

## Breakdown of the Writing Process

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## A Sample Breakdown of the Writing Process

**Topic:** Suppressors

**Approach:** Argumentative

**Essential Question:** Why should suppressors be more readily available to consumers?

**Essential Statement:** Suppressors should be easy for users to obtain.

### Prewriting Strategies

**WHY??????**

**FREE WRITE SAMPLE:** Suppressors are presented in the media and film in a way that's created a myth of a deadly assassin slinking through the shadows and taking down targets without a sound. I know that's what I always thought of when I saw a suppressor, as most of my own experience with them has just been through media portrayals. That's not the case. It's just a muffler for a firearm. Just as a muffler doesn't make a car silent, a suppressor doesn't make a firearm silent, it just quiets it so it isn't as harmful to the ears. Why was it even put on the NFA list? Why would some one want one? The answer to that seems easy; hearing protection? That's the big one. Noise pollution too if we're going that way. Hunting in areas with a denser population. Residential areas near firing ranges. How much does the suppressor cut the decibels down to? How does a suppressor compare with ear-plugs or headgear with cutting down hearing loss?

**LISTING SAMPLE:**

#### Suppressors

- On NFA list
- Does not completely silence firearm
- Like a muffler
- Hearing protection
- Noise pollution reduction
- Helpful for hunters
- Helpful for ranges
- How often is it actually used in crimes?
- Does its perceived use warrant such strict control over it?
- False portrayals

**BRAINSTORMING SAMPLE:**



## Research

### CRAAP TEST #1

**Author(s):** Deanna K. Meinke, Ph.D.,<sup>1</sup> Donald S. Finan, Ph.D.,<sup>1</sup> Gregory A. Flamme, Ph.D.,<sup>2</sup> William J. Murphy, Ph.D.,<sup>3</sup> Michael Stewart, Ph.D.,<sup>4</sup> James E. Lankford, Ph.D.,<sup>5</sup> and Stephen Tasko, Ph.D.<sup>2</sup>

**Article Title:** "Prevention of Noise-Induced Hearing Loss from Recreational Firearms"

**Source:** *Seminars in Hearing*

**Date:** November 2017

**Publisher:** Thieme Medical Publishers

**URL:** <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5634813/#!po=68.7500>

#### Currency:

Published in 2017 brings it under five years old, which makes it current enough to be used for research. Links within the article itself still work.

#### Relevance:

The source relates directly to my topic. Provides important stats for topic like: db level of certain firearms, how much a suppressor helps in cutting decibel levels, provides data on how damaging firearm usage can be to hearing without taking every possible precaution.

#### Authority:

I can trust the authority of the authors and source publisher due to their extensive publication record. Each of the authors are experts in their fields with advanced degrees, most of them with doctorates. The paper has been cited by many other papers as well.

#### Accuracy:

The paper has been cited by many other papers as well. It has extensive primary research as well as evidence from other peer-reviewed studies and articles. Appears to be free of bias, instead just offering factual data and preventative alternatives.

#### Purpose:

The article's intention is to inform. The intention is clear, as a scientific study whose results are meant to teach and inform the reader on hearing loss associated with recreational firearm usage, and how suppressors are a clear alternative to this issue. Does not appear to opinion based at all



## CRAAP TEST #2

**Author(s):** David Kopel

**Article Title:** "The Hearing Protection Act and 'silencers'"

**Source:** *The Washington Post*

**Date:** June 19, 2017

**Publisher:** NA

**URL:** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2017/06/19/the-hearing-protection-act-and-silencers/>

**Currency:**

Since it was published within the last five years, it would be considered up to date.

**Relevance:**

Adheres directly to topic. Provides a historical overview of the suppressor as well as its current status in the United States.

**Authority:**

The author has written on the topic of firearms and legal areas in scholarly journals, newspaper and magazine articles, and has been interviewed by many outlets for his expertise on this topic. Has written several firearm related pieces for *the Washington Post*.

**Accuracy:**

The article has not been reviewed in the sense of peer-reviewed, but it comes from an established newspaper outlet, which requires a certain level of ethical and moral responsibility, i.e., fact checkers, editors, proofreaders, etc.

**Purpose:**

Though the article itself isn't biased, the author's previous publications place him on a side in the argument (for taking the suppressor off the NFA list). Provides a clear breakdown of why the suppressor was targeted, providing specific examples. From there, offers statistical data that leans on the informative without interpretive bias.



