

The Generation of CF and an Investigation of the Products of Its Reaction with Alkenes

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Abstract: The reaction of arc generated carbon atoms with CF₄ at 77 K in the presence of alkene trapping agents results in the formation of fluorocyclopropanes and 1,1-difluoroalkanes. The fluorocyclopropanes are postulated to arise by addition of CF to the double bond generating a cyclopropyl radical which abstracts H. CF adds stereospecifically to olefins and gives both cis and trans fluorocyclopropanes with the trans generally predominating. The 1,1-difluoroalkanes are postulated to be the result of a ³CF₂ reaction. In the presence of oxygen, the CF is oxidized to CO₂, and the ³CF₂ gives carbonyl fluoride.

Although monovalent carbon intermediates are quite common when coordinated to metal complexes,¹ little is known about the chemistry of free methylidyne.² There have been spectral,³ theoretical,⁴ and kinetic⁵ studies of fluoromethylidyne, CF, but no reports of the products of the reactions of this interesting species. In this paper, we report evidence for the formation of CF in the reaction of atomic carbon with fluorocarbons and give details of its reaction with alkenes.

The intermediacy of CF in the reactions of atomic carbon was postulated by Blaxell, MacKay, and Wolfgang who reacted nucleogenic carbon-11 atoms with fluorocarbons and observed organic products which were thought to contain a single fluorine atom.⁶ Finn, Ache, and Wolf⁷ reported high yields of ¹¹CO₂ when ¹¹C was reacted with fluorocarbons and O₂ and proposed that an intermediate, perhaps CF, was oxidized to CO₂. The intermediacy of CF in these systems is reasonable as the abstraction in eq 1 is exothermic by 28 kcal/mol for C(¹D) and only slightly endothermic by 2 kcal/mol for C(³P).⁸






In order to determine if the reaction in eq 1 is kinetically favorable, we have carried out ab initio molecular orbital studies of the reaction of atomic carbon with CF₄. We have also examined the reaction experimentally by reacting arc generated carbon atoms with CF₄ in both the presence and absence of olefinic trapping agents.

Results and Discussion

Molecular Orbital Calculations. In these calculations, which utilized the GAUSSIAN 82 program,⁹ geometries were optimized by using the 3-21G basis set at the single configurational level with the restricted Hartree-Fock formalism for closed shell

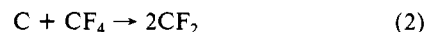
Table I. Relative Energies (kcal/mol) of Various Species on the C₂F₄ Potential Energy Surface

molecule	electronic state	6-31G	MP2/6-31G	6-31G*	[MP2/6-31G*] ^a
(1) C + CF ₄	³ P, ¹ A ₁	0	0	0	0
(2) C + CF ₄	¹ D, ¹ A ₁				30.0 ^b
(3) CF + CF ₃	² π, ² A ₁	14.9	3.7	16.2	5.0
(4) 2(CF ₂)	¹ A ₁	11.9	-20.5	4.8	-27.6
(5) FCCF ₃	¹ A'	-23.0	-52.7	-27.8	-57.5
(6) FCCF ₃	³ A''	-37.9	-52.7	-34.8	-49.6
(7) F ₂ C=CF ₂	¹ A _g	-58.4	-97.0	-55.6	-94.2
(8) F ₂ CCF ₂	³ A ₁	-22.6	-41.4	-14.0	-32.8
(9) C-CF ₃	¹ A'	123.7	80.5	131.4	88.2
(10) 	¹ A ₁	89.4	35.5	97.2	43.3
(11) 	³ A''	18.3	4.8	18.5	5.0
(12) 	³ B ₂	65.3	31.4	72.0	38.1

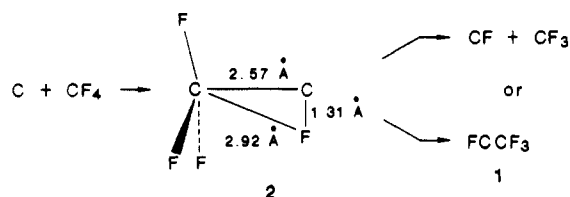
^a Additivity approximation; ref 10. ^b Taken from experimental C(³P) - C(¹D) splitting. Moore, C. E. *Natl. Bur. Stand. Circ. (U.S.)* **1949**, 1, no. 467.

systems and the unrestricted formalism for open-shell systems. Single point calculations were made at the 6-31G* level and at the MP2/6-31G level in order to estimate relative energies at the MP2/6-31G* level by using the additivity approximation.¹⁰

The reactions considered in these calculations were the fluorine abstraction to give CF (eq 1), concerted formation of two molecules of CF₂ (eq 2), and insertion into the C-F bond to generate tetrafluoroethanidyne, 1. The calculated energies, relative to C(³P) + CF₄, are shown in Table I.



