

Opinion / Editorial

Family & Marriage

THOUGHTS ON THE MISSION TO EXTRADICT NICHOLAS MADURO

By Bill Connor

On January 3, 2026 the US Department of Justice supported by the US military, arrested and extradited Venezuelan Dictator Nicholas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Florez. The arrest took place in the middle of the night around 1am at the guarded compound Maduro and his wife were sleeping. From public sources, the US Army's 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta (commonly known as "Delta Force" or "Delta") made the actual arrest

with agents of the Department of Justice. According to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John "Raizin" Caine, this operation had been months in the planning and involved all branches of the Armed Forces and Federal agency partners like DEA and DOJ. Through intelligence sources, the US knew Maduro's whereabouts and patterns in Venezuela and were able to fly in Delta by the famed 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment in helicopters. No Americans or aircraft were lost during the operation, though



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two Americans were wounded. I have several thoughts about the operation from both the perspective of Army Infantry officer and now as a lawyer.

First, from the perspective of the law this operation was Constitutionally justified. In March 2020 Nicholas Modura and his wife Cilia were indicted by the Southern District of New York for drug, conspiracy, and firearms related crimes. Nicholas Maduro was the head of the Del Sols cartel and used his armed forces in the furtherance of the cartel. He welcomed enemies of the United States to Venezuela, including terror groups like Hezbollah, and sought to harm the United States through offloading prisons and gang members to America. The mission to get Maduro was like what happened in Panama in 1989. That was a mission to arrest and extradite US indicted drug criminal and Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega. The difference is that mission required a full-scale invasion of Panama and cost American lives. We had to occupy and conduct "regime change". For the present operation, our military is outside Venezuela, and we will be working

through the current Venezuelan leadership to "run" the country. The mission to arrest Maduro and wife comports with the President's Constitutional powers as chief law enforcement officer.

Second, this was a masterpiece of synchronized joint and interagency operations in a way I never saw throughout my 30-year Infantry Officer career. The point of the spear was the team of Delta operators who came down fast-ropes from helicopters onto the roof of the building where Maduro was sleeping and within a military compound. From open-source reporting, within three minutes of exiting the aircraft Delta had detained Maduro and his wife while trying to flee from their bed to a safe room. Delta quickly loaded them on the aircraft and left within minutes. The Delta team snatch was amazing, but not the most challenging part of the operation. Delta operators train for thousands of hours for this type of operation. From reports, Delta trained on a mock-up of the exact building and bedroom they would hit. They had prepared for every contingency, including carrying blow torches in case Maduro made it inside the safe room.

The toughest part of this operation was insertion of the 160th SPOA helicopters to the middle of Venezuela's capitol of Caracas and inside the military compound (and back out). For weeks the Venezuelan military had watched the massive US military buildup in the waters off Venezuela and so had warning of a potential military operation. They had watched the US carrier group enter the Caribbean, the first time since the Panama invasion, and seen the drug boats being destroyed. They emplaced substantial air defense on the coast and in the capital, of which 160th helicopters at low level flight are particularly vulnerable. Venezuelans had military units on short alert around and within the capital. To help get the aircraft inside the compound, US cyber command conducted offensive cyber ops to turn off the power in the capital and surrounding areas just before the 160th arrived. Around 150 fixed wing aircraft were involved with taking out air defense along the flight path. Helicopters were flown from Navy ships like the Iwo Jima, and forces like the 75th Ranger Regiment were

Good Couple Habits



Roger Rollins,
Family and Marriage Coalition

"Great marriages don't happen by accident, but require being intentional 365 days a year." - Casey Caston

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." - Bible (Ephesians 4:32)

Mark and Mary were a newly married couple. They were both in their early 30's and this was the first marriage for both of them. They were truly in love with each other and wanted to make their marriage a success. But they each were aware that they had developed lifestyles better suited to singleness than marriage. They had their professional responsibilities outside the home which consumed much of their time and attention. They knew it would take a concentrated effort to learn to live with, spend time with, and especially to truly love their spouse.

Mark Travers, PhD, a psychologist who specializes in relationships, suggests seven things successful couples consistently do before the day ends.

