

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Examining the effect of prison time on landlords' willingness to rent to exonerees: A test of the stigma-by-association framework

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Abstract

Researchers posit that stigma-by-association may account for the discrimination that exonerees experience post-release. Exonerees who serve a longer prison sentence may experience more stigma than exonerees who spent less time in prison. Across two studies, we examined whether criminal history (exoneree, releasee, or control) or prison time (5 or 25 years) impacted landlords' willingness to rent their apartment. Authors responded to one-bedroom apartment listings in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada, inquiring about unit availability. The rental inquiries were identical except for criminal history and prison time. Across both studies, results demonstrated that landlords were significantly less likely to respond, and indicate availability, to exonerees and releasees compared to control. Landlords discriminated against exonerees when the exoneree did not mention a formal exoneration (Study 1) and explicitly mentioned that he was exonerated by DNA evidence (Study 2). Prison time had no significant impact. A content analysis of landlords' replies revealed that exonerees and releasees experienced more subtle forms of discrimination compared to individuals without a criminal history. Together, our results demonstrate that individuals who were formerly incarcerated and associated with prison—whether it be for 5 years or 25 years

or a rightful or wrongful conviction—experience housing discrimination upon their release.

KEYWORDS

discrimination, exonerees, housing, stigma

1 | INTRODUCTION

Although being released from prison is undoubtedly a triumph for exonerees, it does not represent the end of their struggles (McLellan, 2013). An exoneree's release from prison is often only a precursor to the countless psychological and sociological challenges that they face post-release (e.g., Grounds, 2004; Westervelt & Cook, 2010). Many exonerees report experiencing stigma and discrimination when they attempt to reintegrate into their communities, seek gainful employment, and obtain housing (Grounds, 2004; Westervelt & Cook, 2010). As just one example, consider Joseph Frey, who spent 19 years in prison for a rape that he did not commit. He was released from prison in 2013 without any support or services to help him transition to life outside of prison. With no financial compensation and no immediate services such as housing support, transportation, or workforce development, Joseph was forced to live in a homeless shelter after his release (The Innocence Project, 2013). Although each story is unique, and every exoneree has a story to tell, many exonerees report facing similar experiences with stigma and discrimination post-release.

1.1 | Stigma

Stigma represents a negative label that society attributes to an individual or a group of individuals based on attributions of deviancy and other negative characterizations (Goffman, 1963). This negative label discredits an individual or group, indicating that they are morally inferior and should be disregarded, discounted, and rejected from society (Goffman, 1963). This stigma often becomes one's primary identifying attribute—their master status (Goffman, 1963). Because a criminal record is considered “deeply discrediting” (Goffman, 1963, p. 4) and conveys that a person is dangerous, risky, and untrustworthy (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010), formerly incarcerated individuals are released from prison carrying the stigma of being a “criminal” (Campbell & Denov, 2004). In fact, individuals who violate social norms, such as those who engage in criminal behavior, are chronically stigmatized and are considered society's most reviled group (Crandall et al., 2002). This stigma extends to wrongfully convicted individuals as well. Many exonerees report feeling stigmatized by members of their communities upon release and note that their wrongful conviction casts a dark cloud over every aspect of their lives (Grounds, 2004). Upon returning to their communities, exonerees report feeling hostility, fear, suspicion, and hatred from those they once had a close relationship with (Burnett et al., 2017). They also report damaged reputations (Burnett et al., 2017), feeling labeled and vilified (Campbell & Denov, 2004), and feeling that their wrongful conviction negatively impacted their standing in their community (Zeman, 2004).

These anecdotal accounts from exonerees are corroborated by experimental research with community members and students (e.g., Clow & Leach, 2015; Scherr et al., 2018; see Faison & Smalarz, 2020 for a review). For example, Clow and Leach (2015) found that participants perceived both exonerees and offenders as less friendly, warm, and respected than members of the general public. Participants also reported desiring a greater social distance from both exonerees and releasees (e.g., a stronger aversion to living near and/or socializing with them) compared to individuals without a criminal history. Together, qualitative interviews with exonerees and experimental research demonstrate that exonerees experience stigma upon release, representing a significant barrier to their reintegration. In particular, exonerees experience discrimination—the unequal and unjust treatment of groups or members of a group, due to their social category or stigmatizing attribute (Heckman, 1998)—in their attempts to secure housing upon release.

1.2 | Housing discrimination

During the rental process, landlords prioritize attributes such as eviction history, employment, credit, and criminal history when considering a tenant (Clark, 2007; Healy, 2013). Unfortunately, research suggests that although landlords are willing to consider explanations of employment and income deficiencies, they are less willing to consider explanations regarding criminal history (Clark, 2007). Accordingly, many landlords are hesitant, or will refuse, to rent to individuals with a criminal record (Healy, 2013). Indeed, parole officers note that, for formerly incarcerated individuals, obtaining housing is "by far their biggest challenge, even more difficult and important than finding a job" (Petersilia, 2005, p. 69).

Consistent with this, experimental research using audit designs demonstrated that individuals with a criminal history experience housing discrimination (e.g., Evans & Porter, 2015; Furst & Evans, 2017). For instance, Evans and Porter (2015) had research assistants pose as prospective tenants (over the phone), with or without a criminal record, and inquire about the availability of an apartment. Results demonstrated that landlords were significantly more likely to offer a viewing to individuals *without* a criminal record compared to those *with* a criminal record. Moreover, Evans et al. (2019) inquired about the availability of an apartment over the phone, either disclosing a criminal history (drug trafficking, statutory rape, and child molestation) or no criminal history. Results also demonstrated that landlords were willing to consider individuals with no criminal history more often than those with a criminal history, and that the specific crime did not impact landlords' decisions. Central to the current work is whether exonerees experience similar discriminatory treatment. Clearing a criminal record after a wrongful conviction is an arduous and expensive process, and it can take years of appeals to courts to expunge a record (Healy, 2013). Because exonerees' criminal records are not immediately expunged upon release, landlords will often see exonerees' criminal history during a background check, suggesting that exonerees may experience similar discrimination to releasees (Shlosberg et al., 2014). Accordingly, when we speak about exonerees in the context of this paper, we are referring to wrongfully convicted individuals who have been released from prison but do not explicitly have their criminal records expunged.

