Christopher J. Stetler

Partner

White Collar and Internal Investigations

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Christopher Stetler is a highly skilled trial attorney and investigator. During his 20+ year career, he has earned a reputation for being a hard-working attorney with exceptional judgment and practical solutions, providing significant benefit to clients as he guides them through their most sensitive investigations and litigation.

Outcome-focused counsel

Described by a *Chambers* respondent as "an exceptional investigator and trial lawyer," Chris focuses on results. Known for his investigative skills, he conducts internal investigations into allegations of wrongdoing, often in conjunction with responding to inquiries from the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and other government agencies. Having led and supervised hundreds of government investigations, he understands how law enforcement pursues white-collar matters and uses those insights to advocate for his clients at all stages of a case, especially before the government decides whether to bring charges.

When the government nonetheless proceeds, Chris relies on his deep experience in trying complex white-collar cases to identify and develop the facts that are truly critical to winning at trial. Chris has tried cases involving, among other charges, bank fraud, bribery, tax fraud, theft of trade secrets and wire fraud. Among his cases, Chris served as the lead trial attorney in prosecutions of a chief executive officer of a startup technology company accused of defrauding investors by using solicited investment funds for personal use and a vice president accused of defrauding her employer by funneling money to herself and others through shell companies.

Chris has handled criminal and civil matters involving allegations of Anti-Kickback Statute violations, accounting fraud, bank fraud, bankruptcy fraud, bribery, Clean Air Act violations, commercial bribery, counterfeiting, extortion, False Claims Act violations, false statements, healthcare fraud, insider trading, insurance fraud, kickbacks, mail and wire fraud, money laundering, obstruction of justice, organized crime, securities fraud, Stark Law violations, tax fraud, theft of government funds and theft of trade secrets. He is particularly adept at conducting internal investigations,

Practices

- Antitrust and Competition Litigation
- Commercial Litigation
- Financial Markets Litigation and Enforcement
- Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Litigation
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure and P3
- Insurance and Healthcare Fraud Litigation
- Litigation
- Securities Litigation
- White Collar and Internal Investigations

Industries

- Construction
- Energy
- Entrepreneurial Ventures
- Finance and Financial Markets

Education

- JD, University of Illinois College of Law, *magna cum laude*
- BA, Washington University in St. Louis, *with honors*

Bar Admissions

- Illinois

Court Admissions

- US District Court, Northern District of Illinois

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piecing together complex facts based on a variety of sources, applying those facts to applicable laws, rules and regulations, and deciding the appropriate next steps. Clients trust his ability to practically navigate investigations while positioning their businesses for the best possible outcome, with one Chambers respondent describing Chris as "incredibly business-focused." Chris is a frequent speaker on how best to conduct internal investigations and respond to government investigations.

Chris understands the harm done to businesses in the absence of adequate compliance programs. He uses that knowledge to advise clients not only on how to respond to government and regulatory investigations but also on how to mitigate risks through implementing effective compliance programs.

Previously, Chris served for 11 years as an Assistant United States Attorney, including as a Deputy Chief of the General Crimes Section. In those roles, Chris led teams of prosecutors and federal agents in high-profile and complex investigations and prosecutions that resulted in convictions of the Chairman of the Illinois Senate Transportation Committee, an Assistant Majority Leader of the Illinois Senate, an Assistant Majority Leader of the Illinois House of Representatives, a Cook County Commissioner, a former Chief Executive Officer of McPier, mayors, township officials, and participants in a multimillion-dollar international fraud scheme perpetrated by several offenders who were extradited to the United States. Chris was among a select group of Assistant United States Attorneys chosen to supervise prosecutors in the General Crimes Section. In that role, he advised and guided new prosecutors in the course of their responsibilities, including by helping develop investigative and trial strategies, preliminarily approving indictments and plea agreements, and approving criminal complaints and search warrants.

Earlier in his career, Chris served as a law clerk to the Honorable Judge Amy J. St. Eve while she was a judge for the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Representative Experience

Internal Investigations

- On behalf of technology company, conducted internal investigation into allegations that company officials made misrepresentations while seeking millions of dollars in federal grant funding.
- On behalf of national company, conducted internal investigation into allegations of fraud and harassment.

Professional & Community Involvement

- American Bar Association
- The Chicago American Inn of Court
- Church Elder
- Defense Research Institute, Internal Investigations, Regulatory and Enforcement Litigation Committee Chair
- Federal Bar Association
- Federal Bar Association, Lift Up Leaders Mentorship Program, Mentor
- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, Mentor
- PEAK, Board of Directors
- University of Illinois College of Law, Alumni-Student Mentor; Law Alumni Board
- Washington University in St. Louis Alumni and Parents Admission Program

"Chris is the whole package and then some. He keeps things fact-based and provides empathy and peace of mind."

