



We will begin momentarily at 2pm ET



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Thursday, January 22, 2015

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"Rookie Lab Mistakes and Other Facts Not Found in Textbooks"



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We all want to avoid A Nightmare Scenario...



....like these ones...

Photo Credit: https://www.fema.gov/earthquake/fema-e-74-reducing-risks-nonstructural-earthquake-damage-14

A Nightmare Reaction

To Begin With



Theory suggests that the experiment should work. However, the only precedent you find is either:

- a) in another language
- b) from 1927
- c) has no experimental details... OR

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/reaction.php?page=nightmare

A Nightmare Reaction

To Begin With



It's 9 PM. None of your glassware is clean. You can't decide what scale to run it on and you don't have any of the reagents.

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/reaction.php?page=nightmare

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A Nightmare Reaction

Setting Up

You need to weigh four different reagents:

- 1. a hygroscopic solid that gets liquidy in the air,
- 2. 0.05 mg of catalyst,
- 3. a liquid that clogs syringes and must be distilled immediately before use, and
- your precious reactant, which is heat and acid sensitive.

The reaction must be done at -30°C under argon using a complex glass apparatus, and requires three flasks for successive dropwise addition via cannula.

A Nightmare Reaction

Monitoring the Reaction



- The reaction takes hours to complete: however, the product is unstable and decomposes slowly under the reaction conditions.
- Progress cannot be monitored by TLC.

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A Nightmare Reaction Quench



The product mixture is highly reactive and requires dropwise addition of quenching reagent to prevent a volcano-like exothermic eruption.

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/reaction.php?page=nightmare

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Photo Credit: http://www.stevespanglerscience.com/lab/experiments/erupting-peroxide-volcano

A Nightmare Reaction

Workup

When an aqueous solvent is added to the diluted reaction mixture, an emulsion forms. All efforts to resolve the layers fail, your solution has swollen to gargantuan proportions, and you can't find or can't lift a separatory funnel large enough to hold it.





http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/reaction.php?page=nightmare

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A Nightmare Reaction

Workup

Upon addition of aqueous bicarbonate, the organic layer becomes a graceful fountain, coating the inside of your fume hood.

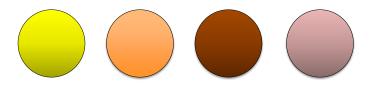
OR



 $http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/^nvd/pages/reaction.php?page=nightmare $$_{24}$ Photo Credit: http://www.prweb.com/releases/Lab_furniture_fume_hood/mistral_fume_hood/prweb11858713.htm$

A Nightmare Reaction Workup

The aqueous solution you use to wash the organic layer turns yellow, orange, brown or pink- the first ten times you try it.



http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/reaction.php?page=nightmare

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A Nightmare Reaction

Purification

IMPURITIES



Your compound is an oil. No purification method has been reported for its isolation. The crude reaction mixture has three or four minor impurities, all with similar boiling points and Rf values similar to your desired compound.

Inherent challenges

+

The wizardry of expert chemists

=

Voodoo?

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Not Voodoo:

Demystifying Organic Laboratory Technique

In 2004: 11 Rookie Mistakes

In 2014: >250 Rookie Mistakes

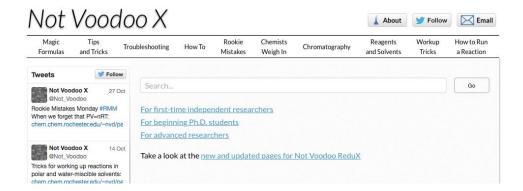
- About Not Voodoo: Development, Wanted Items, Charter Contributors, Contributors
- Browse by Experience Level:
 - First-Time Independent Researchers
 - o First-Year Ph.D. Students
 - Intermediate Graduate Students
 - Advanced Researchers
- The Tour of Collective Wisdom: Rookie Mistakes, Toxic Reagents, Pyrophoric and I A Day in the Life, May Require Mojo, 1, 2, 3... Ph.D., Q&A
- Search Not Voodoo:

 Search



In September 2014: Not Voodoo X:

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/?page=home



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Which of these Rookie Mistakes is the MOST common?

- Forgot to pre-weigh your round-bottom flask
- Burned hand on hot plate because it didn't look hot!
- Didn't check for cracks on clips for rotovap, or didn't use a clip.
 When vacuum is switched off, flask containing precious compound drops in bath.
- Didn't label a flask. One week later, have NO idea what is inside.
- Tried to drain sep funnel with stopper still in.

According to Site Visitors (2004-2014)

- Forgot to pre-weigh your round-bottom flask #2
- Burned hand on hot plate because it didn't look hot! #9
- Didn't check for cracks on clips for rotovap, or didn't use a clip. When vacuum is switched off, flask containing precious compound drops in bath.
 #6
- Didn't label a flask. One week later, have NO idea what is inside. #5
- Tried to drain sep funnel with stopper still in. #1

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Most Common Rookie Mistakes



5: Didn't label a flask. One week later, have NO idea what is inside.



