

## Supporting Information

### **L-Proline Catalyzed Stereoselective Synthesis of (*E*)-Methyl $\alpha$ -Indol-2-yl- $\beta$ -Aryl/Alkyl Acrylates: Easy Access of Substituted Carbazoles, $\gamma$ -Carbolines and Prenostodione**

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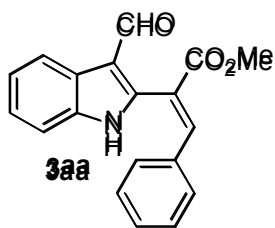
#### **General Information:**

All reactions were carried out either under inert atmosphere or air and monitored by TLC using Merck 60 F<sub>254</sub> pre coated silica gel plates (0.25 mm thickness) and the products were visualized by UV detection. Flash chromatography was carried out with silica gel (200-300 mesh). FT-IR spectra were recorded on a BrukerTensor-27 spectrometer. <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance (III) 400 MHz spectrometer. Data for <sup>1</sup>H NMR are reported as a chemical shift ( $\delta$  ppm), multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, q = quartet, m = multiplet), coupling constant *J* (Hz), integration, and assignment, data for <sup>13</sup>C are reported as a chemical shift. High resolutions mass spectral analyses (HRMS) were carried out using ESI-TOF-MS. Single crystal X-ray structural studies were performed on a CCD Agilent Technologies (Oxford Diffraction) SUPER NOVA diffractometer. Data were collected at 293(2) K using graphite-monochromated Mo K $\alpha$  radiation ( $\lambda_{\alpha} = 0.71073$  Å). The strategy for the Data collection was evaluated by using the CrysAlisPro CCD software. The data were collected by the standard 'phi-omega scan techniques, and were scaled and reduced using CrysAlisPro RED software. The structures were solved by direct methods using SHELXS-97 and refined by full matrix least-squares with SHELXL-97, refining on  $F^2$ .<sup>1</sup>

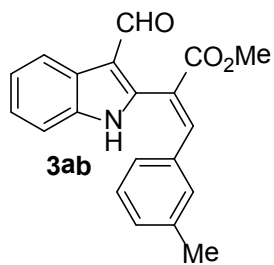
The positions of all the atoms were obtained by direct methods. All non-hydrogen atoms were refined anisotropically. The remaining hydrogen atoms were placed in geometrically constrained positions and refined with isotropic temperature factors, generally  $1.2U_{eq}$  of their parent atoms.

**Materials:** All these starting materials and catalysts were either purchased from commercial sources or synthesized by literature known procedures.<sup>2</sup> All the solvents dried and distilled under reduced pressure before prior used.

**General procedure for the synthesis of (*E*)-methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -aryl/heteroaryl-substituted acrylates:** To a stirred solution of methyl 2-(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)acetate (0.2 mmol), aldehydes (0.3 mmol) and L-proline (0.05 mmol) in dry DMSO (1.0 mL) at room temperature under argon atmosphere. The progress of the reaction was monitored by TLC. After completion of the reaction, the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (3  $\times$  10 mL), washed with water and brine respectively and dried with Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. The organic phase was evaporated by rotary evaporator under reduced pressure to give the crude product. The crude product was purified by column chromatography over silica gel to furnish the pure product. The product was characterized by corresponding spectroscopic data (<sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR, HRMS).

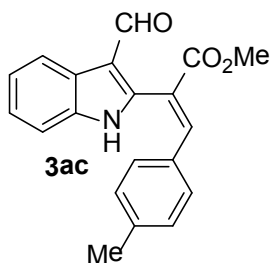


**(*E*)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -phenylacrylate (3aa):** Yield 83%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  9.86 (s, 1H), 8.70 (br s, 1H), 8.32-8.35 (m, 1H), 8.21 (s, 1H), 7.40-7.42 (m, 1H), 7.30-7.35 (m, 3H), 7.18-7.22 (m, 2H), 7.09-7.11 (m, 2H), 3.84 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  185.5, 166.5, 147.3, 141.7, 136.0, 132.8, 130.8, 130.4, 129.0, 125.4, 124.3, 123.1, 122.1, 120.1, 115.5, 111.5, 52.9; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd. For C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>15</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> [M+Na]<sup>+</sup>: 328.0950; Found 328.0944.



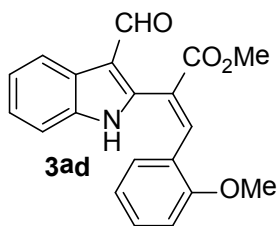
**(*E*)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(3-methylphenyl)acrylate (3ab):** Yield 75%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  9.85 (s, 1H), 8.81 (br s, 1H), 8.31-8.34 (m, 1H), 8.17 (s, 1H), 7.38-7.41 (m, 1H), 7.30-7.34 (m, 2H), 7.01-7.09 (m, 2H), 6.95 (s, 1H), 6.81 (d, *J* = 7.56 Hz, 1H), 3.82 (s, 3H), 2.17 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  185.5, 166.5, 147.6, 141.7, 138.6, 135.9, 132.8, 131.7, 131.6, 128.8, 127.0, 125.3, 124.3, 123.1, 122.2, 119.9, 115.6, 111.4, 52.9, 21.2; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd. For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>17</sub>NO<sub>3</sub> [M+Na]<sup>+</sup>: 342.1106; Found 342.1101.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(4-methylphenyl)acrylate (3ac):** Yield 78%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.84 (s, 1H), 8.86 (br s, 1H), 8.32-8.35 (m, 1H), 8.18 (s, 1H), 7.39-7.41 (m, 1H), 7.31-7.34 (m, 2H), 6.98 (s, 4H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 2.26 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.6, 166.6, 147.5, 142.0, 141.6, 135.9, 130.5, 130.0, 129.7, 125.4, 124.3, 123.1, 122.2, 118.9, 115.5, 111.4, 52.8, 21.4; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_3$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 342.1106; Found 342.1101.

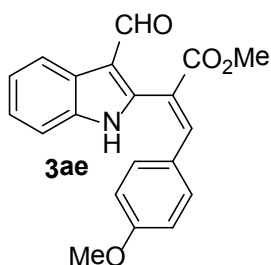
**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(2-methoxyphenyl)acrylate (3ad):** Yield 71%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.81 (s, 1H), 8.84 (br s, 1H), 8.55 (s, 1H), 8.28-8.30 (m, 1H), 7.37-7.39 (m, 1H), 7.28-7.31 (m, 2H), 7.22-7.24 (m, 1H), 6.86 (d,  $J$  = 8.28 Hz, 1H), 6.76 (d,  $J$  = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 6.61 (t,  $J$  = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 3.86 (s, 3H), 3.83 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.7, 166.7, 158.5, 142.7, 142.0, 135.8, 132.2, 129.7, 125.4, 124.2, 122.9, 122.2, 122.1, 120.7, 119.9,

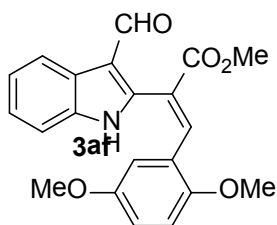
115.3, 111.3, 111.0, 55.6, 52.8; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_4$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 358.1055; Found 358.1050.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(4-methoxyphenyl)acrylate (3ae):** Yield 74%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



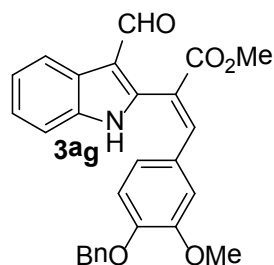
(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.88 (s, 1H), 8.63 (br s, 1H), 8.35-8.37 (m, 1H), 8.17 (s, 1H), 7.41-7.43 (m, 1H), 7.33-7.35 (m, 2H), 7.05 (d,  $J$  = 8.76 Hz, 2H), 6.70 (d,  $J$  = 8.56 Hz, 2H), 3.82 (s, 3H), 3.74 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.7, 166.8, 161.7, 147.2, 142.6, 136.0, 132.6, 125.3 (2C), 124.2, 123.0, 122.2, 117.0, 115.4, 114.5, 111.5, 55.3, 52.7; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_4$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 358.1055; Found 358.1050.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(2,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acrylate (3af):** Yield 72%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



