

Nadine Taylor

# SHAWN MENDES *uncovered*



# PREFACE

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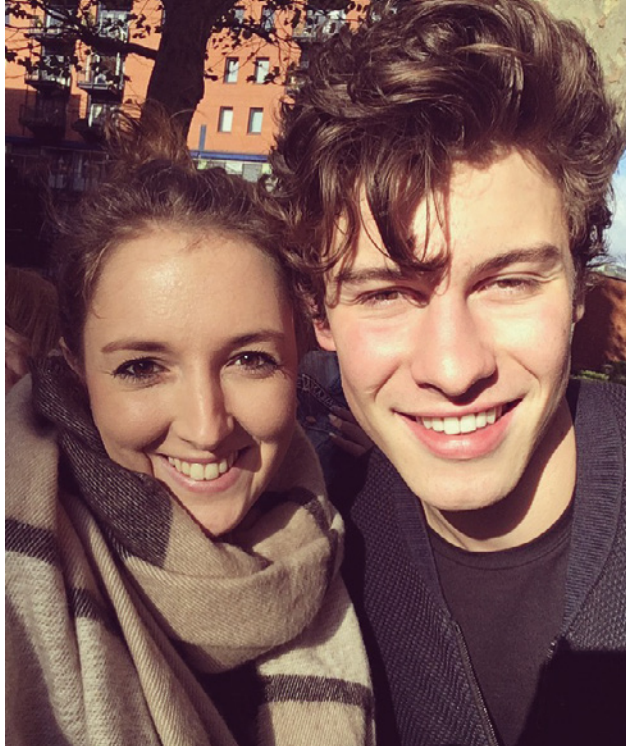
I first heard about Shawn Mendes in the middle of 2014. I had been travelling through New Zealand, and was working at a dairy farm on the South Island. During our working days, we listened to the radio a lot and Shawn's first single, "Life of the Party" was a real hit at the time. This song came to represent the wonderful memories I have of a great time spent abroad. Back in Germany however, I forgot about him very quickly. As time passed, I started to hear some of his new songs like "Mercy", "Stitches" and "Treat You Better" and my opinion was, initially, that his album "Handwritten" would not really be for me. After I moved to Munich at the end of 2016, I saw a poster advertising Mendes's Illuminate World Tour and, given my enthusiasm for 'Life of the Party', coupled with happy memories of New Zealand, I naturally considered going to the concert. I quickly found out, however, that he had by this time built a huge fan base, and that every show was completely sold out. Luckily, a notification on Facebook caught my attention; someone was selling a "front row" ticket! The person selling

it was currently in New York, could not use it for himself and was keen to sell it at the original price. I drove to meet his sister, who lived a little outside of Munich, to get the ticket. Everything went well and, on inspecting the ticket, I was pleasantly shocked. It really was a front row ticket. Moreover, the ticket was for seat 25, in the middle, and as close to the stage as anyone could get! The night before the concert, I had a strange dream: I met Shawn Mendes outside the venue and found out what a nice, likeable guy he was. The confusing thing about this dream was that, in the waking world, I didn't even know what he looked like! When I woke up at six in the morning to go to work, I had a message on my phone: "Hey, do you want to meet Shawn Mendes today?" It was from the person who sold me the ticket. Never in my life have a dream and reality seemed closer to each other than in this precise moment. The guy told me that he had a VIP Gold Card left and was thinking about giving it to me, because he couldn't be there anyway. Such tickets are always personalized and not transferable. The only

way for me to get in would be through authorization from the seller. However, there was one problem: because of the time difference between New York and Munich, the guy was sleeping and I couldn't reach him. At work I waited the whole day, very nervous because the Meet & Greet was meant to start at 4 pm, and eventually, at 3.05 pm I finally received a message with the authorization. I left everything behind at my desk, jumped onto the subway and when I arrived at the venue, I ran as fast as I could to get through the Olympiapark, which is huge! Virtually out of breath, I arrived at the concert hall 20 minutes before it was supposed to start and all I could see were closed doors. There was no one around at all. I ran around the hall hysterically, desperately trying to find the right entrance and avoid missing my opportunity to meet a big pop star. Finally I found an open door, but there was an intimidating woman from the security team who would not let me in because I needed a copy of the passport of the person who had given me the authorization. It was minutes before four and of course, the person was unreachable. In the hallway were about 50 young girls who were looking at me as if I was from a different planet. Of course, after running through the Olympiapark for ages, I must have looked like I was close to a nervous breakdown. I was starting to think that this was a failure, but just as I was fi-