***Chambers USA* 2026 (Illinois, Litigation: White-Collar Crime & Government Investigations) survey response**

- On behalf of publicly traded company, conducted internal investigation into allegations of product tampering.
- On behalf of international company, conducted internal investigation into root causes of, and remedial measures to address, plant shutdown costing the company hundreds of millions of dollars.
- On behalf of private equity firm, conducted internal investigation into unlawful conduct of holdover employee.
- Following internal investigation on behalf of crypto-trading firm, obtained the return of funds seized by the federal government pursuant to a seizure warrant.
- Following internal investigation on behalf of international shipping company, referred to federal law enforcement conduct of employee who defrauded company.
- Following internal investigation on behalf of international food manufacturer, referred to federal law enforcement conduct of employee who embezzled from the company.
- Conducted internal investigation into allegations of Internet harassment.
- Represented individual accused of criminal and workplace misconduct in connection with international company's internal investigation.
- Advised licensing and regulatory body regarding disciplinary procedures.

White Collar Defense

- Obtained declinations from the Department of Justice and Securities and Exchange Commission in representation of nationwide company allegedly involved in commercial bribery.
- Obtained declinations from the Department of Justice and Securities and Enforcement Commission in representation of asset-management firm, portfolio managers, and trader involved in insider-trading investigation.
- Act as pool counsel for employees of company involved in investigation of alleged false statements by defense contractor.
- Act as pool counsel for employees of company involved in investigation of cryptocurrency company.
- Obtained sentence of probation for individual charged with insider trading.

- Represented owner of COVID-testing lab in grand jury investigation into alleged fraudulent billing.
- Represented hospital Chief Financial Officer in grand jury investigation into allegations of fraudulent billing and other healthcare-related wrongdoing.
- Represented individual involved in DOJ investigation into alleged environmental violations.
- Obtained bond for individual facing extradition from the United States.
- Represent victims of investor fraud scheme orchestrated by individuals subsequently charged with mail fraud, wire fraud, and conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud.
- Represent companies and individuals in connection with federal grand jury and SEC investigations.

Due Diligence

- Conducted due diligence on behalf of company by counseling on the significance of potential criminal issues related to an individual associated with an acquired entity.
- As part of due diligence process ahead of proposed deal, conducted interviews of potential deal partners.

Civil Litigation

- Represented company sued by a former executive for wrongful termination.
- Represented company sued for alleged discriminatory business practices.
- Represented collegiate football coach in litigation involving allegations of hazing and discrimination.

Recognitions

Recognized or listed in the following:

- *Chambers USA*
  - Litigation: White–Collar Crime & Government Investigations, 2024–2026
- *The Legal 500 United States*
  - Recommended Attorney, 2024, 2026

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News

- Katten Earns Top Rankings in the Legal 500 US 2026 Guide (June 10, 2026)
- Katten Climbs in *Chambers USA* 2026 Rankings (June 4, 2026)
- *Chambers USA* 2025 Ranks Katten as Leading Law Firm (June 5, 2025)
- Katten Highly Ranked in Legal 500 United States 2024 (June 12, 2024)
- Katten Receives High Marks in *Chambers USA* Guide 2024 (June 6, 2024)
- Christopher Stetler Shares With *Bloomberg Law* Potential Risks Stemming From Recent DOJ Guidance on Evidence Gathering (June 22, 2022)
- Christopher Stetler's Return to Katten Garners Media Attention (January 6, 2022)
- Former Assistant US Attorney Reunites With Katten's Distinguished Team of Former Prosecutors (January 4, 2022)

Publications

- Chicago United States Attorney's Office Launches Pilot Program to Encourage Self-Disclosure (September 26, 2024)
- Regulators and Law Enforcement are Closely Monitoring the Crypto Sector (January 10, 2023)
- Grand Jury Procedure | *Federal Criminal Practice 2023 Edition* | Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education (2023)
- Ensuring fairness in Illinois Whistleblower Act claims (July 2009)
- From *Booker* To *Spears*: A Roadmap for Sentencing Guidelines (May 2009)

Presentations and Events

- 2026 Business and Intellectual Property Litigation Super Conference (April 15–17, 2026) | *Speaker* | *Business Litigation: Internal Investigations*
- Corporate Guardians: Trends and Considerations Affecting Gatekeeper Liability | Presented by Securities Docket (December 9, 2024) | *Panelist*

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- After the Fraud: Recovering Losses in an Insurance Claim | Fraud Eats Strategy (September 25, 2024)