



# Frenzy in Frome Road



# **Frenzy in Frome Road**

Book Four of the Bidy  
and Justin Series

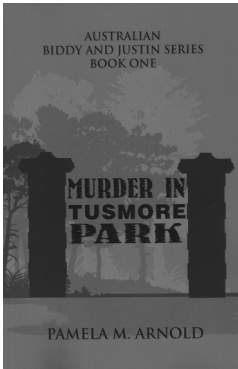
Pamela M. Arnold



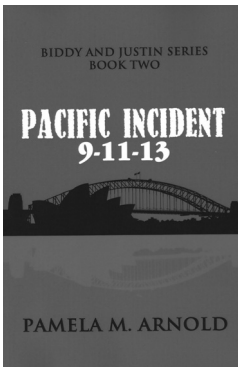
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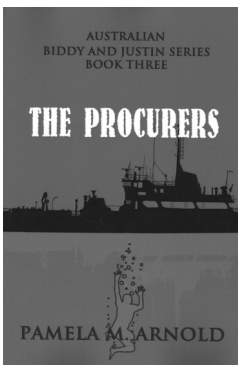
Previous Titles in The Bidy and Justin series by Pamela M. Arnold:



Murder in Tusmore Park



Pacific Incident, 9-11-13



The Procurers



# Dedication

To Jaxon





## Acknowledgements

Emeritus Professor Sydney Hamberger.

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Unmanned System Academy/Drones.



## Chapter One

“**Y**ou can put your gun away now. It’s the second time we’ve been abducted, but certainly not from our own home in peaceful Tusmore, South Australia.”

Biddy managed to keep her voice even as she stared at the abductor sitting between her and Justin, now in the backseat of a large Mercedes. Her gaze drifted past to Justin. He was giving her an almost imperceptible head shake. *Shut up, don’t antagonise them!*

“It’s a bit early in the morning for abduction; may we ask who is responsible?” Bid demanded obstinately.

“When we get there.”

“And where is that?” she persisted.

“You’ll see.” The abductor’s voice was tense, with a ring of irritation. Gun in hand, he was distracted, his eyes constantly on the rear and side vision mirrors.

Biddy, irritated and tired from the early morning flight home, was not intimidated, but nevertheless was curious; somehow their captors didn’t appear as menacing as one would assume an abductor to be. On the other hand, the abductors *had* hustled her down her hall at gunpoint before firmly ordering her out of the house with her de facto husband, Justin, and into this powerful vehicle.

Their security gate's bell had rung before they had even unpacked, and Biddy herself had opened them in anticipation of their friend Detective Senior Sergeant Janine West's arrival. She visualised the three kitchen mugs prepared with warming tea pot, boiling jug, and the welcoming plate of Janine's favourite Florentine biscuits – not even time to make the tea.

The interlopers' driver had remained in the car, backed up and facing out of their drive during this home invasion. The second abductor, who had run upstairs to intercept Justin, was now in the front passenger seat next to the driver, still fingering his Glock. All three wore dark jeans and similar leather jackets. *Almost a uniform*, Biddy thought. *Maybe replacements for their usual terrorist garb?*

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Janine West found the pair of security gates wide open – as was the front door to Justin's duplex. She immediately called Adelaide Major Crime for backup. Arriving promptly, Detective Jack Ellis found Janine tying Puffer, Justin's Japanese Chin, to a veranda post while a very angry cat hissed in a cat basket dumped on the tessellated tiles.

Entering apprehensively, guns at the ready, the pair found prepared food, *Mary Celeste* style, left in Justin's kitchen, and no sign of any occupants. They surmised that Biddy and Justin must have just arrived home from the Adelaide Airport by taxi, having completed

quite a gruelling overseas assignment for the Australian National Veterans Network. As before, Bidy and Justin, untrained detectives, had achieved quite spectacular results in rescuing boat people and thwarting and enraging the terrorists.

This morning, the Australian National Veterans Network (ANVN) had seconded Janine from Adelaide Major Crime to urgently and unobtrusively warn the older couple that the terrorist cell, this time headed by Suzette, a well-established al-Qa'ida protagonist, was furious at being thwarted again and was seriously seeking to annihilate Bidy Jennings and Justin Fuller in their home in Stirling Street, Tusmore.

As their luggage had been taken upstairs but not unpacked, Janine was at a loss. Assassins would have simply eliminated the couple, not abducted them. But there were red stains on the white balustrade, and a chair had been overturned in the kitchen of the empty house.

Janine was uneasy. "What do you reckon, Jack?"