### CRAAP TEST #3

**Author(s):** Mr. Guns N Gear

**Article Title:** Everything You Need to Know about Silencers & Which One You Shout Get

**Source:** *Mrgunsngear channel*

**Date:** February 27, 2020

**Publisher:** NA

**URL:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1kUI3xVso8>

Published in 2020, it is only a year old and so very current. Author of contents is still producing material. Contact information provided.

Connects directly to the topic. It offers more than what the paper needs, and so the information from the source will predominately be taken from the first half as opposed to the second half. The information is presented in an easy to digest way. Very accessible.

The author has a strong audience and has produce multiple videos that have been well regarded.

Information is supported by in-video evidence and also lines up with other research done on the subject already.

Author's intent is to inform, though a bit of persuasion is also involved. There's no real bias involved, as an argument isn't being made. The process of obtaining a suppressor, important information on the suppressor, and which to choose is the main content of the source.

**\*Note: You may not end of up using all the sources you've explored in your initial research. You may also end up needing to conduct additionally research as you go = *don't get married to a source.*\***



## Outline

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- I. Thesis: Film and media's portrayal of firearm suppressors has created a myth that doesn't exist, the effect from which has prevented quality hearing protection for firearm owners, and anyone in close proximity to firearm usage, from being easily attainable. (You want your thesis to provide the main idea and also preview the body paragraph topics)
- II. Main Idea One: Film and Media's Suppressor Myth
  - A) The image of the silent assassin with suppressor vs science
  - B) Connect to why it was placed on the NFA
  - C) Crime rate usage = small
- III. Main Idea Two: The Science and Truth Behind Suppressors
  - A) Examples of hearing damage done.
  - B) Safer, but still need additional hearing protection (reaffirms still not as silent/dangerous as people claim).
  - C) Where its usage would be most beneficial.
- IV. Main Idea Three: Hearing Protection for Firearm Users and those in Close Proximity
  - A) Not just for shooters, but for those around any areas where firearms are being fired.
  - B) Cars driving neighborhoods without mufflers metaphor.
  - C) Noise pollution data on firearm ranges and dense hunting areas.
- V. Restated Thesis: The world would be a quieter place if not for the unfair portrayal placed upon firearm suppressors, and everyone's ears, firearm enthusiast and others alike, would be happier if that were the case.



## **First Draft: Rough Draft**

### *Silencing the Suppressor Myth*

A shadowy figure stalks fire escapes and alleyways under the cover of night. They prowl along rooftops, slinking as quiet as a cat on the hunt. They aim their pistol, fit with a suppressor, and fire a round at an unseen target. The sound their pistol makes is no louder than a bee whizzing by your ear. That imagining of the firearm suppressor or silencer has been used again and again, countless times in film, television, comics, etc. Despite how invasive this image has become, an image the suppressor has never been able to shake or silence, the depiction lacks any firm ground in the science and actual usage of a suppressor. The ultimate victim in all of this is the hearing for all firearm users and bystanders. It's been film and media's portrayal of firearm suppressors that has created a myth that does not exist, the effect from which has prevented quality hearing protection for firearm owners, and anyone in close proximity to firearm usage, from being easily attainable.

A story told a thousand times will begin to be accepted as truth, regardless of whether it is or not. This is the dilemma the suppressor is facing. Like all stories though, there was an initial purpose or agenda for smearing the suppressor with such a PR nightmare. The often used examples in relation to this comes from the "Gangster Era" Hollywood films of the 1920's and 1930's. These films, heavily influenced by news headlines such prohibition criminals such as Al Capone and Tom Dillinger, littered the theaters with violent firearm depictions. These films, and the prohibition era violence they mythologized, is often pointed to as a deciding factor in placing the suppressor on the National Firearms Acts, making it as difficult to get as a machine gun. However, there's another important element to this story. William T. Hornaday, the director of the Bronx Zoo, wrote a book in 1913, wherein he argued that there was an overhunting issue in America, and suppressors were part of the problem. It wasn't the hunting that was the problem for Hornaday though, it was who was doing the hunting. Economic and racial tensions drove this agenda to some degree, along with the outlandish stereotypes used in the gangster films of the early 20th century. Both of these factors are what landed the suppressor in the same category as a machine gun, despite the obvious differences between the two as a "danger" in civilian hands.

