

39. Daphny Michel

Who was Daphny Michel? Daphny Michel was a 31-year-old Haitian immigrant who lived in a Haitian-immigrant community in Charleroi, Washington County, Pennsylvania. She was in the United States under the TPS (Temporary Protected Status) immigration program for people from Haiti – a program that was ended in 2025 by the Trump administration and whose program suspension was upheld by the US Supreme Court in late June 2026.

“Daphny was a person with a kind heart, who loved her family very much,” Michel’s family wrote in her obituary. “Since she was a child, she showed great respect, courage, and love for everyone. She was always ready to help those who needed her help and her presence brought joy and happiness and light into the lives of all who knew her.”

How did Daphny Michel end up in ICE custody? According to Pittsburgh’s Public Source newspaper, “Michel had spent six months in the Washington County Correctional Facility on misdemeanor charges. When they were withdrawn, she was handed over to ICE.”

How did Daphny Michel die? Daphny Michel was arrested in autumn 2025, in warm weather. She was released by ICE in February 2026 in sub-freezing temperatures, wearing only her summer clothes. She died of hypothermia a few days after being released from the ICE facility, as photographed by a transit camera on the ground of a bus shelter, where she had been for approximately 30 hours in sub-freezing temperatures, not moving, before being found. Daphne was pronounced dead of hypothermia.

What happened after Daphny Michel’s death? The Public Source newspaper reports, “The Allegheny County Office of the Medical Examiner found that Daphny Michel died from hypothermia due to ‘the actions of another individual’ after her release from ICE custody but did not allege criminality..... The opinion of the forensic pathologist in this case is that Ms. Michel was a vulnerable adult, suffering from untreated severe mental health issues and a significant language barrier when she was released from federal custody.... Based on all available information during the investigation, the pathologist ruled Ms. Michel’s death a homicide.”

Sources:

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