Zannella et al. (2020) conducted two studies to test whether exonerees, compared to releasees, experience similar difficulties when attempting to secure housing post-release. Using an audit design, researchers responded to online apartment listings across Canada inquiring about the availability of a one-bedroom apartment; the content of the inquiries was identical apart from criminal status (exoneree, releasee, or control). Across both studies, results demonstrated that landlords were less likely to respond, and indicate availability, to exonerees and releasees, compared to those without a criminal record. Similarly, Kukucka et al. (2021) sent rental email inquiries across the contiguous United States from individuals who were purportedly rightfully convicted, wrongfully convicted (self-described as "exonerated," "wrongfully convicted," or "innocent"), or had no criminal history. Results revealed that both rightfully and wrongfully convicted individuals (regardless of label) were less likely to receive a response from landlords than those without a criminal history. A content analysis revealed that individuals with a criminal history also experience more subtle forms of discrimination when attempting to obtain housing. For example, landlords were more likely to request a background check when responding to exonerees and releasees compared to control. Moreover, landlords offered fewer invitations to view the apartment when responding to exonerees—but not releasees—compared to control. Similarly, Hamovitch et al. (2022) conducted a content analysis on landlords' responses to formerly incarcerated individuals and found that landlords were more likely to justify the rental's unavailability, inquire about the renter's financial stability and references, and to say they would follow up later when corresponding with convicted and wrongfully convicted individuals compared to control. Together, these studies suggest that landlords' beliefs and attitudes toward formerly incarcerated individuals—both wrongfully and rightfully convicted—can impact their ability to secure housing upon release.

These results suggest that exonerees experience both overt and subtle forms of discrimination when attempting to secure housing post-release. This is particularly troubling insofar as exonerees receive minimal, if any, support once they are released, which is in stark contrast to the support and services that parolees are eligible to receive. Specifically, parolees may be provided with life skills training (e.g., résumé building, job searching, financial advising),

food stamps, psychological counseling, education credits, substance abuse programs, and housing support (Chunias & Aufgang, 2008), whereas exonerees in Canada and the United States are not eligible to receive these services (Campbell & Denov, 2004; Seiter & Kadela, 2003). This is because exonerees did not commit the crime for which they were incarcerated, and thus are not a “parolee” (Chunias & Aufgang, 2008; Cook et al., 2014). Therefore, although exonerees experience similar levels of stigma and discrimination as releasees, they do not receive the same programming or assistance post-release. The Innocence Project (2009) explained that exonerees “get the worst of both worlds—the stigma of prison with none of the support services available to those who served time” (p. 9). In fact, although not empirically tested, Clow et al. (2012) posit that “the stigma of prison” may help explain the stigma that exonerees experience post-release.

1.3 | Stigma-by-association

Stigma-by-association, or courtesy stigma, occurs when individuals are stigmatized and discriminated against due to their association or contact with a stigmatized person or group (Goffman, 1963). For example, research demonstrated that people perceive psychiatric nurses as less logical than other nurses (Halter, 2008), perceive partners of disabled individuals as less athletic and intelligent than partners of non-disabled individuals (Goldstein & Johnson, 1997), and that family members of overweight women (Pryor et al., 2012) and formerly incarcerated individuals (Austin, 2004; Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009) experience family-based stigma-by-association. The literature suggests that exonerees may similarly experience stigma-by-association through two mechanisms: (a) merely because they are associated with prison and individuals in prison or (b) due to the belief that exonerees are genuinely changed and tainted by their time in prison (Blandisi et al., 2015; Clow & Leach, 2015).

Blandisi et al. (2015) conducted in-depth interviews with 30 Canadians to examine their perceptions of exonerees and found that just under half of the interviewees noted that members of the general public may avoid and stigmatize exonerees due to fear of being victims of stigma-by-association. Therefore, the fear that an exonerees' stigma will be transferred onto others if they associate with them may explain why landlords choose to avoid interacting or associating with exonerees. Moreover, Clow et al. (2012) argued that stigma-by-association may account for the stigma that exonerees experience insofar as being associated with prison and offenders can contaminate and stigmatize an individual. That is, because exonerees have experience with the prison system and have lived alongside “dangerous criminals,” the stigma and negative stereotypes (e.g., Clow & Esses, 2007; MacLin & Herrera, 2006) associated with rightfully convicted individuals are applied to exonerees by association (Blandisi et al., 2015; Clow et al., 2012). Relatedly, individuals may be concerned about the impact of incarceration and how it changes someone, leading to a preferred social distance from exonerees, and ultimately contributing to the stigma and discrimination that exonerees experience post-release (Clow & Leach, 2015). An interviewee from Blandisi et al. (2015) study noted that “even if you were a good person, the situation [incarceration] you are put in—often changes your behavior and the way you think” (p. 1889).

According to this logic, it is possible that exonerees who serve a longer prison sentence, and therefore a longer time around convicted individuals and in a prison setting, may experience greater levels of stigma than exonerees who spent less time in prison, impacting their ability to secure housing upon release. In particular, exonerees who spend longer in prison may be more stigmatized because they are associated with prisoners and criminals who spend lengthy amounts of time in prison. Therefore, an exoneree who was incarcerated for 25 years, compared to 5 years, may take on more of the stigmatizing “criminal” label and its associated discrediting characteristics. Individuals who carry this discrediting label and its associated stereotypes may be less likely to be considered desirable tenants. Alternatively, or additionally, individuals may perceive exonerees who spend a longer time in prison to be changed and hardened by their prison experience. For example, spending more time surviving and adapting to the harsh prison climate can toughen and harden an individual, further isolate prisoners, and lead to increased recidivism upon release (Mears et al., 2016). If prison changes and “contaminates” a person, it follows that an individual who spends more than 2 decades (compared to 5 years) in prison may be viewed as more hardened and changed by their prison

experience and association with prisoners. What remains largely understudied is whether exonerees' time spent in prison impacts their experience of obtaining housing post-release, and whether this impact is similar for releases.