Since economic agendas and film portrayals don't offer a true depiction of a suppressor, its capabilities and positive attributes, it's important to peak behind the curtain and see the suppressor for what it really is; a hearing protection aid. A firearm, depending on the type of course, has an average decibel range of 140 to 170. This decibel range is the equivalent of a jet taking off or being on the deck of an aircraft carrier. When a firearm with a suppressor attached is fired, the decibels can drop by 30. While the number seems like a steep drop off, the equivalent of 110 to 130 decibels measures a suppressed firearm as the same volume as a rock concert or thunderclap. A suppressed firearm is by no means silent, which the vast media portrayal would leave many to believe. It's that factor, it's over-exaggerated silencing quality as a danger for criminal activity, that's led to this hearing protection aid being expensive and difficult to acquire. The crime rates associated with suppressors are small. This may be due to the difficulty in obtaining one, but science shows that the only thing a suppressor protects is





a person's hearing, not their stealth. Using it in a crime wouldn't be anymore concealing than using a chainsaw or being fifty feet from a military jet with its afterburners going.

Whether it's recreational firearm usage or hunting, hearing protection is a must. While earmuffs and plugs are incredibly helpful in cutting back the hearing damaging decibels from firing a firearm, it's not enough to remove all risk. A suppressor helps reduce that decibel impact to an even greater extent. One could even take it further and use subsonic round, along with a suppressor and hearing protection to obtain maximum effect. That being said, it's not just the firearm users that face dealing with the unfortunate hearing damage that can be associated with firearms without proper hearing protection. People living in close vicinity to ranges or dense hunting areas run the risk of hearing damage as well. Imagine a neighborhood where every car on the street did not have a muffler. It would be deafening. Not only would it damage hearing, but it would also have a profound impact on mental health. The kind thing to do would to get a muffler for you car to protect the hearing of those around you and leave a small a footprint sonically as possible. Firearm users would gladly oblige no doubt if obtaining suppressor wasn't such an economic and legislative hurdle to navigate.

The world would be a quieter place if not for the unfair portrayal placed upon firearm suppressors, and everyone's ears, firearm enthusiast and others alike, would be happier if that were the case. It's a difficult task to rewrite a story that's been told so many times, and to tell it with conflicting information. Science shows the suppressor's impact of a firearm's decibel range is minor enough to not make it a threat of violence. In fact, it's advised that even when using a suppressor, other hearing protection is a must. The only damage or danger the public faces in regards to suppressors, is that they are tedious to obtain. If there is little to no danger in their usage, and they offer another element of hearing protection, placing them alongside a machinegun appears irrational. The great cost facing both firearm users and the public is not the effect purchasing a suppressor has on a wallet, but the damage of not purchasing one that's inflicted on one's hearing.



## Second Draft: Revised Draft

**\* See the bolded comments for revision notes. Those applied revision notes can be seen in THIRD DRAFT: PROOFREAD DRAFT \***

### *Silencing the Suppressor Myth*

A shadowy figure stalks fire escapes and alleyways under the cover of night. They prowl along rooftops, slinking as quiet as a cat on the hunt. They aim their pistol, fit with a suppressor, and fire a round at an unseen target. The sound their pistol makes is no louder than a bee whizzing by your ear **(Hook is too long, trim it back)**. That imagining of the firearm suppressor or silencer has been used again and again, countless times in film, television, comics, etc. Despite how invasive this image has become, an image the suppressor has never been able to shake or silence, the depiction lacks any firm ground in the science and actual usage of a suppressor. The ultimate victim in all of this is the hearing for all firearm users and bystanders. It's been film and media's portrayal of firearm suppressors that has created a myth that does not exist, the effect from which has prevented quality hearing protection for firearm owners, and anyone in close proximity to firearm usage, from being easily attainable **(Thesis is a bit awkward (read it out loud). Simplify it)**.

