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Jessica Jackson, a first-year master's student in the Sports Administration program, shares her story of moving from Colorado to Louisville just as the Breonna Taylor verdict was announced, and the effect of dual pandemics on her racial identity.

All eyes and ears were on America as tragedy struck the neighborhoods of Black Americans amidst a national health pandemic during the summer of 2020. This is where the intersection of two pandemics – COVID-19 and racism – collided.

I have lived in Colorado for 22 years, and in my 23rd year I chose to move to Louisville, Kentucky to pursue my masters in sports administration. The decision was a joyous moment and time of celebration. The celebration was short lived, however, as I continued to watch the news to see Black and Brown bodies strewn in streets, lifeless. In my own neighborhood of Denver, Colorado, it was Elijah McClain. On the west side of Indianapolis, it was Sean Reed. In Louisville Kentucky, it was Breonna Taylor. Grief was immense and my heart was heavy, but I had 3 weeks to pack up my life in Denver, Colorado and move to my new home in Louisville.

September 23rd came, and emotions were sparked across the city of Louisville as the grand jury made their decision in the case of Breonna Taylor. As a Black woman living in Louisville, my light was dull. I was fortunate enough to receive support from a professor, the only Black woman in my department, simply to discuss our emotions at the time. Through that exchange, I realized the only way to help fix the systems built against us is to be an impregnable presence in the spaces where representation is currently non-existent.

American society wasn't created for Black people. Only 200 years ago we were considered three-fifths of a person. Today, stepping into spaces and claiming our truth in all of its glory is the act of a true revolutionary. As a Black woman with a lifetime ahead of me, I plan to stand on the shoulders of giants and exist in the grandeur that is my Blackness.