

## Greyhounds Star in 'Charlie Wilson's War'

**A behind-the-scenes look at the champion dogs who appear in the new hit movie.**

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Photos by Mary Bloom                      Forget Tom Hanks and Julia Roberts. Never mind the story of political intrigue. The real reason you want to go see "Charlie Wilson's War" is the Greyhounds.

"Charlie Wilson's War" is currently in theaters, but I was lucky to do a story about the Greyhounds who are in the movie – the real stars for us dog lovers – Winnie and Mia last year when they were preparing for their adventure.

"Ready for Their Close-Up," which ran in the AKC Gazette in September 2007, told the story of the dogs, their owner Kathleen Helmke, and trainer Bill Berloni, as they trained for their big break.

Bill Berloni is one of the top theater animal trainers in the business and trains and handles the Chihuahuas and English Bulldogs who appear in the Broadway hit, "Legally Blonde".

Though Berloni owns most of the animals he works with, often obtained from shelters, the tight timeframe for this film and the typical Greyhound temperament meant he needed trained, adaptable dogs.

Enter Kathleen Helmke, from upstate New York, and her lovely Greyhounds, Ch. Go Lightly Brand New Day CD RA NA NAJ JC, "Winnie," and Ch. Go Lightly I Want To Talk About Me CD RN JC, "Mia." Accomplished, champion performance dogs, they knew how to travel, live in hotel rooms, and weren't put off by big noisy buildings with strange equipment. Think of the cameras, strange people, and the focused attention those dogs coped with during the shoot!

Kathy said her breed club is going to leverage any publicity the breed gets from the movie to continue to educate the public about the breed, and to re-home retired racers.

"Charlie Wilson's War" is now playing in theaters across the country, starring Winnie and Mia ... oh yes, and the ever lovely Julia Roberts and Tom Hanks.