

**Organophosphorus-Catalyzed Deoxygenation of Sulfonyl Chlorides: Electrophilic (Fluoroalkyl)sulfenylation by  $P^{III}/P^V=O$  Redox Cycling**

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## 1. General methods

All reactions were carried out using dry glassware and standard Schlenk techniques (when applicable) unless otherwise noted. All reagents were purchased from commercial vendors (Sigma-Aldrich, Alfa Aesar, Acros, TCI, Combi-Blocks, A.K Scientific, or Oakwood Chemical) and used as received unless otherwise noted. All solvents were purified and collected under argon using a Glass Contour Solvent Purification System. Column chromatography was performed using 230-400 mesh silica gel (Silicycle) as the stationary phase unless otherwise noted.  $^1\text{H}$ ,  $^{13}\text{C}$ ,  $^{19}\text{F}$ , and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra were recorded with Bruker AVANCE-400 and AVANCE DRX 600 spectrometer and processed using MestReNova software.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR chemical shifts are given in ppm with respect to the residual  $\text{CHCl}_3$  peak ( $\delta$  7.26 ppm),  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  peak ( $\delta$  5.32 ppm), residual DMSO ( $\delta$  2.50 ppm),  $^{13}\text{C}\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR chemical shifts are given in ppm with respect to  $\text{CDCl}_3$  ( $\delta$  77.16 ppm),  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$  peak ( $\delta$  53.84 ppm),  $\text{DMSO-}d_6$  ( $\delta$  39.52 ppm), and  $^{31}\text{P}$  chemical shifts are given in ppm with respect to 85%  $\text{H}_3\text{PO}_4$  ( $\delta$  0.0 ppm) as an external reference. Coupling constants are reported as *J*-values in Hz. ESI mass spectra were obtained from the Mass Spectrometry Laboratory at the School of Chemical Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as well as at the MIT department of chemistry instrumentation on a JEOL AccuTOF-DART (JMS-T100LP, ionSense DART source).

## 2. Preparation of phosphorus catalysts

All phosphetanes were prepared according to: (a) S. E. Cremer, R. J. Chorvat, *J. Org. Chem.* **1967**, *32*, 4066. (b) T. V. Nykaza, T. S. Harrison, A. Ghosh, R. A. Putnik, A. T. Radosevich, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2017**, *139*, 6839.

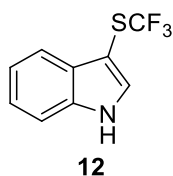
## 3. General procedures for catalytic (fluoroalkyl)sulfenylation reactions

### General Procedure I: Trifluoromethylthiolation or perfluoroalkylthiolation of indoles

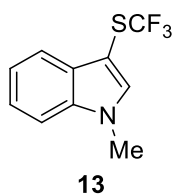
To a dry 40 mL vial equipped with Teflon cap and a stir bar was added 0.5 mmol of indole substrate, 15-25 mol% of phosphetane oxide precatalyst **2**·[O] and R<sub>f</sub>SO<sub>2</sub>Cl (1.8 equiv) if solid. The reaction vial was sealed and following evacuation and introduction of nitrogen on a Schlenk line, dry 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M or 0.25 M) was added *via* syringe from a SureSeal bottle. Phenylsilane (2 equiv) and RSO<sub>2</sub>Cl (1.8 equiv) if liquid were added and the sealed reaction vial was placed in a heating block pre-heated to 40 °C. The reaction was stirred (~600 rpm) until completion as indicated by TLC. Following completion, the reaction mixture was cooled to RT, quenched with saturated aqueous NH<sub>4</sub>F solution (25 mL) and stirred for 1 h. The aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate (3x25 mL) and the combined organic layer was dried over anhydrous MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated under reduced pressure. Column chromatography on silica gel subsequently afforded the desired sulfenylated products.

### General Procedure II: Sulfenylation of indoles

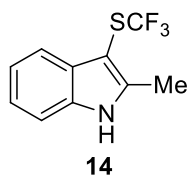
To a dry 40 mL vial equipped with Teflon cap and a stir bar was added 0.5 mmol of indole substrate, 20 mol% of phosphetane oxide precatalyst **2**·[O] and RSO<sub>2</sub>Cl (1.8 equiv) if solid. The reaction vial was sealed and following evacuation and introduction of nitrogen on a Schlenk line, dry 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M) was added *via* syringe from a SureSeal bottle. Phenylsilane (2 equiv) and RSO<sub>2</sub>Cl (1.8 equiv) if liquid were added and the sealed reaction vial was placed in a heating block pre-heated to 40 °C. The reaction was stirred (~600 rpm) until completion as indicated by TLC. Following completion, the reaction mixture was cooled to RT, quenched with saturated aqueous NH<sub>4</sub>F solution (25 mL) and stirred for 1 h. The aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate (3x25 mL) and the combined organic layer was dried over anhydrous MgSO<sub>4</sub> and concentrated under reduced pressure. Column chromatography on silica gel subsequently afforded the desired sulfenylated products.



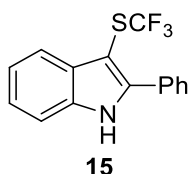
**3-((Trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 12.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 98% (107 mg). Colorless oil; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.46 (bs, 1H), 7.87–7.82 (m, 1H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 7.44–7.41 (m, 1H), 7.35–7.30 (m, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 136.1, 133.0, 129.6 (q, *J* = 310.0 Hz), 129.6, 123.6, 121.8, 119.5, 111.8, 95.7 (q, *J* = 2.3 Hz); <sup>19</sup>F NMR (565 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ -44.52. HRMS calculated for [C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>6</sub>F<sub>3</sub>NS]<sup>+</sup> 217.0173, found 217.0164.



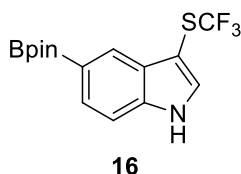
**1-Methyl-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 13.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 85% (99 mg). White solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.81 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.41 – 7.36 (m, 2H), 7.36 – 7.27 (m, 2H), 3.84 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 137.4, 137.1, 130.4, 129.6 (q, *J* = 311.3 Hz), 123.1, 121.4, 119.5, 110.0, 93.2, 33.3; <sup>19</sup>F NMR (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ -44.88. HRMS calculated for [C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>8</sub>F<sub>3</sub>NS]<sup>+</sup> 231.0329, found 231.0329.



