

“LEAN” and VARIED PROSE – Exercise 2

The following passage has both too many “wordy words” (“to be” verbs, prepositions, relative pronouns), and too little variety in sentence length and structure. First, circle the suspect words, then eliminate as many of them as possible and create better sentence variety, as discussed in chapters 4-6 of Richard R. Guzman’s *Writing Well Wherever You Work*. Write your revision below.

The pre-crime system was set up thirty years prior to the story by the main character Anderton. It uses the help of three precogs, which are humans who are essentially mutated or deformed. They have the special ability to see the future, which means they can predict murders before the murder is even attempted. The three precogs are hooked up to a machine that records the nonsense they talk as their visions of the future. The machine then spits out a card with the name of the person who will commit a crime and also the name of the person the precogs determined will be killed. The card is spit out at precrime and at the army headquarters to avoid corruption. The police will then set out to find this person and imprison him or her to avoid the foreseen murder.*

* The passage is about the movie *Minority Report*, starring Tom Cruise. Exploring the ethics and efficacy of arresting people before they commit a crime, the film poses the question, How much freedom and privacy would we give up to have our safety “guaranteed”?