

# The merciless 'acid man'

The mysterious 'Bangsar Splasher' who last struck in Wangsa Maju, Kuala Lumpur, on May 13 has caused much anxiety and debate. **HARIZ MOHD** has the story

SK Bukit Bandaraya is in a restful corner of Bangsar. Trees bordering its *padang* shield the school from the rigours of the city. Its main entrance is at the midpoint of a sloping road that delivers pupils from affluent homes and nearby condominiums.

There was much din on the afternoon of March 2 as Year Six pupil Nur Farah Najihah Mohd Nasir and her friends waited for their transport home after school and extra-curricular activities.

It was then that a motorcyclist riding a *kapcai* downhill started revving his engine. Just as the children turned to look, the splasher struck, and they were the first victims of the Bangsar Splasher, which has since caught public attention.



Wan Mohd Arif Wan Din, 15, was attacked in front of SK Bukit Bandaraya, Bangsar, on March 2 at 5pm

electronic system and wiring were damaged.



The splasher injured Rohainah Hussin, 30, in Jalan Scott, off Jalan Tun Sambanthan, on March 24 at 5.30pm

attacks has not been identified. It caused burning sensation and left scars



This teacher, who was attacked near a secondary school in Bukit Bandaraya, is undergoing psychiatric treatment and has sought a transfer to another school.

Nur Farah and her friends screamed and ran to the nearest water source — the school toilet — to wash up.

There seems to be a method to the attacks by the Bangsar Splasher who has struck 23 times, including six prior to the March 2 incident.

He would startle his victims by appearing suddenly in a blue Suzuki or dark EX5 motorcycle, either alone or with an accomplice.

The suspect acquired the name Bangsar Splasher partly because many of the incidents reported earlier were in Bangsar. However, he has now been targeting people in other parts of Kuala Lumpur as well.

This scourge has afflicted 39 people, mostly women. Two men had also been victims of the Bangsar Splasher, as did a baby. All the victims, with the first incident reported on Feb 9, were either alone or in small groups when attacked.

A teacher was attacked near a secondary school in Bukit Bandaraya, Bangsar. She had lowered the window of her car at a junction when the Bangsar Splasher rode up alongside her. This was a day after Nur Farah and her friends had the fright of their lives.

Such was the strength of the liquid used that the teacher's car was smoking. Smoke also visible on the road where Nur Farah and friends were attacked.

Victims have had to endure much anguish. The father of a victim said his son's right eye turned green for several hours.

The teacher's husband said the car repairs amounted to RM40,000 and its

The splasher appeared to strike once, twice or up to five times a day, usually around late noon. So far, only three morning incidents had been reported.

At times, after the attacks, the splasher would go under the radar before launching his next attack.

The longest layoff came after the first attacks on Feb 9. He next turned up at SK Bukit Bandaraya on March 2, about 5pm.

Soon, everyone started talking about "a serial acid man" on the loose.

As laymen seek to psycho-analyse the pattern and debate the motives, Kuala Lumpur Hospital psychiatric consultant Dr Salina Abdul Aziz hinted that this was not the case of the aggressor suffering from "psychosis".

This particular mental illness relates to severe delusions.

Generally, sufferers encounter sightings that trigger a sudden burst of violent behaviour.

A psychosis patient lives in his own world and normally strikes alone, but these are not organised or premeditated acts.

Dr Salina said the Bangsar Splasher appeared to resemble characteristics associated with anti-social personality disorder (ASPD). Someone with ASPD is capable of the most merciless of attacks, inflicting pain on others with no remorse.

"People with ASPD love to see suffering and pain in others... they enjoy it. That could explain why he also has an accomplice and the attacks becoming rampant," said Dr Salina, who has been working at HKL for 13 years.

To date, the potent liquid used in the

victims.

Nur Farah suffered one week of painful burn marks on both her hands and thighs, while the teacher still has scars around her mouth.

Police believe it is a concoction of alkaline-based oxidising liquid.

Prince Court Medical Centre plastic surgery and burns director Dr Yap Lok Huei said certain types of strong acids could also cause "vapour trails" while reacting with human tissue or other material.

Concentrated chemicals of both types can cause severe injury to human tissue, with a strong acid causing oxidation injury, where it breaks down the normal structure of protein. A strong alkali could cause extensive protein damage and degeneration of fat.

"If the concentration is high, both alkalis and acids can inflict severe damage to human tissues in just a matter of seconds. These chemicals can cause severe inflammation and scarring, with extensive disfigurement in victims."