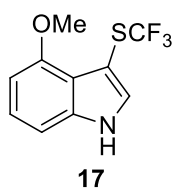
**2-Methyl-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 14.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 70% (82 mg). Brown solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.29 (bs, 1H), 7.74–7.70 (m, 1H), 7.34–7.31 (m, 1H), 7.26–7.21 (m, 2H), 2.58 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 143.7, 135.2, 130.7, 129.9 (q, *J* = 310.6 Hz), 122.7, 121.5, 118.8, 110.9, 92.7 (q, *J* = 2.3 Hz), 12.2. <sup>19</sup>F NMR (565 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ -44.43. HRMS calculated for [(C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>8</sub>F<sub>3</sub>NS)+H]<sup>+</sup> 232,0408, found 232.0410.



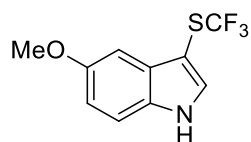
**2-Phenyl-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 15.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 75% (110 mg). Brown solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.58 (s, 1H), 7.88 – 7.86 (m, 1H), 7.79 – 7.77 (m, 2H), 7.55 – 7.49 (m, 3H), 7.45 – 7.43 (m, 1H), 7.35 – 7.30 (m, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  144.5, 135.4, 131.6, 130.8, 129.9 (d,  $J = 311$  Hz), 129.4, 129.0, 128.9, 123.8, 121.9, 119.9, 111.4, 92.6;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -43.41. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{10}\text{F}_3\text{NS}] + \text{H})^+$  294.0564, found 294.0563.



**5-(4,4,5,5-Tetramethyl-1,3,2-dioxaborolan-2-yl)-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 16.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 96% (165 mg). White solid  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.68 (s, 1H), 8.33 (s, 1H), 7.74 (d,  $J = 8.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.51 (d,  $J = 2.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.38 (d,  $J = 8.2$  Hz, 1H), 1.39 (s, 12H).  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  138.2, 133.4, 133.1, 129.6, 129.5 (d,  $J = 309.9$  Hz), 129.2, 127.0, 111.3, 96.3, 83.9, 25.0.  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  -44.51. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{17}\text{BF}_3\text{NO}_2\text{S}] - \text{H})^-$  342.0947, found 342.0943.

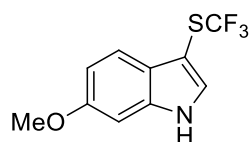


**4-Methoxy-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 17.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 89% (111 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.47 (s, 1H), 7.40 (d,  $J = 2.7$  Hz, 1H), 7.19 (app t,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.02 (d,  $J = 8.2$  Hz, 1H), 6.65 (d,  $J = 7.9$  Hz, 1H), 3.97 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  154.7, 138.0, 132.4, 129.6 (q,  $J = 310.4$  Hz), 124.5, 118.7, 104.9, 102.2, 94.8, 55.6;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -45.49. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_8\text{F}_3\text{NOS}] + \text{H})^+$  247.0279, found 247.0271.



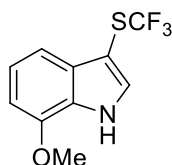
18

**5-Methoxy-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 18.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 88% (109 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.52 (s, 1H), 7.51 (d,  $J = 2.8$ , 1H), 7.33 (d,  $J = 8.8$ , 1H), 7.30 – 7.28 (m, 1H), 6.99 (dd,  $J = 8.8$ , 2.4, 1H), 3.95 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  155.7, 133.4, 131.0, 130.4, 129.6 (q,  $J = 311.3$  Hz), 114.1, 112.7, 100.7, 95.1 (q,  $J = 2.4$  Hz), 56.0;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -44.61. HRMS calculated for  $[(\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_8\text{F}_3\text{NOS}) + \text{H}]^+$  248.0357, found 248.0356.



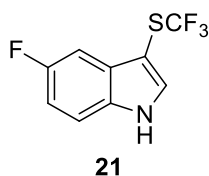
19

**6-Methoxy-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 19.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 82% (102 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.40 (s, 1H), 7.66 (d,  $J = 8.7$  Hz, 1H), 7.43 (d,  $J = 2.7$  Hz, 1H), 6.94 (dd,  $J = 8.7$ , 2.1 Hz, 1H), 6.90 (d,  $J = 1.8$  Hz, 1H), 3.86 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  157.5, 137.0, 132.6 (q,  $J = 311.1$  Hz), 131.7, 128.0, 123.7, 120.2, 111.8, 95.1, 55.9;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -44.62. HRMS calculated for  $[(\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_8\text{F}_3\text{NOS}) + \text{H}]^+$  248.0357, found 248.0357.

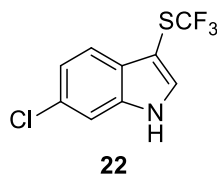


20

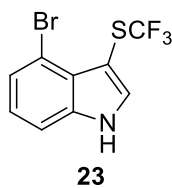
**7-Methoxy-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 20.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 92% (114 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.74 (s, 1H), 7.50 (d,  $J = 2.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.40 (d,  $J = 8.1$  Hz, 1H), 7.20 (app t,  $J = 7.9$  Hz, 1H), 6.73 (d,  $J = 7.7$  Hz, 1H), 3.98 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  146.4, 132.3, 131.0, 129.6 (q,  $J = 311.0$  Hz), 126.8, 122.2, 111.9, 103.2, 96.0, 55.6;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -44.67. HRMS calculated for  $[\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_8\text{F}_3\text{NOS}]^+$  247.0279, found 247.0276.



**5-Fluoro-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 21.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 94% (111 mg). Colorless oil. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.53 (s, 1H), 7.58 (d, *J* = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 7.45 (dd, *J* = 9.1, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 7.36 (dd, *J* = 8.8, 4.2 Hz, 1H), 7.05 (app td, *J* = 9.0, 2.5 Hz, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 159.2 (d, *J* = 238.6 Hz, 1C), 134.5, 132.6, 130.5 (d, *J* = 10.5 Hz, 1C), 129.5 (q, *J* = 311.2 Hz, 1C), 112.8 (d, *J* = 9.6 Hz, 1C), 112.3 (d, *J* = 26.8 Hz, 1C), 104.7 (d, *J* = 24.7 Hz, 1H), 95.9. <sup>19</sup>F NMR (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -44.57 (3F), -121.64 (1F). HRMS calculated for [C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>5</sub>F<sub>4</sub>NS]<sup>+</sup> 235.0079, found 235.0077.

