

## **The Camden Town murder**

*R v Robert Wood 1907*

Background: The ship's cook, Roberts, had identified Wood as having been with Phyllis at the Rising Sun on the 9<sup>th</sup>. He had also sworn to the letter of assignment received on the Wednesday morning for the meeting at the Eagle, and it is this letter that Marshall Hall is cross-examining him on. Marshall Hall was a very tall, imposing man, and the ship's cook is obviously completely intimidated by him; a good example of the power of personality in court.

Marshall Hall: I put it to you that this fragment was never part of such a letter. I put it to you that the story of this long letter is an invention.

Roberts: It is not so

Marshall Hall: It was signed "Bert".

Roberts: Yes

Marshall Hall: Are you quite certain about the contents of this letter? Repeat it again!

Roberts: "Dear Phyllis, will you meet me at the bar of the Eagle, Camden Town 830 tonight, Wednesday? Bert"

Marshall Hall: How could anybody writing that on the Tuesday night write "tonight" for Wednesday?

Roberts: You generally write that way to a person you know.

Marshall Hall: Do you usually, when writing on a Tuesday to make an appointment for a Wednesday night, write "Meet me tonight"?

Roberts: I do not.

Marshall Hall: I put it to you that that piece of burned paper is a fragment which might have come from anywhere and which never came through the post?

Roberts: It did.

Marshall Hall: Where did the name "Bert" come from?

Roberts: I tell you it was written.

Marshall Hall: if the object had been to put suspicion on Shaw, the suggestion would have been very useful?

Roberts: (No answer)