

Hands Up!

A 10-minute play

by

Scott Cohen

LIFE

Arts

Contact:

Scott Cohen

Easton, Maryland USA 21601

+1.917.690.7691

scott@lifearts.com

Cast of Characters

VALERIE: 20-30 years old

MACK: 25-40 years old

Place

New York City

Time

A dark night after work on the street

LIFE *Arts*

VALERIE

(Talking into cell phone) I'm going to stop at the store for a couple things and head to the subway. Should be home about ten o'clock. *(Pause)* Yes. *(Pause)* Yes. Don't worry. *(Pause)* Love you too. *(Hangs up and puts phone in her knapsack)*

MACK

(Walks toward VALERIE) Stick 'em up.

VALERIE

What?

MACK

Are you deaf? I said "Stick 'em up!"

VALERIE

I will not.

MACK

I have a gun. *(Holds hand in pocket like he's holding a gun)*

VALERIE

How do I know that's a gun?

MACK

It's a freakin' 45. And I will use it. Now raise your hands slowly, and hand over your bag and your watch.

VALERIE

Show it to me.

MACK

No. If you don't gimme me your money I'm gonna use it on you.

VALERIE

No.

MACK

No? Are you crazy? I'll shoot.

VALERIE

I'm not giving you any money.

MACK

I don't know who you think you are lady, but this is a robbery. Cooperate and nobody gets hurt. *(Beat)* Think about your family.

VALERIE

First of all, my name is Val, not "lady".

MACK

A *lady* with an attitude. Alrighty then. Let's start over. Good day Val. This is a robbery. Give me whatever you got.

VALERIE

I'm not cooperating.

MACK

Hey! I'm in kind of a rush. The way this works is you give me your money and I let you go on your way.

VALERIE

No. *(Beat)* I mean that's not the way this is going to work.

MACK

I'm sorry but you don't have a choice.

VALERIE

Don't be sorry. I have several choices. One is to give you my money. The other is not to give you my money. I choose the latter.

MACK

Are you crazy? Why risk / being shot over

VALERIE

Here's the deal: I'm not giving you anything. So it's time for you to go.

MACK

Deal? This is not a negotiation.

VALERIE

I'm not negotiating.

MACK

Look Val. Don't risk your life.

VALERIE

Have you heard of Krav Maga?

MACK

MAGA? Is that like Trump's make America Great Again thing?

VALERIE

No. Not MAGA. Krav Maga.

MACK

What's Krav Maga?

VALERIE

Israeli self defense.

MACK

Are you Jewish?

VALERIE

No. What difference does that make?

MACK

You said Israeli.

VALERIE

Don't be ridiculous. Krav Maga started in Israel. It's a military fighting system developed for the Israel Defense Forces.

MACK

Like karate or judo.

VALERIE

Yes. *(Beat)* But it's more deadly.

MACK

How?

VALERIE

You don't wear robes and belts and stuff. This is for street fighting.

MACK

So what does that have to do with this me? I have a gun / and if you don't --

VALERIE

Well, my dad had me take these lessons because I was going to work in the city and he was worried about my safety.

MACK

Good for you. Look, lady. I mean, Val. Just shut up and give me your money.

VALERIE

Last year, someone tried to rob me, I mean, mug me.

MACK

And . . .

VALERIE

And, I told him I was trained in deadly force. But he figured I was just trying to get out of a bad situation.

MACK

So what happened?

VALERIE

Well, I busted his knee

MACK

(Beat) You busted his knee?

VALERIE

And he fell back and cracked his head on the sidewalk.

MACK

You're kidding!

VALERIE

No. Really. And then I called the police. *(Beat)* And they called an ambulance.

MACK

What happened then?

VALERIE

(Beat) The guy sued me.

MACK

The robber sued you?

VALERIE

Mugger. Yes, he sued for unnecessary roughness.

MACK

You're joking.

VALERIE

No joke. It cost me 5,000 bucks for legal fees. And I almost lost my job.

MACK

He sued you?

VALERIE

For \$25,000 to cover his hospital bills and pain and suffering. *(Beat)* And emotional distress.

MACK

Why d'ya lose your job?

VALERIE

Because I had to be in court. The company I worked at was in the middle of a merger, and my boss needed me and I wasn't there.

MACK

Is that even legal? Firing someone because they have to go to court? Sounds like your boss is not a very nice guy.

VALERIE

He's a she, and it was a busy time.

MACK

So what? Did ya win?

VALERIE

It was kind of a draw. There were mitigating circumstances. The judge said I had not warned the "victim" of my skill, but did not award any monetary damages.

MACK

Your "deadly force."

VALERIE

Yes. *(Beat)* So here's what we need to do. *(Reaches into knapsack for pad)* I just need to write up this little thing that discloses I made you aware of my skill. Then / you can try --

MACK

This is fuckin' stupid.

VALERIE

(Looking for pen) Not from where I stand. And definitely not based on my prior experience. *(Still looking for a pen, looks up)* Do you have a pen I could borrow?

MACK

No. I do not have a pen.

VALERIE

I'd give it back.

MACK

I said "I don't have a fuckin' pen.

VALERIE

No need to use obscenities. *(Beat)* I could record it on my cell. *(Still looking for pen)* I guess that would work.

MACK

Lady, this is bullshit. Just give me your money and walk away.

VALERIE

(Finds pen in knapsack) Never mind, I got one *(holds up pen)*. Or if you prefer, I could record this, just so there's no misunderstanding.

MACK

Lady, there's no misunderstanding, I'm robbing you. I have a gun. You just need to cooperate. Give me your money and walk away. That's how this works!

VALERIE

I thought you were mugging me.