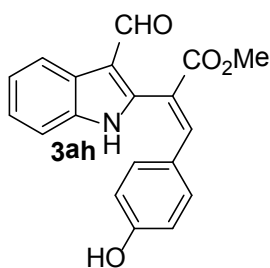
(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.84 (s, 1H), 9.05 (br s, 1H), 8.51 (s, 1H), 8.27-8.29 (m, 1H), 7.32-7.35 (m, 1H), 7.25-7.28 (m, 2H), 6.75-6.78 (m, 2H), 6.16 (s, 1H), 3.83 (s, 3H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.03 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.7, 166.7, 153.1, 153.0, 142.3, 142.2, 135.8, 125.3, 124.3, 123.0, 122.1, 122.0, 119.8, 119.4, 115.6, 112.8, 112.3, 111.3, 56.1, 55.0, 52.8; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_5$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 388.1161; Found 388.1155.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(4-benzyloxy-3-methoxyphenyl)acrylate (3ag):** Yield

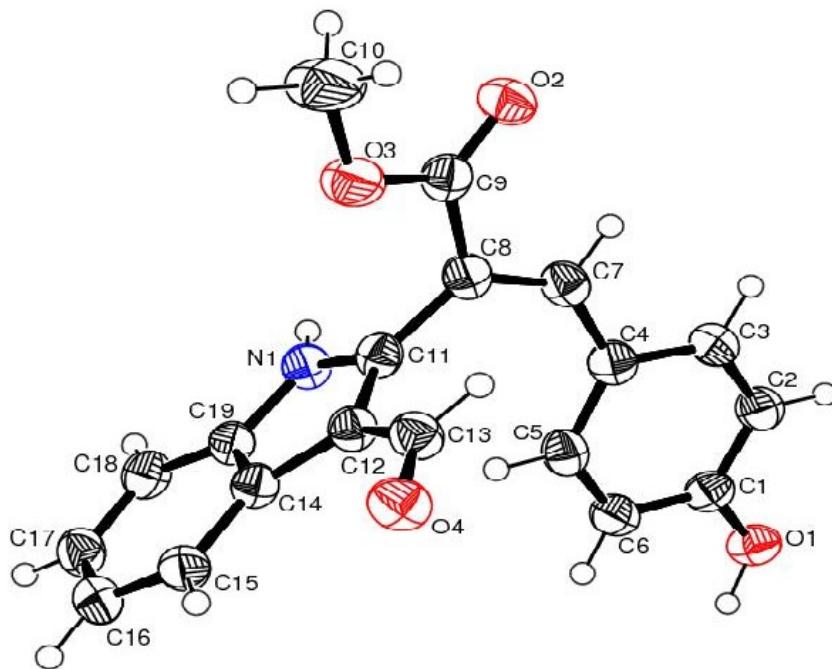


70%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.91 (s, 1H), 8.68 (br s, 1H), 8.33-8.36 (m, 1H), 8.11(s, 1H), 7.38-7.41 (m, 2H), 7.30-7.35 (m, 6H), 6.72-6.82 (m, 2H), 6.31 (s, 1H), 5.10 (s, 2H), 3.82 (s, 3H), 3.15 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.6, 166.7, 150.6, 149.3, 147.3, 142.5, 136.1, 135.8, 128.6, 128.1, 127.1, 126.1, 125.8, 125.3, 124.4, 123.2, 122.1, 117.2, 115.8, 112.9, 111.8, 111.4, 70.6, 55.0, 52.8; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{27}\text{H}_{23}\text{NO}_5$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 464.1474; Found 464.1468.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(4-hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl)acrylate (3ah):** Yield



76%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{Acetone-d}_6$ )  $\delta$  11.17 (br s, 1H), 9.86 (s, 1H) 9.13 (br s 1H), 8.25-8.27 (m, 1H), 8.15 (s, 1H), 7.52-7.54 (m, 1H), 7.26-7.32 (m, 2H), 7.04 (d,  $J = 8.56$  Hz, 2H), 6.69 (d,  $J = 8.76$  Hz, 2H), 3.75 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{Acetone-d}_6$ )  $\delta$  185.3, 167.2, 160.8, 147.3, 144.5, 137.5, 133.6, 126.4, 125.7, 124.5, 123.2, 122.3, 118.1, 116.6, 115.8, 112.8, 52.7 **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{15}\text{NO}_4$   $[\text{M}-\text{H}]^-$ : 320.0923; Found 320.0917.

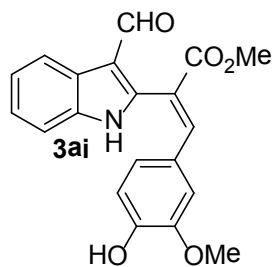


**Figure 1.** The molecular structure of compound **3ah** (CCDC 952076)

**Table 1.** Crystal data and structure refinement for **3ah**

Compound	<b>Compound 3ah</b>
Empirical formula	C <sub>19</sub> H <sub>15</sub> NO <sub>4</sub>
Molecular weight	321.32
Temperature	150(2) K
Wavelength (Å)	0.71073 Å
Crystal system, space group	orthorhombic, p b c a
<i>a</i> (Å)	<i>a</i> = 9.3019(5) Å
<i>b</i> (Å)	<i>b</i> = 16.7028(18) Å
<i>c</i> (Å)	<i>c</i> = 20.7326(14) Å
$\alpha$ (°)	alpha = 90 deg.
$\beta$ (°)	beta = 90 deg.
$\gamma$ (°)	gamma = 90 deg.
Volume (Å <sup>3</sup> )	3221.2(4) Å <sup>3</sup>
Z, Calculated density (mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	8, 1.325 Mg/m <sup>3</sup>
Absorption coefficient (mm <sup>-1</sup> )	0.094 mm <sup>-1</sup>
F(000)	1344
Crystal size (mm)	0.23 x 0.18 x 0.14 mm
$\theta$ range (deg)	2.94 to 25.00 deg
Limiting indices	-11 ≤ <i>h</i> ≤ 11, -19 ≤ <i>k</i> ≤ 19, -24 ≤ <i>l</i> ≤ 24
Reflections collected / unique	23304 / 2829 [R(int) = 0.0988]
Completeness to $\theta = 25.00$	99.9 %
Max. and min. transmission	0.9870 and 0.9788
Data / restraints / parameters	2829 / 0 / 222
Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	1.062
Final R indices [I > 2σ(I)]	R1 = 0.0594, wR2 = 0.1613
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0743, wR2 = 0.1796
Absolute structure parameter	0.43 (3)
Largest diff. peak and hole (e.Å <sup>-3</sup> )	0.244 and -0.242 e.Å <sup>-3</sup>
CCDC	<b>952076</b>

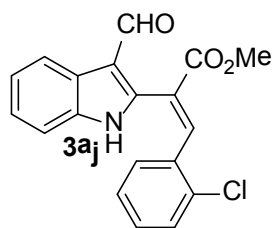
**(E)-methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(4-hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl)acrylate (3ai):** Yield 77%;



<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, Acetone-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  11.21 (br s, 1H), 9.89 (s, 1H), 8.34 (s, 1H), 8.26 (d, *J* = 7.04 Hz, 1H), 8.13 (s, 1H), 7.54 (d, *J* = 7.28 Hz, 1H), 7.26-7.32 (m, 2H), 6.88 (d, *J* = 7.04 Hz, 1H), 6.74 (d, *J* = 8.28 Hz, 1H), 6.38 (s, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.13 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, Acetone-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  185.3, 167.1, 150.4, 148.2, 147.6, 144.5, 137.4, 127.4, 126.4, 126.0, 124.6, 123.3, 122.2, 118.2, 116.1, 116.0, 112.9, 112.7, 55.2, 52.7; **HRMS** (ESI) *m/z* calcd.

