CANNES, France — Much attention has been paid to the $120 million of his own fortune that [*Francis Ford Coppola*](https://apnews.com/hub/francis-ford-coppola) put up to make [*the futuristic epic “Megalopolis,”*](https://apnews.com/article/megalopolis-cannes-francis-ford-coppola-d965352b9f0f5d78d6c470beb801f6f8) but the director himself isn't much concerned.

“I don’t care. I never cared,” Coppola said of money, speaking to reporters at the [*Cannes Film Festival*](https://apnews.com/hub/cannes-film-festival) on Friday. “The money doesn’t matter. What is important are the friends. Because friends will never let you down. Money may evaporate.”

Coppola sold a piece of his winery business to finance “Megalopolis," a passion project the filmmaker has been pondering [*for decades.*](https://apnews.com/article/megalopolis-francis-ford-coppola-cannes-film-festival-60e6fe4b066e91f1ceeea5feac0dc0bf) Regardless of the outcome — the film is seeking a North American distributor — he's going to be fine, financially, Coppola said.

“My children, without exception, they have wonderful careers without a fortune,” he said. “They don’t need a fortune.”

Coppola faced questions from the press [*the day after premiering*](https://apnews.com/article/cannes-film-festival-behind-scenes-2b661482cda9b8d4bdd276f6dff00efb) the hotly anticipated “Megalopolis," starring [*Adam Driver*](https://apnews.com/hub/adam-driver) as an architect named Cesar Catalina who is trying to build a utopia in a future New York City. Critics called the film everything from a disaster to an admirably ambitious gambit that only Coppola could make.

Coppola fashions his film as a Roman Empire-esque tale. The closer he got to making it, he said, the more relevant it seemed to him.

“What's happening in America, in our republic, our democracy, is exactly how Rome lost their republic thousands of years ago,” said Coppola, who lamented the resurgence of the “neo-right, even fascist tradition.”

“Our ***politics*** has taken us to the point where we might lose our republic,” he continued. “It’s not the people who have become politicians who are going to be the answer. I feel it’s the artists of America. The role of the artist is to illuminate contemporary life, to shine a light, to be the headlights."

Drawing laughs, Coppola then turned to one his cast members, [*Jon Voight,*](https://apnews.com/hub/jon-voight) noting he had “different political opinions.” Voight responded: “How did you find that out?”

Coppola has been shopping “Megalopolis” for potential buyers. When asked whether a streaming company might be a home for the movie, he suggested streaming was nothing new.

“Streaming is what we used to call home video,” Coppola said. He voiced some misgivings about modern Hollywood.

“The job is not so much to make good movies, the job is to make sure that they pay their debt obligations," he said of studios. "It might be that the studios that we knew for so long — some wonderful ones — are not going to be here in the future.”

But Coppola's tone was otherwise overwhelmingly positive. The 85-year-old filmmaker exalted the family members who came with him and implored reporters to ask more questions of his cast, including Laurence Fishburne, [*Giancarlo Esposito*](https://apnews.com/article/giancarlo-esposito-parish-breaking-bad-gustavo-fring-0f3e1571f8b3389a6fa5c879e7c56f5a) and Aubrey Plaza. (Shia LaBeouf attended Thursday's premiere but did not join the press conference.)

“There’s so many people when they die, they say, ‘I wish I had done this, I wish I done that,’" said Coppola. "When I die, I’m going to say, ‘I got to do this.’ I got to see my daughter (Sofia Coppola) win an Oscar and I got to make wine and I got to make every movie I wanted to make. I’m going to be so busy thinking about all the things I got to do that when I die I won’t notice it.”