These calculations indicate that C(³P) will react with carbon via the transition structure 2, which lies 5 kcal/mol above C(³P) + CF₄ at the [UMP2/6-31G*] level. Removal of two fluorines by C(³P) to give either 2CF₂ or C₂F₄ is calculated to have a barrier of 38.1 kcal/mol (entry 12, Table I). A treatment of the reaction



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Table II. Yields of Fluorocyclopropanes and 1,1-Difluoroalkanes in the Reaction of C + CF₄ + Alkenes

reactants ^a		product yields (mmol × 10 ³) ^b	
alkene	C mmol ^c	fluorocyclopropane	1,1-difluoroalkane
	8.36	6.84	1.28
	13.10	cis 8.79, trans 6.2	1.23
	8.40	2.95	2.78
	2.88	cis 0.87, trans 1.14	0.27
	5.79	cis 2.28, trans 2.30	1.97
	1.76	2.34	0.44
	3.27	cis 0.95, trans 1.60	0.30
P=	1.55	cis 0.77, trans 0.94	d
	1.62	syn 1.96, anti 3.86	1.10

^aIn all cases 15 mmol each of alkene and CF₄ were cocondensed with carbon. ^bAlthough CHF₃ is detected among the products it is difficult to quantitate due to its volatility under the reaction conditions. ^cThis is the amount of carbon lost from the graphite electrodes. Since some carbon is physically removed, the actual amount of carbon vaporized is less. ^dNo 3-phenyl-1,1-difluoropropane could be detected. Perhaps the HCF₂ polymerizes the styrene.

between CF₄ and C(¹D) is more complex in that this state of carbon has both open and closed shell components and is not well treated by a single configurational method. Thus, we have evaluated the reactivity of C(¹D) by separately considering both open and closed shell reaction paths.¹¹ When this is done, the closed shell singlet is calculated to form tetrafluoroethylene directly with a barrier of 13.3 kcal/mol. In order to evaluate the open shell singlet surface, we have assumed that the energy of open shell **2**, with its widely separated unpaired spins, is only slightly higher than that of triplet **2**. Since C(¹D) is 30 kcal higher in energy than C(³P), this assumption leads to the conclusion that C(¹D) will react with CF₄ to form **2** with little or no barrier. Thus, the calculations predict that the lowest energy process for both singlet and triplet carbon will be the formation of **2**. However, an examination of the geometry of **2** does not allow us to determine if it will proceed directly to CF + CF₃ or collapse to tetrafluoroethylenide, **1**. In good agreement with experimental heats of reaction,⁸ fluorine abstraction by C(³P) is calculated to be endothermic by 5 kcal/mol while abstraction by C(¹D) is exothermic by 25 kcal/mol. Dixon has calculated that carbene **1** has a singlet ground state with a singlet-triplet splitting of 9.2 kcal/mol.¹² A splitting of 7.9 kcal is calculated in the present work.

Reaction of Arc Generated Carbon Atoms with CF₄. In order to examine this reaction experimentally, we have generated atomic carbon in a carbon arc and cocondensed it with CF₄ at 77 K.¹³ Reaction of carbon with CF₄ alone generates no volatile products. Extraction of the reactor bottom with acetone yields a polymer with an IR absorbance at 1215 cm⁻¹. It is interesting that this IR band is the same position as that reported for (CF)_n.¹⁴

The lack of volatile products in the C + CF₄ reaction induced us to follow the lead of Wolfgang and co-workers⁶ and add alkenes to trap any intermediates that may be present. Since the products of the reaction of atomic carbon with alkenes themselves are generally well understood,¹³ we have focused our attention on

