Peter Dean as Jack Lynn and Ken Campbell as solicitor Alex Gladwell Photo: Contributed

"The reaction was immediate with callers jamming the BBC switchboard, the Director General Sir Ian Trethowan was summoned to the Home Office (to see Minister of State, Baron Harris of Greenwich), and Sir Eldon Griffiths (a Tory MP and parliamentary spokesman for the Police Federation) threatened to prosecute us for sedition.

"The BBC were very supportive about the series: BBC2 Controller Brian Wenham only saw it 30 minutes before it was broadcast, but he knew what was coming. That's how it worked in those days. Now, a programme like that would never get made – the executives would be too scared.

"But it did cause the BBC a lot of anxiety and we couldn't get it out of their archive for 30 years, even for festivals. They were scared to show it. There is still corruption in the system, of course. But we can't shock people like that any more, the shock tactics are long gone.

"The police and detectives at that time were allowed to do their own thing in the 1970s, now it is more bureaucratic, more checks and balances. And crime has changed – there were a lot of robberies in those days, crimes involving the transit of money, which is different to now.

"But we live in an intensely materialistic world, so there is still much corruption. There is a lot of fudging of evidence, withholding evidence. The criminal justice system really needs policemen who will investigate for the defence as well as the prosecution and try to prove innocence. There is a huge corrupt bias for the prosecution.

"Prison officers are now terrified of the prisoners. They hide in their offices and watch CCTV. There are a lot of nasty, violent people in prison and it takes a very peculiar person who wants to be part of it.

"Policemen will avoid criminals if they are out in the streets. If they see a stolen vehicle, then they will often avoid getting involved. This is a form of corruption in my view.

"Government ministers who go on to take board positions with companies that they used to deal with is shocking, but no-one seems to blink apart from me now."

The 70-year-old has little hope that the return of *Law & Order* will spark a debate about the current state of our justice system: "Forty years ago, it had a massive effect. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act came in, but I'm not sure it made a lot of difference. There are more ethnic minorities in the Force now, but I think they still suffer.

"Crime has moved onto the internet and it's more difficult to detect. It all depends on the victim's gullibility. And companies still use bribery for a contract."

For actor Derek Martin, who played bent copper DI Pyall, *Law & Order* was not just his big break, it was the mirror image of his own experience. He worked as a porter in Smithfield Market and ended up at the Old Bailey's Court Number One for attempting to steal £10,000-worth of beef in 1962. He managed to get off and was told by a female member of the jury: "You be a good boy. You should be an actor."

He took her at her word, left the market for fear of being 'fitted up' by an angry City of London Police and enjoyed a long and successful acting career.

The 84-year-old said: "I was born and bred in the East End and we all knew that there were police who would put you away like Pyall. I was lucky to get away from crime and become a successful actor.

"I owe it all to *Law & Order*. It was an incredible part and it put me on the map. And there was such a tremendous reaction to it. I used to go and watch Chelsea play and remember going after it was broadcast and the crowd were booing and hissing me. It was pretty scary for a while.

"But I used to get coppers come up to me after *Law & Order* and tell me that I had got it spot on. Most of my career, I played coppers or villains, until I got a lovely role for 15 years as Charlie Slater in *EastEnders*. I didn't have to be nasty all the time then, bring more emotion into it."

For Tony Garnett, the question of the effect of *Law & Order* and whether the UK is still home to corrupt police is difficult. He said: "I have no idea if it had an effect, that wasn't the purpose. My purpose was to raise consciousness. There was a general feeling that the authorities had to grasp the nettle... I doubt if there is any police force in a major city in the world that is straight. It is always there. The question is how to manage corruption and reduce it."

■ *Law & Order* will be broadcast over four nights from April 12 on BBC Four, starting with *The Detective's Tale*. The book *Law & Order* is being republished by No Exit Press

LANGUAGE EUROFILE

RAMBLING MOORS WHO ADDED SPICE TO OUR LANGUAGE

The influence of the Arabic language on Europe stretches further than Spain, says **PETER TRUDGILL**. In fact, it reaches right into central London

We don't generally think of Arabic as a being a European language, but for many centuries it was in fact very much a language of Europe.

