

# Thomas: Solicitation Arrests Rise

First Of Two Parts  
By DON KING  
Editor

Bob Thomas is the Charlotte Police Department's personable attorney. He spent almost three hours during February talking with Q-Notes about the campaign against sex and soliciting in adult bookstores and parks.

These are excerpts.

**Q-Notes: Is there a stepped-up campaign directed at men who indicate an interest in having sex with other men?**

**Thomas:** It's stepped up in the sense that there are more arrests now than a year ago. We've been in the bookstores with undercover officers since the middle of 1984 and we've said repeatedly

that police officers in an undercover capacity would be in and out frequently. We are not in there with the sole purpose of arresting men interested in having sex with other men. Our purpose originally was to determine whether violations of the law were occurring. As we announced in December of 1984 there are several different types

of violations taking place. We intend to take appropriate enforcement action for any kind of violation we encounter.

There are more arrests now. In the early stages of our bookstore investigation, any arrests would have revealed the existence of law enforcement people on the premises. Further — and I don't have any way to prove this — my personal belief based on conversations with officers is that there is an increased frequency of sexual approaches.

I just don't buy that gay men must engage in sex on the premises. The root cause is not homosexual vs. heterosexual; it is the presumption on the part of gays that anyone who walks into these stores has given permission for a sexual encounter and talking in very graphic terms with them on the spot. This is not the case, of course, with respect with everyone who enters.

**Q-Notes: Do you know of any arrests for soliciting for crime against nature in an adult bookstore that have been made based on normal citizen complaint rather than on complaint by an undercover officer?**

**Thomas:** No, to my knowledge there has not been one.

**Q-Notes: Do you know of any arrests of soliciting for crime against nature in a public park that have been made based on normal citizen complaint rather than on complaint by an undercover officer?**

**Thomas:** I think that the only arrests that have been made have been from undercover officer activity.

**Q-Notes: Is the police department concerned with the social consequences of those arrests?**

**Thomas:** We're concerned with the social consequences of people committing crimes, particularly crimes of this nature. One of the reasons we are so

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