nally admitting to myself that I wasn't going to get in, the security woman showed me some mercy and gave me a VIP card. Another security man picked me up and we joined a small queue of girls waiting in front of a curtain. I was sweaty, my hair was a mess and I was wiped out. Behind the curtain I heard some heavy crying. The security guard pointed to me, said "Next", and I realized that I was about to meet a huge superstar. He opened a small gap in the curtain and I was able to pass through. There he was, right in front of me: Shawn Mendes. Real and six feet two inches tall, with the most wonderful smile, brown curls and bright eyes. He definitely had a special aura. I was impressed. He asked with a big smile: "How are you?". Nearly speechless, all I could say was "I'm fine.". He gave me a hug and we smiled into the camera for a picture. The moment only lasted a few seconds. Once I left the area, I remembered how amazing he smelled and how comfortable he seemed when close to his fans. I don't know whether it was Shawn's stardom that I was overwhelmed by in this moment, or his special charisma, but I do know that this short encounter pulled the ground away from under my feet. There are just a few moments in your life that touch your soul like this and change your life forever, and this was definitely my moment. The idea for this book came to me a month after the concert, by which time

Mendes had released his first perfume spearheaded by a huge worldwide advertising campaign. I noticed that my local perfume shop had a life-sized cutout of him. I wanted that cutout so I asked in the store, and when they didn't need it any more, they let me take it. I carried the huge thing across the city, back to my apartment. Just for fun, I took a picture of my new roommate with it and put it on Instagram. The next morning I saw that the picture had more than 8000 likes, which was insanely high for one of my posts. I told my mum about it and mentioned that I would like to write a book about him, because there was so much to tell. She replied simply, "Do it". After a few days of trying, I convinced a publisher and was able to start the project. Alongside my full time job, I was able to write the whole book in about three months. I was in contact with fans all over the world, day and night, and I investigated everything about him and collected



*Shawn Mendes and me in London  
in November 2017*

many fan pictures. The result holds for me a memory of an amazing time, and I hope that it can also make a few fans out there happy.

