

Title	Crimes and Misdemeanors
Director	Woody Allen
Date	1989
Area	Moral Philosophy
Theme	Morality and religion
Plot Summary	Judah (Martin Landau), a distinguished ophthalmologist, has a mistress who threatens to expose their affair. He decides to have her killed, gets away with it, and finds he can live with himself. There is also a second plot dealing with a documentary film-maker (Allen). The doctor and the film-maker meet in the final scene. Offers a theistic perspective on why one should be moral, represented by Judah's father who appears in flashbacks, and a rabbi who tries to advise Judah. His father says that God sees everything, and those who are righteous will be rewarded while those who are wicked will be punished for eternity. The rabbi echoes this view, and adds that we need a God-given moral law, for if there is no higher power, or moral structure with real meaning, then all we have is an empty, valueless world.
Key Scenes	Flashback to Judah's father telling him that the eyes of God are always upon us. We should do the right thing in order to avoid divine punishment. [13.16 – 16.54] The doctor confesses to rabbi Ben about the affair. The rabbi argues that we must believe that there is an objective moral order or we will be left with an empty, valueless world. [13.16 – 16.54] As the doctor contemplates the murder, he has a conversation with the rabbi (actually an inner conversation) in which the rabbi again argues that we need a moral law, and that God sees everything. [38.15 – 41.22] After the murder the doctor recalls his father saying that nothing escapes God's sight, the righteous are rewarded and the evil are punished. [55.44 – 56.08] The doctor visits his childhood home and remembers a dinner table discussion from his childhood, discussing religious morality versus 'might makes right' views of ethics. [1.06.50 – 1.10.09] Final conversation between the doctor and the film-maker in which the doctor discusses his murder in the guise of a suggestion for a movie plot, about a murder who first feels and guilt and the eyes of God upon him, and then realises that it's OK because he has gotten away with it. [1.29.25 – 1.34.56]
Relevant Text	John Pappas, 'It's All Darkness: Plato, The Ring of Gyges, and Crimes and Misdemeanors', in Mark Conard and Aeon Skoble, Woody Allen and Philosophy, 2004