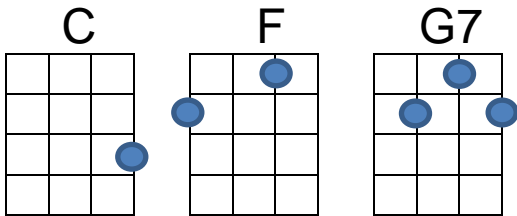


## Coward of the County

Written by: Roger Bowling and Billy Ed Wheeler - 1979

Recorded by: Kenny Rogers - 1979



(C) Everyone considered him, the (F) coward of the (C) county,  
He never stood one single time, to prove the county (G7) wrong,  
(C) His mama named him Tommy, but (F) folks just called him (C) yellow,  
Something always told me, they were (G7) reading Tommy (C) wrong.

(C) He was only ten years old, when (F) his daddy died in (C) prison,  
I looked after Tommy cause he was my brother's (G7) son,  
(C) I still recall the final words, my (F) brother said to (C) Tommy,  
Son my life is over, but (G7) yours is just (C) begun.

(C) Promise me son not to (F) do the things I've (C) done,  
(F) Walk away from (C) trouble if you (G7) can,  
(C) Now it don't mean you're weak, if you (F) turn the other (C) cheek,  
I hope you're old (F) enough to under(G7)stand,  
(F) Son, you don't have to (G7) fight to be a (C) man.

(C) There's someone for everyone, and (F) Tommy's love was (C) Becky,  
In her arms he didn't have to prove he was a (G7) man,  
(C) One day while he was working, the (F) Gatlin boys came (C) calling,  
They took turns at Becky, (G7) there were three of (C) them.

(C) Tommy opened up the door, and (F) saw his Becky (C) crying,  
The torn dress, the shattered look, was more than he could (G7) stand,  
(C) He reached above the fireplace, and (F) took down his daddy's (C) picture,  
As his tears fell on his daddy's face, he (G7) heard these words (C) again.

*Coward of the County continued:*

(C) Promise me son not to (F) do the things I've (C) done,  
(F) Walk away from (C) trouble if you (G7) can,  
(C) Now it don't mean you're weak, if you (F) turn the other (C) cheek,  
I hope you're old (F) enough to under(G7)stand,  
(F) Son, you don't have to (G7) fight to be a (C) man.

(C) The Gatlin boys just laughed at him, when he (F) walked into the (C) barroom,  
One of them got up and hit him halfway cross the (G7) floor,  
(C) When Tommy turned around they said, "Hey (F) look ole Yellow's (C) leaving",  
But you could aheard a pin drop, when (G7) Tommy stopped and locked the (C) door.

(C) Twenty years of crawling, was (F) bottled up inside (C) him,  
He wasn't holding nothing back, he let 'em have it (G7) all,  
(C) When Tommy left the barroom, not a (F) Gatlin boy was (C) standing,  
He said this one's for Becky, as he (G7) watched the last one (C) fall.  
And I heard him say:

(C) I promised you Dad, not to (F) do the things you've (C) done,  
I'll (F) walk away from (C) trouble when I (G7) can,  
Now (C) please don't think I'm weak, I couldn't (F) turn the other (C) cheek,  
And Papa I sure hope you under(G7)stand,  
(F) Sometimes you gotta (G7) fight when you're a (C) man,  
Everyone considered him, (Slower) the (F) coward of the (C) county.