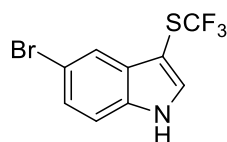


**6-Chloro-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 22.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 99% (125 mg). Colorless oil. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.35 (s, 1H), 7.61 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.40 (d, *J* = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 7.29 (d, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.21 – 7.11 (m, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 136.4, 133.5, 129.6, 129.4 (q, *J* = 311.2 Hz), 128.2, 122.6, 120.5, 111.8, 96.2. <sup>19</sup>F NMR (376 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -44.43. HRMS calculated for [C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>5</sub>ClF<sub>3</sub>NS]<sup>+</sup> 250.9783, found 250.9788.



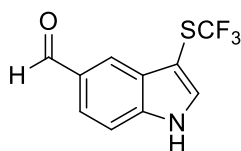
**4-Bromo-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 23.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 98% (146 mg). White solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.62 (bs, 1H), 7.61 (d, *J* = 2.9 Hz, 1H), 7.43 (dd, *J* = 7.6, 0.9 Hz, 1H), 7.39 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 7.12 (app t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (151 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 137.2, 135.4, 129.1 (q, *J* = 309.5 Hz), 126.9, 126.2, 124.4, 114.5, 111.4, 96.6 (q, *J* = 2.5 Hz); <sup>19</sup>F NMR (565 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ -45.43. HRMS calculated for [C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>5</sub>BrF<sub>3</sub>NS]<sup>+</sup> 294.9278, found 294.9283.





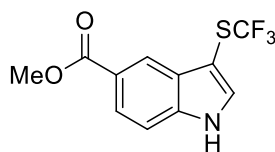
**24**

**5-Bromo-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 24.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 95% (142 mg). Off-white solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.54 (bs, 1H), 7.93 (s, 1H), 7.53 (d,  $J = 2.8$  Hz, 1H), 7.38 (dd,  $J = 8.6, 1.9$  Hz, 1H), 7.29 (d,  $J = 8.6$  Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  134.8, 133.9, 131.3, 129.4 (q,  $J = 311.3$  Hz), 126.7, 122.2, 115.4, 113.3, 95.5;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -44.46. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_9\text{H}_5\text{NSBrF}_3])^+$  294.9278, found 294.9275.



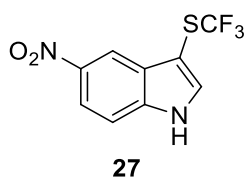
**25**

**3-((Trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole-5-carbaldehyde 25.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 64% (79 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ ):  $\delta$  11.49 (bs, 1H), 10.14 (s, 1H), 8.33 (s, 1H), 8.04 (d,  $J = 2.8$  Hz, 1H), 7.84 (dd,  $J = 8.5, 1.5$  Hz, 1H), 7.73 (d,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (151 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ ):  $\delta$  192.6, 141.1, 137.6, 132.3, 130.5 (q,  $J = 308.9$  Hz), 30.4, 123.9, 123.6, 114.2, 96.0;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (565 MHz, acetone):  $\delta$  -45.69. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_6\text{F}_3\text{NOS}] + \text{H})^+$  246.0200, found 246.0200.

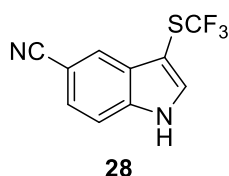


**26**

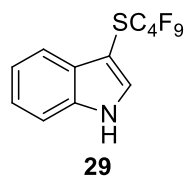
**Methyl 3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole-5-carboxylate 26.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 99% (137 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ )  $\delta$  11.45 (bs, 1H), 8.46 (d,  $J = 1.7$  Hz, 1H), 8.00 (d,  $J = 2.8$  Hz, 1H), 7.94 (dd,  $J = 8.6, 1.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.65 (d,  $J = 8.6$  Hz, 1H), 3.91 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (151 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ )  $\delta$  167.8, 140.3, 137.3, 130.5 (d,  $J = 309.1$  Hz), 130.1, 124.8, 124.5, 121.8, 113.4, 95.3, 52.2;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (565 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ )  $\delta$  -45.77. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_8\text{F}_3\text{NO}_2\text{S}] + \text{H})^+$  276.0306, found 276.0316.



**5-Nitro-3-((trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole 27.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 25 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 58% (76 mg). Orange solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ ):  $\delta$  11.68 (bs, 1H), 8.64 (d,  $J = 2.2$  Hz, 1H), 8.19 (dd,  $J = 9.0, 2.3$  Hz, 1H), 8.16 (s, 1H), 7.79 (d,  $J = 9.0$  Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (151 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ )  $\delta$  144.0, 140.8, 139.3, 130.4 (d,  $J = 308.9$  Hz), 130.0, 119.1, 116.0, 114.2, 96.7;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (565 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ )  $\delta$  -45.64. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_9\text{H}_5\text{F}_3\text{N}_2\text{O}_2\text{S}] + \text{H})^+$  263.0102, found 263.0110.

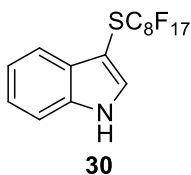


**3-((Trifluoromethyl)thio)-1H-indole-5-carbonitrile 28.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 25 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 52% (63 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (600 MHz, acetone- $d_6$ ):  $\delta$  11.55 (bs, 1H), 8.13 (s, 1H), 8.09 (d,  $J = 2.8$  Hz, 1H), 7.77 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 1H), 7.59 (dd,  $J = 8.5, 1.6$  Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (151 MHz, Acetone- $d_6$ )  $\delta$  138.6, 137.2, 129.5 (d,  $J = 309.0$  Hz), 129.5, 125.7, 123.8, 119.5, 113.9, 104.7, 94.3;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (565 MHz, acetone)  $\delta$  -45.72. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_5\text{F}_3\text{N}_2\text{S}] + \text{H})^+$  243.0204, found 243.0200.

