





The Bear star Edwin Lee Gibson on Rob Reiner's final performance and saying goodbye to Ebraheim

As The Bear prepares to serve its final course, Edwin Lee Gibson tells The Standard about the emotional goodbye awaiting fans.

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24 June 2026

Five years ago, The Bear arrived as a frenetic portrait of grief inside a struggling Chicago sandwich shop. It quickly became one of television's defining dramas, collecting countless awards, launching careers and proving that a story about a kitchen could be just as much about family, loss and belonging.

Now, the service is almost over.

When I speak with Edwin Lee Gibson, who has played the quietly dependable Ebraheim since 2021, there's a sense of gratitude mixed with sadness about his character finally hanging up his apron.

It was confirmed in May that The Bear, which streams on [Disney+](#) in the UK and Ireland, would return for one final season, picking up after Carmy ([Jeremy Allen White](#)) unexpectedly walks away from the restaurant, leaving Sydney ([Ayo Edebiri](#)), Richie ([Ebon Moss-Bachrach](#)) and Sugar (Abby Elliott) to keep the dream alive. For Gibson, a veteran of the stage as well as screen, though, the show's ending feels bigger than saying goodbye to a television series.

Edwin Lee Gibson has played the quietly dependable Ebraheim since 2021

“I'll take away the creativity in the general sense and the love of these beautiful people that I got to spend time with,” he tells The Standard. “I'll take away the beautiful response to the show. What [the viewers] have given us is why we've come back each season doing it the way we're doing, you know, we've done it.”

Over four seasons, Ebraheim, known to most simply as Ebra, has quietly become one of The Bear's most beloved characters. The longtime line cook has remained a steady presence keeping the restaurant's original sandwich counter running while everyone else chased Michelin stars.

After briefly attempting culinary school, Ebra returned to serving locals through the Beef's lunchtime window, quietly building one of the restaurant's most reliable and profitable operations. While the fine-dining side of The Bear struggled to stay afloat, Ebra's corner of the business continued to thrive.

Last season finally rewarded that patience, revealing him as one of the restaurant's sharpest business minds. His determination to 'create opportunity' led to an unlikely mentorship with veteran restaurateur Albert Schnur, played by the late Rob Reiner, and opened up an entirely new chapter for a character who had spent years quietly holding everything together.

Asked what fans can expect from Ebra in the final season, Gibson, 61, smiles. "More," he laughs before elaborating. "There's a desire to, to assist in whatever way he can, and I think you saw that beginning to happen at the end of season three, you saw it really put into motion in season four... and then I think in season five, more."

Ebra's growth mirrors that of The Bear itself. What began as a supporting role has evolved into one of the series' most quietly powerful stories, with Gibson viewing the stoic East African war veteran as representing something far bigger than the kitchen's four walls.

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"I really love the fact that people have responded to Ebraheim the way that they have because it's what I really wanted for him," he says. "I wanted to really show this character and tell this global immigrant story."

As audiences demanded to know more about the man showrunner Christopher Storer once called "a mystery who's lived 1,000 lives", the series began rewarding that curiosity and Gibson says he was "excited at the response season after season".

Part of Ebra's appeal, Gibson believes, is that he quietly subverts expectations.

"He's really the one person that doesn't get frazzled throughout all of it," he shares. "Especially when you delve into brown-skinned male characters, people only talk about them when they are the trope of somebody else's imagination.

"And here's Ebraheim, who is not any of those stereotypes or tropes on their best day, on their worst day."

Instead, Ebra became something altogether different, "He's this character that's very, very calm amidst this entire storm, and that's what I wanted for him."

At a time when immigration remains one of America's most divisive political issues, with the Trump administration pursuing both mass deportations and efforts to revoke the legal status of some migrants, Gibson believes Ebra offers a different, hopeful perspective.

“Hopefully people... will see his strength and that they can find their way - and that it's not always going to be easy,” he shares. “... but that these folks, especially in the African diaspora, where this character is from, see that their brilliance can be utilised in different kinds of ways.

“They have to be creative and here's a character that was very creative, utilising this vast knowledge that no one knew that he had to assist the picture that's bigger than himself.”

It's that humanity, rather than the restaurant itself, that Gibson believes will define The Bear's legacy.



Gibson reflected on working with the late Rob Reiner

“I really think this show will age well,” he says. “It's about so much more than a small restaurant that grows to a big restaurant. It's about family that you find and re-examining the family that you inherited.”

One relationship that particularly resonated with audiences last season was Ebra's unlikely partnership with Reiner, whose character became an unexpected mentor before the legendary actor's untimely death. Following his passing last December, the storyline has taken on an added resonance for Gibson, who was working alongside someone he had admired for decades.

“All those days that Rob and I spent together were a lot of fun,” he remembers. “I'm really happy that it looks like, ‘oh, they must have spent so much time’, when in actuality we just had such a great chemistry immediately.”

He pauses. “I got to be his last scene partner, unfortunately... but it was just really, really great moments with someone that you grew up watching in front of the camera, then behind the camera.”

Returning for season five without him was difficult.

Gibson reflects: "It's emotional when I think about it, because we go back in season five, and he's not there and we fully expected him to be there, [it] changed a bit the trajectory of the story."

As our conversation comes to an end, Gibson is careful not to spoil what's ahead. But he does offer one piece of advice for viewers.

"Get your tissue box out," he laughs. "That's the spoiler. I'll give you that spoiler. That's it."