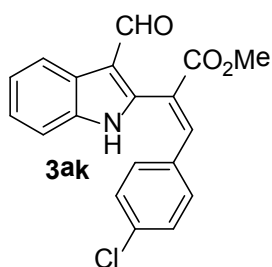
For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>17</sub>NO<sub>5</sub> [M-H]<sup>-</sup>: 350.1029; Found 350.1023.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(2-chlorophenyl)acrylate (3aj):** Yield 82%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



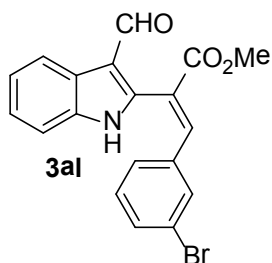
(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.81 (s, 1H), 8.93 (br s, 1H), 8.43 (s, 1H), 8.25-8.27 (m, 1H), 7.39-7.41 (m, 2H), 7.28-7.33 (m, 2H), 7.19 (t,  $J = 8.28$  Hz, 1H), 6.91 (t,  $J = 7.52$  Hz, 1H), 6.81-6.83 (m, 1H), 3.90 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.3, 166.2, 143.5, 140.1, 135.8, 135.4, 132.0, 131.3, 130.1, 127.0, 125.3, 124.5, 123.1, 122.8, 122.1, 115.7, 111.4, 53.1; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{ClNO}_3$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 362.0560; Found 362.0554.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(4-chlorophenyl)acrylate (3ak):** Yield 85%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.85 (s, 1H), 8.78 (br s, 1H), 8.31-8.33 (m, 1H), 8.14 (s, 1H), 7.41-7.43 (m, 1H), 7.33-7.36 (m, 2H), 7.17 (d,  $J = 8.52$  Hz, 2H), 7.02 (d,  $J = 8.52$  Hz, 2H), 3.84 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.3, 166.2, 145.7, 140.8, 137.0, 135.9, 131.5, 131.3, 129.3, 125.3, 124.6, 123.3, 122.2, 120.7, 115.6, 111.5, 53.0; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{ClNO}_3$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 362.0560; Found 362.0554.

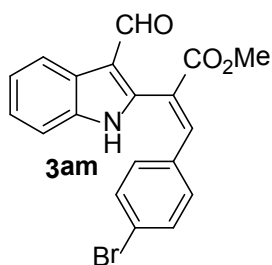
**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(3-bromophenyl)acrylate (3al):** Yield 78%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



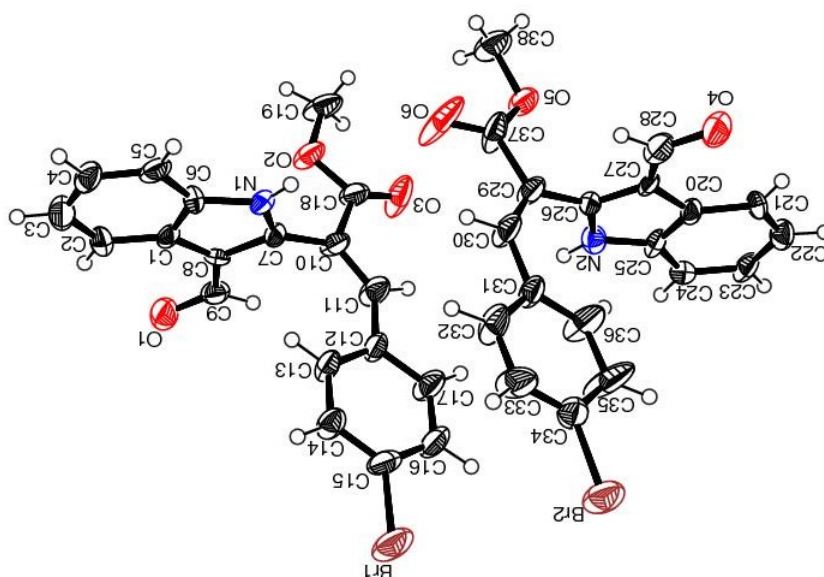
(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.87 (s, 1H), 8.72 (br s, 1H), 8.31-8.33 (m, 1H), 8.10 (s, 1H), 7.39-7.44 (m, 2H), 7.31-7.36 (m, 3H), 7.01 (t,  $J = 8.04$  Hz, 1H), 6.90-6.92 (m, 1H), 3.85 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.2, 166.1, 145.2, 140.6, 135.9, 134.9, 133.8, 133.5, 130.4, 127.8, 125.3, 124.6, 123.2, 122.9, 122.1, 121.9, 115.6, 111.5, 53.1; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{NO}_3\text{Br}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 406.0055; Found 406.0049, 408.0030.

$\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{NO}_3\text{Br}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 406.0055; Found 406.0049, 408.0030.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(4-bromophenyl)acrylate (3am):** Yield 81%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.84 (s, 1H), 8.92 (br s, 1H), 8.30-8.32 (m, 1H), 8.11 (s, 1H), 7.40-7.42 (m, 1H), 7.31-7.34 (m, 4H), 6.94 (d,  $J = 8.52$  Hz, 2H), 3.83 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.3, 166.3, 145.8, 140.9, 135.9, 132.3, 131.7, 131.7, 125.4, 125.3, 124.6, 123.3, 122.2, 120.9, 115.6, 111.5, 53.0; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{NO}_3\text{Br}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 406.0055; Found 406.0049, 408.0030.

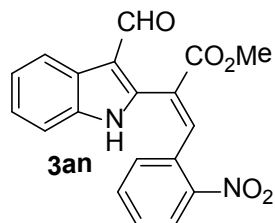


**Figure 2.** The molecular structure of compound **3am** (**CCDC 952075**)

**Table 2.** Crystal data and structure refinement for **3am**

Compound	<b>Compound 3am</b>
Empirical formula	C <sub>19</sub> H <sub>14</sub> N O <sub>3</sub> Br
Molecular weight	384.22
Temperature	150(2) K
Wavelength (Å)	0.71073 Å
Crystal system, space group	Monoclinic, P 21
<i>a</i> (Å)	<i>a</i> = 11.3964(9) Å
<i>b</i> (Å)	<i>b</i> = 7.3357 (6) Å
<i>c</i> (Å)	<i>c</i> = 20.4793(7) Å
$\alpha$ (°)	alpha = 90 deg.
$\beta$ (°)	beta = 103.585 (5) deg.
$\gamma$ (°)	gamma = 90 deg.
Volume (Å <sup>3</sup> )	1664.2 (2) Å <sup>3</sup>
Z, Calculated density (mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	4, 1.534 Mg/m <sup>3</sup>
Absorption coefficient (mm <sup>-1</sup> )	2.486 mm <sup>-1</sup>
F(000)	776
Crystal size (mm)	0.16 × 0.08 × 0.06 mm
$\theta$ range (deg)	2.96 to 27.50 deg
Limiting indices	-13 ≤ <i>h</i> ≤ 14, -9 ≤ <i>k</i> ≤ 8, -26 ≤ <i>l</i> ≤ 25
Reflections collected / unique	15880 / 7267 [R(int) = 0.0589]
Completeness to $\theta = 25.00$	99.8 %
Max. and min. transmission	0.8651 and 0.6918
Data / restraints / parameters	7267 / 1 / 436
Goodness-of-fit on F <sup>2</sup>	1.026
Final R indices [ <i>I</i> > 2 $\sigma$ ( <i>I</i> )]	R1 = 0.0574, wR2 = 0.01295
R indices (all data)	R1 = 0.0988, wR2 = 0.01596
Absolute structure parameter	0.43 (3)
Largest diff. peak and hole (e.Å <sup>-3</sup> )	0.469 and -0.679 e.Å <sup>-3</sup>
CCDC	<b>952075</b>

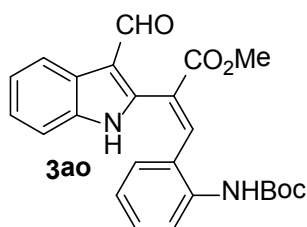
**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(2-nitrophenyl)acrylate (3an):** Yield 68%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$



(400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.84 (s, 1H), 9.06 (br s, 1H), 8.43 (s, 1H), 8.19 (d,  $J = 7.52$  Hz, 1H), 8.12 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H) 7.38-7.44 (m, 2H), 7.28-7.35 (m, 3H), 6.99 (d,  $J = 7.52$  Hz, 1H), 3.93 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.4, 165.9, 148.1, 143.8, 139.3, 135.9, 133.9, 130.9, 130.4, 130.3, 125.3, 125.2, 124.6, 123.3, 123.1, 121.9, 116.5, 111.4, 53.2; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 373.0800; Found 373.0795.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -[2-(tert-butoxycarbonyl)aminophenyl]acrylate (3ao):**

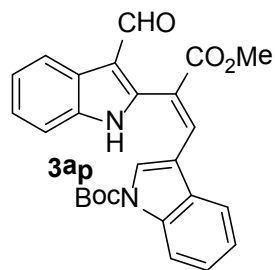
Yield 72%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  10.11 (s, 1H), 10.02 (br s, 1H), 8.24 (d,  $J = 7.52$  Hz,



1H), 8.13 (s, 1H), 7.20-7.24 (m, 5H), 6.90-6.94 (m, 1H), 6.83-6.85 (m, 1H), 6.66 (s, 1H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 1.51 (s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.3, 166.2, 154.5, 144.2, 140.8, 135.6, 135.6, 131.8, 130.1, 129.2, 126.8, 125.8, 125.2, 124.7, 123.8, 122.7, 121.1, 116.8, 111.8, 81.7, 52.8, 28.1; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ : 421.1764; Found

421.1758.