Det. Jack Ellis shrugged. "Beats me, marm – seems a bit stagey. Maybe the assassins changed plan, deciding to abduct them to get information."

Janine shuddered – so many violent atrocities had been enacted by vicious thugs in the name of religion. She felt guilty, as Bidy would have opened the security gates expecting her to arrive with their two animals. As Janine slammed the front door of the empty house behind them, they were greeted on the veranda by her two charges. One could almost imagine that they

sensed calamity. Puffer, the Japanese Chin, with head on one side gazing up at them, whined mournfully. The cat, emulating his name, Piss Off, as usual was furious at being stuck in a cat basket.

“I hope you two haven’t become orphans,” Janine said, undoing Puffer’s lead and handing the hissing basket to her subordinate. Embarrassed, she knew from Jack’s look of concern that he had noticed the tremulous note in her voice, belying her tough-cop demeanor.

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Tearing open a defenceless afternoon newspaper, spreading pages over his desk in the headquarters of the Adelaide Major Crime Squad, Detective Inspector Brien Schultz ground his teeth. Headlines splashed: “Celebrity Fashion Designer and Partner Abducted.”

“How could the press have the story already?” Schultz snarled. “The electric jug was still hot, you say! Bloody Suzette couldn’t have been that efficient. The couple had barely arrived home.”

Standing in front of his desk, Janine said quietly, “With due respect, sir, I left immediately. I was tasked by ANVN.”

Schultz shook the paper at her. “What about the damn phone?”

“We found the same problem that ANVN encountered – the house line had not been reconnected. As you are aware, the couple had been away for months,

and neither mobile answered.” Janine shoved her hair back, struggling again to steady her unusually tremulous voice.

“What about neighbours, bystanders, people in the park opposite?” Schultz’s voice was now just gruff. It had been a long time since he had flown into a rage with his efficient senior sergeant, Janine. He could see she was blaming herself; she didn’t deserve to be chastised.

“We have questioned every possible observer, sir. The general description was of a slightly unique black Mercedes, which appeared to have reinforced windows. It had backed into Justin Fuller’s drive.”

Schultz ran a finger over his stubbly red moustache. “What about their security gates?”

Janine looked down. “I-I’m afraid they had them open for me, sir.”

Schultz softened his voice. “How did they know to expect you, Janine?”

“Biddy rang before they loaded at Sydney this morning. She was concerned that Steve and I had been pet sitting their animals for so long, and was dying to tell about their last assignment.” Janine sneaked a look at her boss and boldly continued, “Although having organised much of it for ANVN, sir, you know the assignment detail already. I arranged to take my lunch break early, to arrive with the dog and cat about the same time as they. Then I got this emergency call from ANVN.”

Janine put her hand on a chair. “Do you mind if I sit, sir? It’s been a harrowing morning.”



Chastened, Schultz gave a conciliatory wave at the chair.

Seated, Janine continued, “Their plane got in at seven this morning, and their taxi must have paused on the way home from the airport to pick up milk, bread, Florentine biscuits, and a newspaper. A by-passer saw Bidy and Justin being hustled into the Merc’s backseat by a man who sat between them, while the driver and another armed man got into the front seat. The windows were obscured, so we don’t have much of a description.”

Schultz had cast the paper aside and begun his habit of torturing a cigarette to shreds on his desktop. “No other observers?”

“A high brush front fence obscured the view, sir, but a chap who was leaving the park immediately opposite Justin’s gateway got the impression it was almost staged. In fact, he wondered if he had intruded on a video sh—”

Lifting an interrupting forefinger, Schultz snatched up his mobile.

“Staged? ANVN! You planted that headline? You’ve given us all a hell of a fright, Graham. Of course, it must have been close, certainly better than an assassination! I’ll tell her.”

Fingers over her mouth, Janine tried to suppress tears of relief.

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Trying to relax next to the gunman, Bidy recognised the Old Belair Road winding up through clumps of

dense gum trees, with glimpses of golden quarry walls and individual driveways snaking up off the road to affluent homes, situated to take advantage of the views of Adelaide city and night lights on the plains below.

She glanced again across at Justin and capitulated, their eyes meeting in steady mutual agreement. They would go along with their abductors and see what transpired. Biddy felt she should be more alarmed and upset, but jet lagged as they both were, this seemed an almost surreal anticlimax to their previous assignment, filed as “The Procurers.” They were not really so perturbed as weary and edgy. Perhaps with all the danger and mayhem they had recently experienced overseas, they had learned to take things in their stride, she thought almost complacently.

“Company! Move!” the driver yelled.

Roughly grasping Bid and Justin’s shoulders, their backseat abductor shoved them both down, doubling them forward, pushing the backs of their heads hard toward the floor.