Table III. ¹⁹F Chemical Shifts and Coupling Constants for the Fluorocyclopropanes

fluorocyclopropane	δF ^a (ppm)	J _{H1-F} (Hz)	J _{Hcis-F} (Hz)	J _{Htrans-F} (Hz)
fluorocyclopropane	-212.6	65.28	21.59	10.14
<i>trans</i> -2-methylfluorocyclopropane	-208.0	64.62	21.98, 21.65	9.96
<i>cis</i> -2-methylfluorocyclopropane	-229.0	65.9	20.0	11.17, 10.93
2,2-dimethylfluorocyclopropane	-218.0	65.25	21.12	9.50
<i>trans,cis</i> -2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane	-203.5	63.36	22.0	
<i>cis,cis</i> -2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane	-242.5	67.77		7.64
<i>cis,trans</i> -2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane	-224.9	65.10	21.35	b
<i>trans</i> -2,2,3-trimethylfluorocyclopropane	-215.4	65.23	22.98	
<i>cis</i> -2,2,3-trimethylfluorocyclopropane	-232.6	65.99		11.85
<i>trans</i> -2-ethylfluorocyclopropane	-208.1	65.0	21.80, 21.45	10.5
<i>cis</i> -2-ethylfluorocyclopropane	-228.6	64.0	21.52	10.45, 10.10
<i>syn</i> -7-fluorobicyclo[4.1.0]-heptane	-205.5	64.55	22.54	
<i>anti</i> -7-fluorobicyclo[4.1.0]-heptane	-234.5	67.63		9.07
<i>trans</i> -2-phenylfluorocyclopropane	-203.0	64.2	19.15, 18.6	8.0
<i>cis</i> -2-phenylfluorocyclopropane	-223.0	65.75	18.0	7.75, 7.4

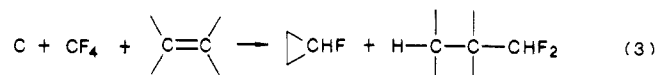
^aChemical shifts are relative to CFC1₃. ^bCoupling could not be resolved.

Table IV. ¹⁹F Chemical Shifts and Coupling Constants for RCHF₂

R	δF ^a (ppm)	² J _{H-F} (Hz)	³ J _{H-F} (Hz)
ethyl	-118.3	56.65	17.40
<i>n</i> -propyl	-116.9	56.75	17.42
isobutyl	-116.8	57.13	17.20
<i>sec</i> -butyl	-123.9	56.69	14.76
3-methyl-2-butyl	-119.0	55.32	12.33
<i>n</i> -butyl	-116.6	56.65	17.40
cyclohexyl	-124.2	56.8	13.0

^aChemical shifts are relative to CFC1₃.

products containing fluorine. Two common products always observed are fluorocyclopropanes and 1,1-difluoroalkanes (eq 3) whose yields are shown in Table II. In no case could tetrafluoroethylene or adducts of carbene **1** be detected among the products.



Spectral Characterization of Fluorine Containing Products. The structures of the fluorine containing products were deduced from their ¹⁹F NMR spectral data. The stereochemistry of the fluorocyclopropanes can be determined from their F-H couplings and ¹⁹F chemical shifts.¹⁵ The vicinal protons *trans* to the F in fluorocyclopropanes couple with J_{H-F} = 8–12 Hz while *cis* protons have J_{H-F} = 18–23 Hz. Fluorines *cis* to alkyl groups in fluorocyclopropanes always resonate at higher fields than *trans* fluorines. Of the 15 fluorocyclopropanes identified in this study, the ¹H spectra of fluorocyclopropane,¹⁶ and the ¹⁹F spectra of 2,2-dimethylfluorocyclopropane,¹⁷ *cis*- and *trans*-2,2,3-trimethylfluorocyclopropane,¹⁵ *cis*- and *trans*-2-phenylfluorocyclopropane,¹⁵ and *syn*- and *anti*-7-fluorobicyclo[4.1.0]heptane¹⁵ have appeared

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Table V. Cis-Trans Ratios of Fluorocyclopropanes Formed in the Reactions of C + CF₄ and CHF with Alkenes

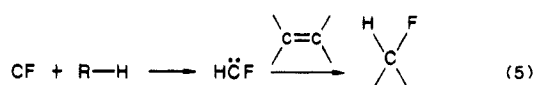
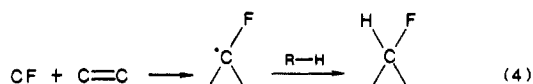
alkene substrate (s)	cis-trans ratios in product fluorocyclopropanes		
	C + CF ₄	CTF (gas) ^a	CHF (soln) ^b
	0.76	1.09	
	0.99	1.0	
	0.59	1.0	1.1
	0.51		1.0
+ (1:1)	0.23		
+ (1:1.5)	0		
+ (1:2)	0		

^aGenerated by the reaction of energetic tritium atoms with difluoromethane.²⁰ ^bFrom the photolysis of fluorodiodomethane.²¹

in the literature. We have synthesized *cis*- and *trans*-2-ethylfluorocyclopropane and *cis,cis*-, *trans,cis*-, and *cis,trans*-2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane.¹⁷ In all cases the spectra of our products are similar to those of the authentic sample. We have also synthesized all the 1,1-difluoroalkanes¹⁸ with the exception of 2,3-dimethyl-1,1-difluorobutane and have observed similar ¹⁹F spectra to our products and those reported in the literature.¹⁹ The ¹⁹F spectral data of products are listed in Tables III and IV.

