

Luke M. Reid | Partner
Maritime

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Luke is a former U.S. Coast Guard officer and attorney, having attained the rank of commander. He now advises and represents clients throughout the United States and globally in connection with government investigations, maritime regulatory compliance, criminal and civil litigation, defense of maritime regulatory enforcement actions, and international law.

Since entering private practice, he has represented numerous maritime corporations and individuals in a variety of civil and criminal matters, including matters before the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and other government enforcement and regulatory agencies.

Among other major marine incidents, Luke represented the owner and operator of the SS *EL FARO*, a Ro-Ro/Container vessel that sank in 2015 in Hurricane Joaquin in the Caribbean, resulting in a complete loss of the vessel, all cargo, and all 33 persons on board. This included the lead representation in the U.S. Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation ("USCG MBI") and co-counsel roles in connection with the National Transportation Safety Board ("NTSB") investigation and the civil limitation of liability suit in federal court. He also represented the owner and operator of the *STRETCH DUCK 7*, a passenger vessel that sank on Table Rock Lake in Branson Missouri in 2018, resulting in the loss of 17 lives, in the NTSB investigation, the USCG MBI, and resulting civil litigation.

In addition to representing clients in litigation and investigations by government agencies, Luke counsels maritime clients on compliance with all aspects of international and domestic regulatory requirements, with an emphasis on maritime safety, environmental protection, maritime security, vessel emissions and the

decarbonization of shipping, fisheries, vessel documentation, application of the coastwise laws (i.e., the Jones Act), the development of offshore energy, and a range of other maritime laws and regulations.

Prior to joining Blank Rome, Luke was a partner in the maritime practice of a large international law firm.

While serving on active duty with the U.S. Coast Guard, Luke was a military prosecutor, defense counsel, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, and investigated and litigated a wide variety of criminal matters. During his career in government, Luke participated in numerous complex civil and criminal investigations of individuals and corporations for violations of MARPOL and other environmental crimes, seaman's manslaughter, fraud, and obstruction of justice. As legal counsel to senior managers of the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, he also assisted in the adjudication and payment of more than \$200 million in pollution claims under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and assisted the DOJ in civil cost recovery litigation from responsible parties. While an active-duty attorney, Luke also led numerous missions in more than 20 European, African, and Asian nations in furtherance of various U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives. These missions included providing overseas training and assistance to foreign nations in rule of law development, combating transnational crime, counter-piracy operations, drug and human smuggling interdiction, the legal aspects of counterterrorism, border security, anti-corruption, human rights, and war crimes.

He was the recipient of numerous awards from the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Department of Justice during his active-duty service in the Coast Guard.

Outside The Firm

Luke enjoys hiking, biking, and spending time with his family in the outdoors, along with their two Labrador Retrievers. He is an avid, lifelong soccer player who plays year round.

Select Engagements

- Represented the owner and operator of the *SS EL FARO*, a Ro-Ro/Container vessel that sank in 2015 in Hurricane Joaquin in the Caribbean, resulting in a complete loss of the vessel, all cargo, and all 33 persons on board. This included the lead representation in the U.S. Coast Guard's Marine Board of Investigation and subsequent enforcement action, and co-counsel roles in connection with the National Transportation Safety Board investigation and the civil limitation of liability suit in federal court.
- Represented the owner and operator of the *STRETCH DUCK 7*, a passenger vessel that sank on Table Rock Lake in Branson Missouri, on July 18, 2018, resulting in the loss of 17 lives, in the National Transportation Safety Board investigation, the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation, and resulting civil litigation. Commenced limitation of liability

proceeding in the Western District of Missouri (*In the Matter of The Complaint of Branson Duck Vehicles, LLC and Ripley Entertainment, Inc.*, 6:18-cv-03339-MDH) and resolved all civil claims within 18 months of the incident.

- Represented a tug and barge owner and operator in connection with an anchor strike incident in the Great Lakes, resulting in damage to underwater cables and a pipeline. This included lead representation during the pollution response and subsequent U.S. Coast Guard and NTSB investigations, and co-counsel role in the resulting civil limitation of liability suit in federal court in which the pollution and property damage claims were resolved.
- Represented a cruise line in connection with alleged violations of MARPOL Annex VI (air emissions), within the North American Emissions Control Area. The matter was resolved with the U.S. Coast Guard and EPA without the filing of an enforcement action or payment of a fine or penalty.
- Represented a global shipping carrier during MARPOL criminal investigation. The matter was resolved and no charges were filed.
- Represented a towing vessel operator in connection with vessel collision and seaman's manslaughter criminal investigation. The matter was resolved and no charges were filed.
- Represented a vessel owner and operator during U.S. Coast Guard and NTSB investigation of major onboard fire resulting total constructive loss of the vessel.
- Represented a vessel owner and operator in connection with a MARPOL enforcement action in which the government sought more than \$500K in civil penalties. The charges were adjudicated and dismissed.
- Advising and representing vessel owners, operators, and trade associations in connection with international and U.S. domestic regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from ships and the decarbonization of the maritime industry.
- Advising and representing numerous vessel and facility owners and operators in connection with compliance with U.S. and international maritime safety, security, environmental, and trade regulations.
- Advised private maritime security companies on compliance with international and U.S. legal requirements for conducting counter-piracy operations onboard commercial vessels.
- Advising vessel owners and operators on sexual assault and sexual harassment reporting, surveillance, and related U.S. Coast Guard regulatory requirements.
- Represented vessel owner and operator during MARPOL enforcement action, resulting in all charges being reduced to a warning.
- Represented and advised vessel owners and operators on compliance with U.S. Coast Guard ballast water regulations and EPA Vessel General Permit standards and reporting requirements.
- Advised maritime corporations and conducted Jones Act and other regulatory due diligence for mergers and acquisitions.
- Represented and advised buyers and sellers of U.S. flag vessels during vessel transactions and petitions to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration for foreign transfer and reflagging approvals.
- Represented and advised a pipeline owner and operator in the aftermath of

pipeline strike by a third party, in connection with resulting claims under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

- Represented a vessel owner and operator in investigation and enforcement action in connection with alleged violations of U.S. coastwise laws (Jones Act). The matter was resolved without a fine or penalty.
- Advised a global tanker owner/operator on alleged sexual assault at sea and led related internal investigation of the same.
- Advised and represented a leading global tanker owner/operator in connection with voluntary reporting under U.S. Coast Guard's Environmental Crimes Voluntary Disclosure Policy (Appendix N).
- Advised clients on the application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("UNCLOS") and related international maritime conventions.

Admissions

- Maryland
- Massachusetts

Memberships

- Maritime Law Association of the United States
- Wardroom Club of Boston

Education

- University of Maryland School of Law, JD
- United States Coast Guard Academy, BS
- University of Michigan, MSE

Recognitions

- 2019–2023, listed in *The Legal 500 United States*
- 2021–2024, "Next Generation Partner– Transport: Shipping – Litigation and Regulation," listed in *The Legal 500's Guide to Up-and-Coming Lawyers Nationwide*
- 2019–2020, "Next Generation Lawyer – Transport: Shipping – Litigation and Regulation," by *Legal 500 USA*
- 2009, Directors Award for Superior Performance of Litigation Team, by Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys
- 2008, Outstanding Career Armed Services Attorney Award, by Judge Advocates Association
- 2003, 2006–2008, Certificate of Commendation, by U.S. Department of Justice, Environment and Natural Resources Division

Professional Activities

Luke is a member of the U.S. Maritime Law Association and the Wardroom Club of Boston.