This talk focuses on the records of St. Elizabeths Hospital, the federal hospital for the mentally ill in Washington, DC, in order to explore the ways in which sexual- and gender-variant people have encountered psychiatry and psychoanalysis in mid-twentieth-century America. Kunzel considers these records not as a collection of disparate documents but as an archive, in order to reflect on how, through an archive’s logics and silences and the longings an archive elicits, they challenge queer history. Bringing queer history into conversation with new scholarship on archives and “the archive” more generally, the talk is part of a larger project on the role of psychiatric scrutiny and stigma in the making of modern sexuality.

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