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Ruthenium/TFA-catalyzed regioselective C-3-alkylation of indoles with terminal alkynes in water: Efficient and unprecedented access to 3-(1methyl-alkyl)-1*H*-indoles

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Experimental procedures, characterization data and copies of the ¹H and ¹³C{¹H} NMR spectra of all compounds synthesized.

General methods: Infrared spectra were recorded on a Perkin-Elmer 1720-XFT spectrometer. NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker DPX-300 instrument at 300 MHz (¹H), 282.4 MHz (¹⁹F) or 75.4 MHz (¹³C) using SiMe₄ or CFCl₃ as standards. DEPT experiments have been carried out for all the compounds reported. GC/MS measurements were performed on a Agilent 6890N equipment coupled to a 5973 mass detector (70eV electron impact ionization) using a HP-1MS column. All reagents were obtained from commercial suppliers and used without any further purification, with the exception of complex [{RuCl(μ -Cl)(η^3 : η^3 -C₁₀H₁₆)}₂],¹ which was prepared by following the methods reported in the literature.

General procedure for the catalytic alkylation of indoles with terminal alkynes: The corresponding indole derivative (1 mmol), the appropriate terminal alkyne (2.5 mmol) and water (1 cm³) were introduced into a sealed tube under nitrogen atmosphere. [{RuCl(μ -Cl)(η^3 : η^3 -C₁₀H₁₆)}₂] (0.006 g, 0.01 mmol; 2 mol% of Ru) and TFA (0.037 cm³, 0.5 mmol) were then added at room temperature, and the resulting suspension heated at 100 °C for 24 h. After removal of volatiles under vacuum, the residue was purified by column chromatography (silica gel) using a mixture of EtOAc/hexanes (1:50) as eluent. Characterization data of the resulting compounds **1a-r** are as follows:



3-(1-Methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (1a):² Yield: 84% (0.169 g);** Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1010, 1093, 1226, 1337, 1375, 1418, 1456, 1618, 2870, 2926, 2956, 3056, 3417 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.92 (t, 3H, J = 6.6 Hz), 1.35 (m, 4H),

1.39 (d, 3H, J = 7.0 Hz), 1.64 (m, 1H), 1.84 (m, 1H), 3.07 (m, 1H), 6.98 (d, 1H, J = 2.2 Hz), 7.12-7.25 (m, 2H), 7.38 (d, 1H, J = 7.9 Hz), 7.70 (d, 1H, J = 7.9 Hz), 7.90 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.5, 22.9, 30.0, 30.8, 37.4, 111.1, 118.9, 119.4, 119.8, 121.7, 122.9, 127.0, 136.5 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 201 (M⁺, 15), 144 (100), 115 (10).



3-(1-Methylbutyl)-1*H***-indole (1b):**³ Yield: 79% (0.148 g); Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): *v* 1010, 1095, 1222, 1245, 1338, 1373, 1418, 1455, 1618, 2869, 2927, 2956, 3056, 3417 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.95 (t, 3H, *J* = 7.4 Hz), 1.31-1.56 (m, 2H), 1.39 (d,

3H, J = 6.8 Hz), 1.62 (m, 1H), 1.84 (m, 1H), 3.10 (m, 1H), 6.97 (d, 1H, J = 2.1 Hz),

7.12-7.25 (m, 2H), 7.37 (d, 1H, J = 8.1 Hz), 7.71 (d, 1H, J = 8.3 Hz), 7.88 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.3, 20.8, 21.4, 30.6, 40.0, 111.1, 118.9, 119.5, 119.8, 121.7, 122.9, 127.0, 136.5 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 187 (M⁺, 20), 144 (100), 115 (10).



3-(1-Methylheptyl)-1*H***-indole (1c):²** Yield: 76% (0.174 g); Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1010, 1094, 1227, 1244, 1338, 1376, 1418, 1456, 1486, 1618, 2854, 2924, 2955, 3056, 3418 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.92 (t, 3H, J

= 6.6 Hz), 1.33 (br, 8H), 1.40 (d, 3H, J = 7.2 Hz), 1.67 (m, 1H), 1.85 (m, 1H), 3.08 (m, 1H), 6.95 (s, 1H), 7.13-7.28 (m, 2H), 7.38 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.70 (d, 1H, J = 7.9 Hz), 7.88 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.4, 22.7, 27.7, 29.5, 30.9, 31.9, 37.7, 111.1, 118.9, 119.5, 119.8, 121.7, 122.9, 127.0, 136.5 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 229 (M⁺, 15), 144 (100), 115 (10).



