

# THE AMERICAN LAWYER

An ALM Publication

americanlawyer.com

APRIL 2018

## THE 2018 DEALMAKERS OF THE YEAR

The deals that mattered and the attorneys who made them happen.

### CHRISTOPHER KIPLOK & BRUCE ZIRINSKY

HUGHES HUBBARD & REED  
AND ZIRINSKY LAW PARTNERS

**MOST PASSENGERS ON A REPUBLIC AIRLINE FLIGHT** don't know they're on one—the company operates regional flights for American Airlines, Delta Air Lines and United Airlines. That reality added a level of complexity to the Chapter 11 restructuring advised by Bruce Zirinsky and Christopher Kiplok that most bankruptcies don't face. The attorneys needed to get deals done with each of Republic's three airline partners, all while rightsizing its fleet of planes—an endeavor comprising dozens of smaller deals in its own right.

“Any one of those moving parts could have been an existential threat to the success of the reorganization,” Kiplok says.

On top of all that, Republic was in the midst of a billion-dollar litigation with Delta before filing for Chapter 11, making it all the more unlikely that it was the first airline to reach a deal, setting the stage for United and American to follow suit. It took “a lot of shuttle diplomacy to make sure all the pieces would fit together as part of the restructuring puzzle,” Zirinsky says, but he and Kiplok helped the process wrap up in just 14 months, staving off concerns that delays could lead to pilot attrition.

Together, the attorneys managed to minimize the turbulence and guide Republic to a safe landing.

“People call bankruptcy a turnaround,” Kiplok says. “To go from a billion-dollar litigation and turn that into a new deal and a new partnership, that really is a turnaround.”

—BEN SEAL