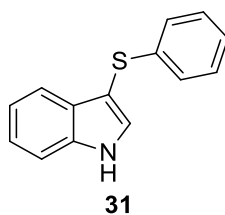


**3-((Perfluorobutyl)thio)-1H-indole 29.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 79% (146 mg). Brown solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.53 (bs, 1H), 7.87 – 7.78 (m, 1H), 7.53 (d,  $J = 2.8$  Hz, 1H), 7.47 – 7.40 (m, 1H), 7.35 – 7.27 (m, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  136.1, 133.7, 130.1, 123.6, 121.9, 119.6, 111.8, 93.8 (4  $^{13}\text{C}$  could not be observed due to C-F coupling);  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -80.94 – -81.99 (m, 3F), -88.29 – -88.37

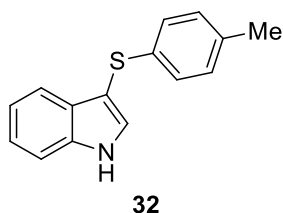
(m, 2F), -120.23 – -124.35 (m, 2F), -125.49 – -125.60 (m, 2F). HRMS calculated for  $[C_{12}H_6F_9NS]^+$  367.0077, found 367.0081.



**3-((Perfluorooctyl)thio)-1H-indole 30.** Prepared according to general procedure I using 15 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.1 M). Yield: 61% (174 mg). Brown solid.  $^1H$  NMR (600 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.56 (s, 1H), 7.82–7.78 (m, 1H), 7.55 (d,  $J = 2.8$  Hz, 1H), 7.46 – 7.42 (m, 1H), 7.30 (ddd,  $J = 6.9, 4.7, 1.6$  Hz, 2H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (101 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  136.2, 133.7, 130.1, 123.6, 121.9, 119.6, 111.8, 93.9 (8  $^{13}C$  could not be observed due to C-F coupling);  $^{19}F$  NMR (376 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  -80.74 – -80.80 (m, 3F), -88.10 (tt,  $J = 14.1, 2.7$  Hz, 2F), -119.29 – -119.40 (m, 2F), -121.21 – -121.24 (m, 2F), -121.87 – -122.93 (m, 4F), -122.73 – -122.75 (m, 2F), -126.08 – -126.23 (m, 2F). HRMS calculated for  $[C_{16}H_6F_{17}NS]^+$  566.9950, found 566.9954.

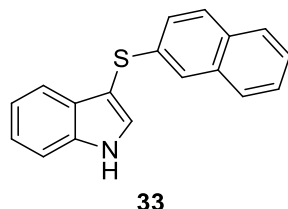


**3-(Phenylthio)-1H-indole 31.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 75% (85 mg). White solid.  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.36 (bs, 1H), 7.58 (d,  $J = 7.9$  Hz, 1H), 7.46 (d,  $J = 2.3$  Hz, 1H), 7.41 (d,  $J = 8.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.23 (m, 1H), 7.08 (m, 6H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (101 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  139.3, 136.6, 130.8, 129.2, 128.8, 126.0, 124.9, 123.2, 121.1, 119.8, 111.7, 103.0. HRMS calculated for  $[C_{14}H_{11}NS]^+$  225.0612, found 225.0607.

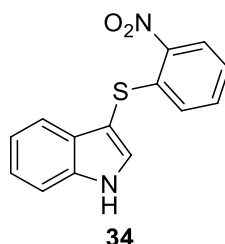


**3-(p-Tolylthio)-1H-indole 32.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 61% (74 mg). White solid.  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.36 (bs, 1H), 7.67 (d,  $J = 7.9$  Hz, 1H), 7.49 (d,  $J = 2.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.46 (d,  $J = 8.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.35 – 7.28 (m, 1H), 7.21

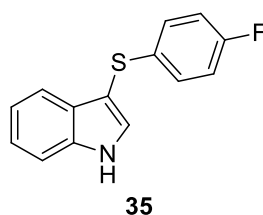
(app t,  $J = 7.5$  Hz, 1H), 7.11 – 7.00 (m, 4H), 2.30 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  136.6, 135.6, 134.8, 130.6, 129.6, 129.2, 126.3, 123.1, 121.0, 119.8, 111.7, 103.5, 21.0. HRMS calculated for  $[\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{13}\text{NS}]^+$  239.0769, found 239.0760.



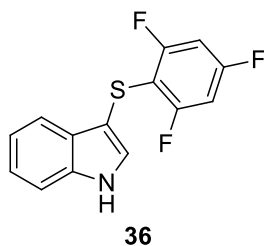
**3-(Naphthalen-2-ylthio)-1H-indole 33.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 78% (108 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.45 (bs, 1H), 7.75 – 7.70 (m, 1H), 7.68 – 7.60 (m, 2H), 7.60 – 7.54 (m, 2H), 7.52 – 7.44 (m, 2H), 7.41 – 7.32 (m, 2H), 7.32 – 7.24 (m, 2H), 7.15 (app t,  $J = 7.5$  Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  136.8, 136.7, 133.9, 131.5, 130.8, 129.2, 128.4, 127.8, 127.1, 126.5, 125.2, 124.9, 123.7, 123.2, 121.1, 119.9, 111.7, 103.0. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{13}\text{NS}] + \text{H})^+$  276.0847, found 276.0840.



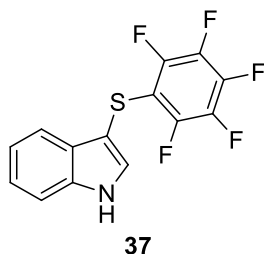
**3-((2-Nitrophenyl)thio)-1H-indole 34.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 98% (133 mg). Bright-yellow solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  8.77 (bs, 1H), 8.24 (d,  $J = 8.1$  Hz, 1H), 7.60 (d,  $J = 2.5$  Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d,  $J = 8.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.47 (d,  $J = 7.9$  Hz, 1H), 7.33 – 7.13 (m, 4H), 6.96 (d,  $J = 8.1$  Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$ ):  $\delta$  145.5, 140.6, 137.4, 133.9, 132.6, 129.1, 128.4, 126.3, 125.2, 123.9, 121.8, 119.6, 112.6, 101.9. HRMS calculated for  $[\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{10}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2\text{S}]^+$  270.0463, found 270.0456.



