

BY: Genna Sapia-  
Ruffin  
ISBN: 1-4033-4970-3

# ***A Memoir: David Ruffin--My Temptation***

## **SAMPLE CHAPTER**

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**A Memoir: David Ruffin--My  
Temptation****

by

Genna Sapia-Ruffin

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by - Genna Sapia-Ruffin (ISBN: 1-4033-4970-3)

## Introduction

Welcome to the sample chapter of the electronic version of my book ***A Memoir: David Ruffin--My Temptation***.

It's an enhanced version of the original hardcopy book, which tells the story of my life with the late David Ruffin and our family, was independently published several years ago to critical acclaim. Feel free to print it out and read it as you would a standard book if you like.

This enhanced electronic version utilizes some of the multimedia/technology capabilities of the Adobe .pdf format, and the Internet. As such, this book allows you the reader to "**see, hear and read**" the story as opposed to only being able to "**read**" the story. Because of that it's best stored on your hard drive and read on your computer while connected to the Internet.

Notice that where there are hypertext links, you will be taken to the corresponding website and/or audio programming. In addition to the text, this electronic version of my book ***A Memoir: David Ruffin--My Temptation*** contains links to exclusive audio and web links not available elsewhere on the Internet:

1. An audio introduction to the book by yours truly
2. An exclusive interview with David Ruffin and Eddie Kendricks
3. Two songs by my son David Ruffin Junior, on one of which he is joined by Curtis Mayfield Junior and Marvin Junior (of The Dells) Jr.
4. Links out to some related websites

**For example...click on the link below to listen to my spoken word introduction to the book in RealAudio...**

[http://www.soul-patrol.net/ruffin\\_intro.ram](http://www.soul-patrol.net/ruffin_intro.ram)

This enhanced electronic version of my book ***A Memoir: David Ruffin--My Temptation*** also contains 34 pictures from my private collection, which tell the story of our lives (As Rod Stewart once said, "Every Picture Tells a Story, Don't It"). Some of them do not appear in the hardcopy version of the book due to space limitations and are exclusive to this electronic version.

There will be additional goodies added as they develop, for those of you who have purchased the book." The complete 170 page book sells for \$15.00, via the PayPal online system, which you can access via my site at the following link:

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Feel free to email me with any questions that you may have.

Yours truly,

**Genna Sapia-Ruffin**

[AGRuffProduction@aol.com](mailto:AGRuffProduction@aol.com)

## CHAPTER 2 - "Black or White? Black or White?"

Mom and Dick had, by this time, moved to Baltimore, leaving ruin in their wake. She left the three little ones behind with their father. I doubt if those kids ever forgave her for that, and I'm sure she never forgave herself either. Matter of fact, she died 5/3/88 from a stomach aneurysm--just blew herself up; something which I believe was caused by all her pent-up negative emotions collected and internalized from a whole lifetime.

For the first year, I tried to live with Mom and Dick, but they wouldn't allow all my friends inside (only the white ones). So we often just hung out and/or rode around until after Dick went to work at dawn. Or, we passed out in the car-- whichever came first. Many early mornings, I'd be coming in when they were in the kitchen throwing condiments at each other--salt and pepper shakers, sugar and creamers, bottles of milk...

It was at that apartment, she told me later, that mom had found Dick smelling my dirty underwear. So, I guess I got out of there in the nick of time. But not before I went through a year of torture, frustration, humiliation and drunken degradation regarding my having black friends. She'd go through my phone book and scream, "Black or white? Black or white?" as she ripped out pages and threw them on the floor like so much garbage. He and Mom went especially berserk with the idea that there was a chance (no, make that a given) that I might (God forbid) have a black boyfriend. They even sent me to a shrink. I refused to go after the first humiliating time. It was a joke. A disgustingly bad joke. He was a racist too. The first thing he did was ask me if I was pregnant, so I pooched my stomach out and sat as if I were. That shrink needed a shrink--far worse than I did!

The "pregnant" part was especially hurtful to me as I was still a virgin. In fact, I had just gotten my period a few months before. I was so innocent that I couldn't quite figure out how to put in a tampon at eighteen--my mom had to help me. One night, a drunken Mom and Dick followed me to a jazz club--a spot frequented by athletes--where I worked as a waitress. She argued with Carter, the owner, she humiliated me in front of all my friends and co-workers, and, for an encore, she attacked me. She punched me in the stomach, ripped my necklace off me and threatened to rip the earrings out of my pierced ears when I reached to take them off in anticipation of same. After much embarrassment and many threats, they finally staggered out. I was in shock. Next day the place blew up. Exploded. *Kaboom*. I've always thought that Ralph did it.