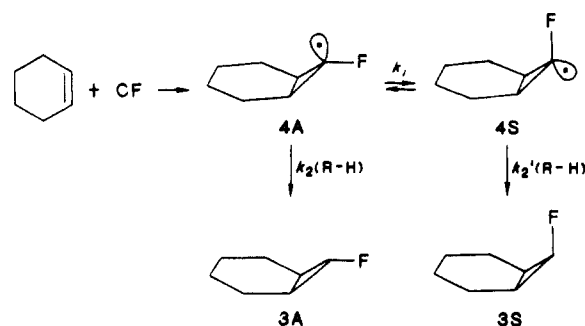
In order to further characterize the fluorine containing products, they were separated by gas chromatography, and their structures were confirmed by mass spectrometry. While the fluorocyclopropanes show a parent ion in their mass spectrum, the 1,1-difluoroalkanes generally exhibit a peak corresponding to the loss of HF from the parent. Mass spectra and retention times of the authentic samples are identical with those of our products.

The Mechanism of Formation of the Fluorocyclopropanes. Since the fluorocyclopropane products represent the addition of both a carbon and a fluorine to the olefinic trapping agent, it is reasonable to assume the involvement of CF in the mechanism of their formation. If CF were formed initially, addition to a double bond would give a fluorocyclopropyl radical. Subsequent hydrogen abstraction generates the fluorocyclopropane as shown in eq 4. Alternatively, the CF could abstract hydrogen to generate HCF which then adds to the alkene (eq 5). However, an examination



of the enthalpy of the hydrogen abstraction in eq 5 reveals that the process is endothermic for both vinyl ($\Delta H = +37$ kcal/mol) and allylic C-H bonds ($\Delta H = 10$ kcal/mol). Hence, this mechanism is unlikely. In contrast, we calculate (3-21G) that the hydrogen abstraction by the fluorocyclopropyl radical in eq 4 is favorable for vinyl and allylic C-H bonds by 2.5 and 26.4 kcal/mol, respectively. When the C + CF₄ + ethylene reaction is run in the presence of ethane, a source of more readily abstractable hydrogen, the fluorocyclopropane yield doubles.

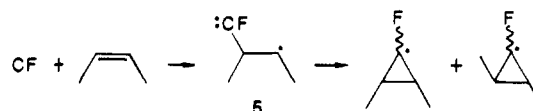
When substituted alkenes are used as substrates in the C + CF₄ reaction, both *cis* and *trans* substituted fluorocyclopropanes are generated with the *trans* generally predominating. In contrast, when CHF is reacted with alkenes in the gas phase²⁰ or in solu-

Scheme I

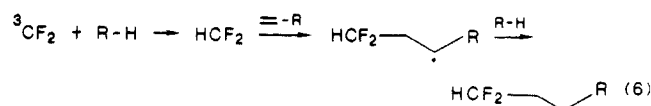
tion,²¹ the *cis*:*trans* ratios in the product cyclopropanes are invariably close to unity. Table V compares *cis*/*trans* ratios from reaction of fluoromethylene with alkenes to those observed in the present study. These data indicate that the reactivity of fluoromethylene is different from that observed here and provide evidence that the intermediate in our system is not HCF but CF.

Table V demonstrates that, when propene is added to the C + CF₄ + cyclohexene system, the *syn*:*anti* ratio in 7-fluorobicyclo[4.1.0]heptane (3-S and 3-A) decreases from 0.51 to 0. We feel that this result is consistent with the mechanism in Scheme I involving initial addition of CF to cyclohexene to give the anti radical 4-A. Radical 4-A can either invert to the *syn* radical 4-S or abstract a hydrogen. Since propene is expected to be more mobile on the low-temperature matrix than cyclohexene and hence a better hydrogen donor, the ratio $k_2[\text{R-H}]:k_1$ is expected to increase as propene is added to the matrix resulting in an increase in 3-A. Since we calculate ([UMP2/6-31G*]) a barrier of 13.7 kcal/mol for inversion of the fluorocyclopropyl radical,²² the interconversion of *syn* and *anti* radicals is possible if these species are formed with a moderate amount of excess energy on the matrix. A variation of the 3-S:3-A ratio as a function of hydrogen donor concentration would not be anticipated if CF were to first abstract hydrogen to give HCF.