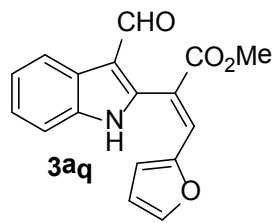
**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(*N*-(tert-butoxycarbonyl)indol-3-yl)acrylate (3ap):** Yield



75%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.96 (s, 1H), 8.66 (br s, 1H), 8.46 (s, 1H), 8.36-8.39 (m, 1H), 8.14 (d,  $J = 7.96$  Hz, 1H), 7.66 (d,  $J = 7.76$  Hz, 1H), 7.43-7.45 (m, 1H), 7.27-7.37 (m, 4H), 6.73 (s, 1H), 3.85 (s, 3H), 1.24 (s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.4, 166.4, 148.3, 142.7, 137.8, 136.0, 135.1, 129.1, 127.9, 125.5, 125.3, 124.5, 123.7, 123.2, 122.3, 118.3, 118.2, 115.4, 115.3, 113.7, 111.4, 84.6, 52.8, 27.5; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For

$\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ : 445.1764; Found 445.1758.

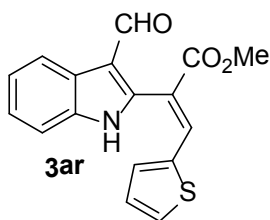
**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(2-furyl)acrylate (3aq):** Yield 76%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400



MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.89 (s, 1H), 8.83 (br s, 1H), 8.36-8.38 (m, 1H), 8.00 (s, 1H), 7.42-7.44 (m, 1H), 7.32-7.35 (m, 3H), 6.34-6.38 (m, 2H), 3.81 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  185.5, 166.4, 149.3, 146.5, 141.8, 135.8, 133.2, 125.3, 124.3, 123.0, 122.2, 118.5, 116.2, 115.7, 112.9, 111.3, 52.9; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{13}\text{NO}_4$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 318.0742; Found 318.0737.



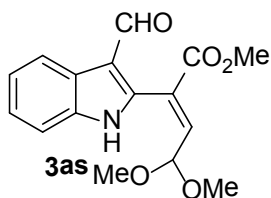
**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(2-thiophenyl)acrylate (3ar):** Yield 78%;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400



MHz, DMSO- $d_6$ )  $\delta$  12.30 (br s, 1H), 9.78 (s, 1H), 8.47 (s, 1H), 8.17 (d,  $J = 7.28$  Hz, 1H), 7.66 (s, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J = 7.52$  Hz, 1H), 7.26-7.33 (m, 2H), 7.08-7.10 (m, 1H), 3.74 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- $d_6$ )  $\delta$  184.5, 165.8, 142.0, 139.9, 136.7, 136.6, 134.0, 127.5, 125.2, 123.7, 122.4, 121.0, 116.6, 115.1, 112.3, 52.5; HRMS (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{13}\text{NO}_3\text{S}$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 334.0514; Found 334.0508.

**General procedure for the synthesis of (E)-methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -alkyl-substituted acrylates:** To a stirred solution of methyl 2-(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)acetate (0.2 mmol), aldehydes (0.6 mmol) and L-proline (0.05 mmol) in dry DMSO (1.0 mL) at room temperature under argon atmosphere. The progress of the reaction was monitored by TLC. After completion of the reaction, the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate ( $3 \times 10$  mL), washed with water and brine respectively and dried with  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ . The organic phase was evaporated by rotary evaporator under reduced pressure to give the crude product. The crude product was purified by column chromatography over silica gel to furnish the pure product. The product was characterized by corresponding spectroscopic data ( $^1\text{H}$  NMR,  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR and HRMS).

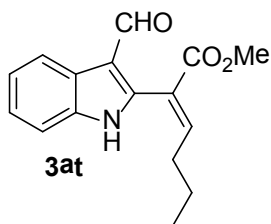
**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -dimethoxymethylacrylate (3as):** Yield 86%; dr (82:18);



$^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  (major isomer) 9.97 (s, 1H), 9.51 (br s, 1H), 8.31-8.34 (m, 1H), 7.42-7.45 (m, 1H), 7.30-7.34 (m, 2H), 7.25 (d,  $J = 7.28$  Hz, 1H), 4.84 (d,  $J = 7.56$  Hz, 1H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 3.34 (s, 6H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  (major isomer) 185.5, 165.5, 143.6, 138.6, 135.6, 126.5, 125.4, 124.6, 123.2, 121.6, 117.1, 111.5, 99.6, 53.1, 53.0; HRMS (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd.

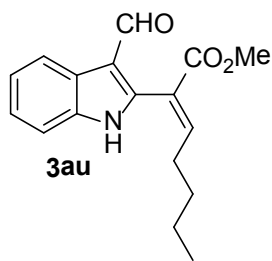
For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_5$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 326.1004; Found 326.0999.

**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -propylacrylate (3at):** Yield 81%; dr (4:1)  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400

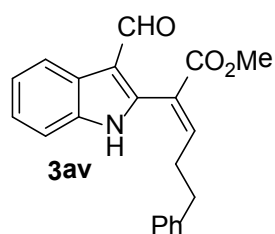


MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.86 (s, 1H), 9.11 (br s, 1H), 8.34-8.36 (m, 1H), 7.46 (t,  $J = 7.80$  Hz, 1H), 7.39-7.42 (m, 1H), 7.29-7.33 (m, 2H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 2.18-2.24 (m, 2H), 1.43-1.52 (m, 2H), 0.86 (t,  $J = 7.28$  Hz, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  (major isomer) 185.6, 166.0, 153.1, 141.8, 135.8, 125.0, 124.3, 123.0, 122.8, 121.9, 116.4, 111.3, 52.6, 32.4, 21.7, 13.7; HRMS (ESI)  $m/z$

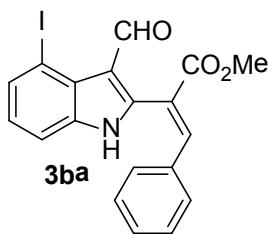
calcd. For  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{17}\text{NO}_3$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 294.1106; Found 294.1101.



**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -butylacrylate (3au):** Yield 85%; dr (4:1);  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  (major isomer) 9.86 (s, 1H), 9.21 (br s, 1H), 8.34-8.36 (m, 1H), 7.46 (t,  $J = 7.52$  Hz, 1H), 7.39-7.41 (m, 1H), 7.29-7.31 (m, 2H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 2.20-2.24 (m, 2H), 1.38-1.46 (m, 2H), 1.22-1.29 (m, 2H), 0.81 (t,  $J = 7.24$  Hz, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  (major isomer) 185.6, 166.0, 153.3, 141.9, 135.8, 125.0, 124.3, 123.0, 122.6, 121.9, 116.4, 111.3, 52.6, 30.5, 30.2, 22.3, 13.7; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_3$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 308.1263; Found 308.1257.



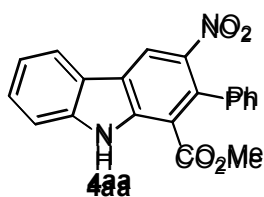
**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(2-phenylethyl)acrylate (3av):** Yield 83%; dr 4:1;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  (major isomer) 9.71 (s, 1H), 8.19-8.21 (m, 1H), 7.54 (br s, 1H), 7.39 (t,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.25-7.27 (m, 3H), 7.17-7.22 (m, 2H), 7.11-7.13 (m, 1H), 6.98-7.00 (m, 2H), 3.67(s, 1H), 2.73 (t,  $J = 6.76$  Hz, 2H), 2.37-2.43(m, 2H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  (major isomer) 185.4, 165.6, 151.1, 141.3, 140.2, 135.5, 128.8, 128.7, 126.5, 125.0, 124.1, 124.1, 122.9, 121.6, 116.3, 111.4, 52.6, 34.2, 32.4; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{19}\text{NO}_3$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ : 334.1443; Found 334.1438.