MACK

Don't get caught up in language. Mugging, robbery. Same thing.

VALERIE

Language is important. I was an english major at Swarthmore / and even though I didn't graduate --

MACK

Swarthmore? My old girlfriend was there. They have labels on all the trees.

VALERIE

Yeah. The Scot Foundation. They love their trees.

MACK

It's like another world up there.

VALERIE

What was her name?

MACK

Who?

VALERIE

Your girlfriend. Maybe I know her.

MACK

You think I'm stupid? I'm not telling you her name.

VALERIE

Look, umm... what's your name?

MACK

I'm not saying.

VALERIE

OK. I'll call you John.

MACK

Call me whatever you want. This is crazy. Somebody's gonna come around that corner any minute and then they'll be trouble too! Just give me your money.

VALERIE

No. And there's nobody around tonight. Too darn cold outside.

MACK

I'm poor. I'm desperate. I'll shoot.

VALERIE

No you won't. And for your information, the difference between a robbery and a mugging. Robbery is a crime of stealing money or property, while the general connotation of a mugging is that the person getting mugged is harmed in some physical way (*beat*) or at least threatened with injury.

MACK

So mugging is a subset of robbery with the added specificity of actual injury occurring and it being in a generally public place.

VALERIE

Right.

MACK

While burglary is the criminal offense of breaking and entering a building illegally for the purpose of committing a crime.

VALERIE

WOW. You sound like a lawyer.

MACK

I've had some experience with the legal system.

VALERIE

Well, *(Writing on a piece of paper)* whether it's a mugging or a robbery, I just need you to acknowledge that I have made you aware of my skill in self defense and kicking ass. *(Beat)* So I don't get sued.

MACK

I'm not signing ...

VALERIE

You can walk away and we can forget this ever happened, / or I'll have to --

MACK

(Shouting) I'm not signing anything.

VALERIE

Or beat the crap out of you. This has not been a good day, and I'm not in a good mood *(Beat)* It's that time of the month.

MACK

Lady, stop. Just stop. Did you forget I've gotta gun?

VALERIE

Let's just do this. You sign here, and then try and / get my money --

MACK

(Shouting) I'm not signing it!

VALERIE

You'll get hurt. I'll call the cops. You'll go to the hospital. *(Beat)* And there's no way I'm going to get sued for defending myself, again.

MACK

You're crazy!

VALERIE

Batshit crazy. Lot of my friends say that when / push comes to shove --

MACK

Give me your watch.

VALERIE

You don't want this watch. It's fake.

MACK

Looks real.

VALERIE

Genuine fake Rolex. Bought in Chinatown.

MACK

Give me \$20 and I'll go away.

VALERIE

Better idea. You give me 20 bucks and I will not beat the shit out of you.

MACK

Lady. I mean Val. Let me give you some advice. Your possessions aren't worth getting hurt.

VALERIE

I'm not . . .

MACK

Your stuff is replaceable.

VALERIE

The clock's ticking. How do you want to end this?

MACK

(Thinking) How do I know you're really capable of what you say?

VALERIE

Here's my phone? *(Types on phone)* I'm Googling "MUGGING" plus "BROOKLYN 2011 LAWSUIT" PLUS "VALERIE STONEWALL". Should bring up the story.

MACK

(Takes her phone) This it?

VALERIE

(Proudly) I was on CBS Good Morning America.

MACK

Okay, look. Just give me \$10. I need to eat.

VALERIE

No way. You give me twenty, or I'll go to town on you.

MACK
I have a gun.

VALERIE
Make sure the safety is off

MACK
I know how to use my gun.

VALERIE
So how do you want to do this?

MACK
Give me your money or I shoot.

VALERIE
No

MACK
This makes no sense.

VALERIE
Look *John*. I have a job I don't like, kids wanting things I can't afford. My husband ran away with some 20 year old chick six months ago. I have no money and a stack of bills to pay. I hate this area. It's dark and cold and I want to get out of here. Everyone's in a bad mood these days. I'm sick and tired of it all.

MACK
Ooh, I feel sorry for you. But I haven't eatin' and I'm sleeping on the street because my landlord threw me out. I don't want to hurt you, but you're giving me no choice.

VALERIE
You have a choice. Walk away.

MACK
You never had to make a decide or even think about robbing someone. (*Beat*) I didn't grow up wanting to be a criminal.

VALERIE
John, let me be honest with you. (*Beat*) I'm a hitman. I kill for money.

MACK
No, you're not.

VALERIE

Yes, I am.

MACK

You're a woman.

VALERIE

Makes it easier to do what I do. Easy to slip away.

MACK

I'm desperate. And desperation leads to desperate measures.

VALERIE

Tell you what. I'm in a charitable mood. There's a late night falafel shop around the corner. I'll walk down there and buy you a meal.

MACK

A meal? Just give me the money.

VALERIE

No money. Food. I feel sorry for you, but I'm not giving you money for drugs or booze. At least we can end this peacefully.

MACK

But. *(Beat)* Let me think.

VALERIE

Don't think. Come with me.

MACK

(Stares at VALERIE) (Pause) This is a trap. I'm not going.

VALERIE

Free meal. Nobody gets hurt. That's a win.

MACK

This is nuts.

VALERIE

Consider yourself lucky, John.

MACK

My name is Mack. *(Beat)*

VALERIE

Come on Mack. Let me buy you dinner.

Why?
MACK

I feel sorry for you. *(Beat)* I care.
VALERIE

I need to get out of here. *(Takes hand out of pocket, looks down. He has no gun, runs off stage).*
MACK

(Blackout)

End of Play.

LIFE Arts