

Boy, 17, admits six acid attacks in 90 minutes to steal mopeds

George Sandeman

A teenager has admitted carrying out a spate of acid attacks against moped riders during a 90-minute crime spree in attempts to steal their vehicles.

Derryck John, from Croydon in south London, was named in court after a judge lifted reporting restrictions. He was 16 when he carried out the attacks with an accomplice, who has not been identified, on July 13 last year. One of his victims suffered "life-changing

ing" injuries from substances with pHs ranging between one and two — acidities similar to those of some lavatory cleaning products.

John, now 17, admitted six charges of throwing a corrosive liquid with intent to "disable, burn, maim, disfigure or cause grievous bodily harm". He also pleaded guilty to two charges of robbery and four of attempted robbery at Wood Green crown court yesterday.

Judge Noel Lucas, QC, adjourned sentencing until March and said: "This

is still a very young man. He is 17. The offences were committed when he was 16. I want to assess the defendant's criminality. These are very serious offences. However, there is a very strong public interest in naming the defendant, therefore I lift the restriction.

Last month the judge jailed Arthur Collins, 25, a former partner of the reality TV personality Fernie McCann, for 20 years for an acid attack in a London nightclub that injured 14 people.

John and his accomplice, an older

man, waited for their victims to stop at red traffic lights before attacking them. They then tried to steal the mopeds as the riders struggled to remove their helmets and stop their skin burning.

John was arrested the day after the attacks when he crashed a moped in the early hours of the morning.

His plea, read out to the court, said: "I will plead guilty to counts two to 13 inclusive on the basis the acid was thrown to incapacitate the victim."

"The other male involved was much

older than me. I really didn't appreciate the damage that would be done. I am terrified of the sentence I will receive. I am very sorry for what I have done."

The judge ordered a report on John's threat to the public "because these were serious offences over a two-hour period and it would be wrong of me not to ask probation to make that assessment," he said. He warned John that he faced "the possibility of quite a long prison sentence". John was remanded in custody to be sentenced on March 9.

Times 9/01/18