**(E)-Methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(2-phenylethyl)acrylate (3ba):** Yield 55%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  11.30 (s, 1H), 8.50 (br s, 1H), 7.99 (s, 1H), 7.82-7.84 (m, 1H), 7.31-7.35 (m, 2H), 7.18-7.21 (m, 2H), 6.97-6.99 (m, 3H), 3.79 (s, 3H); **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{INO}_3$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 453.9916; Found 453.9911.

**General procedure for the synthesis of carbazole derivatives:** To a stirred solution of (*E*)-methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -aryl/alkyl substituted acrylate (0.15 mmol), nitromethane (0.45 mmol) and DBU (35 mol%) in dry THF (0.4 mL) at room temperature under air or oxygen. The progress of the reaction was monitored by TLC. After completion of the reaction, the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (3  $\times$  10 mL), washed with dilute HCl (1N), brine and dried with  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ . The organic phase was evaporated by rotary evaporator under reduced pressure to give the crude product. The crude product was purified by column chromatography over silica gel to furnish the pure product. The product was fully characterized by their corresponding spectroscopic data ( $^1\text{H NMR}$ ,  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  and HRMS).

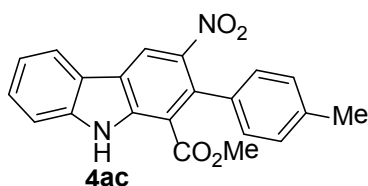
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-phenyl-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4aa):** Yield 81%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz,



CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.94 (s, 1H), 8.65 (s, 1H), 8.05 (d, *J* = 7.76 Hz, 1H), 7.50-7.48 (m, 2H), 7.35-7.28 (m, 4H), 7.22-7.19 (m, 2H), 3.48 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 167.6, 143.7, 141.4, 140.6, 137.0, 135.4, 128.5, 128.2, 128.0, 127.8, 123.3, 122.2, 121.4, 121.0, 120.1, 112.7, 111.8, 52.2; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd

For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>14</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>[M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 369.0851; Found 369.0846.

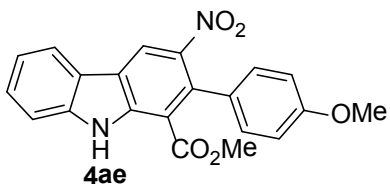
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(4-methylphenyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4ac):** Yield 78%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.95 (s, 1H), 8.68 (s, 1H), 8.13-8.11 (m, 1H), 7.57-7.54 (m, 2H), 7.39-7.35 (m, 1H), 7.23-7.16 (m, 4H), 3.59 (s, 3H), 2.42 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 167.6, 144.0, 141.3, 140.6, 137.5, 135.4, 133.9, 128.6, 128.4, 128.1, 123.1, 122.2, 121.3, 121.0,

119.9, 112.8, 111.7, 52.2, 21.4; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd For C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>[M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 383.1008; Found 383.1002.

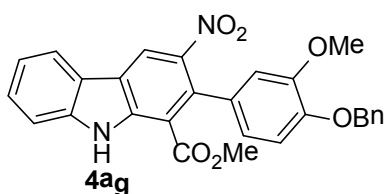
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(4-methoxyphenyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4ae):** Yield 76%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.97 (s, 1H), 8.67 (s, 1H), 8.12 (d, *J* = 8.04 Hz, 1H), 7.59-7.56 (m, 2H), 7.39-7.35 (m, 1H), 7.20 (d, *J* = 8.52 Hz, 2H), 6.94 (d, *J* = 8.52 Hz, 2H), 3.87 (s, 3H), 3.61 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 167.7, 159.3, 144.2, 141.3, 140.6, 135.0, 129.7, 129.0,

128.1, 123.1, 122.2, 121.3, 120.1, 119.9, 113.4, 112.9, 111.7, 55.3, 52.3; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd For C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>[M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 399.0957; Found 399.0951.

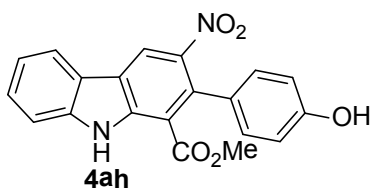
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(4-benzyloxy-3-methoxyphenyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4ag):** Yield 74%;



<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.94 (s, 1H), 8.66 (s, 1H), 8.11 (dd, *J* = 0.8, 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.53-7.58 (m, 2H), 7.47-7.49 (m, 2H), 7.29-7.40 (m, 4H), 6.92 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 6.84-6.85 (m, 1H), 6.74-6.76 (m, 1H), 5.20-5.22 (m, 2H), 3.87 (s, 3H), 3.54 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100

MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 167.8, 149.2, 147.9, 144.0, 141.3, 140.6, 137.1, 134.7, 129.9, 128.6, 128.1, 127.9, 127.4, 123.1, 122.2, 121.4, 121.1, 121.0, 119.7, 113.5, 113.0, 112.7, 111.7, 71.1, 56.2, 52.2; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd For C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>22</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>6</sub>[M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 505.1376; Found 505.1370.

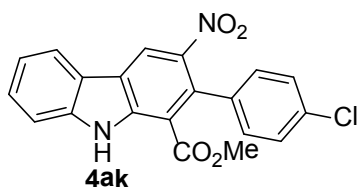
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4ah)** : Yield 71%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400



MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) δ 11.83 (br s, 1H), 9.60 (br s, 1H), 9.01 (s, 1H), 8.34 (d, *J* = 7.76 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 8.04 Hz, 1H), 7.53-7.57 (m, 1H), 7.30-7.34 (m, 1H), 7.05 (d, *J* = 8.28 Hz, 2H), 6.79 (d, *J* = 8.52 Hz, 2H), 3.66 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) δ 166.1, 157.1, 142.7, 141.4,

138.6, 132.3, 129.6, 127.7, 126.5, 122.0, 121.7, 121.3, 120.6, 119.1, 116.0, 115.0, 112.3, 52.4; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd. For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>14</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> [M+Na]<sup>+</sup>: 385.0800; Found 385.0795.

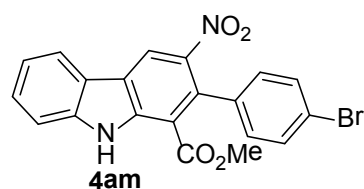
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(4-chlorophenyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4ak)**: Yield 82%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 10.07 (s, 1H), 8.75 (s, 1H), 8.14 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.56-7.61 (m, 2H), 7.37-7.41 (m, 3H), 7.21-7.24 (m, 2H), 3.61 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 167.3, 143.5, 141.5, 140.7, 135.6, 134.1, 133.9, 129.9, 128.4, 128.0, 123.6, 122.1, 121.5, 121.1, 120.3, 112.4, 111.8, 52.3; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd

For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>13</sub>ClN<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>[M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 403.0462; Found 403.0456.

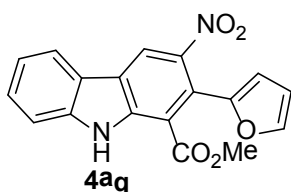
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(4-bromophenyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4am)**: Yield 79%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 10.07 (s, 1H), 8.74 (d, *J* = 0.76 Hz, 1H), 8.13 (dd, *J* = 0.8, 7.76 Hz, 1H), 7.59-7.53 (m, 4H), 7.41-7.37 (m, 1H), 7.17-7.15 (m, 2H), 3.61 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 167.3, 143.4, 141.5, 140.7, 136.1, 134.1, 130.9, 130.2, 128.4, 123.6, 122.1, 122.0, 121.5,

121.0, 120.3, 112.3, 111.8, 52.3; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>13</sub>BrN<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>[M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 446.9956; Found 446.9951 and [M+Na+2] 448.9931.