Most Common Rookie Mistakes



4. Set up reaction under Ar, added in reagents and forgot to add stir bar.

Photo Credit: http://www.cellartek.com/products/lab_equipment_and_supplies/lab_ware/accessories.php



Most Common Rookie Mistakes



3. Poured a reaction mixture into a sep funnel without closing the tap. Recovered reaction mixture from the bottom of the fume hood.



Most Common Rookie Mistakes



2. Forgot to pre-weigh your round-bottom flask

 $Photo \ Credit: \\ 35 \\ \text{http://us.mt.com/us/en/home/products/Laboratory_Weighing_Solutions/Accessories/ergoclips/11106746_ErgoClip_Round_Bottom_Flask.html}$



Most Common Rookie Mistakes



1. Tried to drain sep funnel with stopper still in.



Most Common Rookie Mistakes

- 5. Didn't label a flask. One week later, have NO idea what is inside.
- 4. Set up reaction under Ar, added in reagents and forgot to add stir bar.
- 3. Poured a reaction mixture into a sep funnel without closing the tap. Recovered reaction mixture from the bottom of the fume hood.
- 2. Forgot to pre-weigh your round-bottom flask
- 1. Tried to drain sep funnel with stopper still in

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Lessons Learned:

Everyone Forgets



- 5: *Didn't label* a flask. One week later, have NO idea what is inside.
- 4. Set up reaction under Ar, added in reagents and *forgot to add* stir bar.
- 3. Poured a reaction mixture into a sep funnel without closing the tap. Recovered reaction mixture from the bottom of the fume hood.
- 2. Forgot to pre-weigh your round-bottom flask
- 1. Tried to drain sep funnel with stopper still in



<u>Lessons Learned:</u> *Routines Help You Remember*

When you come into the lab, you wear eye protection. You'd feel weird without it.

Here are some new routines to adopt:

- Always label your flasks. It's only a Sharpie away.
- Every time you put a sep funnel in a ring stand, put an Erlenmeyer flask under it.
- Every time you put a round-bottom flask under argon, make sure a stir bar is in it.

More Routines Here:

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/collective_wisdom.php?page=always_and_never

2. Forgot to Pre-weigh Your Round-Bottom Flask



Tip: For all of your flasks, write the weight twice on the inside of the joint in pencil.

Lessons Learned:

More Advice for Rookies

Always and Never

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/collective_wisdom.php?page=always_and_never

Tips and Tricks to Improve Your Yield

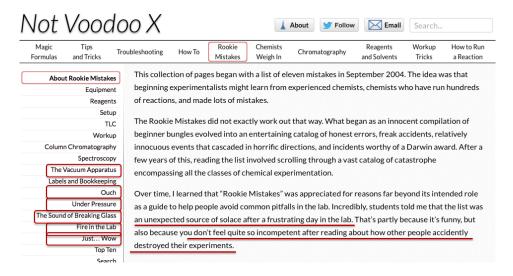
http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/tips.php?page=improve_yield

Rules of Thumb

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/tips.php?page=rules of thumb

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Trends Emerging from the Mistakes



Ouch



Sat down with NMR tubes in the back pocket of pants.

Under Pressure

aka don't forget PV=nRT



Attempted to dissolve something by putting the flask in a hot water bath ... without removing the stopper.

Vacuum Apparatus

low pressure is as tricky as high pressure



Attached air line to vacuum desiccator without first breaking the vacuum seal. Lid burst off, went about 18" in the air and crashed down on top of the dessicator shattering into a thousand pieces.

The Sound of Breaking Glass



Dropped freshly washed glassware and tried to save it with my foot, but ended up kicking it across the lab.

Just...wow!

• Melted shoe to the ground with HCl.



 Added concentrated sulphuric acid to a mixture of acrylonitrile and sodium chloride.....whoa! within seconds the entire reaction setup (flask, thermometer, condenser) got blown off and the overhead motor flew like a missile.....



Audience Survey Question

Which piece of equipment is most difficult to master?

- The Rotovap
- · The Separatory Funnel
- · The Glass Pipette
- The Glovebox
- Vacuum Apparatus

The Glass Pipette



While transferring small amount of product to an NMR tube, accidentally squeezed the bulb of the pasteur pipette, dumping sample onto the bench.

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Vacuum Apparatus



The hose from the manifold vacuum port dropped into the oil bath and sucked the entire contents into the manifold.

The Rotovap



Put product on rotovap at 40C and came back half an hour later to find that compound was very volatile and that flask is COMPLETELY empty.

