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MADMEN HOLD UP SCHOOL

For six terrible hours, an Italian village school full of children is held to ransom by two armed lunatics, while parents and police stand helplessly outside. Ninety-two children and three teachers are at the mercy of Arturo and Osvaldo Santato, brothers who were recently discharged from an asylum. They have acid and dynamite, and using the children as shields, threaten to blind the children and blow up the school unless they receive £120,000 ransom money.

From a window they demand a television set - which is produced, in an attempt to calm them. Holding a teacher beside him, one of the brothers addresses the frantic parents through a microphone which is pushed up to him on a pole. "Give me the money", he says, "Or I will blow the place to bits!".

The deadlock is broken by the bravery of schoolmistress Paola del Caratore, who attacks Arturo and disarms him. Rescuers pour into the building, and within seconds the two maniacs are overpowered. Weeping but unharmed, the children are restored to their families.

Though the children are safe, one man who tried to rush the building is dead, and a mother's ankle has been smashed by a bullet. Angry villagers want to lynch the brothers. They sweep the police aside, and batter Osvaldo senseless before the guards manage to rescue him. The madmen are taken away. The village breathes again - and the heroine of the day is school-teacher Paola, the woman who braved death for her children.