2 | CURRENT STUDIES

In order to help facilitate exonerees' reentry into society and to advocate for modifications to the existing laws and policies, we need not only to document the existence of stigma and discrimination, but to understand the processes that support it. The current studies extend previous research on exoneree stigma, discrimination, and reintegration (e.g., Hamovitch et al., 2022; Kukucka et al., 2021; Zannella et al., 2020) by examining the impact of criminal history and prison time on landlords' willingness to rent to individuals with a criminal history. Research examining the housing discrimination that exonerees experience finds that exonerees and releasees experience similar levels of discrimination compared to individuals without a criminal record (Kukucka et al., 2021; Zannella et al., 2020); however, what remains unknown are the mechanisms driving this discrimination. Research demonstrating that exonerees are perceived differently based on the circumstances of their wrongful conviction (e.g., Clow & Leach, 2009; Clow & Ricciardelli, 2010), coupled with the theory of stigma-by-association (e.g., Clow et al., 2012), may help to explain the discrimination they experience post-release. We examined whether exonerees who spend a longer time in prison, compared to a shorter time in prison, may face additional challenges in their attempts to secure housing post-release, and whether individuals with a criminal history are more disadvantaged compared to individuals without a criminal history. Specifically, we investigated landlords' willingness to rent to exonerees and releasees, who spent either 5 or 25 years in prison, compared to individuals without a criminal record.

To address these questions, we conducted two studies using a similar audit methodology to that of Zannella et al. (2020). Audit studies combine experimental methods and field-based research and are used to simulate and explore real-world interactions (Pager, 2007). This approach relies on real-world settings (e.g., employment searches, consumer transactions), whereby participants in the study are unaware of the experiment to ensure a natural reaction to the experimental condition (Pager, 2007). Audit studies are often used to measure discrimination. For example, previous audit studies have examined the effect of criminal history on employment (e.g., Pager, 2003) and housing (e.g., Evans & Porter, 2015); racial and ethnic biases in rental decisions (e.g., Hogan & Berry, 2011; Ross & Turner, 2005); and gender discrimination in hiring practices (e.g., Neumark et al., 1996). At the cost of slightly lower internal validity, audit designs maximize external validity, allowing researchers to investigate true real-world behavior and instances of discrimination.

In both studies, we responded to a series of one-bedroom apartment advertisements on Kijiji,¹ an online classified advertising website (analogous to Craigslist), inquiring about the availability of the rental apartment. Both used a 2 (criminal history: exoneree, releasee) × 2 (prison time: 5 years, 25 years) + control between-subjects factorial design. Our two dependent variables were whether the landlord replied to the rental inquiry (yes or no) and whether the landlord indicated that the apartment was available (yes or no). We hypothesized that landlords would be more likely to respond, and more likely to indicate that the apartment is available to (a) control compared to exonerees and releasees and (b) individuals in prison for 5 years compared to 25 years. Similar to Kukucka et al. (2021) methodology, we also conducted a content analysis on landlords' replies to identify whether subtle forms of discrimination emerged. The Research Ethics board at Toronto Metropolitan University reviewed and approved both studies.

2.1 | Method

2.1.1 | Sample

We collected data over a 4-month period for Study 1 (July–October 2021) and a 3-month period for Study 2 (May–July 2022) to collect the desired sample. We chose to collect data in the Greater Toronto Area (i.e., a large

metropolitan area) as it allowed us to achieve an adequate sample size, while maintaining some geographic (i.e., and pricing) consistency. For each study, we responded to 450 one-bedroom apartment listings located in the GTA, Canada, that were advertised on Kijiji. Each rental inquiry was randomly assigned to one of five conditions (control, exoneree in prison for 5 years, exoneree in prison for 25 years, releasee in prison for 5 years, or releasee in prison for 25 years). We ensured that each listing and each landlord was only contacted once. Our exclusion criteria included listings that were posted by property managers or real estate companies (i.e., because many renting agencies have a policy to respond to all rental inquiries; Hogan & Berry, 2011), listings that contained explicit information about renter preference (e.g., “students only”), and listings with statements about requiring a phone call to book a viewing. We also excluded apartments that were floors in a shared home as we believe these types of listings (i.e., ones that require sharing common space with others) are fundamentally different from private listings. Specifically, the “Not-In-My-Backyard” (NIMBY) phenomenon suggests that community members understand the need for housing, but that they are fearful of formerly incarcerated individuals living in their communities (Doble & Lindsay, 2003). Accordingly, we reasoned that there may be a difference between renting out a unit to a formerly incarcerated individual compared to sharing a space with a formerly incarcerated individual. At the time of the studies, the average rental price for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto was \$1700; we narrowed our search to apartments that ranged in price from \$1400 to \$2000 (i.e., to control for the quality of the rental, neighborhood desirability, square footage, etc.). Data and study materials can be found on the Open Science Framework (osf.io/a65gx).

2.1.2 | Procedure

Researchers responded to one-bedroom apartment listings on Kijiji that matched the exclusion criteria. Each email ostensibly came from a man named Matthew Smith who was inquiring about renting a one-bedroom apartment. Consistent with Zannella et al. (2020), the content of the rental inquiries was identical apart from the two independent variables (criminal history: exoneree, releasee, control; prison time: 5 years, 25 years). The inquiry stated:

Hi, I am interested in your rental at [insert location]. *[To make sure I'm not wasting your time, I want to tell you up front, I was [wrongfully] convicted of a crime and spent [5 years/25 years] in prison. That chapter of my life is now over.]* I have a job and can pay first and last month's rent. Is the place still available?
Thanks, Matthew Smith

Research has demonstrated that the public perceives exonerees as guilty, even in light of exculpatory evidence and DNA evidence supporting a formal exoneration (Clow & Leach, 2015; Scherr et al., 2018). Therefore, we conducted Study 2 to examine whether the inclusion of a DNA exoneration would impact landlords' decision-making. Specifically, we included an additional sentence in the exoneree condition to indicate a formal exoneration (“DNA evidence proved my innocence and I have been exonerated”), and an analogous statement for the releasee condition (“I served my time and finished parole”). This additional sentence also enabled us to reinforce the condition (either exoneree or releasee) to ensure that landlords knew whether they were responding to someone who was rightfully or wrongfully convicted.

We determined the levels of the prison time variable through a pilot study. Pilot participants ($n = 148$) read five news article vignettes about an exoneree who spent either 5, 10, 15, 20, or 25 years in prison. The news article vignettes included information about the individual's time in prison. The only variable that differed was how long the individual spent in prison (which was stated twice in the vignette). Participants completed attitude thermometers to measure their attitudes of the targets (i.e., using a scale of 1–10) and answered questions regarding criminal-specific stereotypes on 7-point Likert scales (1 = not at all, 7 = extremely). We found significant differences between participants' perceptions toward exonerees who spent 5 and 25 years in prison.² Participants reported feeling more favorable toward exonerees who were in prison for 5 years ($M = 7.18$, $SD = 2.21$) compared to exonerees

who were in prison for 25 years ($M = 6.44$, $SD = 2.07$), $t(147) = 3.90$, $d = 0.321$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI (0.155, 0.458). Participants also rated exonerees who were in prison for 25 years as more criminal ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.91$) compared to exonerees who were in prison for 5 years ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.84$), $t(147) = -2.47$, $d = -0.200$, $p = 0.015$, 95% CI (-0.361, -0.039).