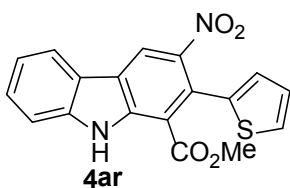
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(2-furyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4aq)**: Yield 82%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz,



CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.99 (s, 1H), 8.70 (s, 1H), 8.09 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.53-7.61 (m, 3H), 7.35-7.38 (m, 1H), 6.52-6.53 (m, 1H), 6.42-6.44 (m, 1H), 3.78 (m, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 167.1, 146.9, 143.4, 143.0, 141.1, 140.8, 128.6, 124.3, 123.8, 122.0, 121.5, 121.1, 120.1, 113.4, 111.8, 111.4,

110.1, 52.9; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd For C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>12</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>[M+Na]<sup>+</sup> 359.0644; Found 359.0638.

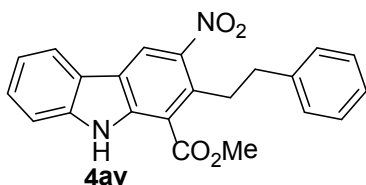
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(2-thiophenyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4ar)**: Yield 84%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz,



CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.96 (s, 1H), 8.65 (s, 1H), 8.11 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.62-7.52 (m, 2H), 7.46 (dd, *J* = 0.16 Hz, 5.2 Hz, 1H), 7.39-7.35 (m, 1H), 7.09-7.07 (m, 1H), 7.02-7.01 (m, 1H), 3.69 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 167.3, 144.6, 141.0, 140.7, 136.4, 128.5, 128.1, 127.1, 127.0, 126.7, 124.0, 122.1, 121.5,

121.1, 119.6, 114.1, 111.8, 52.6 ; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd For  $C_{18}H_{12}N_2O_4S[M+Na]^+$  375.0415; Found 375.0410.

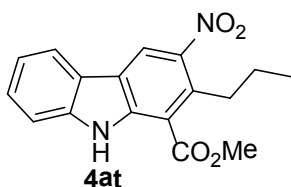
**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-(2-ethylphenyl)-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4av):** Yield 92%;  $^1H$  NMR (400



MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  10.03 (s, 1H), 8.70 (d,  $J = 0.48$  Hz, 1H), 8.08 (dd,  $J = 0.80$  Hz, 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.53-7.55 (m, 2H), 7.31-7.37 (m, 5H), 7.22-7.27 (m, 1H), 4.11 (s, 3H), 3.54-3.59 (m, 2H), 3.06-3.11 (m, 2H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  167.5, 144.7, 142.3, 141.7, 140.3, 136.1, 128.5 (2C), 127.9, 126.2, 122.5, 122.2, 121.3, 121.2, 120.8, 112.2, 111.6, 52.7,

37.7, 32.7; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd For  $C_{22}H_{18}N_2O_4[M+Na]^+$  397.1164; Found 397.1159.

**1-Methoxycarbonyl-2-propyl-3-nitro-9H-carbazole (4at) :** Yield 90%;  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,

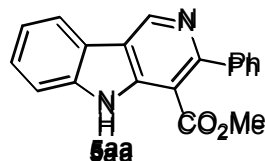


$CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  9.96 (s, 1H), 8.61 (s, 1H), 8.05 (d,  $J = 7.78$  Hz, 1H), 7.48-7.53 (m, 2H), 7.30-7.34 (m, 1H), 4.09 (s, 3H), 3.20-3.24 (m, 2H), 1.70-1.80 (m, 2H), 1.05 (t,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 3H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  167.7, 144.8, 142.2, 140.2, 137.2, 127.8, 122.2 (2C), 121.2, 120.9, 120.7, 112.1, 111.5, 52.6, 32.2, 25.3, 14.5; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd For  $C_{17}H_{16}N_2O_4[M+Na]^+$  335.1002;

Found 335.1021.

**General procedure for the synthesis of substituted  $\gamma$ -carboline derivatives:** A homogeneous solution of (*E*)-methyl  $\alpha$ -(3-formyl-1*H*-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -aryl/alkyl substituted acrylates (0.15 mmol) and ammonium acetate (0.225 mmol) in DMSO (1.0 mL) was stirred at room temperature under air or oxygen. The progress of the reaction was monitored by TLC. After completion of the reaction, the mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate ( $3 \times 10$  mL), washed with brine and dried with  $Na_2SO_4$ . The organic phase was evaporated by rotary evaporator under reduced pressure to give the crude product. The crude product was purified by column chromatography over silica gel to furnish the pure product. The products were characterized by their corresponding spectroscopic data ( $^1H$  NMR,  $^{13}C$  NMR and HRMS).

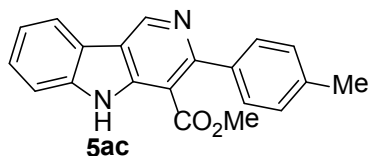
**Methyl 3-phenyl-5*H*-pyrido[4,3-*b*]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 96%;  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )



$\delta$  9.89 (br s, 1H), 9.38 (s, 1H), 8.17 (d,  $J = 7.76$  Hz, 1H), 7.52-7.58 (m, 4H), 7.42-7.48 (m, 3H), 7.35-7.39 (m, 1H), 3.70 (s, 3H);  $^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )  $\delta$  168.4, 156.9, 145.2, 143.6, 141.7, 139.9, 129.1, 128.1, 127.8, 127.5, 121.5, 121.1, 120.9, 119.8, 111.5, 107.6, 51.9; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For

$C_{19}H_{14}N_2O_2 [M+H]^+$ : 303.1134; Found 303.1128.

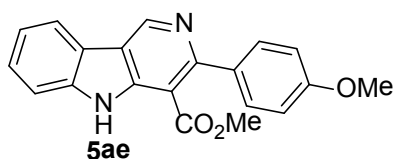
**Methyl 3-(4-methylphenyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 93%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.84 (br s, 1H), 9.36 (s, 1H), 8.15(d, *J* = 7.76 Hz, 1H), 7.51-7.53 (m, 2H), 7.47(d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.34-7.38 (m, 1H), 7.25 (d, *J* = 7.76 Hz, 2H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 2.43 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100

MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.6, 159.9, 145.2, 143.6, 139.9, 138.7, 137.9, 129.1, 128.5, 127.4, 121.4, 121.1, 120.8, 119.6, 111.4, 107.5, 51.9, 21.3; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd. For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup>: 317.1290; Found 317.1285.

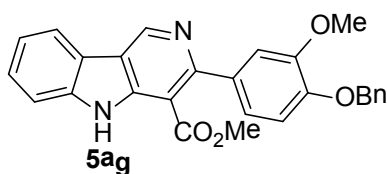
**Methyl 3-(4-methoxyphenyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 89%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.83 (br s, 1H), 9.34 (s, 1H), 8.15 (d, *J* = 7.80 Hz, 1H), 7.50-7.55 (m, 4H), 7.34-7.38 (m, 1H), 6.98 (d, *J* = 8.76 Hz, 2H), 3.88 (s, 3H), 3.75 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.8, 159.8, 156.5, 145.3, 143.6, 139.9, 134.1, 130.6, 127.4, 121.4, 121.2,

120.8, 119.4, 113.3, 111.4, 107.2, 55.3, 51.9; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd. For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>16</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup>: 333.1239; Found 333.1234.

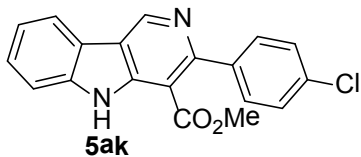
**Methyl 3-(4-benzyloxy-3-methoxyphenyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 86%; <sup>1</sup>H



NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.82 (br s, 1H), 9.33 (s, 1H), 8.15 (d, *J* = 7.76 Hz, 1H), 7.52-7.54 (m, 2H), 7.46-7.48 (m, 2H), 7.34-7.39 (m, 3H), 7.28-7.32(m, 1H), 7.22-7.23(m, 1H), 7.00-7.03(m, 1H), 6.94-6.96 (m, 1H), 5.24 (s, 2H), 3.96 (s, 3H), 3.70 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR

(100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.5, 156.1, 149.2, 148.3, 145.1, 143.3, 139.9, 137.0, 134.7, 128.4, 127.8, 127.4, 127.3, 122.0, 121.4, 121.0, 120.7, 119.5, 113.3, 112.8, 111.4, 107.5, 70.9, 56.0, 51.9; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd. For C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>22</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> [M+H]<sup>+</sup>: 439.1657; Found 439.1652.

