a year before agents encountered Ge in Lower Paxton Township, Pennsylvania, in January 2025. He was accused of accessing a device issued to another who did not authorize its use, and other related charges. Ge, who lived in Queens, New York, was convicted of two of the charges by the Court of Common Pleas in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, on July 31, 2025. He was sentenced to six to 12 months, with credit for time served. When he was released from local custody, ICE agents detained him.

How did Chaofeng Ge die under ICE custody? He died four days after entering ICE custody in Pennsylvania, on August 5, 2025. ICE reported he was found by agents with "a cloth ligature around his neck." Chaofeng Ge was found with his hands and feet tied behind him, an attorney has alleged.

What happened after Chaofeng Ge died? The U.S. government has not released key pieces of information about Ge's death, leaving major questions for his family as they seek closure. It is not clear whether Ge received mental health care in ICE custody after a suicide attempt in prison. Ge's family's lawyers are preparing to file a wrongful death lawsuit, questioning what happened during his incarceration, as well as questioning the circumstances around his death. After an autopsy report, his family is calling for more answers from the Department of Homeland Security.

"I am devastated by the loss of my brother and by the knowledge that he was suffering so greatly in that detention center," Yanfeng Ge, the brother of Chaofeng, said in a statement shared with Newsweek. "He did not deserve to be treated that way. I want justice for my brother, answers as to how this could have happened, and accountability for those responsible for his death."

Sources:

<https://www.newsweek.com/ice-detainee-death-family-questions-hands-feet-tied-11066992>

<https://documentedny.com/2026/03/13/chaofeng-ge-ice-detention-death-pennsylvania/>