I'd heard he carried a sub-machine gun in the trunk of his car and he often shadowed my friends in an effort to find out where I was living (read hiding), and who I was seeing (read screwing). Once he tailed my girlfriend's car so tight that she had no choice but to jump out and ask him what the hell he wanted. A big

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confrontation ensued. He also ferreted out the house of an older male friend--good ol' "Willie Off the Pickle Boat" as he called himself, and threatened him. And when he finally did trace me, he just put a big plain scrap of torn white paper in my mailbox to terrify me. And, yes, it did work--very, very well. Shades of Little Italy--again. He watched and waited, then appeared at my door just after I got home from my job at a wig shop. I was scared and too intimidated to not open it. Having finally come face-to-face, we had a huge argument. He wound up strangling me on my bed, screaming how I was a disgrace to the family name. A family which, by the way, did include such things as drug users, dealers, thieves, bookies and God-only-knows-what. But, hey, no nigger-lovers allowed. *Botta-boom, botta-bing!* That reminds me: Mom used to have two favorite sayings: "A wop ain't nothin' but a nigger turned inside out", and "Ain't nothin' worse than a nigger but a nigger-lover." I apologize for her. I don't like and I don't do racial slurring, thank you. The words just don't feel good in my mouth. But this is what I had to listen to as a young girl--I guess she did too.

At any rate, Ralph informed me that he hadn't tried to kill me, or I'd have been dead. Whatever. And, yes, this is the same Ralph and Dorothy who, as newlyweds, were also victims of bias. Yet, as I was later informed by my hypocritical, two-faced, racist, sexist boy cousins whenever they screwed a black girl, "This is different." Indeed it was!

Dad just happened to be going to trial at that time for illegally booking numbers, so I figured I'd better take advantage of this unique opportunity. Although I was terrified of it, I pressed assault charges in hopes that, together with the first charges, they would carry enough weight to get him jail time, in spite of his connections to the judge--A Nice Italian Boy from the Neighborhood.

Anyhow, Ralph did get a sentence of six months in jail. The main thing I remember, besides fright, is trying to rush past him where he stood under guard by the back door of that courtroom. He had on the signature overcoat he always wore Little Italy style, but his hands were cuffed behind his back. Regardless, he still petrified me.

I must've gone into slo-mo as I passed him, because I remember his hissing that no matter where I went he'd find me. He listed several cities, including Detroit, so I'd think--make that know--that he was one step ahead of me. And for years, I did look behind every tree and jump at every shadow. I figured that while he was in jail would be an auspicious time for me to get out of town--even though I knew he'd be in hot pursuit the moment he was released. At least I'd be a jump ahead, plus I had no choice.

Then, when I was twenty, I met my David. And he said he loved me. He didn't have a horse or shining armor, but he was my knight just the same. This was the savior my mother had always promised. But I don't really think she meant for him to be quite so tall, dark and handsome. Especially the dark part! This brings us

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back to the first question people always ask me: How did we meet? Let me put it this way:

David Ruffin! Even the mention of the name never failed to arouse emotion. If you'd ever seen him perform live, regardless of your gender, that name incited a riot in your heart. If you were among those who'd had the "honor" of actually meeting the man, you had a definite reaction to him. That was the effect he had. His charisma enchanted many--others hated him. Still others both loved and hated him. I was one of those. It wasn't always like that--at first he didn't elicit such strong emotions as love or hate. At least, not from me. In fact, the first time he tried to attract my attention, he simply succeeded in attracting my indifference. Which, knowing him as I do now, may have been a large contributing factor toward his piqued interest in me. Anyhow, interested he was!

Let's see--where do I start? Where does one begin in order to make sense out of love? Yes, love. At first sight. At least, that's what he'd always claimed hit him that hot, sticky June 21 in 1964 at Carr's Beach, Maryland. On the other hand, it took me at least four whole hours to fall in love with him! Ah, yes. Carr's Beach! I went there that day with my buddy, good ol' Willie Off the Pickle Boat, under vigorous and repeated protest. But it was stifling hot, and, what the hell, my roommate had gone off with her new boyfriend. Of all the idiotic nerve! I really had wanted to stay in all day and sulk, but it was too hot. So I let Willie drag me to the beach. I think he really just wanted a "glamour girl," as he called my roommate and I, on his arm.