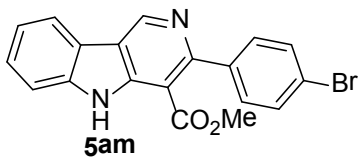
**Methyl 3-(4-chlorophenyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 94%; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400



MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.92 (br s, 1H), 9.36 (s, 1H), 8.16 (d, *J* = 7.76 Hz, 1H), 7.54-7.55 (m, 2H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 8.56 Hz, 2H), 7.42 (d, *J* = 8.28, 2H), 7.36-7.40 (m, 1H), 3.74 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 168.1, 155.6, 145.2, 143.7, 140.2, 140.0, 134.2, 130.5, 128.0, 127.7,

121.6, 121.0, 120.9, 120.0, 111.5, 107.5, 52.0; HRMS (ESI) *m/z* calcd. For C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>Cl [M+H]<sup>+</sup>: 337.0744; Found 337.0738.

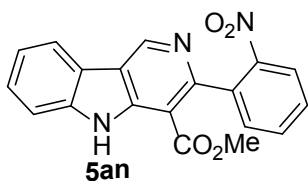
**Methyl 3-(4-bromophenyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 96%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400



MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.92 (br s, 1H), 9.36 (s, 1H), 8.16 (d,  $J = 7.76$  Hz, 1H), 7.54-7.59 (m, 4H), 7.43-7.45 (m, 2H), 7.36-7.40 (m, 1H), 3.74 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  168.1, 155.6, 145.2, 143.7, 140.7, 140.0, 130.9, 130.8, 127.7, 122.5, 121.6, 121.0, 120.9, 120.1,

111.5, 107.5, 52.0; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2\text{Br}$   $[\text{M}]^+$ : 381.0238; Found 381.0233, 383.0214.

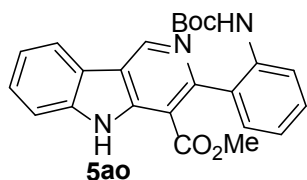
**Methyl 3-(2-nitrophenyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 93%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,



$\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  10.08 (br s, 1H), 9.34 (s, 1H), 8.16-8.21 (m, 2H), 7.69-7.72 (m, 1H), 7.56-7.60 (m, 3H), 7.44 (d,  $J = 7.52$  Hz, 1H), 7.37-7.41 (m, 1H), 3.70 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  166.7, 154.1, 147.8, 144.9, 144.2, 140.0, 138.1, 133.0, 131.3, 128.6, 127.9, 124.0, 121.7, 120.0, 120.9, 120.7,

111.6, 107.0, 52.2; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{13}\text{N}_3\text{O}_4$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ : 348.0948; Found 348.0979.

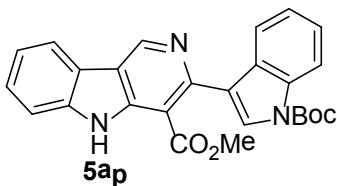
**Methyl 3-[2-(tert-butoxycarbonyl)aminophenyl]-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield



86%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.98 (br s, 1H), 9.37 (s, 1H), 8.16-8.20 (m, 3H), 7.55-7.58 (m, 2H), 7.36-7.41 (m, 2H), 7.15-7.17 (m, 1H), 7.05-7.08 (m, 1H), 3.66 (s, 3H), 1.46 (s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  168.0, 154.3, 153.0, 145.4, 143.2, 139.9, 136.0, 130.8, 129.9,

129.1, 127.8, 122.1, 121.6, 120.9, 120.9, 120.5, 119.9, 111.6, 109.0, 80.1, 52.0, 28.3; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{23}\text{N}_3\text{O}_4$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ : 418.1767; Found 418.1761.

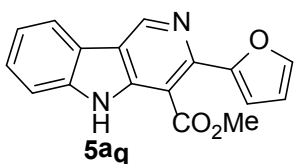
**Methyl 3-[N-tert-butoxycarbonyl-3-indolyl]-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 94%;



$^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  10.00 (br s, 1H), 9.40 (s, 1H), 8.28 (d,  $J = 7.04$  Hz, 1H), 8.17 (d,  $J = 7.52$  Hz, 1H), 8.00 (s, 1H), 7.52-7.55 (m, 2H), 7.45-7.47 (m, 1H), 7.32-7.39 (m, 2H), 7.22-7.26 (m, 1H), 3.53 (s, 3H), 1.69 (s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  168.3, 149.6, 145.2, 144.4, 139.9, 135.3, 129.7, 127.5, 125.5, 124.3, 123.0, 122.9, 121.5,

121.1, 120.8, 120.8, 119.8, 119.2, 115.4, 111.5, 108.4, 83.8, 52.0, 28.1 **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{26}\text{H}_{23}\text{N}_3\text{O}_4$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ : 442.1767; Found 331.1761.

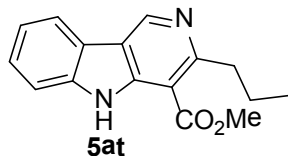
**Methyl 3-(2-furyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 90%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,



$\text{DMSO-d}_6$ )  $\delta$  12.80 (br s, 1H), 9.66 (s, 1H), 8.45 (d,  $J = 7.76$  Hz, 1H), 8.03 (s, 1H), 7.76 (d,  $J = 8.28$  Hz, 1H), 7.64 (t,  $J = 7.52$  Hz, 1H), 7.43-7.48 (m, 2H), 6.80 (s, 1H), 4.01 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-d}_6$ )  $\delta$  164.9,

147.3, 146.3, 143.3, 141.5, 139.1, 136.6, 128.8, 122.3, 121.9, 120.4, 119.4, 113.9, 112.8, 112.7, 108.9, 53.2; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $C_{17}H_{12}N_2O_3$   $[M+H]^+$ : 293.0926; Found 293.0921.

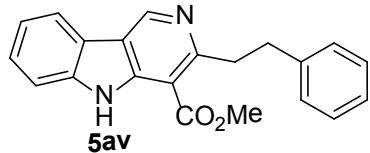
**Methyl 3-(2-propyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 91%;  **$^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  9.98 (br s, 1H), 9.26 (s, 1H), 8.11 (d,  $J = 7.76$  Hz; 1H), 7.47-7.53 (m, 2H), 7.31-7.35 (m, 1H), 4.08 (s, 3H), 3.30-3.34 (m, 2H), 1.18-1.83 (m, 2H), 1.05 (t,  $J = 7.28$  Hz, 3H);  **$^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  168.1,



161.0, 145.6, 144.1, 139.5, 127.1, 121.3, 121.2, 120.6, 119.3, 111.3, 107.1,

52.2, 40.2, 24.2, 14.4; **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $C_{16}H_{16}N_2O_2$   $[M+H]^+$ : 269.1290; Found 269.1285.

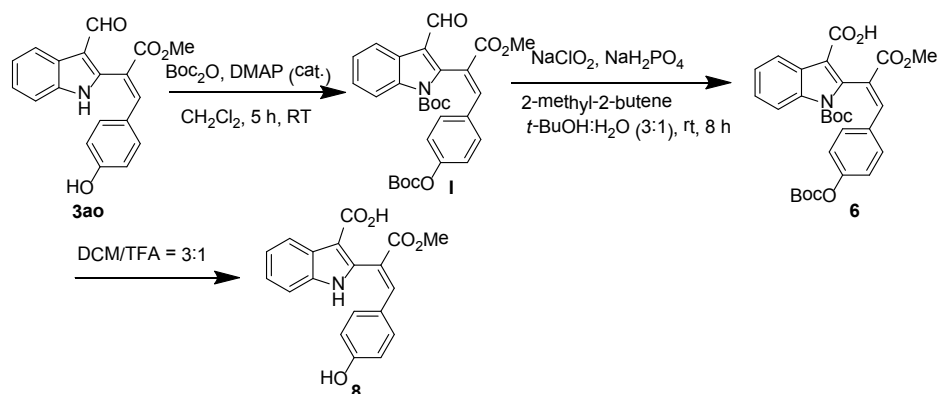
**Methyl 3-(2-phenylethyl)-5H-pyrido[4,3-b]indole-4-carboxylate:** Yield 95%;  **$^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  10.01 (br s, 1H), 9.30 (s, 1H), 8.13 (d,  $J = 7.76$  Hz, 1H),



7.49-7.54 (m, 2H), 7.33-7.37 (m, 1H), 7.29-7.31 (m, 4H), 7.20-7.23 (m, 1H), 4.07 (s, 3H), 3.63-3.67 (m, 2H), 3.07-3.11 (m, 2H);  **$^{13}C$  NMR (100 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  167.8, 159.6, 145.5, 144.1, 142.1,

139.5, 128.5, 128.3, 127.2, 125.9, 121.3, 121.0, 120.6, 119.5, 111.4, 107.3, 52.3, 40.2, 37.0 **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $C_{21}H_{18}N_2O_2$   $[M+H]^+$ : 331.1446; Found 331.1441.

