

# National Geographic Channel Prehistoric Predators Episode

by John W. Hoganson and Jeff J. Person



Geological Survey paleontologists John Hoganson and Jeff Person were part of one of the latest National Geographic channel Prehistoric Predators episodes. Andrea Anderson, with Creative Differences, a Hollywood, California production company, contacted one of us (JWH) last year to explore the possibility of filming a fossil excavation in North Dakota for their new production for the National Geographic channel Prehistoric Predators series. They were focusing on fossils from the Oligocene Brule Formation, particularly the giant pig-like animal, *Archaeotherium*, and the wolf-like predator *Hyaenodon*. They were also going to film in the South Dakota badlands.



We have been doing research to determine the predator that caused tooth-puncture damage to a skull of *Dinictis*, a saber-tooth cat-like carnivore that was collected from the Brule Formation in North Dakota and is in the State Fossil Collection. We needed to travel to the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology to compare this *Dinictis* skull to fossils in their collection. In doing so we determined that the damage to our *Dinictis* skull was caused by *Hyaenodon*. This finding became part of the Prehistoric Predators episode called "Razor Jaws" referring to the sharp, flesh-tearing teeth of *Hyaenodon*. The episode shows how we arrived at the conclusion that *Hyaenodon* was the predator by showing us making skull measurements and comparing *Hyaenodon* teeth to the tooth punctures in the *Dinictis* skull. The episode aired in October 2009.