Dependent measures

Both studies examined the same two dependent variables: whether the landlord responded to the rental inquiry (yes or no) and whether the landlord indicated that the apartment was available (yes or no). If the landlord responded and indicated that the apartment was available, researchers waited approximately 36 h before responding that something had come up and that Matthew could no longer look into moving at this time. If the landlord responded and indicated that the apartment was not available, researchers responded by thanking the landlord for their time.

We conducted a series of logistic regressions to examine the main effects of criminal history and prison time on landlords' likelihood to reply and likelihood to indicate that the apartment was available. In line with our hypotheses, for our criminal history variable, we used Helmert contrasts to compare (1) the mean effect of control versus the mean effect of exoneree and releasee combined and (2) the mean effect of exonerees versus releasees. For prison time, we used Helmert contrasts to compare (1) the mean effect of control versus the mean effect of 5 years in prison and 25 years in prison combined and (2) the mean effect of 5 years in prison versus 25 years in prison. An exploratory test of the criminal history by prison time interaction was not significant for reply rate, Wald's $X^2(4, n = 300) = 1.57$, $p = 0.211$ (Study 1); Wald's $X^2(4, n = 300) = 0.04$, $p = 0.843$ (Study 2); or availability, Wald's $X^2(4, n = 300) = 0.09$, $p = 0.76$ (Study 1); Wald's $X^2(4, n = 76) = 0.52$, $p = 0.471$; therefore, only main effects are reported and discussed below.

When a response was received from a landlord, two independent raters coded responses for availability as yes or no. Some landlords requested additional information or were vague about the apartment's availability (e.g., "Hey Matthew, please give me a call," "What do you do for work?"). These responses were excluded from availability analyses in order to reduce subjectivity in the interpretations. Accordingly, of the 247 responses, 33 (13.33%) were excluded from the availability analyses.

Content analysis

Although reply and availability rates allowed us to examine the overt discrimination that prospective renters experience, qualitative analyses provide a more nuanced look into the subtle ways in which a landlord may block or prevent a prospective tenant from renting their apartment. We conducted an inductive content analysis on our data from Study 1 (i.e., a coding method that emphasizes emergent patterns in qualitative data; Thomas & Harden, 2008). One condition-unaware coder independently coded the landlords' replies and identified the initial codes that emerged in the responses. Two condition-unaware coders independently coded the replies, indicating whether each of the codes was present or absent in each of the replies. Coders coded the presence or absence of offering a rental viewing, polite communication (e.g., whether the landlord included a greeting and/or sign off, included Matthew's name, thanked Matthew for the message, and/or interest in the apartment, etc.), questions or comments about Matthew's criminal history (e.g., whether the landlord thanked Matthew for his honesty, asked for details about Matthew's conviction, expressed sympathy for Matthew's situation, etc.), mention of the rental requirements (e.g., credit check, employment information, ID, etc.), deferring the rental decision (e.g., whether the landlord asked for a phone call before a viewing, whether the landlord deferred the decision to someone else, whether the landlord suggested that they would follow up at a later date).

To explore the qualitative data for Study 2, we used a deductive content analysis approach using the codes determined by Study 1 (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Across the 27 predetermined codes, the two condition-unaware coders achieved 93.5% agreement, $\kappa = 0.96$, $p < 0.001$, for Study 1 and 86.4% agreement, $\kappa = 0.899$, $p < 0.001$, for Study 2. Disagreements were resolved via discussion. See Supporting Information S1 for all codes and inter-rater reliability scores for both studies.

3 | RESULTS

In each study, we responded to 450 one-bedroom apartment listings across the Greater Toronto Area. For Study 1, we received 247 (54.89%) replies from landlords, and within the 247 replies, 173 (70.04%) landlords indicated that the apartment was available. For Study 2, we received 216 (48%) replies from landlords, and within the 216 replies, 140 (64.8%) landlords indicated that the apartment was available.

3.1 | Reply

Consistent with our hypotheses, the criminal history manipulation had a significant effect on the likelihood of receiving a reply across both studies. For Study 1, results demonstrated that landlords were significantly more likely to reply to the control group ($n = 130$; 86.7%) compared to exonerees ($n = 56$; 37.3%) and releasees ($n = 61$; 40.6%), Wald's $X^2(1, n = 450) = 75.02, p < 0.001, 95\% \text{ CI}(6.02, 17.19)$. Reply rates did not significantly differ between exonerees and releasees, Wald's $X^2(1, n = 350) = 0.35, p = 0.55$. Similarly for Study 2, results demonstrated that landlords were significantly more likely to reply to the control group ($n = 123$; 82%) compared to exonerees ($n = 46$; 30.5%) and releasees ($n = 47$; 31.5%), Wald's $X^2(1, n = 450) = 88.32, p < 0.001, 95\% \text{ CI}(6.26, 16.44)$. Reply rates did not significantly differ between exonerees and releasees, Wald's $X^2(1, n = 350) = 0.350, p = 0.840$.

Contrary to our hypotheses, and consistent across both studies, the prison time manipulation did not have a significant effect on the likelihood of receiving a reply. In Study 1, results revealed that landlords were not significantly more likely to reply to renters who were in prison for 5 years ($n = 53$; 35.3%) compared to renters in prison for 25 years ($n = 40$; 26.7%), Wald's $X^2(1, n = 300) = 1.692, p = 0.193$. Similarly in Study 2, landlords were not significantly more likely to reply to renters who were in prison for 5 years ($n = 64$; 42.7%) compared to renters in prison for 25 years ($n = 53$; 35.3%), Wald's $X^2(1, n = 300) = 1.69, p = 0.19$.