Nadine



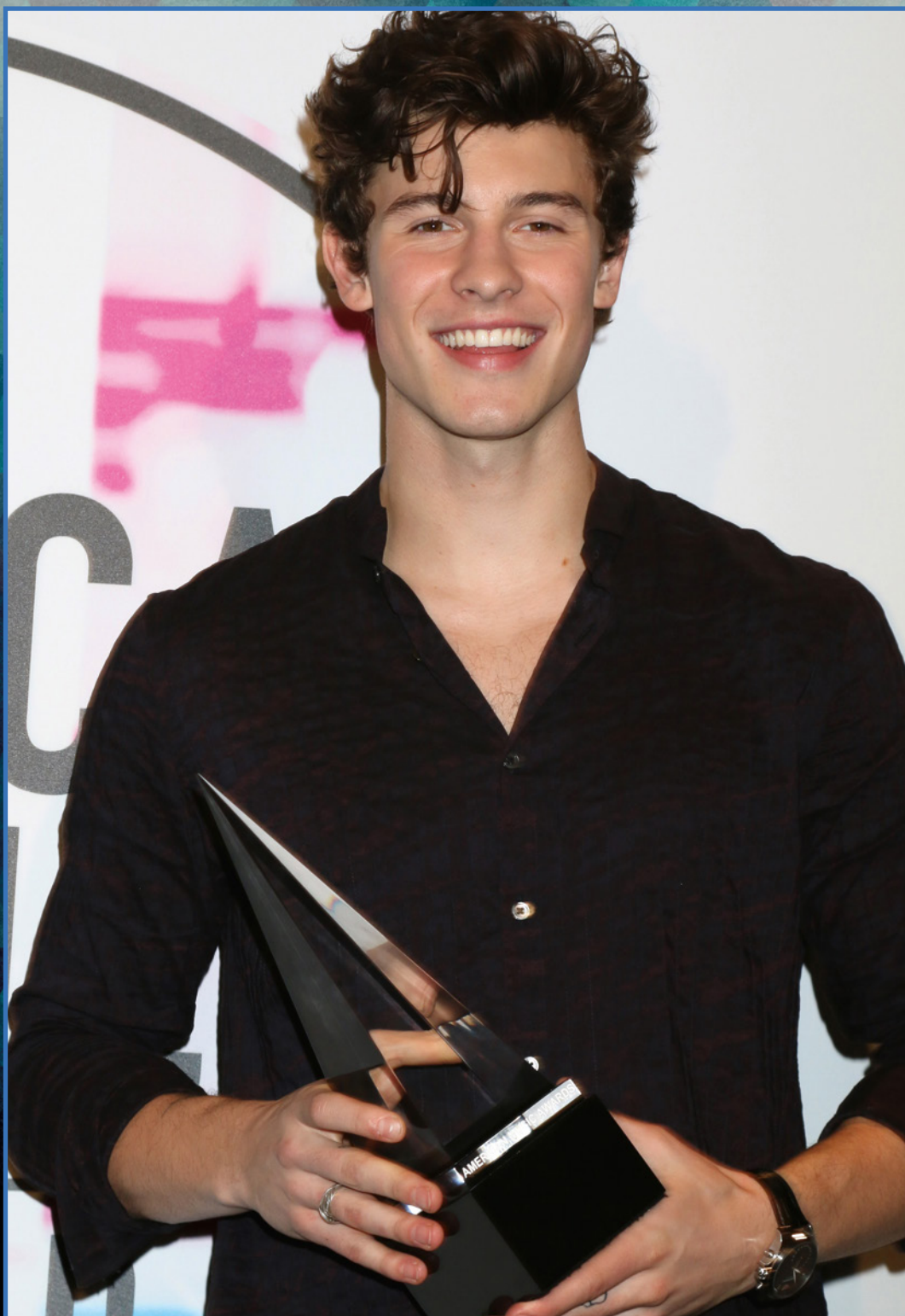




# SHAWN MENDES

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# THE BOY NEXT DOOR

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Pickering is a small city of 100,000 residents, and is about 45 minutes' drive from Toronto, Canada. Five years ago, few teenagers would have heard of this place, but today it is so famous that you can buy T-Shirts and Merchandise showing its coordinates. All of this happened because a young Canadian person decided in 2013 that he wanted to be a musician. I am talking about Shawn Mendes, full name Shawn Peter Raul Mendes, who went from being a normal schoolchild to one of the biggest Popstars of today.

Shawn was born on August 8, 1998 in Toronto. His mum has English roots and his dad comes from Lagos in Portugal – that is where the last name (unusual for a Canadian family) comes from. His sister is five years younger than he is. They are very normal family from a very normal Canadian suburb.

Shawn was a student at the Pine Ridge Secondary School; he enjoyed playing

Hockey and Soccer and liked to hang out every day after school, longboarding with his friends. He always had a passion for the spotlight. He loved singing and acting and he loved the stage. During his school years, he was part of the musical and theater class. In an interview, he once said that the world and all its far away cities seemed so huge to someone growing up in a small town. “So your imagination runs wild.”, he exclaimed.<sup>1</sup> Once, Shawn described Pickering as “suffocating” and if you read his old tweets from 2012, there didn't appear to be much going on in his small hometown. In November 2012 he tweeted: “I find Pickering so boring...”<sup>2</sup> The tweet had a manageable 500 likes, and back then Shawn was able to talk to his friends through Twitter. Today, he has more than 20 million followers and between 10 and 20 thousand responses to each single tweet. I think it is safe to say that boredom has completely vanished from the life of this young Canadian star.





