

ERIC WATSON

Maritime Expert Witness | USCG Licensed Master Mariner

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EXPERT WITNESS PROFILE

USCG Licensed Master Mariner with over 24 years of command experience across passenger vessels, offshore supply vessels, yachts, and tall ships. Provides expert analysis, reporting, and testimony in maritime matters involving vessel operations, navigation, safety management, regulatory compliance, and casualty investigation.

Extensive experience operating vessels up to 280 feet in high-risk and high-consequence environments, including offshore oil and gas operations, inspected passenger vessel service, and new vessel commissioning.

Recognized for detailed, methodical analysis of maritime incidents, applying COLREGS, U.S. Coast Guard regulations, and industry standards to evaluate causation, liability, and adherence to the standard of care.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Maritime Casualty Analysis & Reconstruction
 - Vessel Navigation & COLREGS Application
 - USCG Regulatory Compliance (including Subchapter K)
 - Passenger Vessel Operations & Safety
 - Offshore Supply Vessel Operations (DP1 / DP2)
 - Crew Training, Competency, and Safety Management
 - Vessel Inspection & Audit Preparedness
 - Risk Assessment & Operational Decision-Making
 - Vessel Operations in Restricted & Congested Waters
 - Shipyard Periods, Commissioning, and Sea Trials
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CASE TYPES & ENGAGEMENT FOCUS

- Passenger vessel incidents and personal injury cases
 - Docking, allision, and collision incidents
 - Navigation error and COLREGS violations
 - Crew negligence and training deficiencies
 - Vessel operational failures and command decision-making
 - USCG regulatory compliance violations
 - Offshore operations and DP-related incidents
 - Charter vessel and small cruise ship incidents
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EXPERT METHODOLOGY

Applies a structured, repeatable, and defensible methodology:

- Review of evidence including logs, AIS data, voyage plans, maintenance records, and witness statements
 - Reconstruction of vessel movements, environmental conditions, and operational context
 - Application of COLREGS, USCG regulations, and accepted maritime practices
 - Identification of deviations from the standard of care
 - Root cause and contributing factor analysis
 - Development of clear, evidence-supported expert opinions suitable for deposition and trial
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LITIGATION SUPPORT CAPABILITIES

- Case review and merit evaluation
 - Expert report preparation
 - Deposition and trial testimony
 - Rebuttal reports and opposing expert analysis
 - Identification of regulatory violations and operational failures
 - Translation of complex maritime operations into clear, understandable findings for legal proceedings
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Captain

American Cruise Lines | Nationwide, USA
2022 – Present

Captain of inspected passenger vessels up to 280 feet operating throughout U.S. coastal waters.

- Command vessels carrying passengers under U.S. Coast Guard regulatory oversight
 - Participated in sea trials, commissioning, and operational validation of newbuild vessels
 - Executed navigation in congested waterways, restricted visibility, and varying environmental conditions
 - Applied COLREGS, Safety Management Systems (SMS), and federal regulations in real-time operational decision-making
 - Oversaw crew training, emergency preparedness, and regulatory compliance
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Captain

LeBarge Tropical Cruises | Sarasota, FL
2021 – 2022

Captain of inspected passenger vessel conducting operations on Sarasota Bay.

- Conducted operations under USCG inspection and compliance requirements
 - Performed crew training, safety drills, and operational oversight
 - Maintained vessel readiness through inspection and reporting of deficiencies
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Captain

Alliance Offshore | Larose, LA
2019 – 2020

Captain of offshore supply vessel supporting oil and gas operations.

- Conducted offshore logistics operations between Port Fourchon and offshore installations
- Managed vessel operations in high-risk offshore environments
- Oversaw crew training, safety compliance, and vessel inspections

Captain

Yacht Starship Cruises | Tampa, FL 2017 – 2019

Captain of inspected passenger vessels carrying up to 600 passengers.

- Operated vessels under USCG inspection regimes with full responsibility for safety and compliance
- Selected by USCG for public inspection demonstration based on operational standards
- Trained captains and crew on vessel handling, safety procedures, and regulatory compliance
- Managed high-capacity passenger operations and charter events

Captain

Harvey Gulf International Marine | New Orleans, LA 2013 – 2015

Captain of DP2 offshore supply vessel operating in deepwater environments.

- Conducted operations at ultra-deepwater installations (~8,000 ft)
- Coordinated operations with major energy clients including Shell
- Participated in development of deepwater operational procedures
- Managed vessel safety, compliance, and crew performance

Captain

Abdon Callais Offshore | Golden Meadow, LA 2008 – 2013

Captain of DP2 offshore supply vessels supporting offshore oil and gas operations.

- Conducted offshore operations supporting drilling and production installations
 - Participated in AUV testing operations with Lockheed Martin and Chevron
 - Managed high-risk vessel operations, crew training, and regulatory compliance
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Captain

Bordelon Marine | Houma, LA
2007 – 2008

Captain of DP1 offshore supply vessel.

- Conducted offshore logistics operations across Gulf Coast installations
 - Managed crew training and vessel compliance
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Shipwright

Smith Marine Railway | Dare, VA
2005 – 2007

- Performed structural vessel repairs and construction
 - Worked directly with USCG inspectors on wood vessel standards and compliance
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Fleet Captain / Captain

Liberty Fleet of Tall Ships | Boston, MA
2002 – 2005

- Managed vessel operations, maintenance, and regulatory compliance
 - Oversaw shipyard periods and structural repairs
 - Conducted offshore voyages and sail training programs
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Deckhand / Mate

Historic Ships of America | Key West, FL
2000 – 2002

- Served aboard tall ships conducting offshore voyages and public sailing operations
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EDUCATION, LICENSES & CERTIFICATIONS

- USCG Master 200 Ton, Near Coastal (Current)
 - Master Marine Surveyor - USSA (expired)
 - Accident & Fraud Investigation / Expert Witness Training - USSA
 - Cargo Inspection Certification - USSA
 - Recreational & Small Commercial Vessel Surveying - USSA
 - Dynamic Positioning Operator (Advanced / Basic – expired)
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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- 24+ years maritime command experience
- Vessels operated up to 280 feet
- Experience across passenger, offshore, yacht, and sailing sectors
- Extensive operational decision-making in high-risk environments