### Synthesis of prenostodione (**8**) from **3ao**:



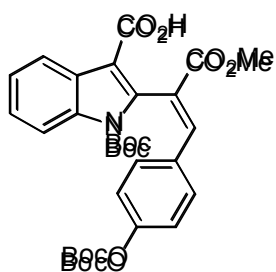
To a stirred solution of compound **3ao** (321 mg, 1.0 mmol) and DMAP (12.2 mg, 0.1 mmol) at 0 °C in DCM was added  $Boc_2O$  (545 mg, 2.5 mmol). The stirring was continued for 5 h at room temperature, and then the reaction mixture was extracted with DCM before being quenched with dilute HCl. Evaporation of the solvent left the crude product which was sufficiently pure and used directly for the next step.

A heterogeneous mixture of aldehyde **I** (1.0 mmol) and 2-methyl-2-butene (280 mg, 4.0 mmol) in  $t$ -BuOH:H<sub>2</sub>O (3:1 = 20 mL) were added  $NaH_2PO_4 \cdot H_2O$  (414 mg, 3.0 mmol) and  $NaClO_2$  (273 mg, 3.0 mmol) respectively at room temperature. The stirring was continued for 8 h (monitored by TLC). After

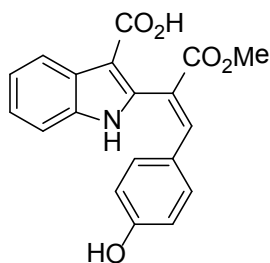


completion of the reaction, the mixture was extracted with EtOAc ( $3 \times 20$  mL), washed with water, brine and dried over  $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ . The combined organic phase was concentrated by rotary evaporator under reduced pressure to leave the crude product. The white solid was purified by column chromatography over silica gel to furnish the pure product **6** (484 mg, 90% two steps).

A homogeneous solution of compound **6** (268.5 mg, 0.5 mmol) in  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  (9.0 mL) was added TFA (3.0 mL) at  $0^\circ\text{C}$ . After that, reaction mixture was stirred for another 8 h (monitored by TLC). After completion of the reaction mixture was concentrated by rotary evaporator to give the crude product. The purification was done by column chromatography over silica-gel to furnish the pure product **8** (154.0 mg, 91%).



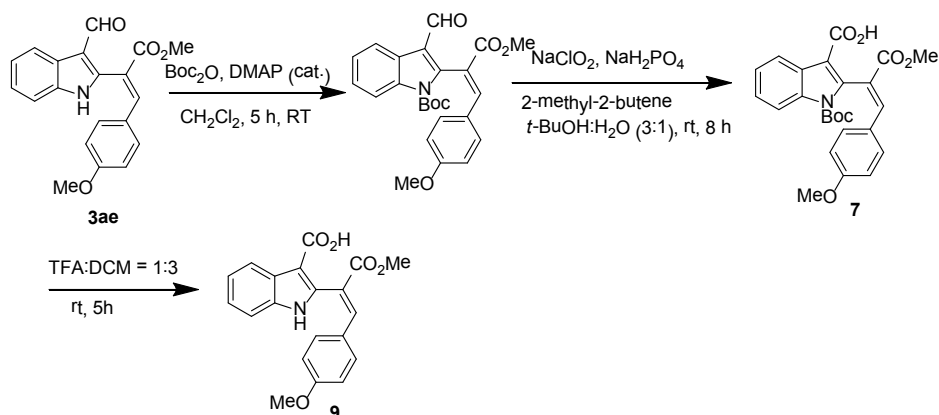
**Compound 6:** Yield 90%;  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.26 (t,  $J = 9.02$  Hz, 2H), 7.96 (s, 1H), 7.37-7.44 (m, 2H), 6.97-7.02 (m, 4H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 1.49 (s, 9H), 1.48 (s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  168.9, 166.5, 151.9, 151.1, 148.9, 141.4, 139.7, 136.0, 131.4, 130.7, 127.1, 125.4, 124.2, 124.0, 122.2, 121.5, 115.4, 111.2, 85.7, 83.8, 52.4, 27.7, 27.6 HRMS (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{29}\text{H}_{31}\text{NO}_9$   $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ : 538.2077. Found 538.2072.



**Prenostodione 8:** Yield 91%;

The product was characterized by spectroscopic data ( $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR, HRMS) which is in good agreement with literature data.

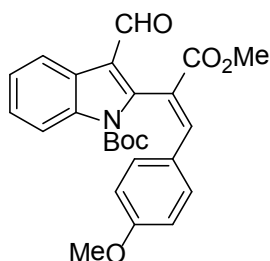
## Synthesis of methylated prenostodione 9:



Similar synthetic methods were followed for the synthesis of compound 9.

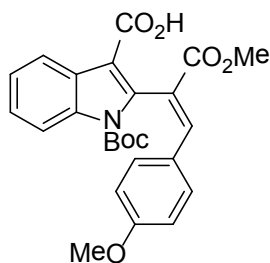
**Methyl  $\alpha$ -(1-tert-butoxycarbonyl-3-formyl-1H-indol-2-yl)- $\beta$ -(4-methoxyphenyl)acrylate:** Yield

97%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  9.82 (s, 1H), 8.28-8.34 (m, 2H), 8.13 (s, 1H), 7.37-7.47 (m, 2H), 7.06 (d,  $J = 9.09$  Hz, 2H), 6.71 (d,  $J = 8.80$  Hz, 2H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 1.56 (s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  187.0, 166.4, 161.3, 149.1, 144.3, 144.3, 136.4, 132.0, 125.9, 125.7, 124.7, 122.2, 119.0, 117.8, 115.4, 114.5, 86.0, 55.2, 52.4, 27.7 **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{25}\text{NO}_6$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 458.1579. Found 458.1574.



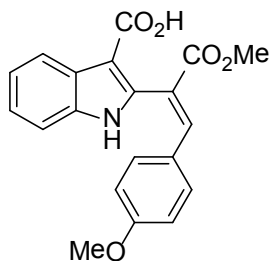
**Compound 7:**  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  8.25-8.28 (m, 2H), 7.92 (s, 1H), 7.37-7.44 (m, 2H),

6.91(d,  $J = 8.67$  Hz, 2H), 6.67 (d,  $J = 9.0$  Hz, 2H), 3.76(s, 3H), 3.70 (s, 3H), 1.46(s, 9H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  169.0, 166.8, 160.8, 149.0, 142.3, 140.5, 136.1, 131.4, 127.3, 126.6, 125.3, 124.1, 122.2, 121.4, 115.4, 114.3, 110.9, 85.5, 55.2, 52.3, 27.7 **HRMS** (ESI)  $m/z$  calcd. For  $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{25}\text{NO}_7$   $[\text{M}+\text{Na}]^+$ : 474.1529. Found 474.1523.



**Compound 9:** Yield 93%;  $^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-d}_6$ )  $\delta$  11.87 (br s, 2H), 8.05-8.07 (m, 1H),

7.85 (s, 1H), 7.38-7.40 (m, 1H), 7.17-7.22 (m, 2H), 6.97 (d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz, 2H), 6.80 (d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz, 2H), 3.69 (s, 3H), 3.66 (s, 3H);  $^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (100 MHz,  $\text{DMSO-d}_6$ )  $\delta$  166.6, 165.7, 160.6, 141.7, 138.9, 135.7, 131.9, 126.9, 126.2,



122.4, 121.3, 121.1, 121.1, 114.3, 112.0, 105.7, 55.3, 52.0. **HRMS** (ESI) m/z calcd. For C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>17</sub>NO<sub>5</sub> [M-H]<sup>+</sup>: 350.1029. Found 350.1023.

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