1. They start with decompression time. After a busy day at work, usually with many people and multiple activities, it takes time to change focus to a spouse, where the relationship should be more intimate and unconditional. A short time alone or maybe doing some light tasks (10-15 minutes) before connecting with the spouse can improve the spousal connection.

2. They 'silent sync' when they're drained. When the day has been particularly exhausting, quiet time spent together can help. In other words, they are enjoying each other's presence without feeling the need to verbally connect. Psychological research labels this as a form of

co-regulation: the process of two people connecting emotionally, allowing the emotions of the day to rise and fall until they feel like themselves again.

3. They do a quick daily recap. Conversations don't need to be deep or intimate. They can be a simple sharing of one thing that happened during their day, good or bad. It's just a matter of continuing to maintain connections. It could be venting some frustration, sharing a little win they had at the office or even just something funny that happened. No advice. No solutions. Just listening

4. They keep one honored ritual, no matter what. One important component of good connections is developing certain rituals (one or more) that they maintain even when they want to zone out. It may be something simple, like eating dinner together without their phones, making a nightly cup of tea, or playing a word game together. The ritual becomes a daily anchor - something predictable, comforting, and theirs alone.

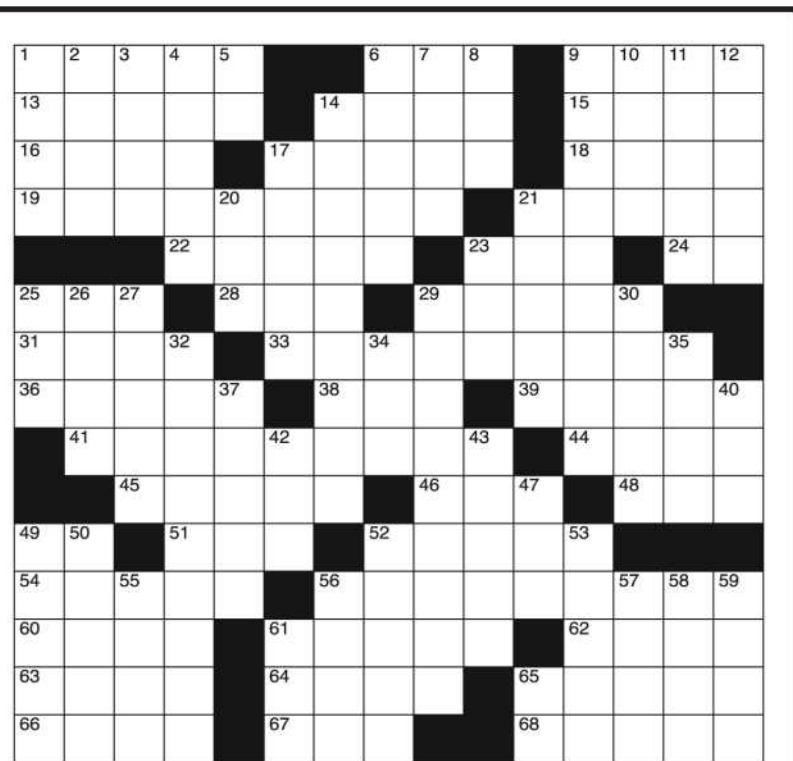
5. They cuddle before sleep. Research shows that partners who cuddle regularly report higher relationship satisfaction and commitment, even compared with couples who emphasize "quality time" together. Sexual connection isn't necessarily involved. It's just knowing you're close to the one you love. Cuddling triggers oxytocin (the bonding hormone) and lowers cortisol (the stress hormone). It's the easiest, fastest biological boost your relationship can get.

6. They 'close the kitchen' as a team. Most couples don't really like household work, but if they can somehow split the tasks so neither feels over-burdened, it seems to make it bearable. That's why they end the evening with

7. They check in about tomorrow. As noted above, keep the recap of the day's events short, look forward to tomorrow. Maybe it's something special at work, or maybe it's looking forward to the weekend or a special time together. If the next day looks especially challenging, share the concern and pray about it together. Instead of rehashing the day, healthy and happy couples look ahead.

The most important thing a couple can do together, both at the beginning and at the end of the day, is to pray together, and to remind each other that they will be praying for them during the day. Maintaining the vertical connection with God and Jesus is as important as the horizontal connection between husband and wife. It's wonderful to know that He is watching over both at the same time.