A story told a thousand times will begin to be accepted as truth, regardless of whether it is or not. This is the dilemma the suppressor is facing. Like all stories though, there was an initial purpose or agenda for smearing the suppressor with such a PR nightmare **(rework overtly biased language = smearing, PR nightmare)**. The often-used examples in relation to this comes from the "Gangster Era" Hollywood films of the 1920's and 1930's. These films, heavily influenced by news headlines such prohibition criminals such as Al Capone and John Dillinger, littered the theaters with violent firearm depictions **(Don't spend as much time on the cinema. Focus on Hornaday, as his impact is more easily defined)**. These films, and the prohibition era violence they mythologized, is often pointed to as a deciding factor in placing the suppressor on the National Firearms Acts, making it as difficult to get as a machine gun. However, there's another important element to this story. William T. Hornaday, the director of the Bronx Zoo, wrote a book in 1913, wherein he argued that there was an overhunting issue in America, and suppressors were part of the problem. It wasn't the hunting that was the problem for Hornaday though, it was who was doing the hunting. Economic and racial tensions drove this agenda to some degree, along with the outlandish stereotypes used in the gangster films of the early 20th century **(Bring in source material from Hornaday)**. Both of these factors are what landed the suppressor in the same category as a machine gun, despite the obvious differences between the two as a "danger" in civilian hands.

Since economic agendas and film portrayals don't offer a true depiction of a suppressor, its capabilities and positive attributes, it's important to peak behind the curtain and see the suppressor for what it really is; a hearing protection aid. A firearm, depending on the type of course, has an average decibel range of 140 to 170. This decibel range is the equivalent of a jet taking off or being on the deck of an aircraft carrier. When a firearm with a suppressor attached is fired, the decibels can drop by 30. While the number seems like a steep drop off, the



equivalent of 110 to 130 decibels measures a suppressed firearm as the same volume as a rock concert or thunderclap **(Bring in citations)**. A suppressed firearm is by no means silent, which the vast media portrayal would leave many to believe. It's that factor, it's over-exaggerated silencing quality as a danger for criminal activity, that's led to this hearing protection aid being expensive and difficult to acquire. The crime rates associated with suppressors are small **(Bring in statistics)**. This may be due to the difficulty in obtaining one, but science shows that the only thing a suppressor protects is a person's hearing, not their stealth. Using it in a crime wouldn't be anymore concealing than using a chainsaw or being fifty feet from a military jet with its afterburners going. **(One more sentence here to close and transition)**

Whether it's recreational firearm usage or hunting, hearing protection is a must. While earmuffs and plugs are incredibly helpful in cutting back the hearing damaging decibels from firing a firearm, it's not enough to remove all risk. A suppressor helps reduce that decibel impact to an even greater extent. One could even take it further and use subsonic rounds, along with a suppressor and hearing protection to obtain maximum effect **(Bring in stats/quotes)**. That being said, it's not just the firearm users that face dealing with the unfortunate hearing damage that can be associated with firearms without proper hearing protection. People living in close vicinity to ranges or dense hunting areas run the risk of hearing damage as well. Imagine a neighborhood where every car on the street did not have a muffler. It would be deafening. Not only would it damage hearing, but it would also have a profound impact on mental health. The kind thing to do would to get a muffler for you car to protect the hearing of those around you and leave a small a footprint sonically as possible **(Metaphor stretches out too long. Examples would serve better here)**. Firearm users would gladly oblige no doubt if obtaining suppressor wasn't such an economic and legislative hurdle to navigate. **(Not sure if this is a firm enough)**.

The world would be a quieter place if not for the unfair portrayal placed upon firearm suppressors, and everyone's ears, firearm enthusiast and others alike, would be happier if that were the case **(Awkward (read out loud). Needs to be reworked)**. It's a difficult task to rewrite a story that's been told so many times, and to tell it with conflicting information. Science shows the suppressor's impact of a firearm's decibel range is minor enough to not make it a threat of violence **(needs follow up)**. In fact, it's advised that even when using a suppressor, other hearing protection is a must. The only damage or danger the public faces in regards to suppressors, is that they are tedious and expensive to obtain **(Advised to cut = it's repetitious)**. If there is little to no danger in their usage, and they offer another element of hearing protection, placing them alongside a machinegun appears irrational. The great cost facing both firearm users and the public is not the effect purchasing a suppressor has on a wallet, but the damage of not purchasing one that's inflicted on one's hearing.



