I've learned so much about oppressive colonial institutions in school. I sit above survivors from a safe, untouchable place and engage in discourse peppered with too many “-isms” with my peers. But what for? What do I do with all this knowledge?
I am a history and international studies major. I have read tens of thousands of words on colonialism, gendered violence, racism, militarism, institutions active and complacent in the oppression of people. And I watch the horrifying legacy of these recorded instances play out in real time as well.

We dissect these pieces of history and their peoples in discussions, separated from the conflict ourselves.

The deep, enduring trauma that was inflicted; the constant undermining of traumas, the way that these social problems manifested themselves today. It broke my heart, but I hesitated to act because I believed I could not do anything. I was discouraged by those around me because so for a while, I thought it would be best for me to stay quiet. I would follow the status quo. I too would be complacent. After all, I was protected, untouchable.

**ACTIVISM IS LOUD AND YOU ARE NOT**

Exit. Proceed with caution: Radical beliefs ahead!
Suspect in Atlanta-area spa shootings might have intended more shootings in Florida, mayor says

By Jason Hanna, Amanda Watts and Madeline Holcombe, CNN

Updated 13:59 GMT (21:59 HKT) March 18, 2021

An 18-year-old man suspected in the shootings at three spas in Atlanta, Georgia, that left eight people dead during a manhunt, police said.

Asian Man In Critical Condition After Another Attack In New York City

San Francisco women stabbed amid wave of attacks on Asians

Two elderly Asian women were stabbed while they waited for a bus in downtown San Francisco on Tuesday, in a series of attacks against Asian Americans nationwide since the start of the pandemic.

By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Two elderly Asian women were stabbed as they waited for a bus in downtown San Francisco — the latest in a series of attacks against Asian Americans nationwide since the start of the pandemic last year.

A woman working at a flower stall Tuesday afternoon told KGO-TV that she saw a man walking on Market Street shortly before the attack, carrying "a pretty big knife" with knuckles on the handle.

VERITI: Anti-Asian hate crimes have increased during COVID-19 pandemic

The limited preliminary data available show that there has been an increase in anti-Asian hate crimes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

WHAT'S GOING ON?
Chinese Exclusion Act, Executive Order 9066, American colonial rule in Southeast Asia, model minority politics... I suddenly felt hyper-aware of my own skin color. The passing microaggressions that I had learned to ignore resurfaced. Tomorrow, would the battered and bloodied face of an elderly hate crime victim be that of my grandparents? Of my friends’ grandparents? How did I let myself stay complacent for so long?

I don’t think I want to stand by anymore. The words abolition and decolonization are scary. But I don’t think I could live it down if in 100 years the struggles of QTBIPOC were fossilized, neutralized, and stored away in white apologist archives just like much is today.

I was taught about oppressive systems, and I recognize some. I was taught about how much suffering they bring about.

Moving away from the concept that capitalism is inherently good. That police institutions protect. Understanding that sex work is legitimate work. Seeing the white savior complex play out in massage parlor raids.
It was scary and new speaking to my parents and peers and partners about this subject. I knew my mother wouldn’t be very happy to hear that I was working with massage parlor workers.

I could hear her protest and try to reason with me in the same language that these parlor workers spoke.

I know I’m biased and traditional, but…
When I visited a parlor in the U-District I met an auntie who ran a parlor on her own. She had no family or friends in the U.S. and doesn’t speak English. The warmth which she received us reminded me of why it was I wanted to stop sitting around wallowing in knowledge that doesn’t take me anywhere if I don’t move. As she ushered me out, pressing a golden kiwi into my hands, I realized that we are organizing out of love.

[reaching the bottom of the stairs, as someone hands me a cup of water drawn from a nearby well. “what a long journey, you must be tired.”]

Above the fear of scrutiny, fear of criticism, fear of being isolated in my beliefs was love and compassion for the groups I was part of, the world I live in, and the people around me.

Maybe this way of thinking is still flawed; I am after all angry at the people who use disgusting racist rhetoric and intentionally continue to perpetuate colonialist narratives, angry at the fact that this is the status quo.

But ultimately I want to rally around and with and uplift and support and defend those who have been knocked down over and over by society.

BECAUSE I LOVE THEM!