

## THE EYES

Title: Live From The Masque: Dicks Fight,  
Banks Hate

Label: Year One

Release Date: 1996

Medium: CD

Availability: Good

Venue: Elks Lodge, Los Angeles, CA

Recording Date: February 24. 1978

Lineup: Joe Ramirez - Guitar, vocals  
John Richey - Guitar

Charlotte Caffey - Bass, vocals  
D.J. Bonebrake - Drums

Set List: Eniwetok  
Take A Quaalude Now  
Go-Go Bee

The Happy Song  
She's Dead  
Disneyland

The Eyes were one of the earliest punk bands that came out of the Los Angeles punk rock scene in the late seventies. They are most notable for their members, including Charlotte Caffey on bass and vocals. Caffey would go on to far great fame as the lead guitarist for the Go-Gos, who came out of the same scene a couple of years later. Their drummer, D.J. Bonebrake would later join X. Their leader, Joe Ramirez, kept the band going for a short time after their departure then joined The Flesh Eaters. During their short existence, they released one single on Dangerhouse Records and two other songs have appeared on compilations. However, they are remembered as being one of the forefathers of cartoon punk, along with the Dickies.

The roots of the band are obscure at best. Caffey was born Charlotte Irene Caffey on October 21, 1953 in Santa Monica, CA. She is the third of thirteen children born to Ann and Michael Caffey, a very successful television director who worked on numerous hit series including *B.J. and the Bear*, *Barnaby Jones*, *Chicago Story*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *It Takes A Thief*, *Mannix*, *The Interns*, *Canon*, *The Mod Squad*, *The Wild Wild West*, *CHiPs*, *T.J. Hooker*, and *Trapper John M.D.* Caffey first learned to play the piano at the age of four. She studied classical music and earned a Bachelor's of Music Degree from Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles.

She first started to write songs in her mid-teens, sharing them with her best friend, Joe Ramirez. The two formed Manuel And The Gardeners, which soon morphed into The Eyes, with Ramirez on guitar and Caffey on bass. Soon after, they convinced drummer D.J. Bonebrake (born December 8, 1955 in CA), then playing with Rocktapus, to join in early 1977. Ramirez and Caffey were influenced by the Sex Pistols and The Ramones at the time. By the second half of 1977, they were playing at the Masque, an infamous punk club owned by Brendan Mullen. By this point, they had added second guitarist John Richey, who also wrote music. They were known for humorous and pop themed punk originals and their bone shattering versions of covers of songs by Sonny And Cher and Arthur Lee's Love.

Their contemporaries at the time included the Germs, The Weirdoes, The Dickies, The Skulls, X, The Allecats. The Zeros, The Bags, The Randoms, Black Randy & The Metro Squad, The Screamers, The Dils, The Controllers, The Deadbeats, The Flesheaters, Plugz, and Shock. Although many of them were only around for a brief period of time, they were the foundation of the LA punk scene that would later morph

with the developing San Francisco scene and produce such important groups as Black Flag, The Dead Kennedys, The Circle Jerks, The Go-Gos, and Social Distortion.

The Eyes were among the most popular of these groups. They played throughout Los Angeles at the Starwood and other clubs. In 1978, Caffey was approached by Belinda Carlisle and Margot Olaverria while playing at the Starwood join their new all girl punk band. At the time, the Go-Go's consisted of Carlisle, Olaverria, guitarist Jane Wiedlin, and drummer Elissa Bello. Even though the band members were barely proficient players, Caffey was intrigued and agreed to join as lead guitarist. She was replaced by bassist Jimmy Leach and keyboardist David Brown. Bonebrake had also left in early 1978 to join X. He was replaced by Joe Nanini.

The original lineup recorded two songs for What! Records, owned by Chris Ashford, in 1978. The first, "Don't Talk To Me" appeared on a seven inch EP along with songs by The Controllers and The Skulls. It also later appeared on a 1982 compilation called *What Is It*. In 1998, Bomp! Records released a compilation of What! Records releases called *What? Stuff*. It included a second Eyes song called "Kill Your Parents".

The Ramirez, Leach, Brown, Nanini lineup released the Eyes first single, "T.A.Q.N." backed by "Topological Lies" on Dangerhouse Records in February, 1979. Brown was one of the co-owners of the label. "Disneyland" wound up appearing on the 1979 Dangerhouse compilation, *Yes L.A.* (1979). At the same sessions, the group also recorded "Research Bee", "Eniwetok", "Disneyland", and "Go Go Bee". These songs were later released on a 2009 Artifex Records release called *TAQN*. The album cover includes only Caffey on the cover photo in a blatant attempt to entice buyers to purchase the EP even though she did not play on a single track.

The band broke up in 1980 when Ramirez joined the Flesh Eaters. Ramirez, Caffey, and Bonebrake did reunite in 2007 at the new Masque. One song, "Don't Talk To Me", circulated on YouTube. As of November, 2017, Caffey and Bonebrake are still members of the Go Gos and X. Ramirez and Richey have a new group, The Adverbs. They recently released a new CD.

My only live recording of The Eyes are six tracks that were recorded on February 24, 1978 at the Masque Benefit show at Elks Lodge in Los Angeles. At the time, the group included Ramirez, Caffey, and Richie. Bonebrake also plays with the group even though he was a member of X at the time. Recording quality is surprisingly good, considering the fact that the original tapes sat in a box for 17 years before they were discovered by recording engineer Travis Dickerson and restored to the best of his team's ability.

The six songs include four of the tracks that were recorded for Dangerhouse along with "The Happy Song" and "She's Dead". While the subject matter of some of these songs is light, the playing is 100% punk. It is intense, highly distorted, fast, and well performed. Unlike many of their contemporaries, there are guitar solos and the rhythm section of Caffey and Bonebrake is as powerful as any punk group of the time.

The set begins with a little under 90 second of full speed punk called "Eniwetok". Ramirez sounds great on lead vocals, with Caffey clearly audible in the background. Their signature song, "Take A Quaalude Now" (TAQN) is terrific, with a solid guitar solo from Richey, tight ensemble vocals from Ramirez and Caffey, and energy to burn. "Go-Go Bee" is Ramones like, with plenty of power chords and a hint of melody. The tandem guitar work of Richey and Ramirez is strong.

“The Happy Song” is typical of their light approach. The song is very clever, proclaiming that all of the people in the seventies are happy compared to those in the sixties. It is sarcasm at the highest level, set to a driving punk musical base. Ramirez and Caffey handle vocals. The group follows with the most interesting song in the mini-set, a less than 90 second version of “She’s Dead”, which consists of Caffey shouting the title continuously through the entire song. There is also an unbelievably sloppy, but appropriate, guitar solo from Richey that has to be heard to be believed. It’s a hoot.

The set ends with “Disneyland”, which is about Disneyland. Once again, the group’s perspective is clearly expressed. Ramirez does a great job on lead vocals, with Caffey supporting him during certain sections, and the ensemble playing is very good. The fact that any punk band would tackle this subject matter, even sarcastically, is what made The Eyes so unique. They were an underappreciated gem among the LA punk scene who could have made some real noise if they had stayed together but that was not to be. Still, they are worth hearing and yet another reason why you should seek out this disc.