*Shawn Mendes performing in  
Philadelphia, December 10th 2014*

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# 10 FACTS ABOUT SHAWN

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- ▶ Shawn absolutely hates tomatoes. To him they taste just awful and they seem to appear in, and ruin, every sandwich or salad that he encounters. Shawn loves muffins. He prefers blueberry muffins in the morning and chocolate chip muffins in the evening. This deep “love” means that he receives presents of muffins from fans from time to time, and he has been given the nickname “Muffin-Man” or simply “Muffin”. However, he has such a well-toned body these days that it is definitely questionable whether he still eats as many muffins as he did at the beginning of his career.
- ▶ He is a huge person. At a stately 6 feet 2 inches tall, he towers above some of his colleagues. By comparison, Justin Bieber is 5'9", Shawn's Idol Ed Sheeran is 5'8" and Bruno Mars only 5'4".
- ▶ Shawn loves Harry Potter. As a kid he used to make wands out of wooden sticks and even today, he wishes they could do magic in real life. For a couple of years his Twitter profile even stated that he was a Hogwarts graduate – an iconic quirk for his fans! He deleted this in December 2017, and the Harry-Potter/Twitter era was sadly over. Even wizards have to grow up!
- ▶ Shawn's biggest idols are John Mayer and Ed Sheeran. These two musicians have been his biggest inspiration since childhood, and today he is close friends with both of them. The Mendes Army is still waiting for a collaboration between these singers.
- ▶ No secret: Shawn has always been a big fan of guitars. Growing up, he had five guitars in his room at his parents' house, and his mum begged him to stop accumulating more. Today, Shawn has many more guitars, and his own condo to house them in the heart of Toronto.
- ▶ Shawn is good at playing ice hockey. When he started, he was the worst player in his team, and his dad told him he could either quit





*Very close: the view from the front row at the concert in Munich, May 15th, 2017*

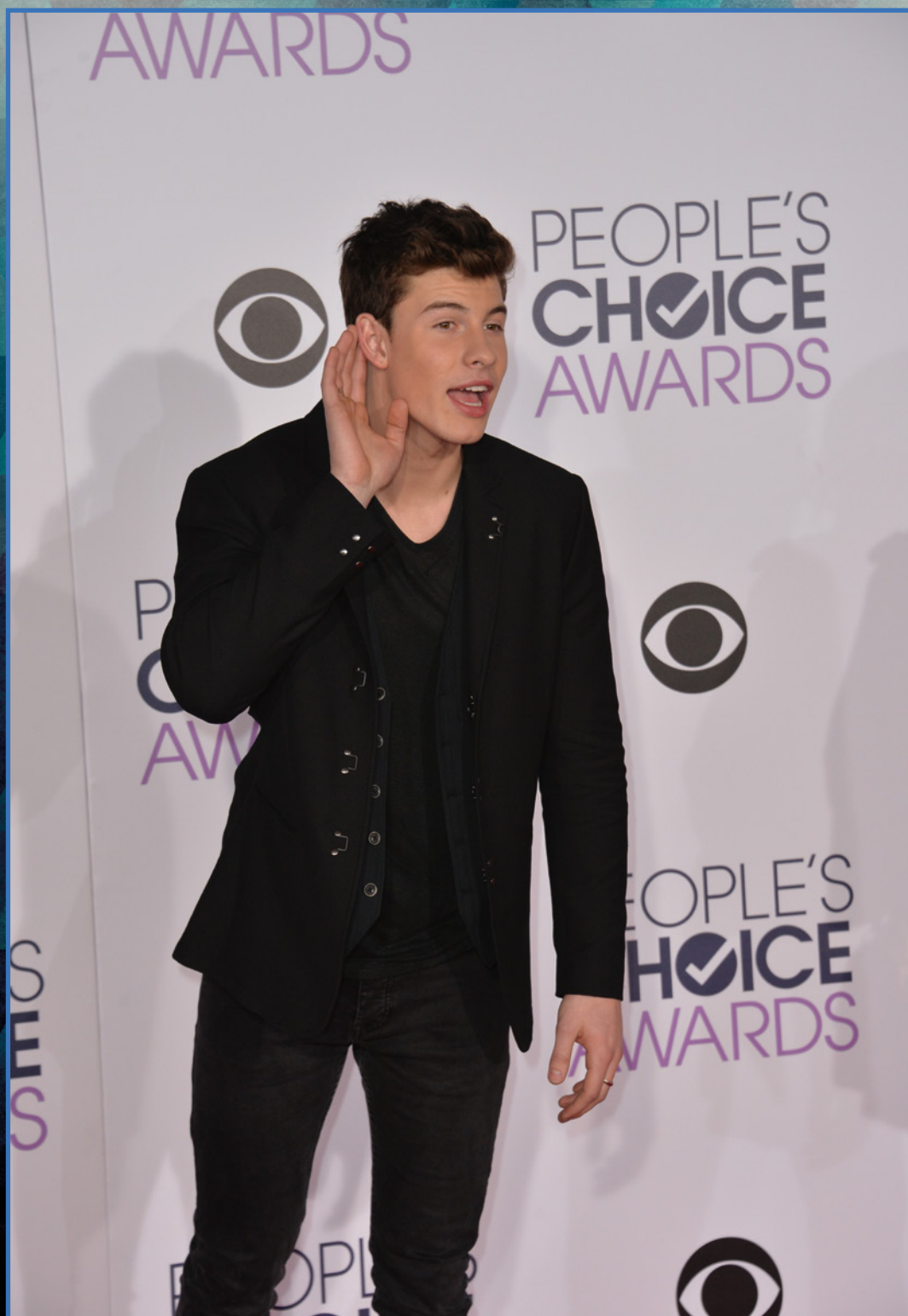
or train even harder. So, he decided to he was going to try harder. His dad supported him every day after school at his training, and after one year the hard work paid off, with Shawn becoming one of the best players on the rink.