3-(1-Methylnonyl)-1*H***-indole (1d):** Yield: 57% (0.147 g); Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1010, 1093, 1224, 1337, 1375, 1418, 1456, 1617, 2853, 2924, 2955, 3056, 3417 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ

0.93 (t, 3H, J = 6.6 Hz), 1.30 (br, 12H), 1.40 (d, 3H, J = 7.0 Hz), 1.64 (m, 1H), 1.82 (m, 1H), 3.07 (m, 1H), 6.97 (s, 1H), 7.13-7.29 (m, 2H), 7.38 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.71 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.87 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.5, 22.7, 27.8, 29.4, 29.7, 29.9, 30.9, 31.9, 37.7, 111.1, 118.9, 119.5, 119.8, 121.7, 122.9, 127.0, 136.5 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 257 (M⁺, 20), 144 (100), 115 (10).



3-(1,3-Dimethylbutyl)-1*H***-indole (1e):** Yield: 64% (0.128 g); Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): *v* 1010, 1092, 1222, 1247, 1337, 1365, 1383, 1418, 1455, 1618, 2867, 2925, 2953, 3056, 3418 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.96 (m, 6H), 1.38 (d, 3H, *J* = 6.8 Hz),

1.50 (m, 1H), 1.63-1.80 (m, 2H), 3.16 (m, 1H), 6.97 (s, 1H), 7.13-7.27 (m, 2H), 7.38 (d, 1H, J = 8.0 Hz), 7.71 (d, 1H, J = 8.0 Hz), 7.87 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 21.9, 22.7, 23.0, 25.8, 28.5, 47.2, 111.2, 119.0, 119.4, 119.8, 121.8, 123.1, 127.1, 136.6 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 201 (M⁺, 20), 144 (100), 115 (20).



3-(1-Cyclohexylethyl)-1*H***-indole (1f):** Yield: 69% (0.157 g); Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1011, 1095, 1224, 1261, 1337, 1418, 1455, 1618, 2850, 2922, 3054, 3417 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 1.19 (m, 2H), 1.41 (d, 3H, J = 7.0 Hz), 1.53-1.66 (m,

5H), 1.82-1.91 (m, 4H), 3.13 (m, 1H), 6.98 (s, 1H), 7.14-7.28 (m, 2H), 7.38 (d, 1H, J = 7.9 Hz), 7.73 (d, 1H, J = 7.9 Hz), 7.88 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 21.9, 25.2, 30.0, 32.8, 33.0, 38.1, 44.5, 111.2, 118.9, 119.5, 119.8, 121.7, 123.1, 126.9, 136.5 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 227 (M⁺, 10), 144 (100), 115 (20).



3-(2-Cyclopentyl-1-methylethyl)-1*H***-indole (1g):** Yield: 83% (0.188 g); Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1010, 1092, 1223, 1337, 1374, 1419, 1457, 1617, 2865, 2951, 3055, 3415 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.97-1.31 (m, 4H), 1.36 (d, 3H, J = 7.0 Hz),

1.67-1.89 (m, 7H), 2.92 (m, 1H), 6.96 (s, 1H), 7.11-7.28 (m, 2H), 7.38 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.68 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.92 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 18.0, 26.7, 26.8, 30.4, 31.5, 36.5, 43.7, 111.0, 118.9, 119.7, 120.7, 121.6, 121.7, 127.4, 136.3 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 227 (M⁺, 10), 144 (100), 115 (20).



3-(2-Cyclohexyl-1-methylethyl)-1*H***-indole (1h):** Yield: 68% (0.164 g); Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1010, 1093, 1225, 1337, 1372, 1417, 1455, 1619, 2848, 2920, 3054, 3417 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 1.00 (m, 3H), 1.25 (m, 3H), 1.36 (d, 3H, J =

7.0 Hz), 1.48 (m, 1H), 1.69-1.80 (m, 6H), 3.20 (m, 1H), 6.95 (s, 1H), 7.11-7.26 (m, 2H), 7.36 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.69 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz), 7.85 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 21.8, 26.3, 26.7, 27.6, 33.4, 33.8, 35.2, 45.6, 111.1, 118.9, 119.3, 119.7, 121.7, 123.1, 126.8, 136.5 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 241 (M⁺, 10), 144 (100), 115 (15).



3-(1-Methyl-4-phenylbutyl)-1*H***-indole (1i):** Yield: 60% (0.158 g); Brown oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): *v* 1010, 1094, 1226, 1259, 1337, 1373, 1418, 1455, 1495, 1602, 2855, 2927, 3025, 3058, 3083, 3420 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): *δ* 1.39 (d,

3H, J = 7.3 Hz), 1.61-1.93 (m, 4H), 2.65 (t, 2H, J = 7.2 Hz), 3.11 (m, 1H), 6.94 (d, 1H, J = 1.8 Hz), 7.11-7.31 (m, 7H), 7.38 (d, 1H, J = 8.1 Hz), 7.66 (d, 1H, J = 7.9 Hz), 7.89 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 21.5, 29.5, 30.8, 36.1, 37.2, 111.1, 119.0,

119.4, 119.9, 121.8, 122.5, 125.6, 126.9, 128.2, 128.4, 136.5, 142.8 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): *m/z* 263 (M⁺, 20), 144 (100), 115 (10), 91 (10).