### Third Draft: Proofread Draft

*\* See the bolded sentences, words, and punctuation for where proofreading corrections have been made \**

#### *Silencing the Suppressor Myth*

A shadowy figure ~~fire escapes and alleyways under the cover of night~~ prowls along rooftops, slinking as quiet as a cat on the hunt. They aim their pistol, fit with a suppressor, and fire a round at an unseen target. The sound their pistol makes is no louder than a bee whizzing by your ear. That imagining of the firearm suppressor or silencer has been used again and again, countless times in film, television, comics, etc. Despite how invasive this image has become, an image the suppressor has never been able to shake or silence, the depiction lacks any firm ground in the science and actual usage of a suppressor. The ultimate victim in all of this is the hearing for all firearm users and bystanders. ~~It's been~~ Film and media's portrayal of firearm suppressors that has created a myth that does not exist, ~~the effect from~~ which has prevented quality hearing protection for firearm owners and others, ~~and anyone in close proximity to firearm usage~~, from being easily attainable.

A story told a thousand times will begin to be accepted as truth, regardless of whether it is or not. This is the dilemma the suppressor is facing. Like all stories though, there was an initial purpose or agenda for placing the suppressor **in the same category as a machinegun. smearing the suppressor with such a PR nightmare.** The often-used examples in relation to this comes from the "Gangster Era" Hollywood films of the 1920's and 1930's. ~~These films, heavily influenced by news headlines such about prohibition criminals such as Al Capone and John Dillinger, littered the theaters with violent firearm depictions.~~ These films, and the prohibition era violence they mythologized, is often pointed to as a deciding factor in ~~placing the suppressor on the~~ National Firearms Acts, ~~making it as difficult to get as a machine gun being enacted.~~ However, there's another important element to this story **that is lesser known but far more impactful on how the NFA and the suppressor first became linked.** William T. Hornaday, the director of the Bronx Zoo, wrote a book in 1913, wherein he argued that there was an overhunting issue in America, and suppressors were part of the problem. **"According to Hornaday, one problem was that modern guns were too accurate. . . in Wyoming, hunters were using silencers so one shot didn't frighten away other game" (Kopel, 2017, p. 2).** Still, it wasn't the hunting that was the problem for Hornaday though, it was who was doing the hunting. **To Hornaday, the overhunting issue was due to minority groups. He pointed the finger at immigrants, African Americans, and the lower class. "Hornaday favored an Alabama proposal for an annual tax of at least \$5 a year on every firearm, to prevent poor people from owning inexpensive guns" (Kopel, 2017, p. 3).** This meant making even the cheapest firearms difficult to obtain, as well as pushing for suppressors and other firearm related items to be taxed and made difficult to get by those without the money to do so. **Many of the legislation that Hornaday pushed for came into being, and the influence could be seen in the enactment of the NFA. As history would show, the NFA did little to keep machineguns and the like out of the hands of the people it was painted to; gangsters and other dangerous persons. Those men had the money to still afford these weapons, it was just those without the financial means that were kept on the outside. Economic and racial tensions drove this agenda to some degree, along with the outlandish and ethnic stereotypes used in the gangster films of the early 20th century. Both of these factors are what landed the suppressor in the same category as a machine gun, despite the obvious differences between the two as a "danger" in civilian hands.**

Since economic agendas and film portrayals don't offer a true depiction of a suppressor, its capabilities and positive attributes, it's important to **peek peek** behind the curtain and see the suppressor for



what it really is, a hearing protection aid. A firearm, depending on the type of course, has an average decibel range of 140 to 170. This decibel range is the equivalent of a jet taking off or being on the deck of an aircraft carrier (**Purdue, 2000, p. 3**). **This can cause immediate damage to one's hearing if the necessary protection isn't employed.** When a firearm with a suppressor attached is fired, the decibels can drop by 30, and while the number seems like a steep drop off, the equivalent of 110 to 130 decibels measures a suppressed firearm as the same volume as a rock concert or thunderclap (**Finan, 2017, p. 5**). A suppressed firearm is by no means silent, which the vast media portrayal would leave many to believe. It's that factor, it's over-exaggerated silencing quality as a danger for criminal activity, that's led to this hearing protection aid being expensive and difficult to acquire. The crime rates associated with suppressors are small. **Between 1995 and 2005, there were only 153 prosecutions involving the use of suppressors, but those cases were marked predominantly with, "the possessor [as] a prohibited person (not allowed to possess firearms, ammunition or silencers), but the possessor was not misusing the item. In only 2 percent of the cases was the firearm discharged"** (**Kopel, 2017, p. 6**). This may be due to the difficulty in obtaining one, but science shows that the only thing a suppressor protects is a person's hearing, not their stealth. Using it in a crime wouldn't be **any more any more** concealing than using a chainsaw or being fifty feet from a military jet with its afterburners going. **It's difficult to imagine that level of sound being considered stealthy.**