Oh yes--by the way! How did I get from "nerdette" to "glamour girl?" Forgot to mention that little miracle, huh? Well, first of all, I grew a body. Finally! After suffering without one for the entire four, long years of high school, wouldn't you know it, the summer after graduation, I grew a body! It was three inches taller, in fact--and it had curves! Encouraged by my girlfriend, I bought a hot-orange and chartreuse two-piece bathing suit--my first ever. Modest by today's standards, it was daring for me then. And I must say, I wore it well. Hell, I was stacked!

I spent that summer working at the Ocean City, Maryland restaurant of my dear late Aunt Josie. She was the only relative I knew with enough chutzpah to continue, in spite of my father, to

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show love to not only me, but later on, to my "half-breed son" as well. There my two-piece and I were soon noticed by the lifeguard on Aunt Josie's section of beach. We had a summer love (no sex--I was to remain a virgin for three more years) during which I soon found out that he was a part-time singer in a local band--the first I'd met. He was fascinating--what they now call a funky white boy. It was my introduction into soul music. And that was it for me! I was home. I bought my first Ray Charles album because of that boy. Soon I had sixteen of them. The boy broke my heart, but it was a fair trade, as the next three years found me spending all my time with music and musicians and their fans and friends.

Ah, the Entertainment World; it was my world. Everything there wasn't either black or white like it was everywhere else. We all hung out at dances, cabarets and so forth. Color lines were blurry--it was great. I'm sure there was discrimination going on behind the scenes, but for us, it was more about the music. We were all pretty innocent, looking back. It was sort of like the movie "Dirty Dancing", in fact. Except that some of the summer help was black.

For me, it was a one-way trip. I liked belonging somewhere--at last. Someplace where the people spent less time on judgment and pre-judgment than on creativity and fun! So, at twenty years old, the Summer of 1964 found me once again a glamour girl in a bathing suit at another beach--Carr's in Annapolis.

As Willie and I arrived, I noticed a huge sign with a long list of singers who performing there that day. Chuck Jackson!? Whew, that got my attention! He was a major star at that time. I perked right up! A stage show at a beach? Never heard of such a thing. Well, not only that, Carr's had an amusement park, swimming, food and drink pavilions, not to mention a bar with a tropical decor. This was a wondrous thing, indeed, as I'd never seen anything like it. Once I'd seen Chuck Jackson's name, I barely noticed the other names under it--Little Stevie Wonder, Charlie & Inez Foxx, The Soul Sisters, Mittie Collier et al. And then there was the little-known group, The Temptations, barely perched on the threshold of success.

Those were the days of the processed hair-do, before the advent of black awareness and pride. And in my fairly small town of Baltimore, if ever you saw a 'do, you could bet a star was in town! So you can imagine my excitement when, as I sat at the open-air bar, not one but six of them traipsed through on the way to the dressing room. I'd never seen Chuck Jackson, but I figured that one of these guys was him. But who could the others be? I was thrilled. It was much later when I found that these were The Temptations and Cornelius Grant, their guitarist and musical conductor, aka "The Sixth Temptation."

Well! By this time, I had gotten way over pouting about my roommate, and was ready to have some fun! I gravitated toward the stage area, and tried to see who or what was happening up there. Needless to mention, the place was jammed. In the course of my climbing up onto some wooden construction, and

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hopping up and down for a better vantage point, two rather husky guys must have seen me and taken pity on me, because they offered to hold me up on their shoulders. I jumped at the chance! Although I can't imagine it now, I believe I sat between them, with one gluteus maximus on each broad shoulder. And so the show proceeded. The acts came, the acts went. They were all equally okay, but we were all anxiously awaiting The Star.



Eddie Kendrick, Melvin Franklin, Paul Williams and Otis Williams, perform just once more).

