

# Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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## **S Street Rising: Crack, Murder, and Redemption in D.C.**

Castaneda, Ruben (Author)

Jul 2014. 304 p. Bloomsbury, hardcover, \$26. (9781620400043). 070.92.

When D.C. mayor Marion Barry was arrested for smoking crack, journalist Castaneda was in that hotel's lobby, phoning in the details to the *Washington Post*, where he'd recently landed a job, moving from L.A.'s now defunct *Herald-Examiner*. What Castaneda also brought to D.C. back then was his own crack addiction, and it is a nonchalantly and honestly detailed part of his memoir. While he's running down the stories and writing them well, he is also getting wasted. D.C.'s S Street is where the drug-selling action takes place, and Castaneda parallels his story with that of pastor Jim, who promises not to rat on the dealers but invites them to church, and that of honest, tough homicide cop Lou. There are scenes in this book that depict people acting in ways that are as low as one can humanly go, but they are related matter-of-factly, almost impersonally. There are also instances of incredible goodness, but the good guys don't always win. Castaneda's page-turner, told with easygoing charm and great skill, is an unstinting unveiling of who got away with what and when and how Castaneda followed the action and found himself.

— *Eloise Kinney*