3.2 | Availability

Consistent with our hypotheses, and across both studies, our criminal history manipulation had a significant effect on the likelihood of landlords' indicating that the apartment was available. In Study 1, landlords were significantly more likely to indicate that the apartment was available when responding to control ($n = 123$; 99%) compared to exonerees ($n = 21$; 51.2%) and releasees ($n = 28$; 56%), Wald's $X^2(1, n = 173) = 20.69, p < 0.001, 95\% \text{ CI}(14.24, 794.95)$. However, landlords were not significantly more likely to indicate that the apartment was available to exonerees compared to releasees, Wald's $X^2(1, n = 91) = 0.21, p = 0.65$. Similarly in Study 2, landlords were significantly more likely to indicate that the apartment was available when responding to control ($n = 108$; 94.7%) compared to exonerees (17; 42.5%) and releasees ($n = 15$; 41.6%), Wald's $X^2(1, n = 216) = 44.78, p < 0.001, 95\% \text{ CI}(9.68, 63.43)$. Again, landlords were not significantly more likely to indicate that the apartment was available to exonerees compared to releasees, Wald's $X^2(1, n = 76) = 0.005, p = 0.941$.

Contrary to our hypotheses, and consistent across both studies, our prison time manipulation did not have a significant effect on the likelihood of landlords' indicating that the apartment was available. For Study 1, no significant differences in landlords' indication that the apartment was available emerged between renters in prison for 5 years ($n = 28$; 58.3%) and renters in prison for 25 years ($n = 21$; 48.9%), Wald's $X^2(1, n = 91) = 0.80, p = 0.30$. A similar pattern emerged for Study 2: we found no significant differences in landlords' indicating availability to renters in prison for 5 years ($n = 16$; 37.2%) compared to renters in prison for 25 years ($n = 16$; 48.4%), Wald's $X^2(1, n = 76) = 0.969, p = 0.325$. See Tables 1 and 2 for a summary of results.

TABLE 1 Logistic regression analyses for Study 1

	Condition	# of responses	Percentages	Logistic regression statistics
Reply rates	Control	130	86.7%	(1) Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 450) = 75.02, p < 0.001, 95% CI (6.02, 17.19)
	Exonerees	56	37.3%	
	Releasees	61	40.6%	(2) Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 350) = 0.350, p = 0.554
	5 years	64	42.7%	Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 300) = 1.692, p = 0.193
	25 years	53	35.3%	
Availability	Control	123	99%	(1) Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 215) = 20.69, p < 0.001, 95% CI (14.24, 794.95)
	Exonerees	21	51.2%	
	Releasees	28	56%	(2) Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 91) = 0.207, p = 0.649
	5 years	28	58.3%	Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 91) = 0.802, p = 0.303
	25 years	21	48.9%	

Note: For criminal history, we conducted logistic regression with Helmert contrasts. We compared control versus exonerees and releasees (contrast 1) and exonerees versus releasees (contrast 2).

TABLE 2 Logistic regression analyses for study 2

	Condition	# of responses	Percentages	Logistic regression statistics
Reply rates	Control	123	82%	(1) Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 450) = 88.32, p < 0.001, 95% CI (6.26, 16.44)
	Exonerees	46	30.5%	
	Releasees	46	31.5%	(2) Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 350) = 0.350, p = 0.840
	5 years	53	35.5%	Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 300) = 1.692, p = 0.193
	25 years	40	26.7%	
Availability	Control	108	94.7%	(1) Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 216) = 44.78, p < 0.001, 95% CI (9.68, 63.43)
	Exonerees	17	42.5%	
	Releasees	15	41.6%	(2) Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 76) = 0.005, p = 0.941
	5 years	16	37.2%	Wald's X^2 , (1, N = 76) = 0.969, p = 0.325
	25 years	16	48.8%	

Note: For criminal history, we conducted logistic regression with Helmert contrasts. We compared control versus exonerees and releasees (contrast 1) and exonerees versus releasees (contrast 2).

3.3 | Content analysis

We performed chi-square analyses on each of the 27 dichotomous codes. In Study 1, results demonstrated that landlords were significantly more likely to offer a viewing to control (53.4%) compared to releasees (32.3%) and exonerees (16.1%). Interestingly, landlords were significantly more likely to offer a viewing to releasees compared to exonerees, $\chi^2(2) = 24.81$, $p < 0.001$. Landlords were not significantly more likely to reply to renters who were in prison for 5 years ($n = 64$; 42.7%) compared to renters in prison for 25 years ($n = 53$; 35.3%), Wald's X^2 (1, n = 300) = 1.69, p = 0.19. In Study 2, landlords were also significantly more likely to offer a viewing to control (40.7%) compared to both releasees (8%) and exonerees (6%), $\chi^2(2) = 72.26$, $p < 0.001$. Consistent with Study 1, landlords in Study 2 were no more likely to offer a viewing to individuals in prison for 5 years (23.1%) or 25 years (26.4%), $\chi^2(1) = 0.176$, $p = 0.68$.

In regard to whether the landlord asked questions about Matthew's criminal history, in Study 1, we did not find any significant differences between exonerees and releasees, all χ^2 s < 1.35, all $ps > 0.05$, or renters in prison for 5 or 25 years, χ^2 s < 4.62, $ps > 0.05$. In Study 2, however, we found that landlords were more likely to ask releasees (5.3%) about their conviction compared to exonerees (0%), $\chi^2(1) = 8.22$, $p = 0.004$. The remainder of the codes in this category were not significant, all χ^2 s < 0.038, all $ps > 0.05$. We also found that landlords were more likely to tell individuals

that were in prison for 5 years (10.8%) that their criminal record was not an issue compared to individuals in prison for 25 years (0%), $\chi^2(1) = 6.07$, $p = 0.032$. The remaining criminal history codes for prison time were not significant for Study 2 ($\chi^2s < 2.14$, $ps > 0.05$).

When assessing the role of prison time, we found that our prison time manipulation impacted landlords' mentioning rental requirements—but only in Study 1. Specifically, we found that landlords were more likely to ask for references from individuals in prison for 5 years (21.5%) than individuals in prison for 25 years (7.5%), $\chi^2(1) = 4.42$, $p = 0.032$. Across both studies, however, our criminal history manipulation impacted whether landlords mentioned the rental application requirements. In Study 1, landlords were significantly more likely to ask exonerees (26.8%) and releasees (33.9%) about their employment compared to control (13%), $\chi^2(2) = 12.27$, $p < 0.001$; significantly more likely to ask exonerees (23.2%) and releasees (27.4%) about their credit compared to control (10.7%), $\chi^2(2) = 9.63$, $p < 0.001$; and significantly more likely to ask exonerees (19.6%) and releasees (11.3%) for references compared to control (3.1%), $\chi^2(2) = 14.02$, $p < 0.001$. Landlords were also significantly more likely to ask exonerees (7.1%) for ID compared to control (0.8%) and releasees (3.2%), $\chi^2(2) = 5.89$, $p < 0.001$. In Study 2, we found a somewhat contrasting result: landlords were significantly more likely to ask control (13.3%) about their employment compared to exonerees (3.3%) and releasees (6.7%), $\chi^2(2) = 10.84$, $p = 0.004$, and significantly more likely to ask control (9.3%) about their credit compared to exonerees (1.3%) and releasees (3.3%), $\chi^2(2) = 11.69$, $p = 0.003$.

