

FLICK (*offstage, fading*). I'm a dirty little chicken! I'm a dirty little chicken! I'm a dirty little chicken! I'm a dirty little...

(*RALPHIE pokes his head onstage from DR, comes C. sighs, looks at the magazine. Western music fades in. The fence, in darkness, swings back. The apron light fades to black DL and DR, and a campfire fades up UR behind the fence line, revealing RALPH in his cowboy hat and bandanna, sitting on a log, warming his hands over the campfire.*)

* RALPH. Howdy, pardner.

RALPHIE (*turns, not the least bit surprised*). Howdy.

RALPH. Come on over and set a spell. (*RALPHIE crosses to the campfire. The DC light fades to black. RALPHIE sits. A coyote howls in the distance. RALPH reaches back and pulls forth a BB gun.*) Know what this is, pardner?

RALPHIE. A legendary official Red Ryder 200-Shot Carbine Action Range Model Air Rifle with a compass and this thing which tells time built right into the stock.

(*Now the dialogue is rapid fire, with no pauses between speakers. It is from the new Red Ryder ad in RALPHIE's hand.*)

RALPH. Yes sir. A real Western saddle gun with a genuine Western Carbine Ring.

RALPHIE. Sixteen-inch leather saddle thong knotted to the ring.

RALPH. So you can tie it to yer saddle or hang it on yer wall.

RALPHIE. Lightning loader—pour in 200 shots in just five seconds.

RALPH. Carbine-style forepiece and cocking lever.

RALPHIE. Red Ryder's picture, signature and portrait of his horse, "Thunder," branded right into the pistol grip stock.

RALPH. Special adjustable cloverleaf rear sight.

RALPHIE. The legendary official Red Ryder 200-Shot Carbine Action Range Model Air Rifle...

RALPH. ... with a compass...

RALPHIE. ... and this thing which tells time...

RALPH. ... built right into the stock. Ya gonna get this cowboy carbine, saddle pard?

RALPHIE. No. They're afraid I'll shoot my eye out.

RALPH. So ya just gonna give up? (*RALPHIE nods.*) Why, I'm plumb ashamed of ya, pard. (*RALPHIE looks surprised and sorrowful.*) Y'ever see Red Ryder give up? (*RALPHIE shakes his head.*) Or Roy or Gene or Hoppy? (*The kicker:*) Or the Lone Ranger? (*RALPHIE, stunned, shakes his head.*) 'Course not! Whether yer fightin' the Cavendish gang or stoppin' a runaway stagecoach single-handed, y'never give up. That's what bein' a cowboy is all about! *

(*Suddenly, he is on his feet. RALPHIE pops to his feet, too. They cross just D of the fence line, where a special fades up. Stirring music fades in under.*)

RALPH. Why, a cowboy never gives up, pard! Even when they've poisoned the water hole, blown up the railroad trestle and shot yer horse, ya never give up! No sir! Ya just push yer hat back, square up yer shoulders, look 'em