- ▶ As well as gaining an opportunity to sign a contract with Island Records, Shawn had more options available to him. Republic Records, Sony Records and Warner Bros. all offered him a contract but, in the end, he decided on Island Records because they had been the first to discover him.
- ▶ Shawn was the opening act in both the USA and Canada for Taylor Swift's "1989" Tour in 2015. One of the concerts took place in Seat-

tle on his 17th birthday, and while on stage Taylor asked her fans to sing "Happy Birthday" to him. The 70,000 fans then sang the song for a speechless Shawn. During Taylor's "Reputation" Tour in 2018, Shawn was once again a special guest and during the concert in Pasadena, California, he and Taylor performed his hit "There's Nothing Holdin' Me Back" together.

- ▶ Shawn received a guest role in the first episode of season 3 of the TV series "The 100". During a short scene he played the song "Add it up" on the piano, and was even involved in a fight! He managed to get the part by asking the producers for a small role, via Twitter! Simple but effective.





*Never loses*

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*the People's*

*Choice Awards in Los Angeles, January 6th, 2016*









# FROM A CHILD'S ROOM TO THE STAGES OF THE WORLD

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Las Vegas, S

Music Festival during the beginning of his career

HeartRadio

# HOW EVERYTHING STARTED

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Sunday, 28th July 2013. It was a hot summer day in Pickering, just a couple of days before his 15th birthday. Shawn Mendes was sitting in his swimming trunks in his room, playing guitar. His younger sister walked by and Shawn asked her to record a short video of him. On this now world-famous recording you can hear her voice saying “One, two, three”.

Shawn sang part of Justin Bieber’s “As Long As You Love Me” for just six seconds, and then put the video on Vine. The hosting service had been online for just a few months at this time, and users were able to upload six-second long videos and share them with other people around the world. It was still early days for Vine and Shawn discovered that nobody else used the site to share music covers. He later mused, “I wasn’t doing it because I wanted anything to come out of it. I was just doing it for fun”<sup>3</sup>. He was using his uploads to fill a gap which no one had

discovered before. When he logged into his account the next morning, he saw that his cover video had more than 10,000 likes, and also that the number of followers he had had rapidly increased. Reflecting later upon this moment, he said, “I thought it was lagging or something.....but I was freaking out a little bit at the time.”<sup>4</sup> During the following month, he uploaded more covers, choosing in particular songs by his idol Ed Sheeran. He received more and more followers on Twitter, and his YouTube channel was amassing a huge fan base. Shawn already had a close relationship with his fans, and was always asking them which songs he should perform. “We work as a team. When I grow, they grow”<sup>5</sup>, he said in an interview in 2015. Shawn’s extraordinary voice and great musical talent are clearly evident in these six-second-videos. It is even more impressive to consider that he never had a singing teacher, no one else in his family was a musician, and