Family and Marriage Coalition of Aiken, Inc. (FAMCO) was created to provide resources for you to succeed in your marriage and families. Roger Rollins, Executive Director, FAMCO, 803-640-4689, rogerrollins@gmail.com. Let us know how we can help.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Lakes
- 6. Electromotive force
- 9. Invests in little enterprises
- 13. Longtime Utah Jazz coach
- 14. Small sailboat
- 15. Actor Idris
- 16. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- 17. System that detects objects under water
- 18. Harsh, grating noise
- 19. Steward
- 21. A fencing sword
- 22. Infections
- 23. Actress Ryan
- 24. Sodium
- 25. Swedish castle
- 28. A lump of slime
- 29. African antelope
- 31. Insurance providers
- 33. Choosy
- 36. Ringworm
- 38. Unpolished
- 39. Drenches
- 41. Pant style
- 44. Son of Noah
- 45. Spiritual being
- 46. Upton Sinclair novel
- 48. Journalist Tarbell
- 49. Popular sports highlight show
- 51. Born of
- 52. Rich tapestry
- 54. S. China seaport
- 56. State of being unclothed
- 60. Surrounded by
- 61. Residue
- 62. Away from wind
- 63. Dried-up
- 64. Visionary
- 65. A very large body of water
- 66. Garden tools
- 67. Screen type
- 68. Ancient Scandinavian poet

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Millisecond
- 2. Spanish city
- 3. A sudden very loud sound
- 4. "The Indiana Jones of beer"
- 5. Tin
- 6. Sea eagles
- 7. Volcanic crater
- 8. Type of coat
- 9. Women's apartments in Ottoman palace
- 10. Divulge a secret
- 11. Norwegian playwright
- 12. "It's a Wonderful Life" director
- 14. Poisonous perennial plant
- 17. 18-year astronomical period
- 20. Clothes
- 21. Places to sit
- 23. Family of regulator genes
- 25. New York ballplayer
- 26. Impressive in size or scope
- 27. Jacques __, French biologist
- 29. One from the Big Apple
- 30. Genus of woolly lemurs
- 32. Songs to one's beloved
- 34. Indigenous person of N.E. Thailand
- 35. Supplemented with difficulty
- 37. Farewell
- 40. Investment account (abbr.)
- 42. One from Utah
- 43. Begets
- 47. A male child
- 49. Break apart
- 50. Brief appearance
- 52. Partner to "oohed"
- 53. A light informal meal
- 55. Fabric with smooth, shiny surface
- 56. One billionth of a second
- 57. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 58. Close tightly
- 59. Mail out
- 61. Language
- 65. Computer characteristic



SUDOKU

		6						4
		4	7		2			
8	7	3	9					2
	2		5					
	3					8		9
7	5		1		8	2		
9				3		4		
		7	6		1			8

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

2	1	6	3	8	5	7	9	4
5	9	4	7	6	2	8	3	1
8	7	3	9	1	8	2	5	6
3	5	2	7	6	8	4	1	9
4	8	1	2	7	6	8	5	9
6	3	9	5	1	4	7	8	2
7	5	2	1	4	5	6	2	8
9	4	7	6	2	3	8	1	5
2	1	6	3	8	5	7	9	4

ANSWER:

PUZZLE SOLUTION

M	E	R	E	S		E	M	F		S	B	I	C		
S	L	O	A	N		P	R	A	U		E	L	B	A	
E	D	A	M		S	O	N	A	R		R	A	S	P	
C	A	R	E	T		A	K	E	R		S	A	B	E	R
			S	O	R	E	S		M	E	G		N	A	
M	E	M		G	O	B		N	Y	A	L	A			
E	P	O	S		S	E	L	E	C	T	I	V	E		
T	I	N	E		A		R	A	W		S	O	A	K	S
		C	O	R	D	U	R	O	Y	S		S	H	E	M
			D	E	I	T	Y		O	I	L		I	D	A
S	C		N	E	E		A	R	R	A	S				
M	A	C	A	U		N	A	K	E	D	N	E	S	S	
A	M	I	D		A	S	H	E	S		A	L	E	E	
S	E	R	E		S	E	E	R		O	C	E	A	N	
H	O	E	S		L	C	D			S	K	A	L	D	