Whether it's recreational firearm usage or hunting, hearing protection is a must. While earmuffs and plugs are incredibly helpful in cutting back the hearing damaging decibels from firing a firearm, it's not enough to remove all risk. A suppressor helps reduce that decibel impact to an even greater extent. One could even take it further and use subsonic rounds, along with a suppressor and hearing protection to obtain maximum effect. **A study conducted for *Seminars in Hearing* concluded, "Peak SPLs [sound pressure levels] for the subsonic ammunition ranged from 100 to 132 db SPL in the suppressed conditions. The levels were 127 to 149 dB SPL for the unsuppressed conditions"** (**Finan, 2017, p. 16**). **Firearm users should have every piece of hearing protection available to them without jumping through hoops to get them.** That being said, it's not just the firearm users that face dealing with the unfortunate hearing damage that can be associated with firearms without proper hearing protection. People living in close vicinity to ranges or dense hunting areas run the risk of hearing damage as well. Imagine a neighborhood where every car on the street did not have a muffler. It would be deafening. Not only would it damage hearing, but it would also have a profound impact on mental health. **The kind thing to do would be to get a muffler for your car to protect the hearing of those around you and leave a small footprint sonically as possible.** Firearm users would gladly oblige no doubt if obtaining suppressor wasn't such an economic and legislative hurdle to navigate.

The world would be a quieter place if not for the unfair portrayal placed upon firearm suppressors, **and**. Everyone's ears, firearm enthusiast and others alike, would be happier if that were the case. It's a difficult task to rewrite a story that's been told so many times, and to tell it with conflicting information. Science shows the suppressor's impact of a firearm's decibel range is minor enough to not make it a threat of violence **but is beneficial enough to be of value for hearing protection.** In fact, it's advised that even when using a suppressor, other hearing protection is a must. **The only damage or danger the public faces regarding suppressors, is that they are tedious and expensive to obtain.** If there is little to no danger in their usage, and they offer another element of hearing protection, placing them alongside a machinegun appears irrational. The great cost facing both firearm users and the public is not the effect purchasing a suppressor has on a wallet, but the damage of not purchasing one **that's inflicted inflicts** on one's hearing.



## Fourth Draft: Final Draft

### *Silencing the Suppressor Myth*

A shadowy figure prowls along rooftops, slinking as quiet as a cat on the hunt. They aim their pistol, fit with a suppressor, and fire a round at an unseen target. The sound their pistol makes is no louder than a bee whizzing by your ear. That imagining of the firearm suppressor or silencer has been used again and again, countless times in film, television, comics, etc. Despite how invasive this image has become, an image the suppressor has never been able to shake or silence, the depiction lacks any firm ground in the science and actual usage of a suppressor. The ultimate victim in all of this is the hearing for all firearm users and bystanders. The media's portrayal of firearm suppressors has created a myth that does not exist, which has prevented quality hearing protection for firearm owners and others from being easily attainable.

A story told a thousand times will begin to be accepted as truth, regardless of whether it is or not. This is the dilemma the suppressor is facing. Like all stories though, there was an initial purpose or agenda for placing the suppressor in the same category as a machinegun. The often-used examples in relation to this comes from the "Gangster Era" Hollywood films of the 1920's and 1930's. These films, and the prohibition era violence they mythologized, is often pointed to as a deciding factor in the National Firearms Acts being enacted. However, there's another important element to this story that is lesser known but far more impactful on how the NFA and the suppressor first became linked. William T. Hornaday, the director of the Bronx Zoo, wrote a book in 1913, wherein he argued that there was an overhunting issue in America, and suppressors were part of the problem. "According to Hornaday, one problem was that modern guns were too accurate. . . in Wyoming, hunters were using silencers so one shot didn't frighten away other game" (Kopel, 2017, p. 2). Still, it wasn't the hunting that was the problem for Hornaday though, it was who was doing the hunting. To Hornaday, the overhunting issue was due to minority groups. He pointed the finger at immigrants, African Americans, and the lower class. "Hornaday favored an Alabama proposal for an annual tax of at least \$5 a year on every firearm, to prevent poor people from owning inexpensive guns" (Kopel, 2017, p.3). This meant making even the cheapest firearms difficult to obtain, as well as pushing for suppressors and other firearm related items to be taxed and made difficult to get by those without the money to do so. Many of the legislation that Hornaday pushed for came into being, and the influence could be seen in the enactment of the NFA (Kopel, 2017, p.6). As history would show, the NFA did little to keep machineguns and the like out of the hands of the people it was painted to; gangsters and other dangerous persons. Those men had the money to still afford these weapons, it was just those without the financial means that were kept on the outside. Economic and racial tensions drove this agenda to some degree, along with the outlandish and ethnic stereotypes used in the gangster films of the early 20th century. Both of these factors are what landed the suppressor in the same category as a machine gun, despite the obvious differences between the two as a "danger" in civilian hands.