**3-((4-Fluorophenyl)thio)-1H-indole 35.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 82% (100 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.38 (bs, 1H), 7.60 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.49 (d,  $J = 2.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.45 – 7.43 (m, 1H), 7.30 – 7.28 (m, 1H), 7.20 – 7.16 (m, 1H), 7.12 – 7.08 (m, 2H), 6.90 – 6.85 (m, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  161.0 (d,  $J = 244.9$  Hz), 136.6, 134.1 (d,  $J = 3.1$  Hz), 130.7, 128.9, 128.0 (d,  $J = 7.8$  Hz), 123.3, 121.1, 119.6, 115.9 (d,  $J = 22.1$  Hz), 111.8, 103.4;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -118.24. HRMS calculated for  $[\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_{10}\text{FNS}]^+$  243.0518, found 243.0517.

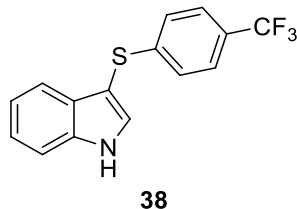


**3-((2,4,6-Trifluorophenyl)thio)-1H-indole 36.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 95% (134 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.26 (bs, 1H), 7.93 – 7.85 (m, 1H), 7.56 (d,  $J = 2.4$  Hz, 1H), 7.44 – 7.33 (m, 1H), 7.32 – 7.22 (m, 2H), 6.67 (dd,  $J = 8.7, 6.6$  Hz, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  163.6 (dd,  $J = 248.7, 6.9$  Hz), 163.5 (dd,  $J = 248.6, 6.9$  Hz), 162.8 (dt,  $J = 250.9, 15.4$ ), 135.9, 130.9, 129.0, 123.0, 121.0, 119.4, 111.6, 109.2 (td,  $J = 22.8, 5.2$  Hz), 104.0, 101.0 – 100.5 (m);  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -101.82 (t,  $J = 7.0$  Hz, 2F), -106.60 - -106.69 (m, 1F). HRMS calculated for  $[\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_8\text{F}_3\text{NS}]^+$  279.0330, found 279.0323.

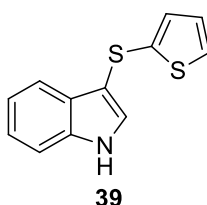


**3-((Perfluorophenyl)thio)-1H-indole 37.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 94% (150 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.23 (s, 1H), 7.79 – 7.63 (m, 1H), 7.48 (d,  $J = 2.7$  Hz, 1H), 7.34 – 7.23 (m, 1H), 7.19 – 7.13 (m, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  148.8 - 148.6 (m), 146.3 - 146.2 (m), 143.0 - 142.7 (m), 140.4 - 140.2 (m),

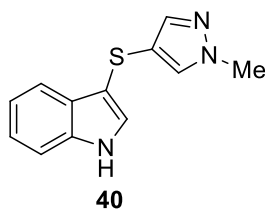
139.0 - 138.8 (m), 136.5 - 136.3 (m), 135.9, 131.5, 128.9, 123.3, 121.4, 119.2, 111.7, 102.3;  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  -133.28 – -133.44 (m), -153.33 (tt,  $J$  = 20.9, 2.2 Hz), -161.10 – -161.29 (m). HRMS calculated for  $[\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_6\text{F}_5\text{NS}]^+$  315.0141, found 315.0128.



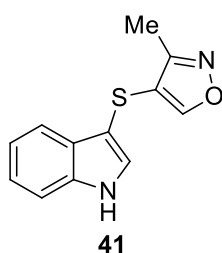
**3-((4-(Trifluoromethyl)phenyl)thio)-1H-indole 38.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 89% (132 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.48 (s, 1H), 7.63 (d,  $J$  = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.56 – 7.49 (m, 2H), 7.43 (d,  $J$  = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.36 (app t,  $J$  = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.29 - 7.23 (m, 1H), 7.19 (d,  $J$  = 8.2 Hz, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  144.8, 136.6, 131.2, 128.8, 126.8 (q,  $J$  = 32.3 Hz), 125.6 (q,  $J$  = 3.8 Hz), 125.4, 124.4 (q,  $J$  = 271.5 Hz), 123.5, 121.4, 119.5, 111.9, 101.3.  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -62.13. HRMS calculated for  $[\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{10}\text{F}_3\text{NS}]^+$  293.0486, found 293.0490.



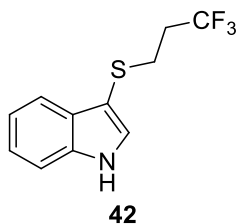
**3-(Thiophen-2-ylthio)-1H-indole 39.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 88% (103 mg). White solid.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.16 (s, 1H), 7.72 (d,  $J$  = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.37 (d,  $J$  = 2.5 Hz, 1H), 7.29 (d,  $J$  = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.18 – 7.10 (m, 2H), 7.10 – 7.06 (m, 1H), 7.03 (d,  $J$  = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 6.79 (dd,  $J$  = 5.1, 3.7 Hz, 1H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  138.0, 136.3, 130.0, 129.4, 128.6, 127.5, 127.4, 123.1, 121.0, 119.6, 111.7, 106.9. HRMS calculated for  $[\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_9\text{NS}_2]^+$  231.0176, found 231.0170.



**3-((1-Methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl)thio)-1H-indole 40.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 72% (83 mg). Colorless oil.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.51 (s, 1H), 7.77 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 1H), 7.49 (s, 1H), 7.40 – 7.30 (m, 3H), 7.25 – 7.17 (m, 2H), 3.78 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  141.7, 136.3, 132.1, 128.7, 128.6, 122.9, 120.7, 119.4, 113.9, 111.7, 107.0, 39.2. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{11}\text{N}_3\text{S}] + \text{H})^+$  230.0752, found 230.0756.



**4-((1H-Indol-3-yl)thio)-3-methylisoxazole 41.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 96% (111 mg). Pale-yellow oil.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.51 (s, 1H), 8.14 (s, 1H), 7.72 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.46 – 7.37 (m, 2H), 7.30 – 7.22 (m, 2H), 2.57 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  169.0, 153.3, 136.3, 129.1, 128.5, 123.2, 121.0, 119.0, 111.8, 109.0, 104.9, 11.2. HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{10}\text{N}_2\text{OS}] + \text{H})^+$  231.0592, found 231.0588.