Photo Credit: www.coleparmer.com

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Lessons Learned:

How to Handle Volatile Compounds

- Reduce the vacuum strength on your rotovap as much as
 possible. If your compound is still ending up in the solvent
 trap, try removing the solvent using conventional distillation,
 using heat at atmospheric pressure.
- To run a reaction at elevated temperature with a volatile reagent, use a Vigreaux condenser or consider sealed-tube apparatus/ techniques.
- To purify a volatile product using column chromatography, choose your solvent system carefully. For example, you can substitute *pentane* for hexanes, and *avoid ethyl acetate*.
- Store extra-volatile compounds at low temperature.

The Sep Funnel

"Accidentally dropped a small sep funnel stopper into a large sep funnel."

Rookie Mistakes #1 and #3 involve sep funnels,
Also, we use sep funnels for workup...



Even More Nightmares at Workup:

Combination of organic and aqueous solutions gives a gooey or insoluble precipitate, which floats between the two layers and obscures the border.

OR

When an aqueous solvent is added to the diluted reaction mixture, an *emulsion* forms.

OR

Addition of aqueous solution to your black organic reaction mixture leads to a *uniform black mixture*.

Lesson Learned: Workup Tips

Problem: Insoluble Goo

Tip: Keep washing with water until most of the goo is removed. Then use lots of drying agent, and with luck, the goo will be absorbed and you will be able to filter it away.

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/workup.php?page=workup

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Lessons Learned:

How to Handle an Emulsion

Problem: An emulsion forms. A brine wash fails to resolve the layers.

Tips:

- Evaporating the reaction solvent before workup
- Wait.
- Add solid NaCl
- Dilute with copious organic solvent
- Filter the whole thing through Celite

Lessons Learned:

Uniform Black Mixture

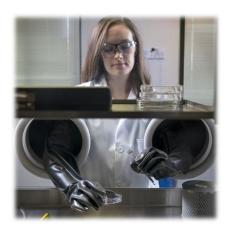
Problem: The solution in your sep funnel is opaque, and you can't see the border between the organic and aqueous layers.

Tip: Try adding ice, which will float on the water, between the layers.

http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/workup.php?page=workup

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The Glovebox



Tried to scratch an itch on my face... while my hands were inside the glovebox.

-stay

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Photo Credit: http://newartsci.case.edu/magazine/fall-2012/a-reason-to-stay

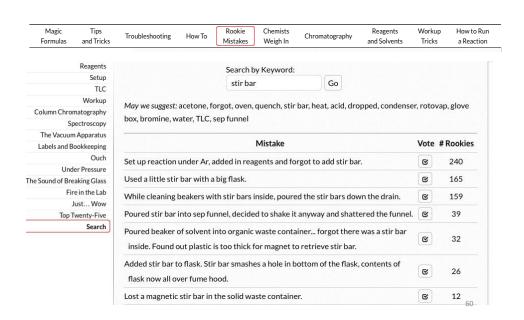
How about Magnetic Stir Bars?



Added stir bar to flask. Stir bar smashes a hole in bottom of the flask, contents of flask now all over fume hood.

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Searching the Rookie Mistakes...



Audience Survey Question

Which reagent is most difficult to work with?

- Triphenylphosphine
- Thiols
- DMSO
- Dicyclohexylcarbodiimide (DCC)
- · Tributyltin hydride

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Rookie Mistake #8



Upset coworkers (and/or self) by handling sulfur compounds or other noxious volatiles outside of the fume hood.

Lessons Learned:

Working with Thiols

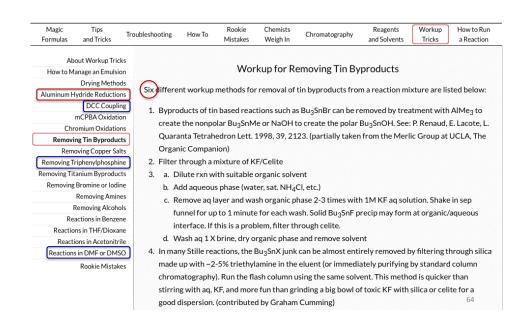
A **Thiol** is an organosulfur compound that contains a carbon-bonded sulfhydryl (–C–SH or R–SH) group (where R represents an alkane, alkene, or other carbon-containing group of atoms).

- BLEACH!
- · Zip-Lock Bags!
- Latex gloves!



Photo Credit: http://www.jerrysartarama.com/discount-art-supplies/general-equipment/safety-gear.htm

Workup Tricks



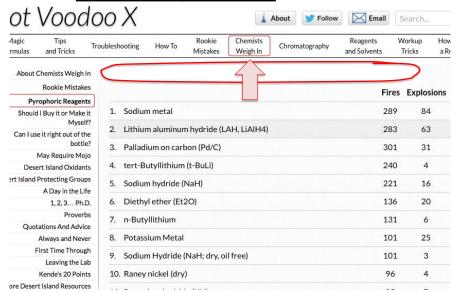


Which reagents most commonly cause fires in labs?

