

STAND BY FOR A SHOCKER



Wing Governor Karen Betts is stunned by Snowball's death. Main picture: Nicole Faraday, who plays Snowball

Hated by her fellow inmates, broken-up by the death of her boyfriend Ritchie, *Bad Girls'* Snowball Merriman puts herself out of her misery this week. In a gruesomely graphic scene that's sure to draw complaints, she hangs herself from a balcony.

'Apparently, it'll be one of the most controversial scenes ever shown on primetime TV,' says actress Nicole Faraday, who plays Snowball. 'You see me jump, then the body jerks. It made me feel sick doing it.'

Nicole admits she was stunned when she discovered Snowball's fate. 'I said to the writers, "You can't! She's such a strong character." But they pointed out it would be bad for the writing, and the character, if they didn't kill her off.'

'She's been through so much. She's couldn't just go on surviving in there. From an actor's point of view, it's better to go out with a fantastic

storyline, but I was sad because I've loved playing her.'

A medical advisor was on hand for the scene and a stuntman filmed the body jerking. Nicole still finds the scene physically and mentally taxing. She was put in a full body harness and winched up to the balcony to do the jump.

'The stunt girl warned me it could hurt because the harness digs into you when you fall,' reveals Nicole. 'I was covered in bruises afterwards.'

'It sounds gruesome, but the make-up department had pictures of people who had hanged themselves so they could get the make-up exactly right. It's all so realistic.'

Nicole, 26, will miss the tight-knit cast and crew on the show. 'But they told me I'll always be part of the gang.'

In the meantime, she's recording songs for two potential musicals: *Hogart*, about the 18th-century English artist, and – wait for it – *Bad Girls: The Musical!*

'I hope it comes off,' says Nicole. 'Failing that, I might come back as Snowball's ghost and haunt them!'

When TV made us flinch

Snowball's hanging isn't the only scene to have us burying our heads in the sofa...

● GRANGE HILL

The 1986 storyline that saw Zammo Maguire collapse in a filthy toilet after a hit of heroin tried to terrify young viewers into saying 'No' to drugs.

● **CRACKER** The 1994 brutal stabbing of DI Bilborough (Christopher Eccleston) came out of the blue and was an agonisingly slow death – for Bilborough and viewers.

● **SPOOKS** In last year's first series, Lisa Faulkner's character, Helen Flynn (right), was pushed face-first into a deep-fat fryer



full of boiling oil, prompting 154 complaints from viewers to the Broadcasting Standards Commission.

● **HOLLYOAKS** The 1996 episode showed Luke Morgan (Gary Lundy)

being killed in 2000. It had to be cut late at night.

● **COVERT AFFAIRS** The 1998 episode 'The Rape of Helen' (George Clooney, Phil Spector, and Dean Cain) was

uncomfortable viewing for some.

● **TRIAL AND RETRIEVAL** A 1998 episode of this grisly series included a scene in which the severed breasts of murdered women were displayed in pickle jars.