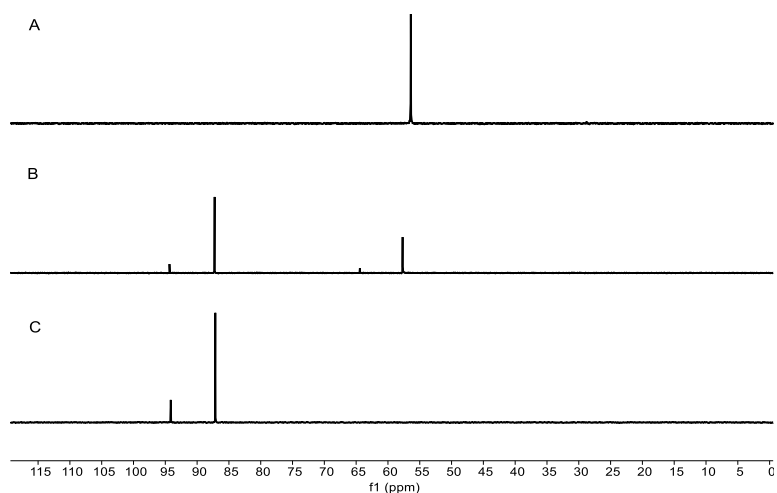
**3-((3,3,3-Trifluoropropyl)thio)-1H-indole 42.** Prepared according to general procedure II using 20 mol% of catalyst **2**·[O] in 1,4-dioxane (0.25 M). Yield: 45% (56 mg). Colorless oil.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  8.26 (s, 1H), 7.75 – 7.68 (m, 1H), 7.39 – 7.34 (m, 1H), 7.32 (d,  $J = 2.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.27 – 7.16 (m, 2H), 2.85 – 2.74 (m, 2H), 2.38 – 2.18 (m, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  136.5, 130.2, 129.4, 126.3 (q,  $J = 278.4$  Hz), 123.2, 121.0, 119.2, 111.8, 104.2, 35.1 (q,  $J = 28.3$  Hz), 28.3 (q,  $J = 3.0$  Hz);  $^{19}\text{F}$  NMR (376 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta$  -65.95 (t,  $J = 10.4$  Hz). HRMS calculated for  $([\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_{10}\text{F}_3\text{NS}] + \text{H})^+$  246.0564, found 246.0574.





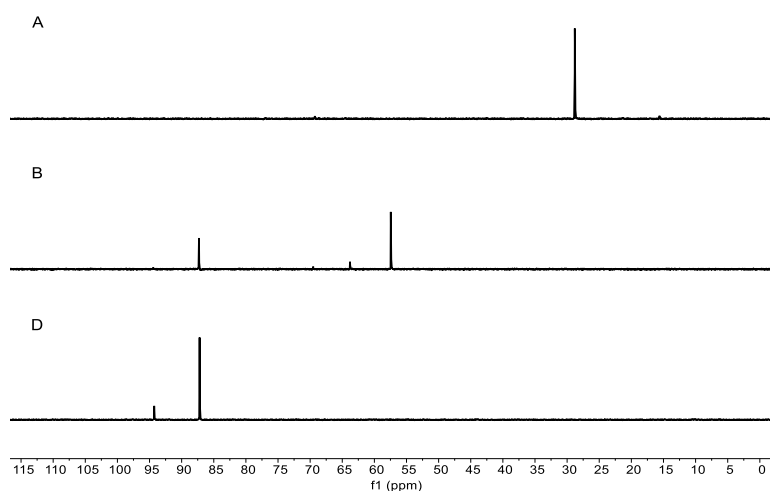
## 4. Mechanistic investigations

### 4.1. *In Situ* NMR Experiments



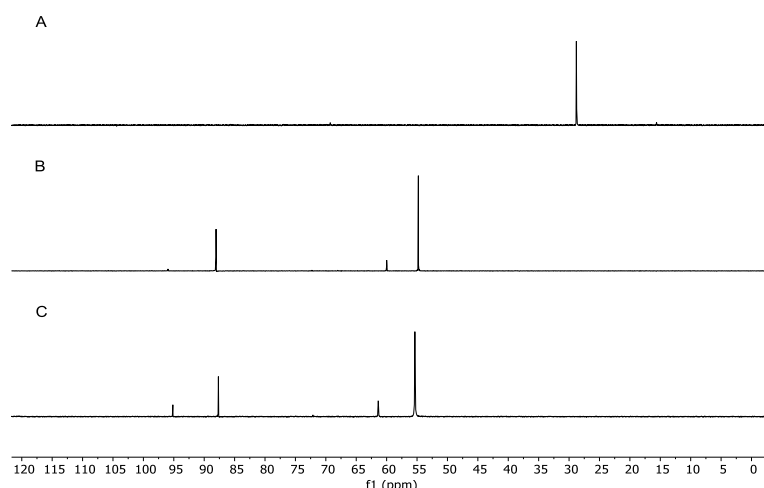
**Figure S1.** Time-stacked in situ  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra during catalysis ( $T = 25\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ , 1,4-dioxane). (A)  $t = 0$  min; (B)  $t = 60$  min; (C)  $t = 90$  min. Chemical shifts ( $\delta$ ): anti-**2**·[O], 56.4 ppm; unknown peaks at 87.3 and 94.4 ppm.

To a dry 4 mL vial equipped with Teflon cap was added indole **1** (29.4 mg, 0.25 mmol) and 20 mol% of phosphetane oxide precatalyst **2**·[O] (8.7 mg, 0.05 mmol). The reaction vial was sealed and following evacuation and introduction of nitrogen on a Schlenk line, dry 1,4-dioxane (1 mL, 0.25 M) followed by phenylsilane (61  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.50 mmol, 2 equiv) were added via syringe. The colorless solution was transferred to an oven-dried purged septum-sealed NMR tube.  $\text{PhSO}_2\text{Cl}$  (59  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.46 mmol, 1.8 equiv) was added to the above reaction mixture in NMR tube and  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra were recorded subsequently at 10 minute intervals. Phosphetane oxide **2**·[O] ( $\delta$  57.7 *major*, 64.4 *minor* ppm) is converted to two new resonances ( $\delta$  87.3 *major*, 94.4 *minor* ppm) over the course of 90 min (In a separate experiment, it was determined that the  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectrum under these reaction conditions remained unchanged even after 48 h reaction time). Upon termination of the experiment after 16 h, an aliquot of the mixture was analyzed by GCMS, with the presence of phosphetane *P*-oxide **2**·[O], indole-3-sulfide **31** and diphenyl disulfide as the only observable products.