The Stereochemistry of CF Additions. The use of *E*- and *Z*-2-butene as substrates allows an evaluation of the stereochemistry about the alkene C-C bond during addition of CF. If CF were to add as a radical, one might expect the open shell intermediate 5 to have sufficient lifetime to permit rotation about the C-C bond and consequently nonstereospecific formation of the fluorocyclopropyl radical. However, the stereospecific formation of *trans-cis*- and *cis,cis*-2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane from (*Z*)-2-butene and only *cis,trans*-2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane from (*E*)-2-butene rules out an open shell intermediate such as 5 in which there is free rotation about the C-C bond.



The Mechanism of Formation of 1,1-Difluoroalkanes. Although the presence of 1,1-difluoroalkanes in the C + CF₄ reaction appears to be indicative of the intermediacy of CF₂, no products in which CF₂ has added to the alkene to give a difluorocyclopropane are ever observed. Instead, the results are best accommodated by invoking a CF₂ which abstracts a hydrogen to generate CHF₂ which then adds to the alkene in a radical manner as shown in eq 6. The 1,1-difluoroalkanes have the regiochemistry that is



expected for addition of CHF₂ to a substituted alkene to give the

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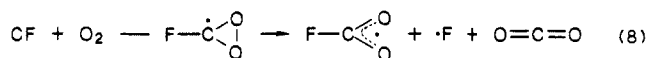
(22) Lien and Hopkinson (Lien, M. H.; Hopkinson, A. C. *J. Comput. Chem.* **1985**, *6*, 274) have recently reported a barrier of 16.7 kcal/mol for this inversion.

most stable free radical. Since hydrogen abstractions by carbenes are characteristic of triplet states, we feel that reactive form of CF₂ in this system is the excited triplet state. However, the reaction shown in eq 2 in which either C(³P) or C(¹D) reacts with CF₄ to give exclusively ³CF₂ is endothermic. As an alternative to the reaction in eq 2, we postulate that the ³CF₂ arises by reaction of carbon with the CF₃ (eq 7). A simple test of this postulate



is the substitution of a fluorocarbon which will not yield CF₃ upon fluorine abstraction by carbon. Accordingly, atomic carbon was condensed with perfluoroisobutane in the presence of ethylene and propene. This reaction resulted in the formation of fluorocyclopropanes but no 1,1-difluoroalkanes.

Reaction of C with CF₄ in the Presence of O₂. The reaction of nucleogenic carbon-11 atoms with CF₄ has been reported to generate ¹¹CO₂.⁷ This is in contrast to the reaction of carbon atoms with oxygen alone which yields CO.¹³ When arc generated carbon atoms are cocondensed with CF₄ containing 5% oxygen, carbon dioxide and carbonyl fluoride are formed in a 1.1:1 ratio. The carbon dioxide, which has also been reported in the ¹¹C system,⁷ may be rationalized by addition of CF to O₂ followed by ring opening to a fluorocarboxy radical which loses a fluorine atom (eq 8). The formation of carbonyl fluoride in the reaction between ³CF₂ and O₂ has been reported and is thought to be a reaction characteristic of ³CF₂.²³



Conclusions. These investigations demonstrate that the reaction of carbon with fluorocarbons is a convenient way to generate CF which reacts with alkenes by stereospecific addition to give fluorocyclopropyl radicals.

Experimental Section

Physical Measurements. The ¹⁹F NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AM 400 spectrometer at 376.4 MHz. Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry data were obtained with a Finnigan 9500 chromatograph interfaced to a Finnigan 3300 mass spectrometer with an Inco data system. Fluorocyclopropanes and 1,1-difluoroalkanes were analyzed by gas chromatography on 6 ft porapak Q (80/100 mesh) and 3% OV-101 (80/100 mesh Supelcoport) glass columns.

Carbon Atom Reactions. The carbon atom reactor is modeled after that reported by Skell, Wescott, Goldstein, and Engel.²⁴ Carbon is vaporized by striking an intermittent arc between two graphite rods attached to water cooled brass electrodes and condensed on the walls of the reactor at 77 K with reactants under vacuum.