Across both studies, we did not find any significant differences for our prison time manipulation in terms of landlords deferring the rental decision (Study 1: $\chi^2s < 0.93$ and all $ps > 0.05$; Study 2: $\chi^2s < 3.91$ and all $ps > 0.05$). In both studies, however, our criminal history manipulation did yield significant effects. In Study 1, we found that landlords were more likely to mention they were in the process of signing a lease to both exonerees (5.3%) and releasees (6.7%) compared to control (0.7%), $\chi^2(2) = 7.36$, $p = 0.016$; and more likely to mention other interested tenants when replying to releasees (17.7%) compared to control (5.3%), $\chi^2(2) = 8.29$, $p = 0.016$; however, exonerees (7.1%) did not significantly differ from either group. In Study 2, we found that landlords were significantly more likely to note that another tenant was in the process of signing a lease when replying to exonerees (7.1%) and releasees (11.3%) compared to control (0%), $\chi^2(2) = 13.98$, $p < 0.001$. Landlords were also more likely to suggest that they would get back to the tenant at a later date (but ultimately did not) when replying to exonerees (8.9%) and releasees (14.9%) compared to control, $\chi^2(2) = 18.199$, $p < 0.001$.

4 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

Anecdotal accounts from exonerees suggest that many exonerees struggle to find housing when they are released (e.g., Roberts & Stanton, 2007; Westervelt & Cook, 2010). These anecdotal accounts are consistently corroborated by audit studies demonstrating that exonerees experience housing discrimination at a similar level to releasees (Kukucka et al., 2021; Zannella et al., 2020). We conducted two audit studies to test whether landlords discriminate against exonerees and releasees who purportedly spent either 5 or 25 years in prison compared to individuals without a criminal history. To bolster confidence in the exoneree's innocence, we added a statement indicating that the exoneree had been formally exonerated in Study 2. Across the two independent audit studies, we found that landlords were less likely to reply, and indicate that the apartment was available, to both exonerees and releasees compared to control. Landlords similarly discriminated against exonerees when the exoneree did not mention a formal exoneration (Study 1) and when the exoneree explicitly mentioned that he was exonerated by DNA evidence (Study 2). These findings are consistent with, and expand upon, previous research examining housing discrimination toward individuals with a criminal history (e.g., Evans & Porter, 2015; Furst & Evans, 2017) as well as audit studies (Kukucka et al., 2021; Zannella et al., 2020) demonstrating that rightfully and wrongfully convicted individuals experience similar levels of housing discrimination. These findings contribute to the growing literature outlining the difficulties that exonerees face post-release (e.g., Clow, 2017; Faison & Smalarz, 2020; Kukucka et al., 2021; Zannella et al., 2020). The results of Study 2, in particular, are consistent with previous research suggesting that the public perceives exonerees as

guilty, even in light of exculpatory evidence and DNA evidence supporting a formal exoneration (Clow & Leach, 2015; Scherr et al., 2018), and that doubts regarding an exoneree's innocence may be a driving force behind the stigma and discrimination faced by exonerees post-release (Zannella et al., 2020).

Contrary to our hypotheses, however, we did not find evidence for housing discrimination based on time spent in prison: landlords were no more likely to reply or indicate that the apartment was available to individuals in prison for 5 years or 25 years (regardless of whether they were exonerees or releasees). These results suggest that spending more time in prison may not have an additive effect on stigma, but that having any association with prison—at least 5 years—may impart significant stigmatization that hinders one's ability to obtain housing (Clow & Leach, 2015). This should be interpreted cautiously, however, as it ultimately derives from a null effect. Future work should further examine the role of prison time on stigma and discrimination toward individuals with a criminal history. Future research could examine at what point in the criminal process (i.e., point of conviction, interaction with police, or time in prison), if any, a stigma-by-association effect triggers stigmatizing outcomes. Indeed, it may be that 1 year, or even 1 day, is sufficient to produce stigma-by-association effects. Likewise, individual differences between evaluators likely further impacts how people use cues such as prison time to inform their judgments. Our study cannot examine all of these factors, but we believe it sets the stage for the investigation of these, and other, future questions.

In addition to overt prejudice and discrimination, we also found evidence for subtle forms of prejudice within the landlords' responses to individuals with a criminal history. Across both studies, we found that landlords were significantly more likely to schedule a viewing when responding to control compared to releasees and exonerees. Therefore, even if landlords responded to exonerees' and releasees' rental inquiry, they were less likely to mention or offer a viewing, thus reducing the opportunity for these individuals to view, and ultimately, rent the apartment. Interestingly, landlords were even *less* likely to offer a viewing to exonerees compared to releasees in Study 1. This result is consistent with Kukucka et al. (2021) who found that exonerees, but not releasees, were less often invited to view an apartment compared to control, suggesting that exonerees may be more disadvantaged than releasees. In Study 1, we found landlords were even less likely to offer a viewing to exonerees compared to releasees. Because of the wording of the email inquiries in Study 1, whereby the exoneree did not mention that they were formally exonerated, it is possible that landlords in this condition may have perceived the exoneree to be guilty, deceptive, and/or unwilling to accept accountability for their crime, and may have exhibited increased stigma toward this group. In Study 2, we found that landlords were not less likely to offer a viewing to exonerees, compared to releasees, but that landlords still discriminated against both exonerees and releasees in their attempts to view the apartment.

