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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THE UNDERMINER
THE BEST FRIEND WHO CASUALLY DESTROYS YOUR LIFE
A NOVEL
MIKE ALBO
WITH VIRGINIA HEFFERNAN

"I started laughing with the first sentence, didn't stop until the last sentence and then, randomly, for the next week, the slightest reminder of one of the zillion funny lines in *The Underminer* would set me off again."

—Malcolm Gladwell, author of *The Tipping Point* and *Blink*

"Hilarious and sick, *The Underminer* is one of those books that makes you insane with rage and laughter. I loved it more than I hate people like this." —Margaret Cho

"It's like Raid for the roaches of the soul"—Ron Rosenbaum, *New York Observer* columnist and author of *The Secret Parts of Fortune*

"The ultimate satirist of the downtown New York social landscape...The Underminer displays an astonishing capacity for condescension." —*New York Times*

Who is The Underminer? He is one of your closest friends, of course! This polite, seemingly harmless, passive aggressive "friend" knows everything about you and he'll never let you forget it. After you talk to the Underminer, you feel sick and depressed but don't know why. The Underminer's talent lies in his ability to lightly and painlessly dismantles the very core of your persona. He remembers your pegged jeans, your fluffy haircuts, and somehow finds your internet dating profile. "There's nothing wrong with Internet dating," he reassures you, "It's just good practice for people who haven't learned how to talk like normal in normal situations." Writer and performer Mike Albo knows the Underminer too. In fact he has been performing this character for ten years at shows in cities all over the

world. Now, with the help of Virginia Heffernan, they have unleashed this hilarious and evil creature onto the printed page in their novel **THE UNDERMINER: The Best Friend Who Casually Destroys Your Life** (Bloomsbury; February 15, 2005; 1-58234-484-1; \$21.95; 176 pages)

Set in the not-too-distant 90s, **THE UNDERMINER** follows the Underminer and a nameless victim (maybe you?), from college up until their mid-thirties. We watch as the poor victim wanders from job to job and relationship to relationship, desperately looking for answers. The Underminer is always there to give the victim updates on his fabulous successes and effortless advances in love and career.

It's not hard to see how life with the Underminer is a losing battle...

Victim is wondering what to do with his Folk & Myth degree. Takes a gallery internship alongside teenagers.

Underminer gets offered a job, straight out of college, writing for some show called "The Simpsons." Hangs out with rockstars in his spare time.

Victim: 0

Underminer: 1

Underminer scores 2 million dollar book deal for a children's book written on a whim. "You know that children's book that I wrote really fast for no reason. It's a Funny Sunny Day? Well, apparently, who knew, it's selling like crazy and can barely stay on the shelves."

Also makes sure to mention that your body looks good, "It's a normal body. People get too hung up on thinness. You're more like a typical American."

Victim: 0

Underminer: 2

Underminer's celebrating the launch of a new fashion magazine and his new handbag line. "I'm so proud of Karen, the Editor in Chief, who is weirdly a close friend of mine from Collage class at Parsons. She helped me with my business plan for my handbag line that I had, which I loved but sold the rights to just because I wanted to do more creative work."

Victim is passing out hors d'oeuvres at the party.

"Do you...need to pass around those spinach quiches?...Oh—I think your catering coordinator is waving for you to come over there. I hope he's not mad at you."

Victim: 0

Underminer: 3

Underminer is photographed for Vanity Fair. "Another year-end wrap up feature from the prominent portrait artist of our time Anne Liebowitz, this year I think Leo is 'The Raconteur,' Dame Judi Dench is 'The Maven' and I guess I am 'The Virtuoso'"

Victim is working at Kids Vogue. "How great. Wow. I thought that was being discontinued. No, sorry. I just heard."

Victim: 0
Underminer: 4

Underminer: bought a brownstone *“we take the top two floors and we rent out the first floor and that actually pays for the whole thing. And it gives us enough money left over for us to buy property in the North Fork, which we rent out in the winter, and that gives us enough money to buy that incredible place in Costa Rica...”*

Victim: living in a basement apartment. *“The one with the sort of deep crack in the foundation? Wow it looks so intimidating from here with the charred facade and scratched wooden doorway. I read in Time Out that this whole area is right on the brink of becoming more of a community and not a nest of prostitution and crystal meth labs.”*

Victim: 0
Underminer: 5

This book is for anyone who has ever felt the pain of realizing that playing-by-the-rules means nothing when we live in a world where some nincompoop is suddenly rich and famous for being a model/dj, or for creating a show where people eat bugs or, for doing nothing at all.

Mike Albo is a writer and performer who has performed his comedic monologues all over the country and abroad, in cities including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Toronto, and London. His first novel, *Hornito*, was published in 2000.

Virginia Heffernan, who co-writes with Albo for his performances, is a television critic for the *New York Times*.

The Underminer has appeared twice in the *NY Observer*, and on a segment of NPR's "This American Life."

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