Reaction of Carbon Vapor with Tetrafluoromethane. Tetrafluoromethane (25 mmol) was introduced into the reactor through the vacuum line at a flow rate of 0.12 mmol/s and cocondensed on the walls of the reactor at 77 K with carbon vapor (4.0 mmol). After the reaction, the

volatiles were pumped through traps at 113 and 77 K. No products were found in the 113 K trap. The infrared spectrum of the 77 K trap showed only CF₄. The nonvolatile residue in the reactor bottom was dissolved in acetone and filtered, and the acetone removed under vacuum. The solid residue showed an IR absorbance at 1215 cm⁻¹ and was not further characterized.

Reaction of Carbon Vapor with Tetrafluoromethane in the Presence of Alkenes. In a typical reaction, CF₄ (15 mmol) and alkene (15 mmol) were allowed to mix for half an hour in the vacuum line. The gas mixture was allowed to condense with carbon vapor as above. After the reaction, the volatile products were pumped from the reactor and transferred to an NMR tube with CDCl₃ as solvent. The ¹⁹F spectra are listed in Tables III and IV. The yields in Table II were determined by integration of NMR peaks using trifluorotoluene as internal standard. The products were also analyzed by gas chromatography, and their structures were confirmed by mass spectrometry.

Reaction of Carbon Vapor with Tetrafluoromethane in the Presence of Cyclohexene and Propene. CF₄ (25.0 mmol), cyclohexene (12.5 mmol), and different amounts of propene were mixed in the vacuum line and condensed at 77 K with carbon vapor. The ratio of the *syn*- and *anti*-7-fluorobicyclo[4.1.0]heptanes was determined by ¹⁹F NMR and is shown in Table V.

Reaction of Carbon Vapor with Tetrafluoromethane and Oxygen. The reaction was carried out as described above with the condensation of CF₄ (80 mmol), O₂ (4 mmol), and carbon vapor (12.06 mmol). Analysis of the volatile products revealed the presence of CF₂=O (1.18 mmol) and CO₂ (1.37 mmol).

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Registry No. C, 7440-44-0; CF₄, 75-73-0; CH₂=CH₂, 74-85-1; CH₂=C(CH₃)₂, 115-11-7; (E)-CH₃CH=CH-CH₃, 624-64-6; PhCH=CH₂, 100-42-5; CH₂=CHCH₃, 115-07-1; CH₃CH₂CH=CH₂, 106-98-9; (Z)-CH₃CH=CHCH₃, 590-18-1; CH₃CH=C(CH₃)₂, 513-35-9; (CH₃)₃CCHF₂, 53731-22-9; F₂CHCH(CH₃)CH₂CH₃, 66688-67-3; F₂CHCH₂CH₂CH₃, 2358-38-5; F₂CHCH₂CH₂CH₂CH₃, 62127-40-6; F₂C=O, 353-50-4; F₂CHCH₂CH(CH₃)CH(CH₃)₂, 103835-63-8; CO₂, 124-38-9; CF, 3889-75-6; ³CF₂, 2154-59-8; cyclohexene, 110-83-8; fluorocyclopropane, 1959-79-1; 2,2-dimethylfluorocyclopropane, 1891-97-0; *cis-trans*-2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane, 50422-75-8; *cis-cis*-2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane, 50422-79-2; *trans-cis*-2,3-dimethylfluorocyclopropane, 50422-78-1; *cis*-2-phenylfluorocyclopropane, 22140-51-8; *trans*-2-phenylfluorocyclopropane, 22140-50-7; 1,1-difluoropropane, 430-61-5; *cis*-2-methylfluorocyclopropane, 50422-73-6; *trans*-2-methylfluorocyclopropane, 50422-72-5; *cis*-2-ethylfluorocyclopropane, 50422-77-0; *trans*-2-ethylfluorocyclopropane, 50422-76-9; *cis*-2,2,3-trimethylfluorocyclopropane, 22140-49-4; *trans*-2,2,3-trimethylfluorocyclopropane, 22140-48-3; 7-fluorobicyclo[4.1.0]heptane (isomer 1), 16646-97-2; 7-fluorobicyclo[4.1.0]heptane (isomer 2), 16646-98-3; (difluoromethyl)cyclohexane, 329-29-3.

Supplementary Material Available: Mass spectrometry data for fluorocyclopropanes (Table I) and 1,1-difluoroalkanes (Table II) (2 pages). Ordering information can be found on any current masthead page.

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