**Figure S2.** Time-stacked in situ  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra during catalysis ( $T = 25\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ , 1,4-dioxane). (A)  $\mathbf{2}\cdot[\text{O}]$ ,  $\text{PhSiH}_3$ ;  $t = 12\text{ h}$ ; (B)  $\text{PhSiH}_3$ ,  $\text{PhSO}_2\text{Cl}$ ;  $t = 1\text{ min}$ ; (C)  $t = 70\text{ min}$ . Chemical shifts ( $\delta$ ): *anti*- $\mathbf{2}\cdot[\text{O}]$ , 56.4 ppm; *anti*- $\mathbf{2}$ , 28.8 ppm; unknown peaks at 87.3 and 94.4 ppm.

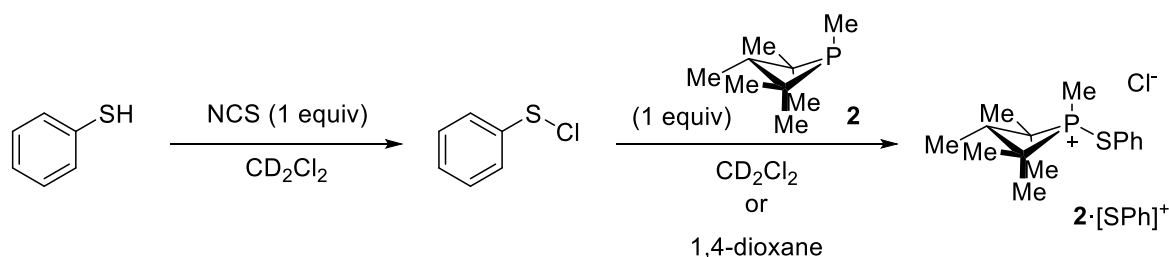
To an oven-dried purged septum-sealed NMR tube, was added a solution of  $\mathbf{2}\cdot[\text{O}]$  (8.7 mg, 0.05 mmol) in dry 1,4-dioxane (1 mL, 0.25 M) followed by Phenylsilane (61  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.50 mmol, 2 equiv) and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra were recorded immediately. Phosphetane oxide  $\mathbf{2}\cdot[\text{O}]$  ( $\delta$  57.7 *major*, 64.4 *minor* ppm) is converted to two new resonances of phosphetane  $\mathbf{2}$  ( $\delta$  28.8 *major*, 15.6 *minor* ppm) over the course of 12 h (Fig. 3B).  $\text{PhSO}_2\text{Cl}$  (59  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.46 mmol, 1.8 equiv) was added to the above reaction mixture in NMR tube and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra, were recorded immediately and at 10 minute intervals. Phosphetane  $\mathbf{2}$  is converted to mixture of  $\mathbf{2}\cdot[\text{O}]$  ( $\delta$  57.7 *major*, 64.4 *minor* ppm) and new resonance at 87.3 ppm within 1 min reaction time. After 70 min reaction time,  $\mathbf{2}\cdot[\text{O}]$  was completely converted to resonances at 87.3 ppm and 94.4 ppm which remained as the only observable phosphorus species in the reaction even after 48 h reaction time. Identical spectra were obtained when the experiment was conducted in presence of indole  $\mathbf{1}$  (29.4 mg, 0.25 mmol).



**Figure S3.** Time-stacked in situ  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra during catalysis ( $T = 25\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ , 1,4-dioxane). (A) *anti*-3; (B)  $\text{PhSO}_2\text{Cl}$ ;  $t = 1$  min; (C)  $t = 12$  h. Chemical shifts ( $\delta$ ): *anti*- $2\cdot[\text{O}]$ , 57.7 ppm; *syn*- $2\cdot[\text{O}]$ , 64.4 ppm; *anti*-3, 28.8 ppm; unknown peaks at 87.3 and 94.4 ppm (from text)

To an oven-dried purged septum-sealed NMR tube, was added a solution of **2** (8 mg, 0.05 mmol) in dry 1,4-dioxane (1 mL, 0.25 M) and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra, were recorded.  $\text{PhSO}_2\text{Cl}$  (59  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.46 mmol, 1.8 equiv) was added to the above solution in NMR tube via syringe and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra, were recorded immediately and at 30 min intervals up to 6 h. Phosphetane **2** is converted to mixture of  $2\cdot[\text{O}]$  ( $\delta$  57.7 *major*, 64.4 *minor* ppm) and new resonances at 87.3 ppm *major* and 94.4 ppm *minor* within 1 min reaction time. After 12 h reaction time, mixture of  $2\cdot[\text{O}]$  ( $\delta$  57.7 *major*, 64.4 *minor* ppm) and new resonances at 87.3 ppm *major* and 94.4 ppm *minor* were still observed in the reaction via  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra. Identical spectra were obtained when the experiment was conducted in presence of indole **1** (29.4 mg, 0.25 mmol).

#### 4.2. Procedure for independent synthesis of intermediate $2\cdot[\text{SPh}]^+$



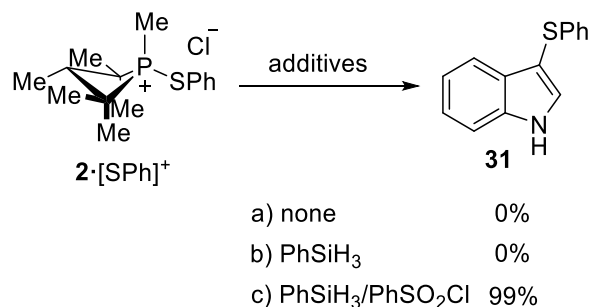
The following procedure was performed inside nitrogen-purged glove box. In a dry 1 dram vial, thiophenol (41  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.40 mmol, 1 equiv) followed by dry  $\text{CD}_2\text{Cl}_2$  (0.4 mL, 1 M) was added. *N*-Chlorosuccinimide (NCS) (54.4 mg, 0.407 mmol, 1.02 equiv) was added to the above reaction mixture in three portions (*resulted in exothermic reaction*) over 5 min. The reaction mixture was stirred at RT for 0.5 h, during which time the pale-yellow solution turned to bright orange along with precipitation