We found inconsistent results regarding whether the landlord mentioned the rental requirements. In Study 1, landlords were more likely to ask exonerees and releasees about their employment and credit history; in Study 2, landlords were more likely to ask controls about their employment and credit history. Asking a prospective tenant about their employment and/or credit history may be interpreted in multiple ways. On the one hand, landlords may be skeptical of the prospective tenant and may therefore want to ask prospective tenants about their employment history and credit to ensure that they are responsible and capable of paying rent. On the other hand, however, it is possible that landlords may want to ask individuals without a criminal record about their employment and credit history because they are genuinely considering these individuals as potential tenants. The latter is consistent with our finding that landlords were more likely to set up a phone call with the tenant when responding to controls compared to exonerees and releasees. It is possible that landlords were more willing to take the time to call control—tenants that they were willing to rent to—compared to exonerees and releasees. Overall, the inconsistent qualitative results with an otherwise almost identical method between Studies 1 and 2 suggest that further qualitative research in this area is needed.

Moreover, in both studies, our content analysis demonstrated that when responding to exonerees and releasees, landlords were more likely to defer or delay the rental decision. Specifically, in Study 1, landlords were more likely to mention that another tenant was in the process of signing the lease when responding to exonerees and releasees, compared to control. In Study 2, landlords were more likely to mention that another tenant was in the process of signing the lease when responding to exonerees and releasees compared to control; and more likely to mention other interested tenants when responding to releasees compared to control. Together, these findings may represent

indirect and implicit measures of landlords' stigmatizing attitudes. It is possible that landlords deferred the rental decision to someone else or noted the number of other interested tenants (i.e., an excuse for why the rental may not be available) in order to conceal their prejudicial attitudes or to shift the blame onto someone or something else. Most individuals believe themselves to be fair and just and may therefore make excuses that seem reasonable to disguise their prejudicial attitudes (Sedikides & Strube, 1995). It is possible that the landlords, when responding to exonerees and releasees, felt the need to defer the rental decision or to explain why their apartments were no longer available in order to disguise their prejudicial attitudes. These findings are consistent with Furst and Evans (2017) who found that real estate agents tended to defer the rental decision to landlords when interacting with individuals with a criminal history and with Hamovitch et al. (2022) who found that landlords were more likely to suggest a "follow-up" (but not ultimately follow-up) when responding to exonerees and releasees compared to control.

Across both studies, we only found two significant results in our content analysis for our prison time manipulation. In Study 1, we found that landlords were more likely to indicate that a criminal record was not an issue, as well as to ask for references, when responding to individuals in prison for 5 years compared to 25 years. These results suggest that landlords may be more willing to consider these individuals as tenants. However, because we only found two results for our prison time manipulation, our prison time findings should be interpreted with caution. Although participants in our pilot study rated individuals in prison for 25 years as more criminal and less favorable than individuals in prison for 5 years, we were unable to replicate these findings in our audit studies. That is, in our audit studies capturing true behaviors, it is apparent that, regardless of time in prison, landlords were less willing to rent to an individual who spent time in prison compared to an individual without a criminal record. The disparate findings between our pilot study and audit studies may reflect the difference in capturing attitudes through a survey and behaviors via an audit study. This explanation is consistent with Pager and Quillian (2005) who found little correlation between greater expressed likelihood of hiring ex-offenders in a survey and actual increased rates of callbacks for ex-offenders in a real employment situation. It is possible that, in a real-world setting, 5 and 25 years in prison elicit similar levels of stigmatization. Future research could examine the difference between individuals who spent time in prison and individuals on probation (i.e., convicted individuals who did not spend time in prison) to investigate this possibility.

4.1 | Implications

The current work builds on past research (e.g., Kukucka et al., 2021; Zannella et al., 2020), underscoring the importance of providing exonerees with housing assistance—and transitional support in general—post-release. Although Zannella et al. (2020) and Kukucka et al. (2021) both found that exonerees are disadvantaged in their attempts to secure housing post-release, a finding that was replicated in Study 1 and Study 2, this study was the first, to our knowledge, to examine the effect of prison time on landlords' willingness to rent to individuals with a criminal history. Although parolees are eligible for, and may be provided with, a variety of reintegration services and programs including access to transitional housing and help finding affordable housing (Chunias & Aufgang, 2008; Cook et al., 2014), exonerees in Canada and the United States receive minimal, if any, reintegration support to assist with their re-entry into the community (Campbell & Denov, 2004; Seiter & Kadela, 2003). Our findings provide evidence that exonerees and releasees are discriminated against—in both overt and subtle ways—in their attempts to find housing post-release. Yet, only releasees are provided with housing services to assist them in obtaining housing when they are released. In 2019, California became the first state in the United States to provide exonerees with funding for post-release housing, providing exonerees with monthly payments for rent, a hotel, or a mortgage, for up to 4 years after their release. At present, only three states in the United States offer any housing assistance for exonerees (Exonerated Nation, 2020). Although these initiatives represent a promising step in the right direction, many exonerees across Canada and the United States experience difficulties in their attempts to secure housing and the fight for exonerees' rights post-release is far from over. Given that exonerees and releasees have similar issues and needs upon release, it is unclear why the criminal justice system is not invested in the successful reintegration of

exonerees. As one exoneree, Vincent Moto, points out, “[they] have programs for drug dealers who get out of prison. They have programs for people who really do commit crimes... But for the innocent, they have nothing” (Roberts & Stanton, 2007, p. 11).

Once released, formerly incarcerated individuals must contend with a host of adverse psychological and socio-logical outcomes including broken familial relationships (Campbell & Denov, 2004), poor mental and physical health (Grounds, 2004; Johnson & Raphael, 2009), housing instability (Harding et al., 2013; Westervelt & Cook, 2010), and declining employment prospects (Apel & Sweeten, 2010; Giguere & Dundes, 2002). These negative outcomes suggest that the stigma and prejudice of being incarcerated disadvantages individuals with a criminal history long after they are released (Kirk & Wakefield, 2018). Landlords may request background checks or a criminal history disclosure (Helfgott, 1997) and many landlords can, and do, refuse to rent to an individual with a criminal record (Geller & Curtis, 2011). As a result, housing insecurity and homelessness are prevalent issues among individuals with a criminal history; in fact, researchers and parole officers have argued that secure housing is their most pressing and immediate short-term need post-release (Petersilia, 2005; Roman & Travis, 2006). Stable housing may be the foundation which other aspects of reentry rely on insofar as having a home helps individuals to maintain stable employment, familial connections, and one’s mental and physical health (Lutze et al., 2014).