Unbeknownst to me, the owner (who I knew, but didn't know he was the owner) saw me towering above the crowd. He motioned for me to join him backstage, which I happily did. Oh wow! Just how lucky could one girl get?! I was about to find out. From my precious spot, I watched in awe and amazement as Chuck Jackson sang song after song; I also watched in amazement as the girls screamed and trampled each other in an effort to merely touch the shoe of their idol. In "I Don't Wanna Cry", he began to shed his sweat-soaked clothes, much to the delight of his fans, and the more he stripped, the more hysterical the crowd became. At one point, he threw his shirt high into the air, where it landed in the rafters. Shrieking girls clamored on top of each other in a hopeless effort to retrieve it.

Elsewhere, whilst my eyes were fixed upon this madness, apparently someone else's (four) eyes were fixed upon me. In fact, David later told me that this wasn't the first time he'd seen me. Little did I know that he'd spotted me earlier eating fried chicken, obviously long before I became vegetarian--or "vegetareyton", as he called it years later, God bless his little pea-pickin' heart. At any rate, a voice sort of mumbled something somewhere near my ear, but not loud enough for me to know, or care, what was said. Having been ignored, the person at the other end of the voice made a second effort to get my attention. All he succeeded in getting was a very dirty glance. I was really trying to watch this, the best part of the show, and this guy was here bothering me! And oh, he was

As just another part of the blur, that group, The Temptations, had come and gone in a quick flash of white-on-white precision, and although I hadn't especially noticed David, evidently he had noticed me. (From the "If I'd Only Known Then What I Know Now" Department: The thing I most regret is that I cannot go back and rewind the tape to that fateful three minutes of "The Way You Do The Things You Do", because I didn't catch it that first time! And even though I must have subsequently seen the show a thousand times, I'd gladly pay anything to see "my" Temptations, David Ruffin,

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persistent--yet polite. He waited until the show was over this time; I guess he'd gotten the message. Finally he succeeded in accomplishing his mission with his third try. I never knew exactly what line he was running--I bet it was priceless--but whatever it was, it struck me funny. He'd been so determined! (He told me years later that he knew he had to get to me before Chuck saw me--imagine). He'd meant to be so serious, but it just made me smile. Finally, he did get my attention. Ironically, he's had it ever since.

Then the show was over, and the atmosphere was a lot calmer and quieter when we began to actually talk. He said his name was David Ruffino--he'd probably just seen his first bottle of Ruffino wine. So, some of the first words out of his mouth to me were false. Years later, when I asked him about it, he justified it by saying it had been his intention to change his name to Ruffino. I eventually found that he often used that as a catch-all excuse for lying--"his intention." Whatever it was, it had been his intention. Nevertheless, I finally agreed to walk with him to find some place to buy cigarettes (interesting, since nicotine is an addictive substance,) and our first afternoon together began.

He was wearing a pair of khaki pants (sort of peg-legged,) a grey and white striped seer-sucker shirt open and tied at the waist (a style he wore well all his life,) a St. Christopher medal (dubious patron saint of the traveler,) a pair of his yet-to-be logo eyeglasses, slip-in sneakers (sockless, of course,) and to top it all off, a red "do-rag!"

(For years he denied the do-rag). Obviously, he was in no way dressed in a fashion that would indicate that he was with the show, let alone was the first tenor, second tenor and soon-to-be lead for The Temptations! (Dressing down became one of his trademarks too. He wore his good clothes regally, of course, but he would wear anything anywhere, and dared 'em not to like it)

I must interject this priceless story here before we leave Carr's Beach: I've said what DR was wearing, and as Sister Fate would have it, I was wearing something similar--for a one-piece bathing suit, that is. The bottom was grey denim boy-cut shorts with white top-stitching, belted at the hip with a wide, white vinyl contour belt, and the top was a V-necked sleeveless chemise with grey top-stitching. It, too, was made of grey and white striped seersucker--60's haute couture!

Well, in the course of our travels that day, we covered the entire park, and at one place there were some bleachers and patios and tables. We sat in the bleachers in the midst of a little bit of a crowd. Apparently it was a rather progressive crowd for 1964, and all genders were interspersed. Just after we sat down, a voice yelled down from a few rows up behind us. "Hey you, in the stripes." As we both noticed a little lisp in the voice, we turned and looked at each other. It continued: Can I have your autograph?" Now, up until just then, we weren't real sure which one of us was being hit upon. After all, we were both wearing those stripes. David quickly retorted without turning around, "I don't have

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a pen!" And under his breath, as he elbowed me, he hissed at me, "And don't you get one, either!" The voice sang back, "You can use mi-i-ne." And then, in a lower octave, a change of mind: "No, you'll never break the point on my eyebrow pencil, honey!" David was not amused.