The police are going all out to nab the culprit(s), with the city and district headquarters setting up task forces.

The party is joined by a special committee set up by the Bukit Aman Criminal Investigation Department.

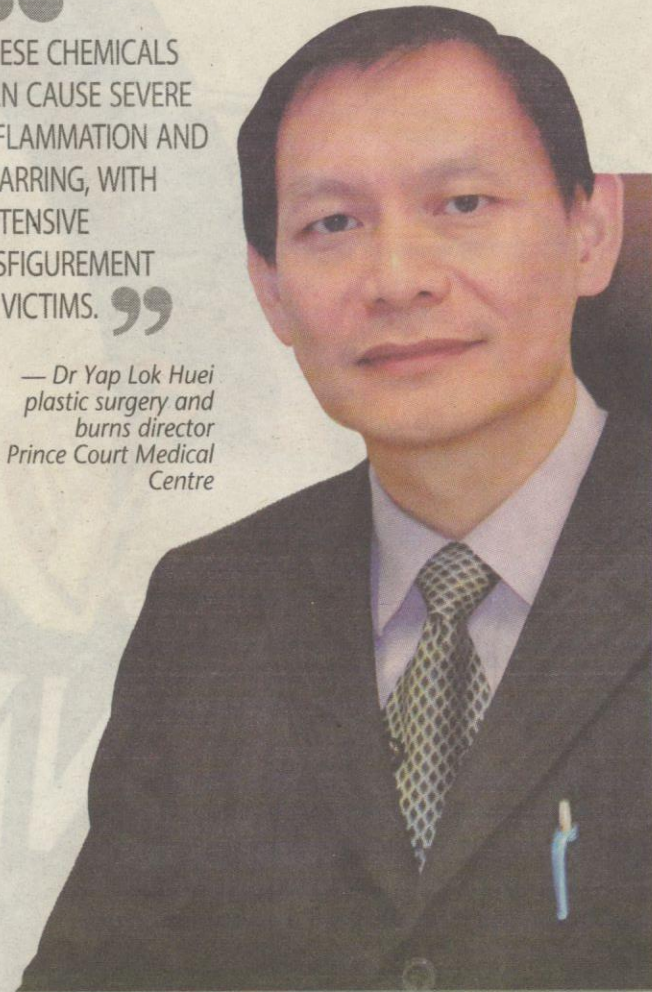
The hunt now involves policemen from every unit, with heavy presence of uniformed policemen backed up by undercover teams.

Taxi drivers have been roped in to help police nab the Bangsar Splasher.

"We need the public's help to provide information on these attacks," said Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Khalid Abu Bakar.

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— Dr Yap Lok Huei  
plastic surgery and  
burns director  
Prince Court Medical  
Centre



# ON THE SPLASHER(S)' TRAIL

**1. Feb 9 (1pm)**  
In front of SK Bukit Bandaraya,  
Jalan Bangkung, Bangsar  
**Victims:** A 36-year-old  
housewife and two children