In an effort to reduce barriers to reintegration for individuals with a criminal history, many jurisdictions in the United States have passed the “Ban the Box” initiative, which is designed to remove the check box on job applications that ask applicants to disclose whether they have a criminal record (Agan & Starr, 2018). Although the Ban the Box initiative does not prevent employers from asking about criminal records altogether, it forces employers to wait until after the application stage (i.e., during the hiring stage) to inquire (Denver et al., 2018). These policies are intended to end the cycle of incarceration by promoting access to employment for formerly incarcerated individuals (Agan & Starr, 2018). At this time, The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on categories such as race, gender, and disability, but not criminal history. Accordingly, criminal background checks are often used as screening criteria for rental housing—a screening process that is a significant barrier to obtaining housing. Seattle became the first U.S. city to prohibit landlords from requiring disclosure of, asking about, or taking adverse action against a prospective tenant based on a criminal history, but few cities have followed suit (Poulos, 2020). Based on our finding that tenants who disclosed their criminal history received fewer replies from landlords, it appears that extending this ban to other cities may be beneficial for reducing housing discrimination against formerly incarcerated individuals.

In addition to assisting individuals with a criminal record, there are initiatives in the United States that seek to eliminate and expunge criminal records altogether. For example, the “Clean Slate” initiative works to expand the eligibility criteria for arrest and conviction record clearance if an individual remains crime-free for a period of time. The goal of the initiative is to ensure that a criminal record is not an enduring stain and that formerly incarcerated individuals are given the opportunity to work, live in a safe home, take care of their families, and give back to their communities (Clean Slate Initiative, n.d.). The current study demonstrated that having a criminal record, whether it be for a crime that one actually committed, restricts access to housing. Expanding the Clean Slate Initiative into Canada and into more U.S. states could help formerly incarcerated individuals to earn a decent living, obtain stable housing, and successfully reintegrate back into their communities.

4.2 | Limitations and future directions

Our results should be interpreted with certain limitations in mind. First, our studies focused on landlords from the Greater Toronto Area who chose to list their rental unit on Kijiji. Accordingly, it is unclear whether our findings generalize to landlords who do not use classified advertisement websites, landlords in other provinces or countries, or to larger property management companies. Given that cultural norms and housing policies vary across jurisdictions and countries, future research in this area could examine a geographically diverse sample to investigate whether or how discrimination varies from place to place.

In addition, our studies employed a between-subjects design, such that each landlord was only contacted once. Therefore, we cannot be certain whether the apartment was available or whether the landlord would have responded to a different tenant. There are also a number of reasons why a landlord may not respond to a prospective tenant (e.g., the landlord forgot to respond). In addition, because of the audit methodology and the fact that landlords did not know that they were participating in a study, we were unable to include a manipulation check (i.e., as is standard with audit studies). Therefore, we were unable to confirm whether the landlords were cognizant of the key features of experimental design. However, because we found significant differences between our criminal history groups, it is fair to believe that landlords were adequately reading the rental inquiries and it is likely that our results reflect true differences in landlords' willingness to rent to individuals with a criminal history. Future work might seek to confirm these findings using an experimental design that allows for greater internal validity. Moreover, the rental inquiries in our studies were not accompanied by any link to media coverage or court documentation of innocence that could confirm the exoneree's exoneration. In Canada, exonerees are not provided with a legal designation or written documentation certifying their innocence and thus they are unable to definitively "prove" their innocence to members of the community or landlords. Therefore, the fact that the prospective renter did not provide any evidence that they were exonerated (e.g., links to media coverage or documentation of innocence) is externally valid and represents the struggles that exonerees face when attempting to obtain employment and housing post-release. We deliberately chose the audit methodology to maximize external validity, understanding that it would necessarily limit internal validity. Future research could benefit from examining whether including documentation of innocence mitigates housing discrimination toward exonerees.

In order to obtain experimental control, and to ensure that landlords knew that they were corresponding with a prospective tenant with a criminal history, we disclosed Matthew's criminal justice involvement in the initial rental inquiry. This disclosure may not be ecologically valid insofar as some individuals with a criminal history may wait to disclose this information until they are asked or until later in the rental process. However, research suggests that many landlords do in fact request this information on the rental application or within the first few instances of communication (Thacher, 2008), suggesting that exonerees and releasees would likely need to disclose this information early in the process. In addition, research suggests that self-disclosure indicates a level of intimacy and trust that can lead to positive feelings and increased liking of disclosure (Berg & Archer, 1982; Collins & Miller, 1994). Importantly, the disclosure of an outgroup status, such as having a criminal history, has been found to reduce in-group biases that normally hinder relations with out-group members (Ensari & Miller, 2002). In fact, research has demonstrated that individuals with a criminal record being open and honest about the nature of their offence is the best strategy for overcoming negative perceptions (Uggen et al., 2014; Winnick & Bodkin, 2008). Future research could examine attitudinal differences toward individuals who do and do not disclose their criminal history in the initial stages.

Finally, our study design prevented us from collecting demographic information about our sample of landlords. Therefore, we were unable to examine how landlords' age, gender identity, education, or other sociodemographic characteristics might influence their willingness to rent their apartment to individuals with a criminal history. Future research may wish to explore whether individuals with certain demographic characteristics—or perhaps exposure to, or experience with, the criminal justice system—are more or less likely to discriminate against individuals with a criminal history. In addition, because we did not follow-up with landlords about their replies or rental decisions, our study is limited to analyzing the rate and the content of replies and indications of availability, but not *why* this bias exists in the first place. Future research may wish to include measures designed to assess the intentions behind landlords' responses to prospective renters.

5 | CONCLUSION

In addition to the injustice of being wrongfully convicted, exonerees face a second injustice when they return home insofar as they are not provided with adequate programming to ensure a successful reintegration back into their

communities. Audrey Edmunds, who was wrongfully convicted of murdering an infant girl that she was babysitting, explains: "They put us through enough to begin with. They don't give us any assistance. I'm glad to be out, but there's got to be more support" (Healy, 2013). These studies extend previous research demonstrating that both releasees and exonerees experience difficulties obtaining housing post-release and that tools and services should be available to all formerly incarcerated individuals.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose. This research was supported by a SSHRC grant awarded to the fourth author.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

This study was pre-registered with the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/6d9ft>). Data and study materials can be found at: osf.io/a65gx.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Kijiji postings, in contrast to Craigslist postings, include the name of the poster, allowing researchers to ensure that they were contacting landlords instead of rental companies or real estate agents, as well as to ensure that landlords were not contacted more than once.

² We did not find any differences at other levels of the manipulation.

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