Since economic agendas and film portrayals don't offer a true depiction of a suppressor, its capabilities and positive attributes, it's important to peek behind the curtain and see the suppressor for what it really is, a hearing protection aid. A firearm, depending on the type of course, has an average decibel range of 140 to 170. This decibel range is the equivalent of a





jet taking off or being on the deck of an aircraft carrier (Purdue, 2000, p. 3). This can cause immediate damage to one's hearing if the necessary protection isn't employed. When a firearm with a suppressor attached is fired, the decibels can drop by 30, and while the number seems like a steep drop off, the equivalent of 110 to 130 decibels measures a suppressed firearm as the same volume as a rock concert or thunderclap (Finan, 2017, p. 5). A suppressed firearm is by no means silent, which the vast media portrayal would leave many to believe. It's that factor, it's over-exaggerated silencing quality as a danger for criminal activity, that's led to this hearing protection aid being expensive and difficult to acquire. The crime rates associated with suppressors are small. Between 1995 and 2005, there were only 153 prosecutions involving the use of suppressors, but those cases were marked predominantly with, "the possessor [as] a prohibited person (not allowed to possess firearms, ammunition or silencers), but the possessor was not misusing the item. In only 2 percent of the cases was the firearm discharged" (Kopel, 2017, p. 6). This may be due to the difficulty in obtaining one, but science shows that the only thing a suppressor protects is a person's hearing, not their stealth. Using it in a crime wouldn't be any more concealing than using a chainsaw or being fifty feet from a military jet with its afterburners going. It's difficult to imagine that level of sound being considered stealthy.

Whether it's recreational firearm usage or hunting, hearing protection is a must. While earmuffs and plugs are incredibly helpful in cutting back the hearing damaging decibels from firing a firearm, it's not enough to remove all risk. A suppressor helps reduce that decibel impact to an even greater extent. One could even take it further and use subsonic rounds, along with a suppressor and hearing protection to obtain maximum effect. A study conducted for Seminars in Hearing concluded, "Peak SPLs [sound pressure levels] for the subsonic ammunition ranged from 100 to 132 db SPL in the suppressed conditions. The levels were 127 to 149 dB SPL for the unsuppressed conditions" (Finan, 2017, p. 16). Firearm users should have every piece of hearing protection available to them without jumping through hoops to get them. That being said, it's not just the firearm users that face dealing with the unfortunate hearing damage that can be associated with firearms without proper hearing protection. People living in close vicinity to ranges or dense hunting areas run the risk of hearing damage as well. Imagine a neighborhood where every car on the street did not have a muffler. It would be deafening. Not only would it damage hearing, but it would also have a profound impact on mental health. Firearm users would gladly oblige no doubt if obtaining suppressor wasn't such an economic and legislative hurdle to navigate.

The world would be a quieter place if not for the unfair portrayal placed upon firearm suppressors. Everyone's ears, firearm enthusiast and others alike, would be happier if that were the case. It's a difficult task to rewrite a story that's been told so many times, and to tell it with conflicting information. Science shows the suppressor's impact of a firearm's decibel range is minor enough to not make it a threat of violence but is beneficial enough to be of value for hearing protection. In fact, it's advised that even when using a suppressor, other hearing protection is a must. If there is little to no danger in their usage, and they offer another element of hearing protection, placing them alongside a machinegun appears irrational. The great cost facing both firearm users and the public is not the effect purchasing a suppressor has on a wallet or society, but the damage not purchasing one inflicts on one's hearing.



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