**2. Feb 9 (1.30pm)**  
Jalan Terasek, Bangsar  
**Victim:** A female driver

**3. Feb 9 (2pm)**  
Near SM La Salle, Jalan Tun  
Sambanthan, Brickfields  
**Victim:** A male driver

**4. Feb 9 (2.23pm)**  
Jalan Telawi 6, Bangsar  
**Victim:** A female driver

**5. Feb 9 (4pm)**  
Near SMK Bukit Bandaraya,  
Jalan Rumpai, Bangsar  
**Victim:** A female driver

**6. March 2 (7am)**  
Jalan Wan Malini 2, Sri Petaling  
**Victim:** None; a car was damaged

**7. March 2 (4.54pm)**

**8. March 2 (6.05pm)**  
Persiaran Titiwangsa,  
Jalan Tun Razak  
**Victim:** Three female students

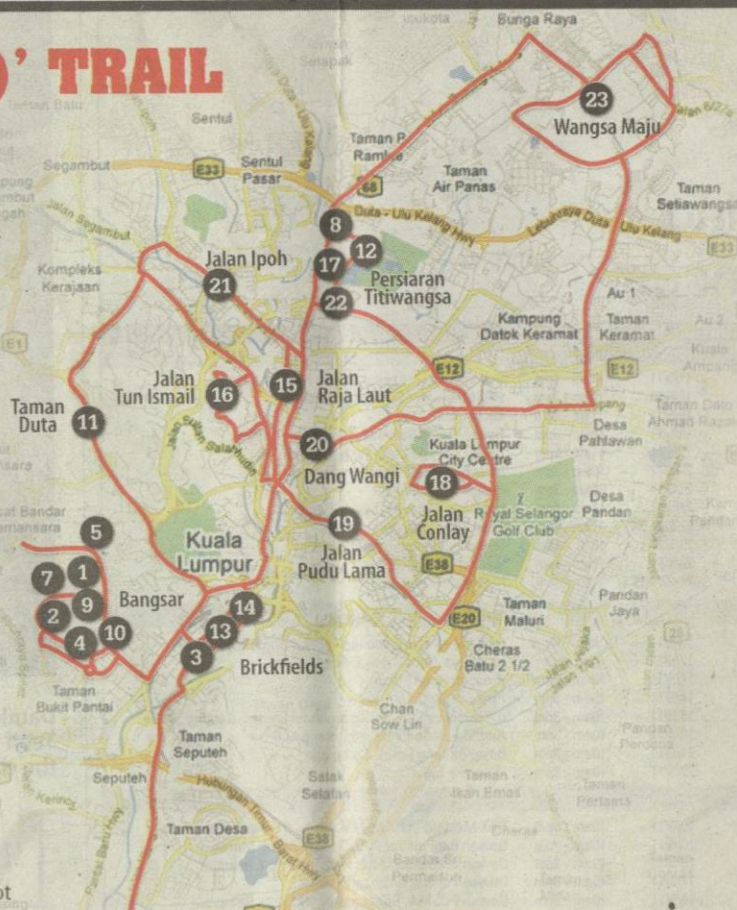
**9. March 3 (4pm)**  
Jalan Terasek 4, Bangsar  
**Victim:** A female driver

**10. March 3 (4.30pm)**  
Jalan Maarof 6, Bangsar  
**Victim:** A female driver

**11. March 3 (5.45pm)**  
Jalan Persiaran Duta,  
Taman Duta  
**Victim:** A female driver

**12. March 3 (6.10pm)**  
In front of Masjid Ibnu Sina,  
Persiaran Titiwangsa  
**Victim:** A woman walking  
home from work

**13. March 24 (5.30pm)**  
Jalan Scott, off Jalan Tun  
Sambanthan, Brickfields  
**Victim:** A woman walking  
towards her car at a parking lot



**Victim:** A teacher walking  
to work

**15. March 25 (7.45am)**  
Near Quality Hotel,  
Jalan Raja Laut  
**Victim:** A female  
pedestrian

**16. March 25 (12.45pm)**  
In front of Putra World  
Trade Centre, Jalan  
Tun Ismail  
**Victims:** Three female  
pedestrians

**17. March 27 (3.38pm)**  
Persiaran Titiwangsa,  
Jalan Tun Razak  
**Victim:** A woman about to  
enter her car

**18. March 27 (5pm)**  
In front of the Kraftangan  
Malaysia building in  
Jalan Conlay  
**Victims:** A British man and  
a French woman, both  
pedestrians

**19. May 6 (9pm)**  
Jalan Bukit Mahkamah,  
off Jalan Pudu Lama  
**Victims:** Two female  
pedestrians walking  
towards their parked car

**20. May 6 (9.30pm)**  
Near The Mall, Jalan Putra,  
Dang Wangi  
**Victim:** A female  
pedestrian crossing the  
road

**21. May 7 (2.20pm)**  
Jalan Kasipillay,  
off Jalan Ipoh, Sentul  
**Victims:** Two female  
students

**22. May 7 (3pm)**  
Near Villa Ukhwah,  
Persiaran Titiwangsa  
**Victims:** A mother and her  
year-old baby

**23. May 13 (8.45am)**  
Section 10, Wangsa Maju  
**Victim:** A female driver

— City Police Criminal Investigations  
Department & victims' account

In front of SK Bukit Bandaraya,  
Jalan Bangkung, Bangsar  
**Victims:** Eight schoolchildren  
aged 11 and 12