- · Lithium aluminum hydride
- · Sodium hydride
- Palladium on carbon
- Sodium metal
- Ether

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Visitor Experience 2004-2014



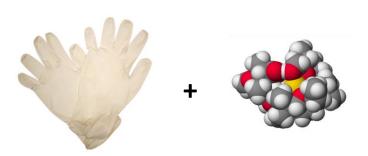
 $http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/^nvd/pages/collective_wisdom.php\ page=pyrophoric_reagents {}^{66}$

20 of the top 25 pyrophoric reagents on the list (80%) are:



- Alkali metals and other elemental metals, metal alloys
- Hydrides (NaH, KH, R₂AlH)
- *Metal Alkyls* (RLi, R₂Zn, R₃Al, R₃B)

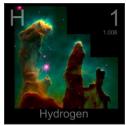
Rookie Mistakes: FIRE



Had to sneeze whilst handling sodium - covered my mouth - gloves on fire!!

Rookie Mistakes: FIRE



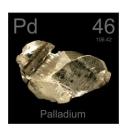


Didn't believe post-doc when he said "KH is much more reactive than NaH"...sink fire.

Photo Credits: http://periodictable.com

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Rookie Mistakes: FIRE

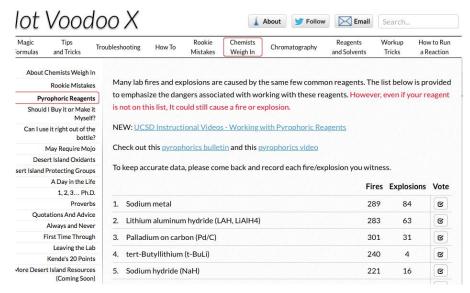






Add **Pd/C** catalyst to an ongoing **hydrogenation** without removing the H₂ first: fire!!

Beware: Pyrophoric and Explosive Reagents



http://chem.chem.rochester.edu/~nvd/pages/collective_wisdom.php?page=pyrophoric_reagents 71

How to Work with Pyrophoric Reagents

Check out these videos by Dr. Haim Weisman from UCSD



1. Getting Ready



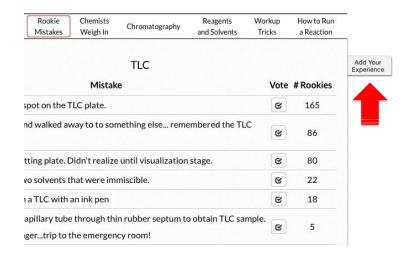
2. Transferring Pyrophoric Liquids



3. Working with Reactive Metals

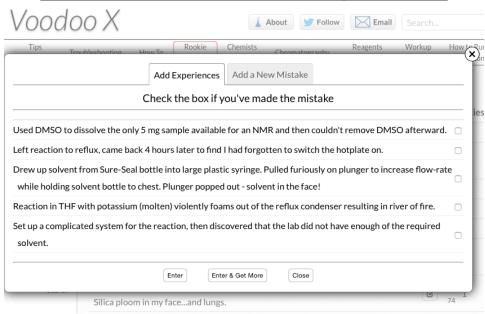
http://chem-courses.ucsd.edu/CoursePages/Uglabs/143A Weizman/EHS/EHS.html 72

How to Add Your Rookie Experiences

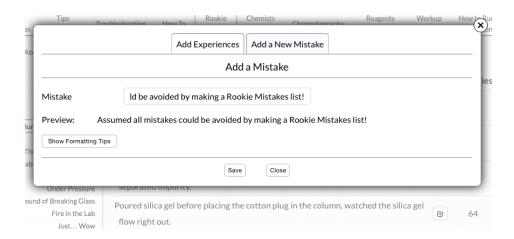


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How to Add Your Rookie Experiences



How to Add Your Rookie Experiences



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Acknowledgements

- Harry Stern
- Hiatt Zhao
- Colin Kinz-Thompson
- Chris Bauer
- Website visitors since 2004
- NSF (Division of Chemistry)





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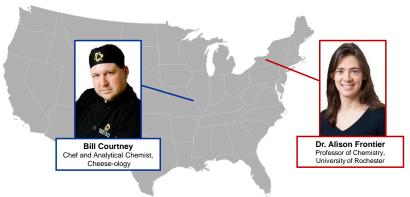
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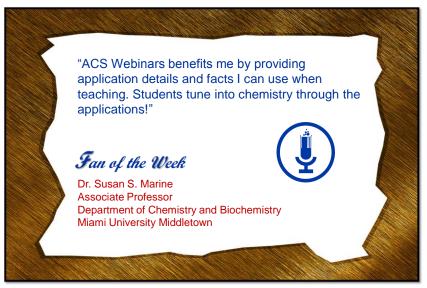


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