5-Methyl-3-(1-methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (1j):** Yield: 82% (0.176 g); Brown oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1095, 1184, 1226, 1329, 1376, 1420, 1459, 1481, 1581, 2856, 2924, 2956, 3015, 3412 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.94 (t, 3H, J = 7.2

Hz), 1.37-1.42 (m, 7H), 1.67 (m, 1H), 1.85 (m, 1H), 2.54 (s, 3H), 3.06 (m, 1H), 6.94 (d, 1H, J = 2.1 Hz), 7.07 (dd, 1H, J = 8.3 and 1.3 Hz), 7.28 (d, 1H, J = 8.3 Hz), 7.50 (s, 1H), 7.76 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.2, 21.5, 21.6, 22.9, 30.0, 30.8, 37.4, 110.8, 119.1, 120.0, 122.4, 123.3, 127.2, 128.1, 134.9 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 215 (M⁺, 20), 158 (100), 142 (15), 115 (5).



5-Methoxy-3-(1-methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (1k):** Yield: 79% (0.183 g); Brown oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): *v* 1032, 1097, 1146, 1174, 1215, 1284, 1375, 1439, 1455, 1483, 1581, 1623, 2857, 2927, 2955, 3418 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): *δ*

0.90 (t, 3H, J = 5.8 Hz), 1.33 (m, 4H), 1.35 (d, 3H, J = 6.9 Hz), 1.63 (m, 1H), 1.79 (m, 1H), 2.99 (m, 1H), 3.88 (s, 3H), 6.86 (dd, 1H, J = 8.8 and 2.5 Hz), 6.93 (d, 1H, J = 2.1 Hz), 7.11 (d, 1H, J = 2.5 Hz), 7.24 (d, 1H, J = 8.8 Hz), 7.81 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.3, 22.8, 29.9, 30.6, 37.2, 55.9, 101.5, 111.6, 120.7, 122.5, 127.3, 131.6, 153.5 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 231 (M⁺, 25), 174 (100), 158 (10), 130 (10).



5-Fluoro-3-(1-methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (11):** Yield: 69% (0.151 g); Brown oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): *ν* 935, 1094, 1141, 1174, 1221, 1274, 1376, 1454, 1483, 1579, 1627, 2870, 2927, 2957, 3429, 3474 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.92 (t,

3H, J = 7.0 Hz), 1.32 (m, 4H), 1.36 (d, 3H, J = 6.8 Hz), 1.58 (m, 1H), 1.75 (m, 1H), 2.99 (m, 1H), 6.93-7.02 (m, 2H), 7.25-7.34 (m, 2H), 7.89 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.3, 22.9, 29.9, 30.8, 37.3, 104.3 (d, J = 23.3 Hz), 110.0 (d, J = 26.5 Hz), 111.6 (d, J = 10.1 Hz), 121.7, 123.1 (d, J = 4.7 Hz), 127.3 (d, J = 9.5 Hz), 133.0, 157.5 (d, J = 233.6 Hz) ppm; ¹⁹F{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ -125.2 (s) ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 219 (M⁺, 20), 162 (100), 133 (10), 115 (5).



5-Chloro-3-(1-methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (1m):** Yield: 67% (0.158 g); Yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): *v* 1090, 1147, 1170, 1222, 1264, 1371, 1450, 1482, 1573, 1625, 2876, 2917, 2952, 3414 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.90 (t, 3H, *J* = 7.1

Hz), 1.30 (m, 4H), 1.34 (d, 3H, J = 6.9 Hz), 1.58 (m, 1H), 1.77 (m, 1H), 2.97 (m, 1H), 6.98 (d, 1H, J = 1.6 Hz), 7.14 (dd, 1H, J = 7.4 and 1.6 Hz), 7.27 (d, 1H, J = 2.5 Hz), 7.62 (d, 1H, J = 1.4 Hz), 7.93 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.4, 22.8, 29.9, 30.7, 37.3, 112.0, 118.9, 121.3, 122.0, 122.7, 124.7, 128.0, 134.8 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 235 (M⁺, 20), 178 (100), 162 (15), 143 (50), 115 (25).