Arabic-speaking Muslims expanded out of the Arabian peninsula, starting in the 600s AD, and reached the shores of southern Europe via North Africa in 711 AD, when Islamic forces crossed the Straits of Gibraltar and started taking control of southern Iberia. These forces obviously brought their Arabic language with them, but they were also accompanied by large numbers of speakers of the indigenous Berber languages of North Africa, from areas which are now Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

These invading Muslims of mixed Arabic and Berber ancestry came to be known as the Moors – from the Latin name of the North African Berber kingdom Mauretania, which was overrun by the Arabs in the 7th century. (The modern – and mostly non-Berber – nation of Mauritania today lies much further to the south.)

Andalusia in modern southern Spain (Spanish, *Andalucía*) derives its name from Arabic *al-Andalus*, the name the Moorish conquerors gave to the large area, eventually covering much of modern Portugal and Spain, which had come under their domination by 1000 AD. The origin of this Arabic name is disputed: some say it came from the name of the East Germanic tribe, the Vandals, who had passed through Iberia on their way to establishing their 5th-century kingdom in North Africa.

Under the Moors of al-Andalus, much of the population of southern Iberia continued to speak the Romance dialects which they had inherited from the Latin-speaking overlords of the Roman Empire. These dialects are often referred to as Mozarabic, from the Arabic word *mustarib*, 'those who have adopted Arabic ways' – even though the dialects were also spoken by Jews and Christians. A better name is Andalusi Romance.

Andalusi Romance was not generally used as a written language, and the few records we have of it are mostly written in the Arabic script, though there are also some using the Hebrew writing system. These records show that the language was rather different from Spanish, which had its origins in Castile in northern-central Iberia.

After centuries of conflict between the Christian north of Iberia and Moslem al-Anadalus, the Moorish rulers were eventually driven out. They finally evacuated Granada in 1492. The Berber languages of the Moors did not survive anywhere in Europe; and their Arabic now survives only in the form of the language which we today call Maltese, historically a variety of Arabic much influenced by Sicilian and Italian. Some recent linguistic research has shown that speakers of Tunisian Arabic and the Libyan Arabic of Benghazi are able to understand about 40% of what is said to them in Maltese. It does not work quite so well the other way round, but Maltese speakers do best when listening to the Arabic of Tunisia.

Although the Arabic language itself did eventually vanish from mainland Europe, very many Arabic words still survive in modern Spanish and Portuguese as remnants of the seven centuries of Arabic domination. Most European languages borrowed many, often scientific, words from Arabic, ranging from *alcohol*, *algebra*, and *alcove* – the 'al-' part is the Arabic definite article 'the' – to *zenith* and *zero*: Arabic-speaking scholars and scientists were, for very many generations, far ahead of Europeans in terms of scientific thinking, research and knowledge.

But Portuguese and Spanish have very many more Arabic words than other European languages, including everyday terms such as Spanish *almohada*, Portuguese *almofada*, 'pillow', which come from Arabic *al-mahadda* (modern Maltese has *mhadda*); Spanish *alicate* and Portuguese *alicate*, 'pliers', originate in Arabic *al-qati'a*; and Spanish *alforja*, Portuguese *alforje*, 'saddle-bag', are from Arabic *al-khurj*. These humble domestic items bespeak a long-term, intimate bilingual co-existence between the Romance- and Arabic-speaking communities of the Iberian peninsula.

TRAFALGAR

Trafalgar Square is named for the 1805 British naval victory which took place off the coast of southern Spain by Cape Trafalgar, whose Spanish name is *Cabo Trafalgar*. This was originally Arabic *Taraf-al-gharb*, where *taraf* meant 'cape' and *gharb* 'west'. Gibraltar was originally Arabic *Jabal Tariq* 'mountain of Tariq', named after an Islamic general.