**14. March 25 (7am)**  
In front of SJK (T) Vivekananda,  
Brickfields

## DESCRIPTION OF ATTACKERS AND THE MOTORCYCLES USED

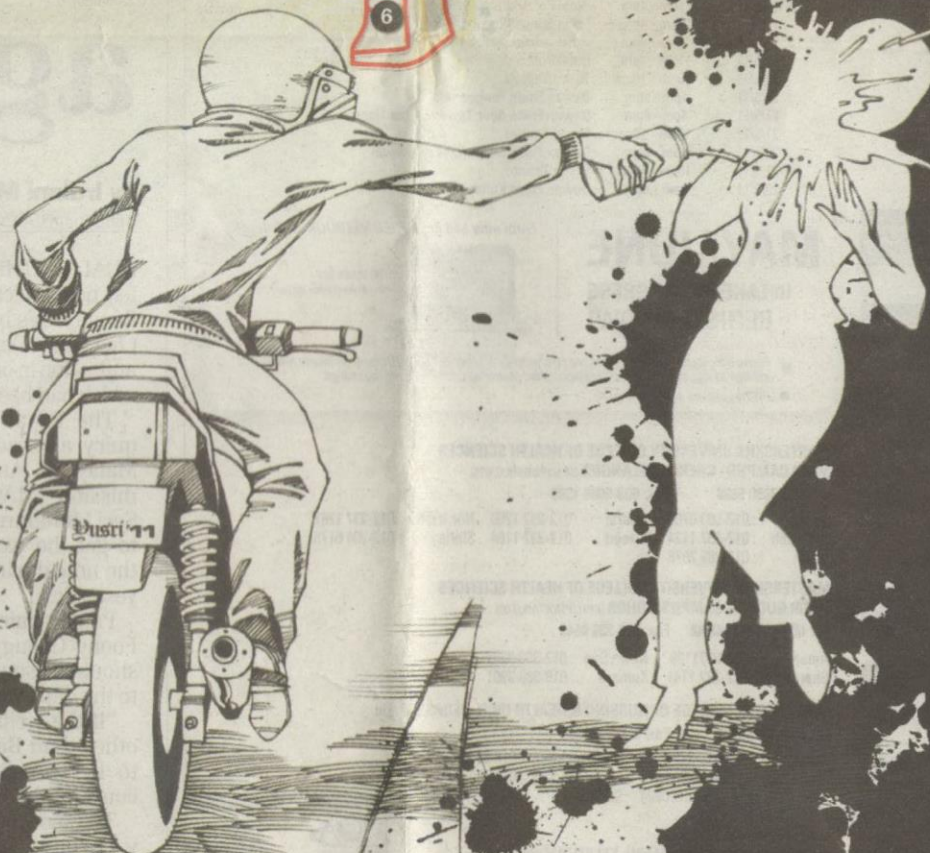
- Dark-skinned
- In their 20s and 30s
- Wear black jacket, pants and helmets with visor
- One is thin while the other is chubby
- Modus operandi: they approach victims from behind before splashing the liquid on their face. Several victims said the splasher threw the liquid from a bottle
- Types of motorcycle used: blue Suzuki RG, Honda EX5, Honda Cub, blue Modenas Kriss, blue Suzuki RGV and blue Suzuki Cub

## TYPE OF LIQUIDS

■ Strong acid can cause oxidation injury, where it breaks down the normal structure of protein. Among the common types of strong acid in Malaysia are sulphuric acid — used in car batteries; hydrochloric acid (metal & pipe cleaners); and hydrofluoric acid (rust removers).

■ Strong alkali can cause extensive protein damage and degeneration of fat. Among the common types of strong alkali in Malaysia are sodium hydroxide — found in drain and oven cleaners; ammonia (cleaners and detergents); and calcium hydroxide (cement mixes).

— Dr Yap Lok Huei  
Plastic surgery & burns director  
Prince Court Medical Centre



## PSYCHOANALYSIS OF THE SUSPECTS

*The splashers could be either suffering from psychosis or anti-social personality disorder (ASPD)*

- Psychosis is an abnormal state of mind where the sufferer loses contact with reality. A person with psychosis lives in his own world and might not see the victims as who they are, but as something that poses a danger to him. Psychosis can be caused by a combination of factors, including genetics, environmental and trauma. Head injury can also cause the condition.
- ASPD is not a mental sickness but rather a personality disorder. The person feels no remorse or mercy, and enjoys seeing others suffer. A person with ASPD lives like a normal person but without the guilt after harming others. ASPD can be caused by several factors, including trauma, genetics and environmental, but there is no one conclusive reason.

— Dr Salina Abdul Aziz  
psychiatric consultant  
Kuala Lumpur Hospital

## STEPS TO TAKE IF SPLASHED WITH STRONG ACID OR ALKALI

- 1 Get someone to call 999 immediately.
- 2 Take off any clothing that comes into contact with the liquid.
- 3 Get to the nearest clean water source and wash the affected parts with running water for at least 15 minutes.
- 4 Cover the affected area with a piece of clean cloth.
- 5 Seek medical treatment immediately.

— Dr Sarah Abdul Karim, emergency physician, Kuala Lumpur Hospital