of succinimide byproduct. The reaction mixture was filtered to remove the white solid and give a dichloromethane solution of PhSCl, which was used immediately due to the known risk of explosion (CAUTION!).<sup>1</sup> To this freshly prepared ca. 1 M solution of phenylsulfenyl chloride (PhSCl) in CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, was added solution of **2** (63.3 mg, 0.4 mmol, 0.5 M, 1 equiv) in CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.8 mL) or 1,4-dioxane (0.8 mL) in dropwise fashion during which time the orange colored solution turned colorless. The resulting colorless solution of **2**·[SPh]<sup>+</sup> (0.4 mmol, 0.34 M, *dr* 16:1) was transferred to a screw-capped NMR tube equipped with septa, sealed and analyzed by <sup>1</sup>H, <sup>13</sup>C and <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectroscopy.

1,2,2,3,4,4-hexamethyl-1-(phenylthio)phosphetan-1-ium chloride (**2**·[SPh]<sup>+</sup>): <sup>31</sup>P NMR (162 MHz, 1,4-dioxane) δ 87.3 *major*, 94.4 *minor* ppm. <sup>31</sup>P NMR (162 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) δ 85.8 *major*, 92.6 *minor* ppm. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) *Major* δ 7.61 – 7.46 (m, 5H), 3.23 (qd, *J* = 7.1, 2.5 Hz, 1H), 2.46 (d, *J* = 11.7 Hz, 3H), 1.58 – 1.47 (m, 12H), 1.05 (dd, *J* = 7.0, 1.3 Hz, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) δ 136.5 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 3.0 Hz), 131.8 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 2.5 Hz), 131.1 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 2.2 Hz), 119.7 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 7.3 Hz), 49.1 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 5.2 Hz), 46.5 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 37.5 Hz), 23.9 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 4.0 Hz), 19.7 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 3.7 Hz), 8.6 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 23.4 Hz), 6.6 (d, *J*<sub>PC</sub> = 20.5 Hz). HRMS calculated for [C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>24</sub>PS]<sup>+</sup> 267.1336, found 267.1336.

*N.B.* The final solution of **2**·[SPh]<sup>+</sup> contains some residual succinimide byproduct and NCS from the PhSCl synthesis step.

#### 4.3. Evaluation of the electrophilicity of **2**·[SPh]<sup>+</sup> against indole



The following procedure was performed inside nitrogen-purged glove box.

Experiment (*a*): To a screw-capped NMR tube equipped with septa, was added solution of indole (22.1 mg, 0.19 mmol) in dry 1,4-dioxane (0.4 mL). Freshly prepared solution of **2**·[SPh]<sup>+</sup> (57.1 mg, 0.19 mmol, 1 equiv) in 1,4-dioxane (0.4 mL) was added to the above solution, sealed and the tube was inverted to facilitate mixing. The resulting reaction mixture was periodically analyzed by <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectroscopy. No sulfenylated product **31** was observed even after 24 h at RT or 40 °C. GC-MS

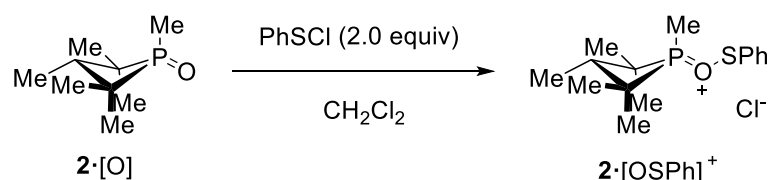
<sup>1</sup> D. G. Garratt, M. D. Ryan, A. Kabo, *Can. J. Chem.* **1980**, *58*, 2329–2339.

analysis of the reaction mixture further confirmed absence of **31**.  $2 \cdot [\text{SPh}]^+$  was the only observable species in  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra.

Experiment (b): To a screw-capped NMR tube equipped with septa, was added solution of indole (22.1 mg, 0.19 mmol) in dry 1,4-dioxane (0.4 mL) followed by  $\text{PhSiH}_3$  (46.5  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.38 mmol, 2 equiv). Freshly prepared solution of  $2 \cdot [\text{SPh}]^+$  (57.1 mg, 0.19 mmol, 1 equiv) in 1,4-dioxane (0.4 mL) was added to the above solution, sealed and the tube was inverted to facilitate mixing. The resulting reaction mixture was analyzed by  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectroscopy and GC-MS analysis. No sulfenylated product **31** was observed even after 24 h at RT.  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra showed presence of **2** and  $2 \cdot [\text{SPh}]^+$  in 2.8:1 ratio.

Experiment (c): To a screw-capped NMR tube equipped with septa, was added solution of indole (22.1 mg, 0.19 mmol) in dry 1,4-dioxane (0.4 mL) followed by  $\text{PhSiH}_3$  (46.5  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.38 mmol, 2 equiv) and  $\text{PhSO}_2\text{Cl}$  (43.4  $\mu\text{L}$ , 0.34 mmol, 1.8 equiv). Freshly prepared solution of  $2 \cdot [\text{SPh}]^+$  (57.1 mg, 0.19 mmol, 1 equiv) in 1,4-dioxane (0.4 mL) was added to the above solution, sealed and the tube was inverted to facilitate mixing. The resulting reaction mixture was analyzed by  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectroscopy and GC-MS analysis. Complete conversion of indole **1** to sulfenylated product **31** was observed.  $2 \cdot [\text{SPh}]^+$  was the only observable species in  $^{31}\text{P}$  NMR spectra.

#### 4.4. Detection of intermediate $2 \cdot [\text{OSPh}]^+$ (cf. Intermediate I in Fig. 4)



To a solution of  $2 \cdot [\text{O}]$  (17.4 mg, 100  $\mu\text{mol}$ ) in  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  was added  $\text{PhSCL}$  (28.9 mg, 200  $\mu\text{mol}$ ) and then stirred for 5 min under  $\text{N}_2$  atmosphere. Analysis of the crude by DART-MS revealed a mass peak of  $m/z = 281.13$  amu consistent with the cationic species  $[\text{C}_{15}\text{H}_{24}\text{OPS}]^+$ .

## 5. Collection of NMR spectra

