Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Zachary Scott. Then, answer questions about it.

Zachary Scott
1914–1965

According to one of his fans, actor and Texas native Zachary Scott had an air of sophistication that made him look like he had "been born in a dinner jacket." Best known for portraying scoundrels, playboys, and villains, Scott was one of Texas's most recognizable faces during Hollywood's golden age.

Born in Austin in 1914, Scott studied acting at The University of Texas. He worked in regional theaters in England before landing on the stage in New York. In 1944, when Hollywood discovered his aristocratic good looks, he embarked upon a motion picture career that included more than thirty films.

Scott's range as an actor was impressive. In 1945, the year he portrayed Joan Crawford's suave but shady husband in *Mildred Pierce*, he also appeared as a poor Texas sharecropper in director Jean Renoir's masterpiece *The Southerner*.

But Scott chafed under the Hollywood studio system, which typecast him as a villain. He ultimately moved away from film roles and returned to the stage, enjoying considerable success.

In 1965, Scott was diagnosed with cancer and returned to his family's home in Austin, where he died later that year.

Today, ZACH Theater, a thriving community theatre named for Zachary Scott, stands in downtown Austin, cultivating Texas's next generation of dramatic talent. Scott's memory is kept alive in Hollywood as well, where his name graces a star on the renowned Walk of Fame.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Zachary Scott. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. What type of roles is Texan actor Zachary Scott best known for playing?

2. Why did Scott decide to leave Hollywood and return to stage acting?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Making Inferences.** What is typecasting? Why might Scott have been unhappy with the roles he was assigned in this system?