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Man Accused of Stalking Bono Held in Hospital Mental Ward

PALM SPRINGS—A man accused of stalking former Mayor Sonny Bono was in a mental health ward pending prosecution on an arson charge, authorities said Friday.

James Hamlin, 40, was under observation and treatment at Riverside General Hospital, said Riverside County Deputy Dist. Atty. Martin Brhel.

Prosecutors filed a felony arson complaint against Hamlin, 40, after a June fire in a room at the San Jacinto Hotel in Palm Springs, Brhel said.

Municipal Judge Arthur Block set Hamlin's bail at \$25,000 pending his arson trial. He had been free on his own recognizance.

Prosecution of the arson case has been delayed because Hamlin has been in and out of Patton State Hospital, Brhel said.

Bono, who made up half of the Sonny and Cher singing duo in the

1960s and '70s, filed a petition this week in Riverside County Superior Court in Indio seeking an injunction to keep Hamlin away from him and his family.

The harassment, Bono said, has caused stress and health problems for him and his wife.

Hamlin has said he suffers from a manic-depressive disorder. He said Thursday that he wanted to avoid long-term commitment to a mental institution and would petition for release Monday.

Hamlin denied that he intends any harm to Bono or his family. He declined to comment further on Bono's allegations for fear it would jeopardize his bid for freedom.

"My concern is I don't want Hamlin out on the streets," Brhel said. "I don't want him getting out and stalking Bono or anybody else."

—Associated Press