For me, it wasn't his clothing or style or mannerisms that made me think that David was gay. I can't imagine it now, but when I first met him, I actually thought that. And in all innocence, I told him so. Well, he had hit on me! To which, I was like, "Whoa! Whaddya' mean!?! I thought you were gay! I don't know what word we used in 1964--I doubt if I said "homosexual"; I'd probably never have said "faggot," that wasn't my style. And, of course, "gay" wasn't being used then--not for that! It was Marvin's last name, for Pete's sake! Maybe I said something like, "I didn't think you liked girls," or...I don't know what. Yes, maybe it was just his beautiful face. He had no facial hair, perfect skin, high cheekbones--just classic beauty; but there most definitely were a few gay men checking him out.

So he dragged (no pun intended) me away. I think he'd had enough for the moment, thank you. It was kind of funny, but it seems as though he'd had that particular cross to bear for most of his life. Po' thing. I mean, we joked, but obviously it ate him up inside.

Believe me, I didn't think for very long that he was gay. To me, he was just very much a gentleman. He was sweet and considerate and, most of all, he seemed to be sincere. We waded in the water--and talked, we rode on the rides--and talked, we ate waffles and ice cream--and talked. It seemed as if we were getting to know each other. Of course, we found out years later that two people never really get to know each other, no matter how hard they try. The simple reality is that people are kaleidoscopes--constantly changing. That's called growth. It's both automatic and necessary.

At that early and simpler time in life, love was easy and uncomplicated; we fell in love before evening. While we were riding the airplane swings, brazen hussy that I was that day, I reached over, pulled him by the chains close to me, and kissed his cheek. (That was my Red Do-rag--I denied it for years! I couldn't admit it. I guess I was afraid that since I'd done this shameless thing, it took something away from our storybook meeting. Or maybe I thought it meant that he just did not love me as much as I dreamed, and that I was responsible for every bad and hurtful thing that followed--like I had given him "license to ill." Call the shrink; I'm not sure. In any case, it embarrassed me, at the very least).

In years to come, he always did love amusement parks, and he'd literally get furious with me because I couldn't even ride a Ferris wheel without throwing up. But that afternoon in June of 1964, we spent just falling in love; and when along toward evening, he said he had to go back, I was utterly clueless. I had no idea what he meant. The dialogue follows:

He: "Well, I have to go back now."

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She: "What for?"

He: "I'm on the show."

She: (sincerely)"Oh. Whaddya' do--light man or somethin'?"

He: "No. D'ju see that group with the white on?"

She: "Yeah?"

He: "Well, I sing lead with them."

She: (surprised, but nonchalant) "Oh. Okay."

At that time, Eddie had sung lead, thus far. So, either David could see into the future, or he was using imagery to create a manifestation. If so, he was ahead of his time--and out of his mind! Probably he was just egomaniacal--a Capricorn who saw the peak and was driven to conquer it, oblivious of those used for footholds along the way. According to brother Jimmie, this was just David trying to outdo him, as usual.

At the end of the second show at the beach, David invited me to this alleged birthday party for a singer on the show, Mittie Collier. It was to be at the motel in D.C. later. By the end of the day, after having had a very long and heartfelt debate with myself regarding the pros and cons--worried what he'd think, but wanting badly to go, I decided to just take my chances.

It wasn't because he had a little celebrity that I wanted to go; I'd already been pursued by a few famous boyfriends in my one year this side of virginity, and even before, really. Some in music, some not. Why, I had just broken up with one in the NBA, and a while back, there was the one in the NFL. So it wasn't like that at all. It was somehow different this time. It seemed so--real. The rest was just "looking for love in all the wrong places." By the time we left for the party, I was already getting attached to David, and I was already afraid of losing him! So, I bravely took the approach that I'd go to the motel with the idea that it was a one-night stand (it was only the 60's, kids, not the 90's,) and leave it at that. That way, I couldn't be hurt. I was already pulling back in anticipation of his rejecting me. I decided to just make the most of it, and not to hold a charge on it. Right!

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Genna Sapia-Ruffin

[AGRuffProduction@aol.com](mailto:AGRuffProduction@aol.com)

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