5-Bromo-3-(1-methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (1n):** Yield: 57% (0.160 g); Brown oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1088, 1222, 1259, 1370, 1419, 1456, 1563, 1617, 2845, 2940, 2959, 3399 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.90 (t, 3H, J = 6.9 Hz), 1.30 (m, 4H),

1.32 (d, 3H, J = 6.7 Hz), 1.61 (m, 1H), 1.76 (m, 1H), 2.96 (m, 1H), 6.95 (d, 1H, J = 1.7 Hz), 7.20-7.26 (m, 2H), 7.76 (s, 1H), 7.98 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 13.6, 20.9, 22.3, 29.4, 30.2, 36.8, 111.8, 112.0, 120.6, 121.5, 122.2, 124.0, 128.2, 134.6 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 281 (M⁺, 10), 222 (100), 195 (5), 143 (90), 115 (60).



5-Iodo-3-(1-methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (10):** Yield: 82% (0.268 g); Brown oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): *v* 1091, 1223, 1261, 1375, 1414, 1456, 1558, 1615, 2855, 2924, 2956, 3424 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.89 (t, 3H, *J* = 6.8 Hz), 1.28 (m, 4H),

1.33 (d, 3H, J = 7.1 Hz), 1.63 (m, 1H), 1.76 (m, 1H), 2.97 (m, 1H), 6.93 (s, 1H), 7.14 (d, 1H, J = 8.2 Hz), 7.43 (d, 1H, J = 8.2 Hz), 7.93 (br, 1H), 7.99 (s, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.5, 22.8, 29.9, 30.6, 37.3, 82.5, 113.1, 120.7, 122.4, 128.3, 129.6, 130.0, 135.5 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 327 (M⁺, 30), 270 (100), 143 (30), 115 (10).



3-(1-Methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole-5-carboxylic** acid methyl ester (1p): Yield: 87% (0.225 g); Yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 974, 1046, 1106, 1246, 1291, 1310, 1373, 1435, 1580, 1616, 1693, 2857, 2927, 2956, 3348 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.88 (br, 3H), 1.28-1.37 (m, 7H), 1.66 (m, 1H), 1.77 (m, 1H), 3.07 (m, 1H), 3.96 (s, 3H), 7.02 (s, 1H), 7.36 (d, 1H, *J* = 8.4 Hz), 7.90 (d, 1H, *J* = 8.4 Hz), 8.26 (br, 1H), 8.44 (s, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.6, 22.8, 29.9, 30.7, 37.4, 51.8, 110.7, 121.1, 122.4, 123.2, 124.4, 126.6, 139.1, 168.4 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): *m/z* 259 (M⁺, 30), 228 (10), 202 (100), 170 (15), 143 (25), 115 (10).



7-Methyl-3-(1-methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (1q):** Yield: 60% (0.129 g); Pale yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1016, 1063, 1113, 1260, 1343, 1377, 1435, 1455, 1494, 1611, 1687, 2857, 2927, 2956, 3050, 3419 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.92 (t, 3H, J = 6.8

Hz), 1.36 (m, 4H), 1.40 (d, 3H, J = 7.0 Hz), 1.65 (m, 1H), 1.84 (m, 1H), 2.52 (s, 3H), 3.07 (m, 1H), 6.98 (s, 1H), 7.03-7.10 (m, 2H), 7.56 (d, 1H, J = 7.9 Hz), 7.82 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 16.6, 21.5, 22.9, 30.0, 31.0, 37.4, 117.2, 119.2, 119.6, 120.2, 122.3, 123.5, 126.5, 136.1 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 215 (M⁺, 20), 158 (100), 140 (20), 115 (5).



6-Chloro-3-(1-methylpentyl)-1*H***-indole (1r):** Yield: 65% (0.153 g); Yellow oil; IR (neat, cm⁻¹): v 1062, 1091, 1224, 1333, 1375, 1398, 1456, 1544, 1617, 2857, 2927, 2956, 3427 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (CDCl₃): δ 0.89 (t, 3H, J = 6.6 Hz),

1.32 (m, 4H), 1.35 (d, 3H, J = 6.8 Hz), 1.59 (m, 1H), 1.79 (m, 1H), 3.01 (m, 1H), 6.95 (d, 1H, J = 2.2 Hz), 7.08 (dd, 1H, J = 8.5 and 1.3 Hz), 7.35 (d, 1H, J = 1.3 Hz), 7.57 (d, 1H, J = 8.5 Hz), 7.91 (br, 1H) ppm; ¹³C{¹H} NMR (CDCl₃): δ 14.1, 21.4, 22.8, 29.9, 30.7, 37.4, 111.0, 119.7, 120.2, 120.5, 123.1, 125.6, 127.7, 136.8 ppm; MS (EI, 70eV): m/z 235 (M⁺, 10), 178 (100), 163 (10), 143 (40), 115 (10).

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