“Stay down,” he hissed. Raising his gun, he sighted out of the rear window.

Straining her head sideways, Biddy was surprised to see him utilising a special slot, which she had assumed was a light, positioned in the centre of the armoured glass back window.

Sheer bedlam ensued. Bullets were cracking against the vehicle, reinforced windows were shattering, the driver had accelerated, tyres screaming as they rounded hazardous sharp hill bends. The two captives, now

crouched, were huddled as small as possible, tossing about like rag dolls on the carpeted floor, desperately clutching for a support on the smooth back base of the front seats. A steady stream of cars, rushing to 9:00 a.m. jobs in Adelaide from their hills homes, struggled to avoid catastrophe, leaning on their horns, howling by, adding to the overwhelming cacophony, as did the higher notes of a wailing police siren. Then there was calm, except for the racing engine and thrusting pressures as they continued to speed around sharp bends.

“Police! Scared ‘em off!” the driver yelled. “You can let ‘em up now.”

Their backseat captor seemed almost apologetic as he helped them both up onto the seat.

Calm reigned, the abductors holstering their guns, Bidy attempting to straighten her casual outfit and regain her composure, Justin fuming at the danger to Bidy.

The driver ventured, “We were only just in time. They tailed us – must have spotted us in Stirling Street as we left Tusmore Park.”

After more precipitous hills climbing, winding around quite extensive private properties, they halted at an impressive double cast-iron gateway. An official stepped out of an unobtrusive control box, checked the driver’s credentials, and glanced at the occupants. Then, turning back to his shelter, he activated the left gate to slide open sideways.

Acknowledging the gatekeeper with a raised thumb, the driver entered the long, curving drive. An extra

reverberating noise of the car tyres made Bidy aware that the imposing drive was brick paved and curved around a lake, which reflected an upside-down duplicate of a very impressive stone residence. The calm lake appeared to be situated in a private park, the trees and shrubs surrounding the house also duplicated in the reflection. Bidy glimpsed deer in the distance, the drive circling a deer park and continuing within the property.

“Wow, all that excitement was almost worth being abducted to a beautiful property like this,” Bidy exclaimed.

Now more relaxed, all three abductors grinned sheepishly. Justin was not amused.

Agent Graham appeared at the massive oak front door, and, approaching the car, opened the Mercedes door for Bidy. Justin stepped out the other side at the invitation of their third abductor, and the car drove off around the house.

“Welcome to you both,” Agent Graham said, hand extended.

“What in the hell are you playing at, Graham?” Justin snapped, ignoring the welcoming hand. “An early morning charade, do you know what we’ve just been through?”

Agent Graham nodded with a wry smile. “My driver was in touch; I heard it all. In fact, you are fortunate that he is a driver of such calibre. They were trying to force you off the road until the police joined the chase.”

Voice still raised, Justin said, “Your crew could have scared Bidy out of her wits. And why take the

Old Belair Road when we could have come by the freeway?”

“I doubt that Bidy has ever been scared out of anything, Justin. And I do apologise, but it was an emergency. We had to beat Suzette at her own game; she was planning an immediate reprisal. She is so furious at you and your cohorts thwarting her once again that she swore to eliminate you both! She has co-opted with ISIS.

“It was part of her cell giving chase. My driver didn’t want to take the obvious route. Actually, we cut it very fine, and unfortunately they spotted you leaving. They were hoping to greet you both as you arrived home, each with a bullet to the brain.”

Abashed, Justin said, “ISIS! A bullet each, at least it’s better than being decapitated.”

## Chapter Two

“Come on in. Have a drink, an apology, and an explanation.” ANVN agent Eric Graham ushered them through a spacious entrance hall.

As they walked through, Biddy noticed the echoing of their footsteps on the polished slate floor. The left two timber doors were discreetly marked with small brass tags, Cloaks and Powder Room. A huge, gilt-framed wall mirror reflected the trio as they approached. Then they turned right into a gracious reception room dotted with luxurious leather furniture. Welcome in late July, a gas fire burned in the grate of a hand-carved timber mantle. On the hearth, a dog basket housed a strange little black-and-white creature.

Graham gestured to comfortable chairs. A tall, well-built Caucasian appeared.

“Mungo manages this establishment for ANVN.” Agent Graham introduced Bid and Justin.

Shaking hands with Justin, Mungo nodded at Biddy. “Welcome to Landmark Estate.”

Biddy couldn’t quite identify his accent. She had a feeling that Mungo was a Greek name. To go with his dark hair and brown eyes, he sported a neat goatee and