

# What or Who is STING?

By Diana Williams-Cotton

I can remember the first time I heard the word STING. It was back in '57 I was a young girl playing in my grandmother's backyard, fascinated by the large yellow and black bumblebees that were flying about her dahlias. I was busy trying to catch one in the palm of my hand. (I've always wanted to know what makes them fly with such tiny wings.) Mama told me that the bee would sting me if I continued to annoy it. Since I wanted to know what a sting felt like, I continued about my research of "mother nature," and as you can imagine, I soon was in the house crying at the top of my lungs.

As I grew older, the word "sting" took on a totally new meaning. I guess it all began with the movie. For years I avoided that particular movie. I just couldn't bring myself to watch a movie with a title that

reminded me of one of the most painful moments in my life. After finally acquiring the nerve to watch it, my whole perception of the "S" word changed. I couldn't again understand why anyone would call a good congame a "sting".

Well, just as I was getting comfortable with knowing only crooks ran "Sting operations, guess who decided to get in on the act? Yep, you got it kid; none other than our top law enforcement agency—the FBI. So I had to go back into a mind that had always known that the "S" word was: 1. a defense mechanism used by some insects to protect themselves; 2. a term used to describe the games of con men, and now, 3. a good congame used by the FBI to catch bad public officials that is just a hair from being entrapment.

I think that any opera-

tion that will identify corruption in public office is all right. However, often these probes are made public prior to concrete evidence. This causes problems for those who are being probed. In communities where most of us live, we are quick to jump to conclu-

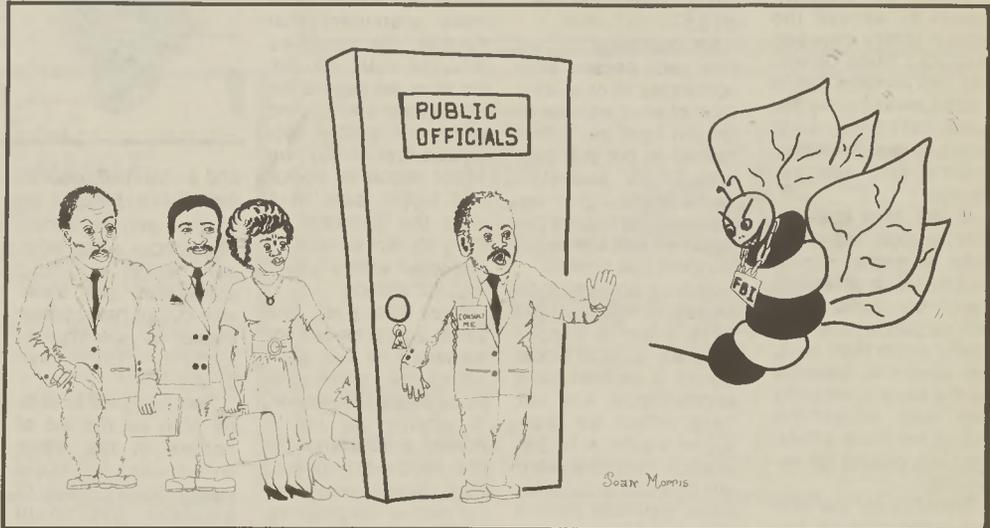
sions if persons are being investigated. We often try and convict them before formal charges are filed.

Across the country, many black elected officials have come under the scrutiny of FBI "Sting" operations. It is

up to us as Black citizens not to be quick to believe what is printed or viewed in the media as being fact. After all, in most cases, we have elected these people to represent our communities.

That "S" word that has

been giving me a problem since '57 is now giving a lot of people a problem, because many of us don't understand just what a "STING" is. Just for your information, a "STING" is a pain from a bee bit, a pop star, a pro-wrestler, and an FBI investigation.



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3431 N. PATTERSON AVE.  
WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. 27115  
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