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## TV Review: Rich, Russian, and Living in London; Backchat



Rich Russian Katia Elizarova now lives a model life in London

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This thoughtful film was more than just an ostentation-ometer in which oligarchs attempted to out-bling each other

**Rich, Russian, and Living in London**

BBC Two

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**Backchat with Jack Whitehall and His Dad**

BBC Two

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I know. It's all about *Broadchurch*, isn't it? However, the new series is protected by such secrecy, it wasn't available to watch in time to reach these pages. So at the time of writing I've no idea what occurred in *Broadchurch 2.0*. In correlation with a character-defining moment of the series finale — in which Olivia Colman stepped on a slug — the second run could be nothing more than a prolonged pest-control tutorial.

No matter. Let's talk instead about **Rich, Russian and Living in London**. This programme had all the potential to be little more than an ostentation-ometer: one oligarch out-blinging the next with their Mayfair property portfolio or Swarovski-studded car. Actually, there was a diamond-encrusted Merc here — but beware appearances. The 21-year-old millionaire who had one million gems painstakingly applied to her vehicle actually auctioned the thing off — for dog charities.

To extend the metaphor, Polly Steele's thoughtful film looked under the bonnet of the bling. A man who talked in an all-white room about how he and his peers lost count of their money turned out to be a big art philanthropist. A model who wore a red lace dress to walk her dog (and who wore much less in shoots) had a law degree and spoke eloquently about the legacy of Soviet times.

Yet the most powerful message, to me, was about the value of home. I felt little sympathy at the first shots of contributor Yevgeny Chichvarkin — the handsome, polo-playing guy selling bottles of booze here at £10,000-plus a pop. However, by the end he represented the fact that money does not equal freedom.

"I am not at home," he said of living in London, having been hounded out of Moscow by the political elite. "A lot of dark history in our blood; a lot of things look similar now," he added, as we heard a list of Russia's political prisoners being read at a vigil. Chichvarkin probably has enough cash to build a real Emerald City. Yet his real message remains that of *The Wizard of Oz*: there's no place like home.